Dear Parents and Carers,

Semester One reporting is almost complete and by the time the Country Week program commences all Year 11 and 12 students’ reports will have been distributed. Year 10 reports are expected to be posted early in the final week of term. I encourage you to take advantage of the follow up parent teacher meeting scheduled for Wednesday, July 29, although immediate contact with teachers and/or counselling staff may be necessary where course changes are recommended.

The letter accompanying Year 11 reports is a statement about a student’s Academic Standing. It is our method of giving feedback about overall progress toward achieving the WACE in 2016, and where necessary, direction to assist you understand what must happen if progress and attendance criteria haven’t been met. Our goal is to ensure all students achieve success. Our expected standards are presented through the Academic Standing statement.

Attendance every day continues to be the best indicator of how successful students cope with their programs. Every contact with peers and staff contributes to learning, deeper understanding and capacity to cope with course demands. We recognise this connection and research has proven this to be the case.

Whether it is the classroom, the workplace, an examination, test, excursion or performance – attendance is important and shouldn’t be considered otherwise.

Participants and organisers of the Arts Extravaganza and health promotion activities are to be commended on the success of the events held last week and particularly, the presentation in the Performing Arts Centre on Wednesday evening. Creativity, talent and skills displayed through student still work and live performance illustrated quite clearly how opportunities have been provided and taken up across the college. Thank you to those who attended and showed support for their son or daughter’s learning. We are also grateful for the continuing support from the School Drug Education and Road Aware (SDERA) program and the Regional leader, Mrs Kate McKonkey.

I will be taking leave next term and Mrs Carson has been appointed as my replacement. Many will be familiar with her work as Deputy who for the past eight years has had senior secondary curriculum, timetabling and course counselling responsibilities. Mrs Carson is a skilled and professional educator who has significant history in the Geraldton secondary schools and long standing associations with the business and sporting communities. The transition will be smooth as my exit coincides with Mr Treffone returning and Mrs Harlett and Mrs Kennedy also continuing in the respective Deputy roles.

I extend best wishes to staff and students for a successful Country Week program which commences on Sunday, June 28th and a safe and satisfying semester break to everyone following their return and the close of business on Friday, July 3rd.

Garry Simmons
Principal

Upcoming Events

Wednesday 24 June
Year 10 to Year 11 Info Night
6pm in the GSC Library

Monday 29 June
Country Week

Friday 3 July
Last day of Term 2

Monday 20-21 July
Staff Development Days

Wednesday 22 July
First day of Term 3

Wednesday 29 July
Parent Night

Friday 31 July
Founders Assembly and Games

Pictured right: A photo from a recent meeting of the GSC & JWC P&C Committee.
Back row (left to right): Julie Campbell, Lisa Mardon, Kate Altham and Arlene Brotherton
Front Row (left to right): Caroline Drogue, Garry Simmons, Caroline Rowcroft
Country Week is upon us again and 84 students at Geraldton Senior College have been selected to represent the school among 3500 student athletes from regional WA. The one week long competition gives an extension to students who have a personal passion for their sport and already practise it in the community.

“Athletes need the right fuel to perform their best,” says Jo Corlett, a teacher at Geraldton Senior College and one of the school Country Week organisers. “We’re able to offer a healthy alternative, and the students are choosing to take us up on that offer.”

Thanks to Ian Blayney, Rigters IGA and the Parents & Citizens Committee, students will receive free lunch at a healthy food tent while at Country Week. “We’ll put out the ingredients and they’ll make their own sandwiches, wraps and rolls for lunch and snacks during the day,” explains Mrs Corlett. “This format was trialled at Country Week last year and by the end of the week, the tent was very popular!”

The students have been training hard over the past three months to be at the top of their game. After all, Geraldton Senior College was the champion school in its division in 2014 and this group of students want to make it two years in a row.

Pictured right (from left to right): Ian Blayney MLA, Logan McGregor and Sabre Stone (Country Week Captains), Caroline Rowcroft (JWC & GSC P&C) and Brad Dodson (Queens IGA)

A few moments with Alana Carson

This year marks 30 years of working in education for Deputy Principal, Alana Carson. Mrs Carson will be standing in as Principal while Mr Simmons is on leave in Term 3.

Mrs Carson has worked in a variety of roles both at John Willcock Senior High School and Geraldton Senior College. She began her career teaching Health and Physical Education, which ties in with her strong values of being active and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. She then moved into Vocational Education and Career Counselling.

“My career has mostly been spent in secondary schools as I enjoy working with teenagers and helping them develop their skills and understanding to enable a smooth transition into life beyond school,” commented Mrs Carson.

Ten years ago she played a big role in setting up the senior school engagement programs. These successful programs are still running today. “I closely monitor progress of all Year 11 and 12 students, including ATAR students, so that we can do what we can to improve student results. If a student is falling behind we have many processes to help support students,” explains Mrs Carson.

Your favourite thing about GSC? “The diversity of students and friendliness of staff.”

What would you change? “I’d like to see the whole school community respect the environment and school property more and identify areas in need of a revitalisation. That students embrace a senior school ethos and become more responsible for their actions and learning. These young adults have many qualities, creative ideas and perspectives that could contribute to the future directions of the college.”

A memorable moment? “I went along to a Clontarf camp in Darwin and they set it up so that I had to feed the crocodile a chicken on the end of the rope. I was so scared that I felt sick. The crocodile jumped up to grab the meat and I screamed! Looking back it was funny and it was only 10 seconds of my life but a time I’ll remember forever.”

Pictured right (from left to right): Ian Blayney MLA, Logan McGregor and Sabre Stone (Country Week Captains), Caroline Rowcroft (JWC & GSC P&C) and Brad Dodson (Queens IGA)
Improving student attendance is on the minds of all staff at Geraldton Senior College. There is a lot of research that backs up the idea that maximum student attendance means that students do better at school.

Educators cannot improve attendance alone. The community needs to be included and recognise the importance of education. Achieving improved attendance can be done by being absent for valid illness only. Absence for birthdays, holidays in term time, appointments that could be done out of hours, for a day of rest after a busy weekend are not valid reasons for missing school.

Students that have a higher amount of unauthorised absences perform consistently lower than those with authorised absences. It is vital that reasons given for non-attendance are valid. Parents that only withdraw their children from school for legitimate reasons have better overall attendance than a child withdrawn for reasons that are not legitimate.

Gaps in attendance rates are obvious in primary school. They become wider in secondary school. Attendance rates seem to decline from the first year of secondary schooling (Year 7). This pattern was seen in all student groups regardless of nationality, gender, transience and socio-economic status.

In all studies, average academic achievements on NAPLAN tests declined and were directly linked with the number of days missed from school. This was evident across all student groups. Every day of attendance contributes positively toward a child’s learning. The academic potential of your child is directly linked to how much school they attend.

**Every day counts.**

Liam Robinson
Student Services Manager

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**How does missing a few days of school affect your future?**

- **90% attendance**
  - ...if this was a habit from Year 1-10, the student would have missed 1 year of school

- **80% attendance**
  - ...if this was a habit from Year 1-10, the student would have missed 2 years of school

- **60% attendance**
  - ...if this was a habit from Year 1-10, the student would have missed 4 years of school

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It is a legal requirement that schools receive explanations for any student’s absences. If your child is not going to be at school please notify Student Services via the following methods:

- Telephone: **08 9965 8415** (please leave a message if the line is busy)
- SMS: **0407 081 344** (no calls are able to be received – text only please)
- Email: geraldtonsenior.college@education.wa.edu.au

If you would like to arrange an appointment to discuss your child’s attendance please contact Mr Liam Robinson, Student Services Manager.

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“Student Attendance and Educational Outcomes; Every Day Counts” was prepared for the Department of Education by the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, UWA in May 2013. The report was based on the attendance patterns of some 415,000 students in Government school students in WA.
**What is it like to call a helpline?**

Asking for help can be difficult and calling a helpline is often a new experience. We’ve put together some frequently asked questions about calling a helpline to make it all less intimidating.

Helplines are not-for-profit organisations that exist to help people find a way to cope with a life crisis. Lifeline (13 11 14) and Kids Helpline (1800 55 1800) are both available 24/7 and provide support from trained professionals.

**Why would I call? What would I talk about?**

**Lifeline:**
Anyone can call. You may be experiencing a personal crisis or thinking about suicide. However, you don’t have to be in crisis to call, people call for different reasons. They provide people with assistance, non-judgemental support and resources in their time of need.

**Kids Helpline:**
Young people call about mental health concerns, family relationships, emotional wellbeing, dating and partner relationships, friends, bullying, study and school issues, self-harm/injury concerns, suicide-related concerns, and family violence concerns.

**What happens when you call?**

**Lifeline:**
Trained Telephone Crisis Supporters will answer your call and:
- Listen to your situation
- Provide immediate support
- Assist to clarify options and choices available to you
- Provide you with referral information for other services in your local area.

Sometimes your call may not be answered straight away; this means they are experiencing high demand and helping others in need. Stay on the line or call back later.

**Kids Helpline:**
When you contact Kids Helpline, you will speak directly with a counselor. Before you are connected to them, you will be asked to listen to a recorded message which relays important information about privacy and disclosure.

You will then speak to a counselor who will ask you what you would like to talk about. They will ask some questions to help understand you and your needs. You can talk to them for as long as you need to. Some calls only last a few minutes and others can last up to an hour.

**What will the call cost?**

**Lifeline:**
- Calls from a landline will be charged the cost of a local call; however, additional charges may apply for some home phone plans.
- Calls from mobiles are **FREE**.
- If you are a pre-paid customer and are out-of-credit you will still be connected, until your prepaid service is suspended (varies between 30 days to 6 months).

**Kids Helpline:**
- **FREE!** Whether you call from a mobile, home phone, or payphone.

**Is it confidential?**

**Lifeline:**
Lifeline is a confidential service, so that means that they won’t tell anyone that you have called or what you have said unless you are in danger.

**Kids Helpline:**
You don’t have to reveal your name when you contact Kids Helpline, and the information discussed is also confidential, unless they feel that a life is in danger.

Krystyna McGerr  
Provisionally Registered  
School Psychologist  
Information from Lifeline  
www.lifeline.org.au and Kids Helpline  
www.kidshelp.com.au

**Other options**

Web counselling is also available through Kids Helpline if you are not ready to phone someone just yet. Go to http://www.kidshelp.com.au. And remember you can always pop into Student Services before/after school, and during recess and lunch, if you want to speak with somebody face to face.

gsc.wa.edu.au -- phone 08 9965 8400 -- geraldtonsenior.college@education.wa.edu.au
Recently a group of Year 10 students presented their best efforts by having excellent attendance and strong participation in classroom activities. “It’s not about being perfect, it’s about doing your best,” says Stuart Gaby, Operations Officer for Midwest Clontarf Academy. “The students went on a camp to Perth and acted as ambassadors for the Academy as well as for Geraldton Senior College.”

The Year 10 students visitedHillarys Primary School where they led ‘minute-to-win-it’ games with Year 5/6 students. They also read to Year 1 students and were impressed with how well some Year 1 students were able to read back to them.

When speaking with students that went on the camp, they mentioned how excited the primary school students were to see the older students and interact with them. Their enthusiasm inspired a couple of the GSC students to consider a career in teaching.

The trip also included a basketball game against Girrawheen Senior High School of which Geraldton Senior College won 34 to 28. The students also attended a Dockers football game and had a really enjoyable camp.

Congratulations to the Geraldton Senior College Netball team who won the overall competition and took out first place in the Year 11 and 12 division at the recent Midwest High Schools Netball Carnival. With teams from eight different schools and a couple hundred students ranging from Year 8 to 12, there were many strong competitors.

“The team played six games and won them all, except for one which we drew,” recalls teacher and coach Marcey Wellstead. “The Carnival is a great warm-up for Country Week at the end of the month.”

The team will be playing A grade Netball at Country Week, as they came in first place in their division in 2014. All the best for Country Week!
Learning to drive is a key part of life in the teenage years and so is making the right choices, especially when you are under pressure. The recent ‘Rear View Mirror’ Arts Extravaganza showcased the various forms of arts studied at the college while considering the theme of Road Awareness and Drug Education.

Drama students presented their version of ‘Alice in Wonderland’ where having to make choices resulted in quirky consequences. Dance students swayed to the beat and exposed the emotions attached to traffic accidents. Music students played resilience motivated pieces. The Year 12 Wearable Art Projects steered down the runway with glamour and style.

The whole school was involved during the week with Form class activities and lunchtime fun including music, performers and multimedia displays. Brad Hogg, international cricket star, came out for a game of lunchtime cricket and spoke to students about resilience.

Congratulations to the students and staff involved in organising and presenting such an incredible week of fun and surprises! Thank you to SDERA for your support.