



Fort Street High School

MERCURIUS

The News Magazine of Fort Street High School

October 2011 Term 4

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Dear Parents, Caregivers and Fortians

Welcome back to Term 4 of 2011.

The HSC has started for Year 12, accelerants in Mathematics, Chemistry and Software Design and Development and a small number of individual accelerants. We wish them well in their examinations and look forward to welcoming them back at the end of the year to celebrate their success.

The school had two groups of students leave Sydney at the end of last term to represent the school. The Robocup team flew to Hobart to take part in the National Robocup tournament accompanied by Mr Dopierala. Congratulations must go to the senior robocup soccer team who achieved a creditable second place in their division and thanks must go to Mr Dopierala for giving up part of his break to support the students.

The second group of students to leave Sydney travelled to France with Ms Manson and Mr Tippett. A report on this tour will be made available for the next Mercurius. Again I would like to thank the staff for spending their two week break from face to face teaching with students from the school and providing the students with an amazing cultural experience.

Every three years the school is required to develop a new strategic plan. This planning cycle is a continual process of evaluating, planning and implementing.

We are currently in the planning phase for the 2012-2014 Fort Street High School Strategic Plan and I intend to speak about the initiatives and timelines included in the first draft of this plan at the next P&C meeting.

I look forward to discussing the future directions of the school with as many member parents as possible.

Aircraft Noise Amelioration Project

The project has continued throughout the holidays to finish the majority of the work in the Kilgour block. During the next two weeks they will continue to commission the air-conditioning in these classrooms leaving only some cosmetic work to be completed during the December-January break.

I would like to thank the project team for their commitment to the proposed timelines which has led to minimal interruptions to our students. The next major part of the project will be the re-roofing of the Hall and the installation of a new ceiling in the Rowe staffroom. These will both start in the second week of December.

We all look forward to quieter and cooler learning spaces.

David Osland
Relieving Principal

Congratulations to:



Kimberly Yoon - Year 10 who received two awards from Open High School.

Kimberly is ranked 1st in both Year 12 Japanese Continuers and in Year 12 Japanese Extension.

Dorothy Symons – Year 8, **Eve Osborn** – Year 10, **Elizabeth Hunt** – Year 11, **Jenna Smith** – Year 11 (Absent from photo gallery) and **Edmund Benson** – Year 12 who were selected for the 2011 Schools Spectacular Orchestra.



Carlo Antonioli – Year 12 who was selected for the 2011 Schools Spectacular Stage Band.



Lauren White – Year 8, **Rose Cousins** – Year 9 and **Zachary Gough** – Year 11 (absent from photo gallery) who were selected for the Core Choir in the 2011 Schools Spectacular.

Edmund Benson and **Michael Christensen** – Year 12 on their nominations for Encore.

Jenna Smith - Year 11 who was accepted into the AYO (Australian Youth Orchestra) 2012 National Music Camp - Orchestral Program, the AYO 2012 Young Symphonists program and is reserve for both the AYO February and July Seasons.

Fort Street High School Exit Profile
School Council Meeting)

Our aim is that on completion of Year 12 Fortians will have:

- *achieved their full academic potential.*
- *developed individual skills and talents.*
- *developed learning strategies to equip them to be independent self motivated lifelong learners.*
- *developed emotional resilience, self reliance and leadership potential.*
- *recognise their responsibility to the wider community.*
- *developed a strong sense of social justice as well as commitment to fairness and equity.*



Important Dates

October:

- 28 Year Assembly Years 7,10 and 11
- 31 Year 11 Hospitality Work Placements

November:

- 4 Year 11 Hospitality Work Placements
(From 31 October - 4 November)
- 7 Year 11 Reports Issued
IMP Parent Meeting
- 7-10 School Certificate
- 9 P&C AGM
- 9-11 Year 9 Camp
- 11 HSC Ends
- 14-15 Year 10 Leadership Camp
- 16-17 Year 12 Sign Out

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Year 12 Graduation 2011 Parent's Address

Ms Moxham, Mr Osland, teachers, parents and students.

It is such an honour to be invited to speak tonight. I have now had a long association with Fort Street. I have been delighted to have had my two daughters, Alice and Sophie, at the school, with Sophie, my younger daughter, graduating tonight. I am a proud father and it is a privilege to be here.

Seeing Sophie and her friends succeeding and happy at school has made Year 12 very much a highlight of my school experience as a parent and I know my Sophie feels the same way, as a student. It is a year that combines all the best of things about school with strong relationships and the toughest and most demanding of challenges.

It's a time of remarkable bonding between friends, between students and teachers and between members of families. Already the opportunities and achievements have been remarkable.

So tonight is a serious milestone not only in the lives of our children but also in our lives as parents. There is more than a tinge of sadness as for many of us this may be the last school function we will ever attend as parents.

And, for these children of ours there will be no more cake stalls, school fetes, late notes. No more IMP performances – sad. No school reports, excursions and incursions. No more - yes you have to go to the school carnival! No more sneaking off to Norton Street in free periods. Those days are over.

So I am very happy to get this chance to say a few thank-yous, to the staff of Fort St, to all the parents and families, and to the students sitting here tonight.

Firstly to the teachers and school staff...

I am a firm believer in the values and benefits of public education and I can honestly say that Fort Street has provided the education every parent dreams of for their child. An academically rigorous learning environment. Teachers who foster independent thinking and self-reliance. A caring school staff that encourages our children to work hard, to be creative, to think critically and aim for success.

Teachers, your dedication and hard work have been much appreciated by us all and on behalf of the students and their families I would like to acknowledge and thank you for your enormous efforts.

To parents and families...

I would also like to thank you for all the support you have given. We have watched our children grow into fine young people - from those stumbling first steps to graceful and capable young adults. From beginners through to sophisticated and skilful experts. I know it has taken an enormous effort for parents to have arrived at this point in one piece! Think of all the driving, the projects, the soup nights and of course the fundraising and campaigning. Our children will do their HSC in an air conditioned school hall! Thank you to all involved in helping create the kind of school community we want for our children.

Also, a thank you to all the Year 12...

We know that peers have an enormous influence on a child's success at school. Well - there couldn't be a lovelier group of students than this year's Year 12 at Fort Street. Students who are bright and responsible, students who are happy and caring friends, students who are inclusive, accepting of difference and socially aware. These are real achievements and thank you for bringing us all such joy and making us so proud.

Finally, as a parent and as part of the school community, I too have made some great friends and connections in my time at the school. I know I am going to miss it when it's gone.

Some things we may not miss. No more wrapping and ferrying major works to school. No more emergency printing trips to office works at midnight - when the computer crashes. No more crazy HSC behaviour, from parents and children alike.

Certainly for all of us parents, a small but significant section of the English language will simply fade into memory... core texts, bodies of work. And scaling - scaling will once more be something that happens to fish. And extensions will again be what you would like to do to your house. Sorry, couldn't help the odd dad's joke.

So to all the students of Year 12 2011, do stop and thank your parents, the staff and teachers of the school. Remember you are not alone, as you head off into the future. Stay connected with your Fort Street friends and family. Look forward with confidence - with new teachers and mentors in an exciting world full of possibilities.

We wish you every success.

Mr John Quinn



Year 12R with Ms Dadour



Graduation Speech 2011 Students Address

Good evening teachers, parents, and fellow Fortians. High school – and my Music class would no doubt agree with me here – is in many ways a broad dichotomy. On the one hand, our time here has passed all too quickly for us to fully relish each other's company; it seems like only yesterday when we were tottering through the school gates for our first day of Year 7 with our roll call teachers and peer support leaders.

On the other hand, we've been dragging ourselves along this path for six tiresome years, and the light at the end of the tunnel is fast approaching. In the past few days, we have found that we are at once both eager to leave and so deeply attached to the Fort that to part from it – and from each other – is more than a challenge. For many of us, high school has been a series of realisations, from the day we stepped through the gates in Year 7 until now.

The first realisation from Year 7 was this: we were no longer the big kids, like we had been in Year 6; we had suddenly been belittled, dropped into a labyrinth of a school surrounded by giants. We had to start over and adapt. This was a scary thing and a lot of people don't look back to it because we push it out of our minds as soon as we don't need to worry about it.

I still remember the days in which we sat huddled in the Fountain Quad before we migrated into other areas of the school, the days in which we hurried off to class in desperate search of K17 to make it in time for the bell, the days in which we had Fortunaes, where eating iceblocks and then writing about them was the hardest task assigned.

Some of us maintained our know-all arrogance from Year 6, which, as always, contributes towards the school's general disapproval for Year 7 students, but all in all, life was very different from primary school. Were we aware then of where our journey would lead us? Year 12 seemed to us like some legendary land far away. Ignorance was bliss.

The next major realisation came to me in the form of a small piece of wisdom imparted upon me by a substitute teacher I had for electronics in Year 8, which has resonated with me throughout all of my time at Fort Street. The teacher was called Mr Bennet, and he told me this: 'You do not come to school to learn things which you will need to remember for the rest of your life. 90% of the *content* you learn here you will never need again. You come to school to learn *how to learn*.' Reflecting on this, I can say with the utmost confidence that not only have I learnt how to learn, but I've learnt the *value* of learning. Learning is a process which does not only occur in school, but occurs all the time, every day, and will continue to occur for the rest of our lives.

Fort Street is a school which has instilled this appreciation within us. And I do not mean learning in the sense of taking notes from a Physics textbook. I mean learning in a wider sense of enriching yourself. Fort Street has sparked this need for knowledge and development within all of us.

A fairly important realisation which occurred to most of us, especially towards our senior years, is that teachers are human beings too. They have emotions and feelings, like us. They get tired, like us. They make mistakes, like us. They work extremely hard, like *some* of us. But most importantly, they are here to teach us because they *chose* to become teachers, to continue to pass on knowledge, because they are passionate about what they teach and about developing us into complete individuals (or so they say). I have been blessed over my school career, especially in my HSC course, to be taught by some of the most inspiring teachers, nay, some of the most inspiring *people* I have met. They are resourceful, engaging and witty. Many of them also often forget that we have subjects outside of those that they teach us.

However they have become our great friends over these two years, and now it seems odd to leave them behind.

Without being self indulgent, I wish to talk quickly about how the Fort has shaped my own life. Through this stage of maturation, our surroundings inevitably shape who we are, and I think that we are extraordinarily privileged to be in the environment of Fort Street High School in these years. Fort Street has, without a doubt, *defined* me. I'll explain. In Year 7, I was blessed to be taught by the most passionate and inspiring man I have ever met. This man is none other than the amazing John Ockwell. To say that he *teaches* music is an understatement. Perhaps a more apt description would be to say that he *disseminates* music, that he infects people with a love and passion for music which cannot be contained. Although I did play a bit of music in Year 7, it wasn't a large part of my life. It was something I did for fun. Having "J.O." for Year 7 music turned this around completely. I was awarded the Speech Day prize for Music that year, which at first came as a very big surprise to me, but I think that this made me realise that within each of us there is potential waiting to be unleashed. Since then, music has become my life.

Many of you know me now as a musician. This is not something which was inherent in me. This is something which was cultivated and nurtured within the Fort Street environment. And I know that *all* of you, in some shape or form, have been developed into who you are now because of the long journey we've experienced together across these six years. Fort Street is not only a school, it is a community, a complex ecosystem in which each individual feeds and develops off each other. We are who we are because of each other.

Fort Street started out as just another school for me. I remember being excited when my parents dropped me to school that day and in true Bollywood fashion, my mum became a little teary seeing me off. What I didn't realise then was how important high school would be. Today I look back over these 6 years and think, *where did they all go?* I look back at myself then, and look at myself now, and think, *wow, I really have changed.* From a shy 12 year old girl, who tied a ponytail to school every day, whose bag was probably bigger than her, to a 17 year old young woman with

her hair out, with a smaller bag (though I think it is still heavier than 90 percent of the grade) who now isn't afraid of speaking her mind. I'll let you in on something. I dance, and have been doing so since the age of 3. But I never danced in front of people, I was always far too scared.

I remember one day in Year 10, where I suddenly just burst out dancing at a family function. Sure people thought I was mad. I however saw something else. I credit this change to Fort Street and the incredible experience I've had. Here everyone is given the opportunity to say something, whether right or wrong, and there is no one to stop you. Every person is appreciated for who they are, and what they think. It was this very environment, and mentality that gave me the confidence with which I am speaking to you right now. My realisation? My realisation was that I too have a voice. That I too had every right to speak my mind. That I too was able and capable of doing great things, whether it be dancing, or organising the Year 12 formal. I could talk about every inspirational individual I have met here. But the list would be far too long.

And at last, we reach the other half of the dichotomy – leaving, something which we have undoubtedly been looking forward to for many years but never expected to creep upon us so rapidly. The final realisation, the one which has only recently struck us, is that, after these tediously long six years, we are suddenly responsible for ourselves. We have to take our own paths through life. But it's more than that. We're being released into the wild, left to our own devices, self-reliant. There are no more teachers telling us what to wear. There are no more school bells to govern time. There are no more slips from the library reminding us to go and renew our maths textbooks. Somehow, over the course of these six years, we have not only learnt how to write essays and draw graphs, but have learnt how to become human, something the Board of You-Know-What cannot measure or assess. And this happens through our interactions with each other. This happens in the wonderful community which is Fort Street High School. I'm talking about all of you now.

The students, who make Fort Street what it is. Our mentors, our peers – our extended family, if you will. Each and every one of you is a wealth of knowledge, personality and charisma.

All of you are my friends. You have made me laugh, taught me, helped me, inspired me and made me who I am. With each of you I share such a strong sense of... well let's just say, the B-word. The connections we have forged together over the past years are invaluable and eternal. Every moment we've shared together – the lessons, the jokes, the triumphs, the mishaps – are priceless experiences which are not to be forgotten.

We will all go our separate ways, as individuals, pursuing our own futures – makers of our own destinies – but we will always be Fortians, bound by the same sense of determination and strength. So go forth from this school and let us fulfil our duties as Fortians. Be brilliant people, which you already are. Excel in your chosen fields, which you undoubtedly will. Live and work with passion and conviction. Continue learning. Embrace every opportunity you are given and tackle every obstacle you face with gusto. There really isn't any need to me to tell you this – after all, we've already been doing it for the past six years!

And now we would like to take some time to mention those people who have played a significant part in our high school career. We must thank Ms Moxham, Mr Osland and Ms Kemp, for guiding us and supporting us through this journey. Thank you to all of the staff, who have provided their undying support throughout the HSC. Thank you to all of our Year Advisors – to Mr Hart for introducing us to the school, to Ms Harper for sharing the greater part of our journey, to Mr Hoekstra for taking the estranged grade in the year crossing to Year 12, and to Mr Ockwell for his incredible support and kind words. We must also thank our parents, who have provided not only their love and care, but their support and good wishes too.

Our journey through high school has certainly been stressful, and you have seen us through it. Thank you to Fort Street, the school we have all come to love and cherish. Thank you, to Fortians 2011, for making this experience all the more worthwhile.

Tonight, we must also say goodbye to many things. Goodbye to the teachers, to the classes, to the statue of Meleager, to sharing 6 periods a day with each other. Tonight, we say goodbye to 6 years of our lives, to this uniform, to this environment. Tonight, we say goodbye to High School.

In true Fortian style, we must end with a quote. This quote comes from Fortian of 2008, Jim Fishwick: *'There are two men on a beach. The wise man looks through a grain of sand and sees the universe. The fool rolls around in the seaweed, stands up, and exclaims, "I AM VINE-MAN!"'*

Fortians, thank you, and good luck.

Carlo Antonioli and Minal Bhagwat

Robocup 2011 Australian Open Hobart – Tasmania



Fort Street's senior robotics team again entered the National Robocup competition. This year's RCJA Australian Open was held at The University of Tasmania on the weekend of the 24th and 25th of September.

Simon Ko – Year 11, Daniel Playfair Cal, Riley Berlecky and Reuben Moorhouse – Year 12 represented the school in the Open Soccer category.

The Robotics Tasmania committee who ran the event were delighted with the large number of teams that competed from all Australian states, the ACT and New Zealand.

Two intense and exciting days of competition ensured some very high standard performances in Dance, Rescue and Soccer.

Robocup Soccer requires each team to field two robots, often one being the striker / defender, and the other the goalkeeper. Over the two days the team kept very busy programming their robots into the early hours of the morning, working to outplay the opposition. Their hotel room was transformed into a robotics workshop!



The team had stepped up to the open soccer category just this year and faced very experienced teams with faster, more aggressive robots. While they were unable to make the quarter finals, the team demonstrated great sportsmanship. The spirit of friendship and goodwill was also openly apparent with competitors meeting up with acquaintances and mingling together on friendly terms. The team was able to take away some great ideas to share with the junior teams back at school.



Congratulations are to be extended to the boys for representing the school and their families admirably.

We thank the parents, **Gracia Cal Franco** and **Paul Moorhouse**, for travelling with Mr Dopierala and the team and for their amazing support.

The Fort Street High School Robotics groups are now looking forward to future challenges and again to the National Titles, to be held in Canberra, NSW in 2012.

Matt Dopierala
Head Teacher TAS

Year 9 German Excursion to the Goethe-Institut and Schnitzel Haus

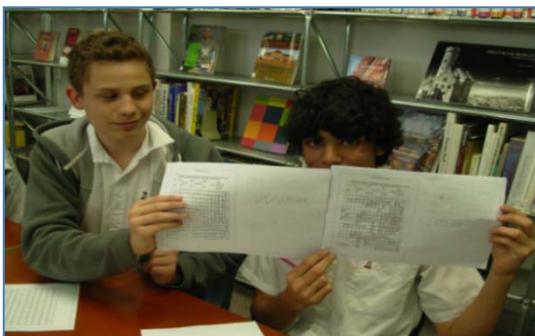


The train rattled in the cold tunnel, speeding through the dark. A group of 20 students sat huddled in the blue seats of the middle carriage, watching as the words "MARTIN PLACE" zoomed by. A short while later, we arrived in Edgecliff.

Finally we had arrived at the Goethe Institute. Kathrin - our guide for the day, invited us into the building and introduced us to the various staff at the Institute. She spoke to us completely in German, which we actually got used to quite quickly. Our class then split into four groups – Hallo, Tschüs, Glück and Berlin.



The aim of the day was to learn more about German popular music and there were various work stations around the building about different musical genres, e.g. pop, rock, indie and techno. Two areas were of particular interest to us – the radio station and the Singstar activities.



In the radio activity, we were given the opportunity to record a spot in German about our favourite song. Radio vierundzwanzig-7, a station in New Zealand, will broadcast our recordings and the songs. Not only will people listen to us in New Zealand, but we can listen to ourselves on their podcast!

However, our favourite station was Singstar. We competed against each other singing German, as well as some English songs. The final battle had us all on the edge of our seats. The contestants? Leya and Yuna versus Hugh and Roshan. Their song of choice? Britney Spear's "Hit me baby one more time". But who would win? After a lot of screeching and screaming, Leya and Yuna doubled the boy's points easily.



The fun didn't end there. The next stop was the delightful Schnitzel House, where the schnitzels are quite large but very delicious. The dessert portions were also scrumptious – strudel with ice-cream and cream. It is a common stereotype about Germans that they eat a lot. However, Dominic, our great (but slim) assistant teacher, assured us that this is not true.

Overall it was a fabulous excursion. We learnt a lot about German music culture as well as enhancing our German speaking skills.

We would like to say a big thanks to Ms Reynolds for organising the excursion and also to Dominic for accompanying us.

Kris Choy, Hugh Pearce and Roshan Kumaraage - Year 9

36th Professor Harry Messel International Science School



During the two week holiday following the conclusion of Term 2, I along with **Rebecca Dawkins** and **John Shi of Year 11** were given the opportunity to attend the 36th Professor Harry Messel International Science School, ISS2011: *Light & Matter*.

It was a truly enlightening experience; the program was packed full of intriguing science lectures and Meet & Greets – opportunities to speak to current Sydney University Science students and discover the amazing diversity of career opportunities available in Science. There were also tours and plenty of spectacular hands-on activities sandwiched between our daily lectures and tours. Every evening our YSA staffers (previous ISS alumni) arranged for various different social activities that we could sign-up for and enjoy, such as rock climbing and the Wharf Theatre productions. They made sure that there was always something going on to keep us busy. Additionally, I was able to appreciate the benefits of living at college, something I had never actually considered before.

My favourite lecture was probably the *Metamaterials and the Science of Invisibility* lecture given by Professor Sir John Pendry. It discussed the theoretical possibility of a 'cloak of invisibility' operating on the principle that light rays can be diverted around an object so that they can reach our retina seemingly unaltered by the usual reflection or refraction that occurs when light interacts with an object.

Another lecture I enjoyed was the *Paintbrushes, Cannibal crickets and Human Obesity* lecture delivered by Professor Stephen Simpson. By firstly experimenting with locusts and finding that they ingest a very precise mix of protein and carbohydrate and prioritise regulation of protein over carbohydrate, this research was able to be applied to combating human obesity.

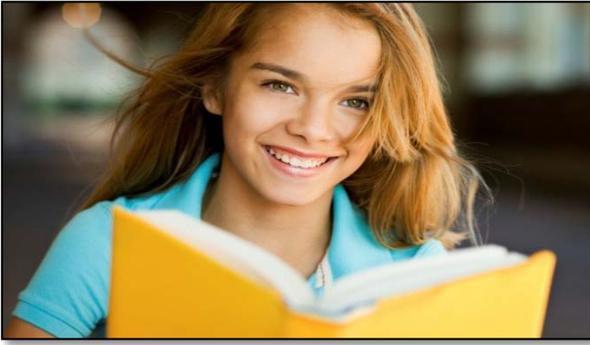
Among the various hands-on activities, I really enjoyed myself in the SMB Heart Attack and Engineering Challenge. The SMB Heart Attack involved carrying out biochemical tests to diagnose chest pain.

A simple version of the method first-year university students regularly practice was produced for us and we were able to experiment with gel electrophoresis, micropipettes and spectrophotometers. The Engineering Challenge reinforced a group effort (from the outset, all 143 students had been separated into colour groups). We were further divided into groups of 3, to participate in specific activities. I grouped with Haruka from Japan, Danran from China and Kanjana from Thailand to compete in an optical fibre communications challenge. We had to come up with a strategic code to send our messages using coloured lights. Although we were very accurate in recording the transmitted messages, our code did not ensure speed efficiency and we finished below the top 3 teams. However, it was a very entertaining and satisfying experience.

Besides social events, formal events and events such as the Aussie Bush dance, Talent Night, Disco, Harbour Cruise and the Harry Potter- themed, Willy Wonka Chocolate fountain party, there were also consulate parties in which each international student could invite an Australian student to accompany them to. I was fortunate enough to attend the Japanese consulate party with Haruka and the other 9 students from Japan. We listened to a brief formal speech and were able to walk around the room appreciating various cultural artefacts and Japanese cuisines.

Having a taste of how beneficial college life could be at the Woman's College, the option of living on campus has become much more real to me. I enjoyed the delicious meals in the kitchen and familiarised myself with the dormitories, the use of the TV rooms and pantries, laundry rooms present in each dormitory. There were also music rooms in the basement and tennis courts just outside the Langley dormitory. Every bit of the ISS has been a wonderful experience for me and I would really encourage any Year 11 and 12 students interested in science to apply for the scholarship.

Kim Nguyen - Year 11



HOW DO I ENCOURAGE MY CHILD TO READ?

Karen Powers is an Australian Teacher Librarian and mother of two teenagers who spends her spare time writing about books and reading.

- 1. Create the right environment.** Surround your child with books and fill your house with books. Make sure your home makes the statement “we are a family who reads”.
- 2. Be a role model.** Lead by example. If your children see you reading, they are more likely to follow your lead. This is especially true of fathers, as research has shown that boys in particular are more likely to read if they have a significant male in their lives, such as a father or grandfather, who models regular reading.
- 3. Read to them.** So many parents stop reading to their children as soon as they are independent readers, but it is important to keep reading to children for numerous reasons. One reason is that you model pronunciation and intonation as your child’s reading develops. Another is that this is how you maintain interest. I read aloud to all my students, up to and including Year 12, and they all enjoy it more than most classroom activities.
- 4. Redefine ‘book’.** If you want your child to be a reader, it is important to recognise that all forms of sustained reading are valid. This means books, magazines, newspapers, graphic novels and information books. As long as your child is engaged, it doesn’t matter what the reading material is.
- 5. Don’t be a literary snob.** All books are created equal in terms of reading for pleasure. Whether or not you think the *Twilight* books have literary merit is irrelevant when you are teaching your child to love reading. I will always stand by the motto that “it doesn’t matter what they are reading, as long as they are reading”.
- 6. Loosen your filter – or lose it altogether.** If you have a problem with books which rely heavily on so-called toilet humour then it is likely you are taking the enjoyment out of reading for your child. I haven’t met a primary school child who doesn’t love a good bum or fart joke in a book.

Likewise, if you decide to restrict books written for young adults which involve sex or swearing, you are depriving a teenager of the illicit thrill of reading something which is enticing and exciting. If you want your child to read, let them read these books. They will never accuse reading of being boring again.
- 7. Remember it’s the 21st century.** Our kids are surrounded by technology and screens so we would be mad not to use this to encourage their reading. If they prefer to read an e-book, encourage this.

Look for online activities about reading: use social media such as Facebook and encourage them to join groups about books, where they can enter competitions and share their favourite books. If they are a writer, suggest they contribute to other sites such as fanfiction.net. Just because it is the 21st century doesn’t mean that they have to stop reading – quite the reverse in fact.

8. **Ask an expert.** How do you know what books to buy, borrow or recommend for your child? It is impossible for busy parents to keep up to date with children's and young adult fiction, but you don't have to.

Your local independent bookseller or librarian will know the most popular titles for all age groups, they will be aware of the new releases, and they can tell you about the next book in the series. They like nothing better than to put the right book in your child's hands – you just have to ask.

9. **Make reading routine.** Like everything that is worthwhile in life, being a reader takes time and practice. Reading needs to be a daily part of your child's routine, preferably from an early age. And it is never too late to start.

10. **Don't ever give up.** Persistence is the key. It takes longer for some children than others to take to reading, but the end result is worth the effort. Some rules will be easier than others to follow, but trust me, if you persist, you *will* get there in the end.

<http://penguineacherscorner.com.au/2011/10/07/the-reading-rules-by-karen-powers/>



William Hales – Year 10 has found an interesting use for out of date advertising postcards.

His first attempt was the predominantly yellow pyramid on the left, but he decided to build a bigger McMansion version by extending out to the right and up higher.





IMP Report

Congratulations to **Elizabeth Hunt, Dorothy Symons, Eve Osborn, Jenna Smith** and **Edmund Benson** who were selected for the 2011 Schools Spectacular Orchestra and to **Carlo Antonioli** who was selected for the 2011 Schools Spectacular Stage Band. Congratulations also to **Lauren White, Rose Cousins** and **Zac Gough** who were selected for the Core Choir in the 2011 Schools Spectacular. These are highly sought after positions – it is wonderful that so many of our students were successful.

Congratulations also to **Edmund Benson** and **Michael Christensen** on their nominations for Encore, and to **Jenna Smith** (Year 11) who was accepted into the AYO (Australian Youth Orchestra) 2012 National Music Camp - Orchestral Program, the AYO 2012 Young Symphonists program and is reserve for both the AYO February and July Seasons!

Congratulations to **Katherine Voukidis, Jenna Smith, Kishor Napier Raman, Angus Johnson, Kasturi Murugavel, Sarah O'Malley, Arthur Thiele** and **Evonne Voukidis** who were fortunate enough to be able to participate in workshops and concerts with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra on their recent tour as part of the NSW Public Schools Symphony Orchestra (The Arts Unit).

Recording has now been completed for the 2011 IMP Ensembles CD which will go into production ready for sale at the IMP End of Year concert on Sunday 4th December. The price is \$15 per CD – a wonderful Christmas present for all members of the extended family and friends!!

Liz Scott
IMP Coordinator

Careers Advisory Service



The Department's annual Careers Advisory Service meets the educational and career counselling needs of students, school leavers and their parents and carers across NSW during the Christmas vacation when schools are closed.

In 2011/2012 students will be able to access the Careers Advisory Service through three facilities:

- Phone-in service - this free state-wide service operates between 15th December 2011 and 6th January 2012. Telephone 1300 300 687.
- E-mail service - this service also operates between 15th December 2011 and 6th January 2012. Access is through the website www.cas.det.nsw.edu.au
- 'Explore your options' - this facility is available year round on the Careers Advisory Service and contains a large number of resources for school leavers. Access is through the website www.cas.det.nsw.edu.au.

Phil Canty
Careers Adviser

P&C President's Report

Uniform Shop Help Wanted

Remember the organised chaos when you bought your child's uniform on Orientation Day? We hope this year will be a calmer experience - as we are selling uniforms from the uniform shop and most families will come **by booked appointment only**.

We are looking for volunteers and really need as much help as we can get. The dates and times are as follows:

- Wednesday 24th November :
10.00am - 2.00pm
- Monday 28th November to Friday 2nd December :
9.00am - 4.00pm
- Monday 5th December :
8.30am – 4.00pm (Year 7 Orientation Day)

Everything will be done from the uniform shop on these days.

We hope it will be easier and more convenient for families as well as for our volunteers. The uniform shop will also be open on Orientation Day 5th December **for booked appointments only**.

We would be very grateful for your help during this week. If you can help for a half day or two, it would be very much appreciated.

- Wednesday 7th December :
10.00am – 2.00pm (2 people needed)
- Wednesday 14th December :
10am - 2pm (2 people needed)
- Thursday 15th December : stocktake
(2 or 3 people needed)
- Friday 27th January :
10.00 am - 2.00pm (3 people needed)

Thank you to all the people who have helped in the past and thank you to all our volunteers in advance. If two or more friends would like to volunteer together, we can arrange that too!

Please email Jane Bell janebell@gmail.com

Jane Bell and Jenny Chan
FSHS Uniform Shop

Uniform prices

The prices of some items in the uniform shop will be increasing slightly from the beginning of Term 4. The price list on the website will be updated shortly.

School Plan and P&C AGM

On Wednesday 9th November at 7:30pm in the school library, there will be a presentation of the new 3 year plan for the school.

This will also be the AGM for the P&C. We have had parents express interest in most of the roles on the executive committee. If you want to get involved, there will be a place for you but do not be afraid that you will be press-ganged into something that you do not want to do.

The Principal will present a report on what has been happening in and around the school, which is always informative. A light supper will be served after the meeting.

Year 7 Parents

Early this year a group of Year 8 parents organised an informal get together for the new Year 7 parents. It is hoped that this will become an annual event.

This is a great opportunity for these parents to meet other new parents, as well as some Year 8 parents who now have a year of experience and knowledge to pass on.

We have some parents who are keen to be involved but if you would like to be a part of it then the more the merrier!

Please contact me at fortst.pc@gmail.com if you would like to help out with this event.

Website

The P&C has some pages on the school website (<http://www.fortstreet.nsw.edu.au/>) under the **Community** link. There you will find information about the P&C, meetings, the canteen and the uniform shop.

Contact Us

If you would like to receive emails notifying you of meetings and other events. Please do not hesitate to contact us by email: fortst.pc@gmail.com

Ian Reid
P&C President



When a student is not able to attend school

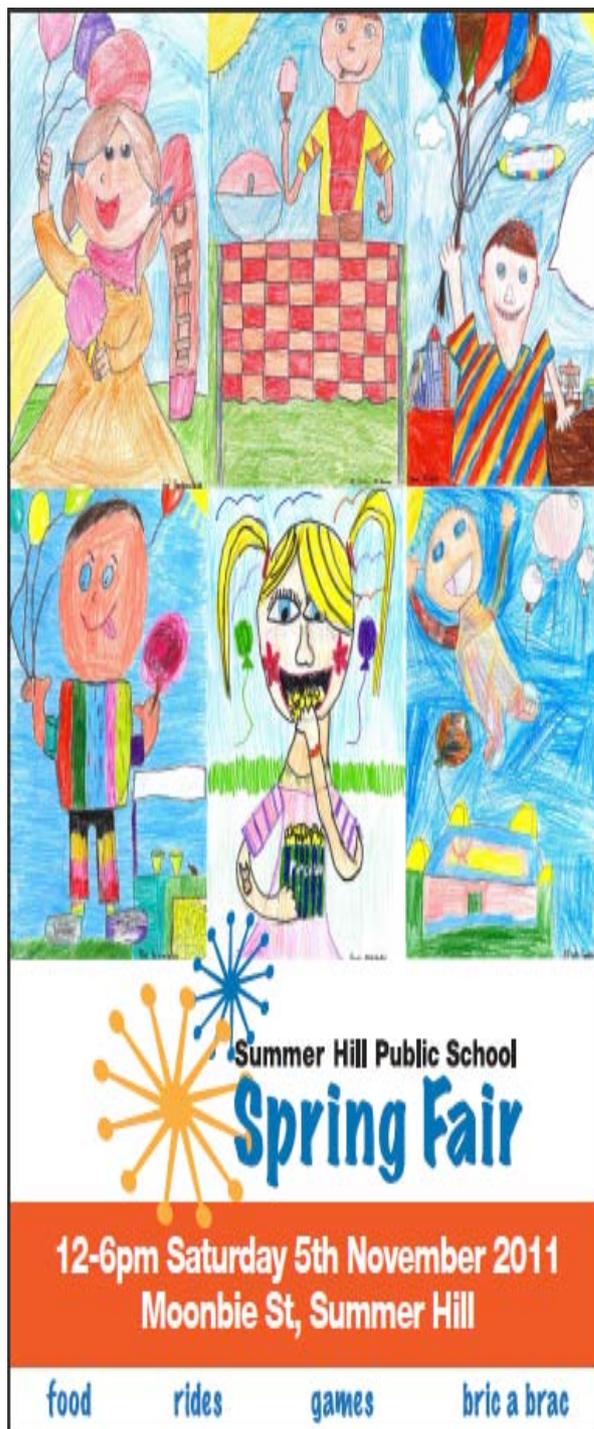
Parents should send a text message to the school on 0428 884 762 prior to 10:00am on that day.

The text message must state the student's name, roll class, date and reason for absence.

If you choose to send us a text message, you will not be required to provide a handwritten letter explaining the absence.

If we do not receive a message, parents will be informed by a text message on the same day of the absence.

If any absence is not explained, parents will receive an official request for explanation from the school.



Study Supports Students Not Repeating A School Year



"This is one of the few studies that look at a wider range of factors for students repeating school years, such as motivation, engagement, peer relationships and self-esteem," says Professor Andrew Martin.

A study by the University of Sydney's [Professor Andrew Martin](#), published in this month's issue of the *British Educational Research Journal*, makes new findings of better outcomes for students who do not repeat a school year.

The study looked at the effects of repeating on both academic and social outcomes.

"While much previous research, including a recent OECD study, has concluded that repeat years can disadvantage students' achievement, this is one of the few studies to look at a wider range of factors such as motivation, engagement, peer relationships and self-esteem," Professor Martin, from the [Faculty of Education and Social Work](#), said.

"Many students repeat school years because of these issues, not just because of a lack of academic achievement. For this reason the findings are a useful addition to the research and can help parents and educators deciding whether to hit the 'pause button' on a student's education."

Professor Martin's study shows that, in terms of academic factors, repeating a grade predicted a decrease in academic engagement and self-confidence. It indicated a lowering of students' motivation including non-completion of homework and increasing absence from school.

The look at social factors demonstrated that a repeat year was also associated with a lowering of self-esteem and brought no advantages in peer relationships, relative to comparable students who did not repeat.

In Australia the percentage of students who repeat years is estimated at between 5 and 15 percent. Some educators have expressed concern that Australia's increased focus on school accountability will lead to higher numbers of students being 'repeated' in the belief it will improve a school's overall performance.

Previous studies have also not controlled for possible moderating factors such as gender, age and ethnicity.

"The implications from this study are that repeating students is not a beneficial strategy, irrespective of whether the student is relatively older or younger in the year group, is male or female, high or low in ability, or of English or non-English-speaking background," Professor Martin said.

"Furthermore, it was found that the grade/age when a student was repeated had no significant association with academic and non-academic outcomes."

The findings support an educational approach which continues to promote students to the next grade while providing those who need it with suitable and targeted educational support. That support could cover motivation and other behavioural issues, greater parental involvement and additional instruction, including for literacy and numeracy.

It supports the view that children will vary in their performances at school but that the range of variation in development should be addressed by a variety of educational responses instead of making students repeat.

The research sample for this study comprised 3261 high school students from six Australian schools.

The article appears in *British Educational Research Journal*: volume 37, number - 5 October 2011.