

BRENDAN REED

## WELCOME TO WATERFORD

My name is Brendan Reed. I'm currently Head of Learning for the Waterford Campus. We look forward to working with you at St Joseph's.

Details will soon be confirmed about a testing day here at the College. The purpose of the testing day is for us to best prepare your son for the start of next year. We do not stream our classes according to student ability, but the results do give us some rich data on where your son's strengths are - so we can build on these as well as areas for learning growth.

My role today is to go over a few of the important organisational aspects of curriculum that will help prepare for next year. Much of this information is contained in the Year 7 Handbook, which can only be accessed from our website. The handbook contains information about subjects your son will undertake next year as well as daily life at the College.

It's important to know that you can contact your son's subject teachers if you have any concerns. Subject teachers are usually the best placed to answer questions about your son's progress.

So let's have a look at what Year 7s will be studying next year. All Year 7s study Religious Education, English, Humanities, Maths, Science, Health + PE and a language, as well as a number of Arts and Technology subjects. Some will run for the whole year, and others will run for a semester. As students progress through the school, they are given more subject choices, but for year 7, the aim is to provide your son with a well-rounded curriculum that will lay a strong foundation for the future.

St Joseph's prides itself on the delivery of innovative and contemporary learning programs. Our curriculum is designed around the Project Based Learning (PBL) model. This is an innovation that has made St Joseph's College's approach to instruction unique in the Geelong area. PBL is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time on a complex question, problem or challenge. Students engage in rigorous projects within discreet disciplines, and at times integrated with other subject areas. PBL follows the Victorian Curriculum standards with a focus on challenging students to investigate curriculum that has a real world connection. Students develop enterprise skills in technology use, collaboration, presentation

skills, investigation and communication in order to create rigorous and authentic learning products.

Next year, your son will study a Language for the whole year, which he will continue into Year 8. The choice of language, as well as our preference for mixed ability class groups, helps form our homerooms.

And while we hope not to undertake any remote learning in 2021, if required we are well resourced and equipped to deliver a comprehensive program of teaching and learning that will see students and teachers follow the normal school timetable, and range of assessment tasks.

We use Champion book suppliers for all our booklist items and there are a number of important things you need to be aware of concerning booklists. The first thing to note is that all the items listed for each subject are compulsory - and this includes the booklisted stationery for each subject, which you can source from any supplier. Students can often need a bit of help in organising their school materials. The last section on the booklist is for general "Stationery" items. Among these items are a number of plastic named 'Attache file'. These are very popular and well-used by the students across every year level.

Religious Education, Health and PE, Maths and Science to name a few either have a digital text or have a digital component of a text book. On the information sheet you'll see your son's name and his email address which you have to use when completing the booklist order. This is really important.

Some of the items have to be ordered online or by going to the Champion website so that Champion have a record of purchases if the licence or code is lost. You must complete the entire order online.

Due to curriculum changes, a number of subjects have had to update their subjects with new hardcopy and digital texts. These should have an explanatory note that the text must be purchased new.

To order from the booklist you must do so online. Booklist items will be delivered to homes by the end of January - the week school starts. The dates will be listed on the booklist and on the flyer.

We also use the Second Hand School Supplies shop located in Star St just off Little Ryrie, for the purchase of second hand text books. To further help you, you will be able to access Sustainable School Shop which is an online trade site

for school resources. On this site you can buy, sell, swap school booklist items and uniforms - a little like eBay for school resources. The school has subscribed to this service so it's free of charge to St Joseph's families.

Each of you next year will have a laptop which is a great tool and essential for learning in our class rooms and you will use this every day for most of the subjects you do. In your first few days next year, you will collect your laptop at school and with your teachers, you will set up all your digital texts.

You are welcome to contact your son's teachers via email, phone or via the school diary which will be issued to your son next year. Please keep in mind that teachers are very busy at school, but will do their best to contact you within 24 hours.

The diary also contains a wealth of information on uniform, key dates, maps, policies and contact details.

A common question that we regularly answer is around the topic of homework. At Year 7 is important in setting good habits and routines, however we also know that the boys need to balance their studies with their other commitments, family, friends and sports. Helping your son build routines around his school work and other commitments is a huge help to us and a big part of learning to manage his time. We recommend on average around an hour of homework/study/reading each week night. This keeps the boys up to date but also helps them go deeper into the topics they're studying. Ensure you regularly ask your son about what he is learning, reading, and what he might do to further enhance his work. Check your son's diary regularly to see what homework tasks he has. There will be weeks when your son has more homework than at other times, however we cannot emphasise the importance of maintaining regular reading to support your son's literacy.

The use of lockers can create some anxiety for Year 7 students. It is one of the key differences of secondary school! Your son will be allocated a locker and combination lock next year. He will have an extensive two week orientation project which will ensure he is confident in organising and using his locker. There can be a steep learning curve here in learning to be organised and to keep their materials in order, however by the middle of term 1, most of the boys get used to their new responsibilities.

The Parent Access Module is of course is known as ....PAM.

In the coming weeks you will be issued with a PAM username, password and instructions via email and this will give you access to your son's reports for each term. You can also view information about your son's timetable, teacher contacts and daily messages. A great way to keep up to date with daily happenings.

We ask that the medical information for your son be completed online in PAM by Friday 23rd October.

Thank you for your attention – we are really looking forward to welcoming your son to St Joseph's later in the year and guiding him through his learning journey.

Thank you.