



# MERCURIUS

The News Magazine of Fort Street High School

October 2015 Term 4

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## Dear Parents, Carers and Fortians

As we start Term 4 I would like to welcome Brian Webb as the new Head Teacher Science. Mr Webb is replacing Leah Anderson who has taken up a position at Wellington High School. The other significant loss for our school is the departure of Evelyn Manson. Ms Manson has been relieving as part of the senior executive throughout 2015. She has been an outstanding Head Teacher of Languages for nine years prior to that. During this time Ms Manson has built a strong and dynamic faculty that has kept languages alive in this school while they struggle in schools across NSW. Ms Manson has also delivered significant professional learning programs for the staff and during the past couple of years she has led the speech day team. We congratulate Ms Manson on her appointment as Deputy Principal of Chatswood High School.

Ms Moxham will not be returning this term but has indicated that she will be returning to the Fort in 2016. The Head Teacher History position has been filled and the successful candidate, Justyn Boyle will start in Week 6. The Head Teacher Language position is at the interview stage and we should know the outcome within the week. We have also been notified by the Department of Education that we can appoint a classroom teacher vacancy through merit selection. This will be completed over the next month.

For some students such as those sitting for HSC examinations, Term 4 is the culmination of their time at Fort Street High School. Life at school is significantly more complex than this. Sitting for the HSC this year are Year 11 students studying accelerated Mathematics and Earth and Environmental Science. There are also students from Year 10 sitting for HSC examinations in Business Studies and Information Processes and Technology.

For the students who have recently finished their Preliminary course you have the next four terms

to complete your HSC course and prepare for your HSC examinations.



On the last Thursday of Term 3 we said farewell to Year 12 with an early morning breakfast, followed by a humorous farewell assembly. I would like to acknowledge the mature fashion in which the Year 12 students approached their planned activities throughout the last week. The level of discussion and negotiation was appreciated and allowed the students and staff to enjoy the week.



The formal graduation ceremony was attended by staff, students, parents and Ms Moxham. As part of my address I acknowledged

outstanding students such as **Yash Bhatt** who received the John Lincoln Community Service Award from the Order of Australia Association and **Daniel Schmoll** who received a Minister and Secretary's Award for Excellence in student achievement. I also noted that these students were the tip of the iceberg and that as a school we always need to be aware of the needs of all students. As teaching staff we have a responsibility to keep student engagement as high as possible and identify ways to reengage students who, for whatever reason, have lost a degree of enthusiasm for their studies.

I also spoke about the role that engagement plays on student attendance and the impact regular attendance has on academic achievement and positive feelings students have

towards their enjoyment on a day to day basis. Throughout Term 3 I have been working with a number of Year 12 students who have been suffering from high levels of anxiety. Some of these students showed quite severe symptoms that aligned with their major assessment tasks and some unfortunately displayed high levels of anxiety when they received their reports as they were worried about the reaction from their parents.

The line between high expectations and exacerbating a mental health issue is one that every parent needs to be very aware of and if they have concerns work with health professionals and school staff. Unfortunately, I have had to work with students this year who have developed significant anxiety issues as they navigated their way through the HSC. I would like to thank our amazing counselling staff for their care and persistence throughout the year.

A revised attendance policy has recently been ratified by the School Council and is due for release and implementation during week two of Term 4. As part of the release there will be an opportunity for students and parents to provide some feedback. The policy introduces some appropriate actions to reinforce the importance of arriving to school on time, notifying parents when students are late and checking on absences that have not been explained.

While other students were studying, three of our Year 12 students were taking part in the Australian National Titration competition. At this event **Tina Dang** won a Gold medal and achieved the best individual score in NSW. Her team mates also acquitted themselves soundly with **Caroline Yang** receiving a Gold medal as well and her twin sister **Christine Yang** receiving a Silver medal. The school's second team saw **Lindsay Small** receive a Gold medal, **Aidan Kemp**, Silver and **Matthew Lihou**, Silver.



During the school holidays Mr Gillespie, Ms Manson and Ms Shino took 22 students to Japan to visit our sister school in Tokyo. The students as

usual identified the time they spent living with a Japanese family as the highlight of the tour.

At the end of the second last week of Term 3



four of our students were invited to attend an assembly at Sydney Girls High School. The students were invited to attend the assembly as

Michael Kirby was speaking. Michael was addressing the Sydney Girls High School audience about the importance of tolerance and acceptance in light of the media attention that Wear it Purple Day produced this year.



One of our enthusiastic and dedicated robotics students attended the National Robocup Championships during the recent holidays and won

the national lightweight soccer championship. **Kevin Zhu** competed without the assistance of his team mates who were unable to attend the event.

The CAPA department has started off the term with a portrait workshop with the students having the opportunity to work with Loribelle Spirovski, a working visual artist. I took the opportunity to visit the workshop and was very impressed by the competence demonstrated by our students.



A group of 35 Fortians from 1978 visited the school last Friday and attended our first assembly for the term. The Fortians were incredibly excited

and sang Gaudeamus with gusto. The old girls who visited reminisced about the start of their school years at Observatory Hill and the move to Taverners Hill. Over the next four weeks there are a further four groups coming to visit the school. The ongoing link with Fortians is a vital part of building the history of the school and I would like to thank Jules Davies for her coordination of these events.

As part of the school's mission to address communication I have opened a twitter account that highlights day to day student highlights and

school news. You will need to open a twitter account and search for **@fort\_street**.

David Osland  
Relieving Principal

**SRC leadership positions 2015-2016**

President	Victor Tsang
Vice President	Olivia Le Khac
Secretary	Brianna Wilson
Treasurer	Edwin Hong Lam
Vice Secretary	Hans Choy
Vice Treasurer	Zoe Robertson
School Council Reps	Michelle Cheung and Sunil Jassal
P&C Reps	Mali Woods and Hugo Degotardi
Publicity Officers	Aurora Muir and Claudia Nguyen
Public Relations Officer	Alicia Gao
Charity Coordinator	Cole Johnson
Canteen Officer	Ashley Challinor

and I won 1<sup>st</sup> place, Lindsay took 2<sup>nd</sup> place and Victor, Brendon and Alex achieved 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the lightweight soccer division during the NSW open at the end of August.



A month later, I travelled to Adelaide with Spider-Man and Alien (the robots), and my dad for a two-day national competition. After winning all of my games on the first day and most of day two, the semi-finals were against a defensive team from St. Francis Xavier College in Canberra. The first half resulted in a tense 0-0 draw, but we finally scored in the second half, ending in a 3-1 score-line our way. However, the ultimate challenge was yet to come with the grand finals against another team from that school with vastly superior hardware to us. Nevertheless, we prevailed with a 10-4 victory and a first place trophy to join the overflowing robotics portion of the trophy cabinet.

**RoboCup Junior Australia competition**



We did it... again... We crushed them... again... Fort Street has had a proud history of robotics, returning with at least one trophy every year from the national and state competition since 2012, capping it last year with six trophies (KPI Target). We primarily participate in two events of the RoboCup Junior Australia (RCJA) competition: Rescue, where robots must navigate an obstacle course, concluding with locating and rescuing soft drink cans (victims), and Soccer, where two robots a side play off and the winner is determined by the highest scoring team. However, our success this year was measured in category domination, where Aidan



However, both the results of this year and the past would not have been possible without the dedication of our mentor, Mr. Grant, into the robotics team through numerous occasions of catering to last-minute requests and overtime to benefit the students. Next, I would like to thank the members of the Fort Street robotics community both past and present whose dedication has resulted in substantial progress and contributions to the trophy cabinet. Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude, on behalf of all robotics teams, to the P&C and Fort Street Foundation for their annual contributions to the acquisition of new equipment every year to better our robotics teams one

generation at a time. We will continue to make your investments worthwhile!  
 Next year's national competition will be in Sydney. Let's prepare to dominate.

– Kevin Zhu (Year 10)

Important Dates	
<b>October</b>	
12	HSC Commences
14	Open Morning HSC Information Evening P&C Meeting
16	Fortians Union Annual Dinner
19	IMP Committee Meeting
21-23	Year 9 Camp
26-30	Year 10 Exams
26-30	VET Work Placement
27-30	Choral Festival
<b>November</b>	
4	School Council Meeting Foundation Meeting
5	Year 7 Vaccinations
6	HSC Concludes
9	IMP AGM and Parent Meeting
11	SRC Induction and Remembrance Day Assembly

### TOP 10 TIPS FOR DEALING WITH EXAMINATION PRESSURE

- 1. KNOW YOUR MATERIAL**  
 The more confident you are about the topic(s) in your exam, the less stress you will feel come exam time. Make sure you stay on top of your school work and homework throughout the term. Follow up with your teacher, or another subject matter expert, if there are things you don't understand, well before the exams. Trying to understand new concepts the night before the exam is very stressful.
- 2. PRACTISE**  
 Make sure you do practise papers if they are available, or practise questions. This might include multiple choice, short answer or essay style questions. Always study in the

way you will be tested. Work out a plan of action so you know how long you are going to allocate to each question type, what question types you will start with and what you will do if you come across things you aren't sure about. *Learn more about this in the Active Studying unit.*

- 3. FUEL YOUR BODY AND YOUR MIND**  
 In the days leading up to an exam make sure you get enough sleep. Being tired makes it harder to concentrate and remember. Fuel your body and mind by eating well and drinking plenty of water. *Learn more about this in the Lifestyle and Balance unit.*
- 4. MANAGE THE PHYSICAL SIGNS OF STRESS**  
 Familiarise yourself with how your body feels when you are stressed. Do you get headaches? Tension in your neck or shoulders? Does your heart race faster? What happens to your breathing? Whenever you feel these effects, quickly start some relaxation exercises. A good one to try during an exam is to breathe in deeply for 4 seconds, hold for 7 seconds and breathe out for 8 seconds. Do this a few times to calm yourself down and allow yourself to refocus. *Learn more about this in the Managing Stress unit.*
- 5. BE PREPARED ON THE DAY**  
 Make sure you have packed or prepared everything you need for the exam day the night before. Have a plan for how you are going to get to school on time - including a back-up plan if necessary. Eat a nutritious breakfast and make sure you are hydrated.
- 6. VISUALISE**  
 Use visualisation techniques to help reduce your stress on the day. Every day in the weeks prior to the exam, last thing at night and first thing in the morning, visualise yourself calmly walking into the exam room, preparing your equipment, reviewing and completing your exam paper and feeling good about how you did. *Learn more about this in the Managing Stress unit.*
- 7. INVOLVE YOUR PARENTS IN YOUR SCHOOLWORK**  
 Throughout the term talk to your parents about what you are studying. Show them your bookwork and homework. The more your parents understand about what you are doing and how you are going along the way, the better they are able to manage their

expectations. They may also be able to help you study by testing you on what you are learning.

## 8. TALK TO YOUR PARENTS ABOUT REALISTIC GOALS

Keep talking to your parents about what you want to achieve, in individual subjects, at school overall and in other aspects of your life. Involve them in helping you to identify where to concentrate the most effort to achieve your goals. *Learn more about this in the Goal Setting unit.*

## 9. UNDERSTAND EXPECTATIONS

Many students feel like they are not meeting their parents' expectations. Often this is a result of poor communication about expectations by both parties. Assessment and reporting systems also change over time and are different in different schools and systems. Making sure your parents really understand what your report means may help them to understand what you are actually achieving. Your school can assist you to explain these to your parents if need be and most schools provide booklets of explanation. Often students are achieving, but reporting structures may not clearly represent this to parents.

## 10. ASK FOR HELP

The most important way to deal with stress is by talking to people and asking for help. Don't try and go it alone. Your school, teachers, parents and friends are your support structure so keep lines of communication open (that means talk to them!) and let everyone know how you are feeling and what help you need.



Supported by



## HSC Seminars for Year 11 & 12 Parents and Students

*Helping you achieve HSC Success*

Dates and Venues

**Sunday 1st November** – UTS Broadway

**Sunday 8th November** – Macquarie University

Cost - \$10 donation per person  
to Father Chris Riley's Youth  
off the Streets program



[hscintheholidays.com.au](http://hscintheholidays.com.au)



*"Brilliant! My son and I were so impressed with the quality of the strategies provided"*

*-Kathryn (Parent of a Year 11 student)*

## Seminar Timetable

10am	Registration
10:15am	Welcome and Introduction
10:30am	Parent and Student Presentation "Stress Free HSC"
11:30am	Short Break
12pm	HSC English Presentation OR Parent Q&A seminar
12:45pm	"Secrets to HSC Success – Working smarter, not harder"
1:15pm	Mathematics Seminars (Mathematics or Mathematics General 2)

*"I would highly recommend these seminars to everyone! I walked away with so much more knowledge and skills than I had before. Thanks again!"*

*-Emily SCEGGS Dartlinghurst*

For more information and to register, go to [hscintheholidays.com.au](http://hscintheholidays.com.au) and follow the 'our programs' tab, or call 1300 677 336