BIRRONG BULLETIN

The Newsletter of Birrong Girls High School
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https://birronggir-h.schools.nsw.gov.au

Issue No. 1 **February 2026**

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

As we begin a new school year, I am thrilled to introduce myself as your new Principal and to share how excited I am to be part of the vibrant learning community of Birrong Girls High School. The dedication and care I have already seen makes me confident that this year will be one of continued growth and achievement for us all.

The school's high expectations are the cornerstone of what we do, and why we do it. Our focus on explicit teaching through literacy and numeracy strategies, formative assessment and guided inquiry provide impactful learning experiences for all students. I have seen the evidence-based wellbeing programs that the school implements during the weekly 'Wellbeing Period', knowing that our girls will learn best when they feel valued, cared for and strong. Our coordinated approach to supporting student growth in the classroom is reinforced by a large variety of extra-curricular activities where committed staff are giving up time after school or during lunch time to further students' engagement and skills.

Over the first three weeks, I have been connecting with students, parents and community partners as I highly value strong relationships within a school community. I hope to see many of our new families at the *Welcome BBQ* on Monday 16 February, at 4:30pm. Additionally, the P&C meeting will be held in Week 5 each term, Wednesday at 4pm, where I look forward to meeting and working with parents and carers. It is my expectation that parents keep up to date with school news, commit to attending school events if possible, communicate with the school if concerned or require clarification, and work with their child to complete homework and study. Always reach out if you need to.

Our new build was completed over the holidays, and the students are now enjoying the fantastic new learning spaces, playground and school

hall. We are very fortunate to have been a part of this infrastructure project, and it will be nice to exist without disruption to our grounds and facilities. We plan to continue discussing future upgrades at our P&C meetings and with other stakeholders throughout the year.

I am so fortunate to be leading a school with expert staff, friendly and respectful students and engaged parents. In particular, the Deputy Principals – Ms Renee George, Ms Kelly Andrews and Ms Lisa Boyle – who have supported me to enjoy a very smooth start to my principalship here at Birrong Girls High School.

Ms Natalie Hale

REPORT FROM THE DEPUTY PRINCIPALS

Welcome back to 2026!

We wish every student from Years 7 to Year 12 success this year and look forward to supporting you in achieving your personal best. It's time to start fresh, to set goals and to work towards them one step at a time. That is what our motto *"Ad Astra – To the Stars"* is all about. We trust that this will be a year when each student takes pride in their personal growth, not just academically, but in all areas of their life.

This year we will continue our focus on student wellbeing and self-reflection. We will be continuing to focus on building student resilience every Wednesday in our Wellbeing period, sharing the benefits of Gratitude, Empathy, and Mindfulness, and easy ways to practice these in everyday life. Students in Years 7 and 8 will receive a resource work booklet for these lessons. Students in Years 9, 10, 11 and 12 will require an exercise book for these lessons. The 2026 student diaries provide a space to write a short reflection every school day, and we encourage all students to participate in this practice daily in roll call.

For example,

We encourage you to take some time to check your child's diary. Students are also required to reflect on their learning at the end of every week during the Friday roll call period and formally address the following questions in their school diaries:
'What went well this week and why?' and *'What do I need to improve / work on next week?'* The aim of self-reflection is for students to increase their self-awareness and self-regulation around their own learning. Reflection on schoolwork enhances its meaning and clarifies learning. Self-reflection also provides an opportunity for students to evaluate their own personal driving force towards their education - a recognition or affirmation of personal core beliefs and values.

Bell times

Don't forget – every Monday afternoon school finish time is 2.16 pm for all students. The school finishes at 2.50pm on all other days. Equally

important, students need to be at school by 8.15am for an 8.30am start. Pack your bag/s the night before so you are organised and ready every day for excellence.

Get actively engaged!

There are many opportunities available at Birrong Girls for your child to be involved in and develop their own personal skills. Many Year11 students are already working hard in their role as Peer Support leaders supporting our Year 7 students.

Year 7 started high school with a wonderful array of orientation activities aimed at welcoming them and assisting with getting to know how our school functions. Our new students enjoyed the various orientation activities in their first week and are now settled into the rhythm of their high school timetables. We welcome Year 7 to the Birrong Girls community! We look forward to meeting all our Year 7 parents and carers at our *Welcome BBQ* on Monday 16th February from 4.30 – 6.00pm

Year 8 will be continuing their studies in Stage 4 and have settled in well to all their routines. Year 8 will engage in a Study Skills program this term, delivered by our librarian, Ms Linquist. The program will run during an allocated period at school. The students will engage in a workshop that teaches the importance of organisational skills, note taking, conceptual learning and independent learning. This is a valuable workshop for year 8 students and will provide them with an understanding of the skills required for success and being an effective learner.

Year 9 students have begun studying their elective classes – two subjects that they had the opportunity to choose in 2025. This is an important step that empowers students to take some control over the direction of their education by selecting courses they have an interest in and want to experience.

Year 10 has become a part of our senior school and as a result we have even greater expectations of them, their behaviour and their commitment to their learning. We have already begun our preparations to ensure they are eligible for the Record of School Achievement (RoSA) and they will be revising their subject selection and personal details to ensure our records are accurate before we progress further. It is critical that they know their address, as well as their own phone number and a parent/guardian number. Your help with this would be very much appreciated.

Year 11 are participating in a special initiative called ALARM lessons. These weekly lessons explicitly teach higher order critical thinking and enhanced writing skills, including academic writing style for the HSC. ALARM (A Learning and Responding Matrix) works by supporting students to understand specific types of questions to be able to form more effective responses. Ultimately, this will help them to gain the highest possible result in the HSC.

Year 12 are now into their second term of their HSC study. They are encouraged to make the most out of their learning time by actively engaging in their lessons and asking questions. This includes planning their study lessons efficiently when they are in the Senior Learning Centre, supervised by our dedicated learning support teachers. Students in Year 12 must be prepared for success with regular homework and study sessions at home as well as seeking the support of their classroom teachers. This means committing at least 3-4 hours each night to this goal. Year 12 students are also encouraged to meet with their teacher mentor on a regular basis for support and guidance.

Year 12 Parents are invited to attend the Welcome to HSC Parent Edition to be held on Tuesday 23rd February 11.10 am- 12.10 pm in the Senior Learning Centre/Common Room. This is to provide valuable tips and advice about how to support your daughters in thriving in their HSC year.

Dressed for Success!

It is important that your child attends school and is always in the correct uniform. Our uniform consists of black lace up, hard leather traditional school shoes; crew length white socks; navy blue hijab and white bond; school tunic skirt or pants and the school blouse must be always worn (even under the school jumper). Fingernails must be kept short to meet work, health and safety requirements at school and no nail polish of any kind is permitted. Acrylic nails, makeup and eyelash applications are also not permissible.

Every Day Counts!

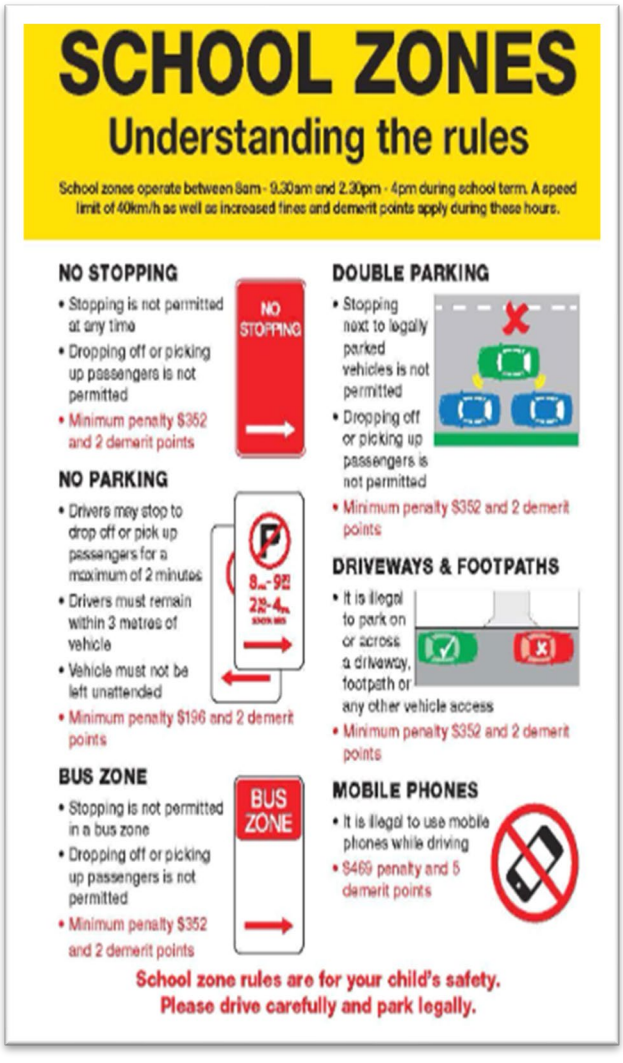
Remember, give your child every chance to succeed. A day absent from school here or there doesn't seem like much, but…

When your child misses just...	That equals...	This is...	And therefore, from kindy to year 12, that is...	This means that the best your child can achieve is...
1 day each fortnight	20 days per year	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1.5 years of school	Equal to finishing Year 11
1 day a week	40 days per year	8 weeks per year	Over 2.5 years of school	Equal to finishing Year 10
2 days a week	80 days per year	16 weeks per year	Over 5 years of learning	Equal to finishing Year 7
3 days a week	120 days per year	24 weeks per year	Nearly 8 years of learning	Equal to finishing Year 4

Travel safely

The safety of our students travelling to and from school is important to us. You will often see us at the school crossing supervising students as they enter and leave our school. We ask you to partner with us to ensure your children are safe by abiding by the school zone road rules before and after school each day.

At the start of the new school year, it is an important time to remind everyone about the Transport for NSW school zone offences aimed at improving pedestrian safety around schools. For example, stopping on top of a pedestrian crossing in a school zone carries a fine of $562 and a loss of 2 demerit points. Queuing across an intersection in a school zone, including roundabouts, will incur a $562 fine and a loss of 2 demerit points. The picture below shows some of the other fines and demerits in school zones.



Our school website and social pages are updated regularly with information, photos and videos that showcase student success. The school calendar provides details of events and excursions. New information will be added as the school year progresses.

To the stars - Ad Astra!

Ms George, Ms Andrews and Ms Boyle
Deputy Principals

Library

Welcome to the Library in 2026—a place where knowledge meets creativity, and imagination comes alive! Our library continues to be a vibrant hub for learning, discovery, and connection. Whether you're exploring the latest digital resources or finding a quiet nook to read and reflect, our library provides the perfect environment for learning.

This year, we are excited to celebrate **Library Lovers' Day** with a special book display and a colouring competition. It's a wonderful opportunity to honour the joy and importance of libraries in our lives.

The **2026 Premier's Reading Challenge** kicks off on Monday, 23rd February and runs until Friday, 18th September. Students are encouraged to challenge themselves by reading a diverse collection of books throughout the year. It's a fantastic chance to discover new favourites, improve reading and literacy skills, and enjoy the adventure that books bring.

This term, the library is also offering a variety of craft activities, including crocheting, card making and puzzling. These are great ways for students to be creative and collaborative.

We look forward to a year full of exciting opportunities to learn, explore, and grow together.

Mrs Linquist and Ms Hotton

Student WELLBEING

The Wellbeing Team members look forward to working with our parents and carers to ensure our students are supported and encouraged throughout the year to engage positively in their learning journey and to strive for academic, social and personal growth.

This year, we are continuing to implement the Resilience Project wellbeing program with our Years 7and 8 students, to build and strengthen our students' empathy, gratitude, mindfulness and emotional literacy which will enhance their levels of resilience and happiness. Our Years 9, 10 , 11 and 12 students will participate in a new wellbeing program, Wellio, which provides engaging wellbeing education to enhance our students' resilience and to support our students to thrive both academically and beyond school.

The Welfare Team includes the School Counsellors, the Year Advisers and Assistant Year Advisers, as listed below, and the Head Teacher Student Wellbeing, Ms Cathy Salvagio. Parents and carers can make an appointment to see one of our school Counsellors, the Head Teacher or the relevant Year Adviser if there are issues or concerns that you wish to discuss.
Below is the list of the Year Advisers and Assistant Year Advisers.
YEAR 7 ADVISER - Ms Christie Rothwell
Assistant - Ms Mona Hamdoun
YEAR 8 ADVISER – Ms Violeta Rilkovski
Assistant – Ms Mona Baddah
YEAR 9 ADVISER – Ms Angela Mezzino
Assistant- Ms Zena Badra

YEAR 10 ADVISER - Ms Jyothi Subramaniam
Assistant- Ms Juliana Do
YEAR 11 ADVISER - Ms Evon Zomaya
Assistant- Ms Nida Tariq
YEAR 12 ADVISER - Ms Katerina Katkarovski
Assistant - Melissa Xerri

Elevate Education Program

Elevate Education will be delivering a study skills workshop to all our students in Years 10, 11 and 12, and an effective use of AI workshop to Years 11 and 12 in Term 1. All students are required to participate in the workshops.

- Years 11 and 12 will participate in two 1-hour workshops
- Year 10 will have a 1-hour workshop

Students will be provided with access to the Elevate Education website throughout the year and will be able to use the online resources to assist them with study, assignments, exams and various HSC subject content. A parent information note and acknowledgement slip will be issued to students outlining the cost of these very beneficial workshops. Years 11 and 12 students are to pay $24 for the two workshops and Year 10 students are to pay $14 for the one workshop.

Year 12 students will participate in the study skills and effective use of AI workshops on 26th March during periods 3 and 4, which will focus on study strategies and techniques for exam preparation, and effective and ethical use of AI. These workshops will assist students to develop positive study habits and to cope better with Trial and HSC examinations.

Year 11 students will participate in the study skills and effective use of AI workshops on 12th March during periods 3 and 4, which will focus on effective learning strategies, techniques to enhance students' performance as a senior student, and effective and ethical use of AI.

Year 10 students will participate in a study skills workshop on 12th March during period 2, which will focus on building effective learning and study habits to enhance students' performance in assessment tasks.

Ms Cathy Salvagio

Special Religious Education (SRE) at Birrong Girls High School

NSW public schools offer special religious education (scripture) and special education in ethics, delivered by approved providers wherever available. During enrolment, you can choose a special religious education option for your child from the school's available approved providers. You can withdraw your child from special religious education by selecting alternative meaningful activities, or special education in ethics if it is available. You can update your preference by writing to the school or through the online form available at participating schools. Visit the department's website for more information about religion and ethics.

At Birrong Girls High School, SRE is delivered in 60-minute lessons in a 5-week block each term on Fridays during period 3 to timetabled year groups.

At Birrong Girls High School, SRE is provided at our school through the following providers:

Buddhist Faith

The Hwa Tsang Monastery has been accredited to provide SRE in the Buddhist faith to primary and high schools for the NSW Department of Education since 1997. For more information, including the authorised curriculum scope and sequence please visit the following site and selecting 'Education', 'Special Religious Education' and then 'Syllabus and Approach':
http://www.hwatsangmonastery.org.au/

Combined Protestant Christian

Combined Protestant Christian Churches Special Religious Education (SRE) is being provided through BLAST (Bankstown Local Area Scripture Team). Several Approved Providers of SRE that meet NSW Department of Education requirements have arranged to partner together to deliver a Combined Christian SRE curriculum. The list of providers represents various Protestant denominations:

Christian Community Churches of Australia
https://cccaust.org

Uniting Church in Australia (NSW Synod)
https://nswact.uca.org.au/
Presbyterian Church of Australia (NSW)
https://pynsw.org.au/
Australian Christian Churches
https://www.acc.org.au/
Churches of Christ in NSW & ACT
https://ccnswact.org.au/
Anglican Diocese of Sydney
https://sydneyanglicans.net/
Baptist Union of NSW
https://nswactbaptists.org.au/

The name of the curriculum is called Think Faith. Information regarding the curriculum can be found at http://thinkfaith.com.au.

Islamic Charities Projects Association

The Islamic Charity Projects Association (ICPA) is accredited by the NSW Department of Education to teach Islamic Special Religious Education in NSW public schools. The ICPA works under the guidelines of Darulfatwa - the Islamic High Council of Australia. For more information about this provider, including the authorised curriculum scope and sequence please visit the following sites:
http://www.icpa.org.au/
www.darulfatwa.org.au

Australian Islamic Education Services (AIES)

The Australian Islamic Education Services (AIES) is authorised through the Department of Education to provide Islamic Special Religious Education lessons in NSW Public Schools. AIES teachers are provided with approved teaching materials and pedagogy. For more information about this provider, including the authorised curriculum scope and sequence please visit the following site:
islamiceducation.org.au

BIRRONG GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL
PARENTS & CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

Parents are invited to attend the
P&C MEETING
at Birrong Girls High School
on Wednesday 25 February 2026
at 4pm
Please register your attendance
by phoning/emailing the school office

CALENDAR

Monday 16-20/2
- Year 12 Retail Work Placement

Monday 16/2
- Welcome BBQ 4:30pm

Wednesday 18/2
- Year 12 Fast Forward at Parramatta Campus

Monday 23-26/2
- Year 12 Hospitality Work placement
- Year 11 VET work Ready program

Tuesday 24/2
- Fast Forward Mentor Session #1. 10am –12pm. Fast Forward Students only. Year 11-12 lunchtime 1:10-1:50 Guest Speakers – Western Sydney

Wednesday 25/2
- P&C Meeting 4pm

Monday 2-6/3
- Year 12 Hospitality Work placement

Sunday 8/3
- International Women's Day

Monday 9/3
- Zone Swimming (TBA)

Monday 9-13/3
- Year 12 Hospitality Work placement

Wednesday 11-20/3
- NAPLAN Testing window

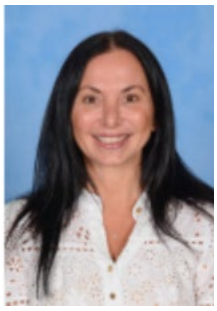
Sunday 21/3
- Harmony Day

Tuesday 24/3
- Year 10 English Excursion – MACBETH
- Parent/Teacher meetings 3pm-5pm

Wednesday 25/3
- CAPA Extravaganza
- UNSW School Leaders Program x 10 Year 11 at UNSW Campus
- Year 8 Swim School

Wednesday 1/4
- Excellence Assembly

Career News



I would like to introduce myself and open the channel of communication between the community and careers.

My name is Ms Nicky Shinas, and I am the Careers Adviser at Birrong Girls High School. I am situated in the library and available to answer all your important questions and concerns about your young person's future pathways. My email contact details are: nicky.shinas@det.nsw.edu.au, should you require any assistance with their pathway.

A small reminder for all students in Years 9-12 to see me if they do not have the code for their Google Classroom (GC) Careers page. This is a platform for students only, and I advise that every student joins their cohorts GC page as valuable and important information is shared via this platform.

I look forward to communicating with you all over the next few years. Aiming high to achieve a successful future for your young person.

Year 10 work experience 2025, was a huge success. Thirty-five students participated in the program during week 8, Term 4. Students attended hospital and medical centres, local primary schools, lawyers' offices, engineering businesses as well as media printing franchises during work experience. Many small businesses hosted our students in support of engaging youth into the work force. It is a valuable experience helping students to develop professional habits and learn new skills.

Here are some articles from the Year 10 cohort of 2025.

Yagoona Public School

Monica, Charlotte, Rhianna, Shifa, Shayma, Farah.

Throughout Term 4 week 8, we had the opportunity to do work experience at Yagoona Public School. We all experienced what it was like to become a primary teacher for a kindergarten class, a Year 1 class, and a Year 4 class for a week.

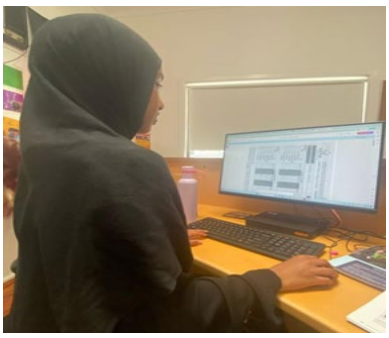
As a result, we have developed skills that are useful for deciding if we want to take the path to becoming a primary school teacher. These skills include communication, leadership, commitment, a good role model, organisation, time management and other skills that would help us in our future career paths.

The school was very welcoming and made me feel appreciated. The staff members were very nice and the teacher that I was assigned with allowed me to have a good understanding of what it was like in a kindergarten class. All the students were active and polite, making me feel involved and respected. I helped the students with a variety of activities including numeracy

and literacy alongside arts and crafts. I am very grateful to be able to have the opportunity of doing work experience in a kindergarten class as I would like to become one in the future, and this experience has given me a greater knowledge of what that would be like.

Monica's experience: I have been assigned to a Year 1 class to experience what class was like. Throughout the 1st of December to the 5th of December, I have been actively monitoring the students and giving them a hand when they had trouble with their work. I have also developed an understanding of the challenges the students face when it comes to learning and the strategies utilised to reduce them. I helped the students through a range of topics including numeracy, literacy, science, sports and arts and crafts, which all have allowed me to communicate and build a bond with the students to understand them better. At the last hour of Wednesday 3rd of December, I was given the opportunity to experience another class and what their understanding, learning and behaviour was like. This experience was in a Year 2 class however, the Year 1 and the Year 2 classes don't really have many differences, but this gave me a great learning experience. Staff members at Yagoona Public School were also very warm and welcoming, allowing me to collaborate with them, whilst taking in various skills that would benefit me in my future career path.

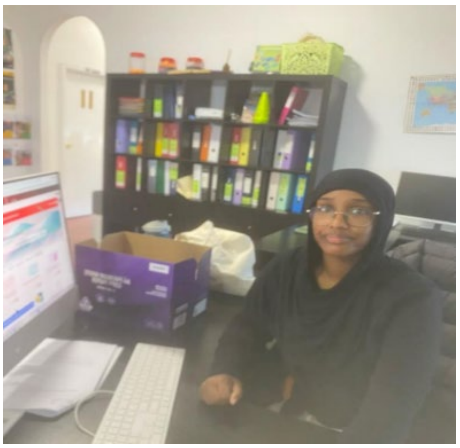
Charlotte's experience: I was given the opportunity to experience a Year 4 class. observed the teachers teaching and assisted the students with their work that included numeracy, literacy, and art making. I learned new skills such as communication, patience and the ability to be able to learn other people's experience when being in a learning environment. On Wednesday, the 4th of December, I helped the staff members set up the presentation day, which was scheduled the next day. I laid out chairs and assisted them in organizing the hall for presentation day. On the last day of work experience, I had a chance to do a career interview with a teacher about the teaching industry, gaining a better understanding of the industry and their experience when becoming a teacher. All the staff members and students were very welcoming and very polite to the work experience students. I was able to learn from my supervisor's feedback and reflect on it.



Rhianna's experience: For my yr 10 work experience I worked in a public school and observed and assisted with tasks around the class. I spent most of my time in kindergarten and was also in yr 3 and observed their routine and caught on fast. My tasks were helping with handing out stuff for the kids, keeping kids engaged with the learning, went on duty in the playground with my allocated teacher for the day and just patrolled the play areas and kept kids from the out of bounds areas. I expected this role to be easy and quick however I was completely wrong. There is a lot of standing, walking, checking around the kids and classroom, but I got used to it and enjoyed it. If I had the chance to do this again, I would come back. I learnt all sorts of different things with different staff members like organisation is key and to always be an open person with the students. I noticed that one of the supervising teachers had a significant impact on my overall experience, and I found that some teachers were more willing than others to involve me in class activities. Overall, it was a valuable experience and I enjoyed it.

Shifa's experience: My work experience at just kids' family day care scheme has taught me many responsibilities that work had. During my placement I was told to scan papers using the printer, copy papers and use the adobe app to make templates for educators to use. I also organized activities for the kids to do during the summer holidays, mainly doing administrative work. The employers and employees were very helpful as they would look out for us if we needed

help with anything. The placement has taught me how important communication and organisation is in these field allowing things to run more smoothly. My work experience has gone well showing me how work life is helping me grow more confident and preparing me for the work part of life.



Shayma's experience: My work experience at just kids' family day care taught me a lot about the responsibilities involved in a real workplace. Throughout my placement, I completed tasks such as scanning, photocopying documents, creating templates for educators using Adobe and used Hub Hello to help organise and update information on enrolment forms. I also helped plan and prepare activities for children during the summer holidays, which gave me insight into the administrative side of childcare.

During my time there I realised how important communication and organisation are in keeping everything running smoothly. I also learnt how to manage my time better and solve small problems independently. Overall, the experience was positive and gave me a good understanding of what working is like.

I had a Great Time During My Work Experience:

Adila

I went to the Australian Martial Arts Academy located in Marrickville for my Work Placement for 5 days. During those 5 days I experienced so many different feelings, thoughts and interacted with different people and different atmospheres.

On my first day I was so excited that I woke up at 5 am and got ready thinking that my shift starts at 8:30 am instead of 9:30 am. Then when I reread my documents, I realised the truth, but still I was very nervous and stressed that I might be late because I had to travel. Now that I look back at these 5 days, I realise they were not just five days of work experience. They were in fact years of life experience for me. I learned to be more patient, understanding, organised, time management and to appreciate my presence in this world with everyone and everything. I realised that it's not too scary after all to be on my own and working with others for the same goal. I realised how the right person can make your day. I just learned how important it is to just appreciate our feelings and our experiences.

It was my very first time travelling on my own much further than the few suburbs I've ever been to. So, on my first day I was out of home by 6:30. I found it very stressful because I got on the wrong bus and had to change it back, but when I learned how to use GPS it was very

easy. Luckily, I was there 30 mins early which made me feel proud of myself. On the first day I assisted my instructor Ms Jessica with the Little Dragons Class which was a class of 7 kids aged 2-3 years old. I did not find myself very confident with instructing little kids, but I tried. In the afternoon I mostly did admin work. The first day didn't feel as exciting as I thought I would be. By the time I returned home it was already 6:00 pm and I was tired and helpless, however I determined this week will be a week where I can grow and find friends.

On the second day, it was much easier for me to get to the location, and I managed to get there 25 min early. I had a different instructor; her name was Ms Maddy. She was and is the most beautiful hearted girl I have ever met.
I found myself so comfortable and confident with Ms Maddy. She taught me how to answer calls and make calls to the clients. At first, I struggled but by the end of the day I made 50 calls to students and parents regarding their awards. I felt great. Ms Maddy made my day.

By the 3rd, 4th and 5th day I felt so organised and managed to be at work 30 min early each day again. I was thrilled because I had Ms Maddy again. We kept each other company during work and breaks and talked and shared our experiences. I was going so well with admin work and making calls. I also assisted Ms Bee with the little Dragons class on my last day, and you won't even believe how much fun I had with kids. I made them laugh and practiced kicks and punches with them. That day when I looked back to my first day, I was just so happy with myself, thanks to Ms Maddy.

Sireen and Fatina experience at Vision Professional Eye Clinic, Chester Square:

On our very first day of work experience at Vision Professional Eye Clinic, we stepped through the sliding doors, were handed a bundle of keys, given a quick tour of what goes where, and left completely unsure of which key opened what. We never could've guessed how much we'd learn by the end of the week.

The first challenge we faced was adapting to a new, foreign environment. The Eye Clinic was set up so that each piece of eyewear was locked behind a glass drawer or cabinet within an interconnected, complex system of locks, branding, and pricing. We quickly felt overwhelmed by the sheer quantity of eyewear pieces we were expected to help sell and immediately got to work memorising the organisational structure of our new workplace.

Early on, we were stumped by the field-specific inquiries customers would make after assuming we already knew the ins-and-outs of eyewear, such as whether or not the clinic could create Carrera sunglasses with a flattened frame instead of a thick one, what types of lenses each glasses had, what brand those glasses were from and what their capabilities were as a result of this. Although those situations were intimidating, they encouraged us to learn from our supervisors more quickly and effectively, communicate more clearly, and rely on each other for support as we found our footing. We began asking better questions, paying closer attention, and slowly building the confidence we needed to support customers properly.

By Day 3, we were both enthusiastic sales assistants, greeting customers and offering guidance on selecting between different reading glasses or sunglasses. We learned how to properly understand customer needs, whether it be based on their face shape, lifestyle, or price range, and observed experienced staff to understand sales techniques like upselling lens coatings or premium brands when appropriate or narrowing down eyewear options for consumers to speed up the sales process. Soon enough, we were selling three to four sunglasses per customer, enticing them with discounts and Christmas season offers.

It was rewarding to help customers find what they were looking for while contributing to the business's success. We were both surprised by the number of people who came each day to purchase our products and have gained a new appreciation for how much coordination and precision retail work requires. This experience taught us that customer service is less about

rehearsed answers and prioritising politeness, and more about listening, adapting, and building trust with our target market.

We've both benefitted from this work experience, clocking out with a broader range of developed practical skills like perceptiveness, multitasking and teamwork, and with an improved understanding of a possible future in a career path like optometry, an industry that uniquely combines healthcare with fashion.

NAPLAN

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) will be completed by students in Years 7 and 9 this term online during the period of Wednesday 11th Feb to Monday 23rd February. NAPLAN will assess the literacy and numeracy skills of students across Australian schools.

The results of the tests will provide important information to schools about what each student can do and will be used to support teaching and learning programs. Parents will receive a report indicating their child's level of achievement. Each student's level of achievement will be reported against the national minimum standard.

The NAPLAN tests at Birrong Girls High will be conducted online on Wednesday 11th Feb, Monday 16th March, Tuesday 17th March and Wednesday 18th March. Catch-up tests will be arranged for students who are absent on another day during the testing period which ends on Monday 23rd March. As the NAPLAN tests will be completed online, it is highly recommended that students bring their own headphones. The school has some headphones to lend to students who don't bring their own for the tests requiring them. It is recommended that students trial their headphones with our computers in the Library to ensure they are compatible.

Additional information, and translations in various languages, about NAPLAN can be found at http://www.nap.edu.au/naplan/parent-carer-support

Ms Cathy Salvagio

Anti-Racism contact officer (ARCO)

At Birrong Girls High School, we are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful environment where every student, staff member and family feels valued and supported. My name is Nadine Johnston and I am the BGHS Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO).

I am available to listen to concerns about racism, provide guidance and take appropriate steps to support students, parents, carers and staff who may have experienced or witnessed racism in any form, whether it's direct, indirect or systemic. My role is not to investigate complaints but to ensure that any concerns about racism are taken seriously and managed in line with the NSW Department of Education's anti-racism policy.

I play an important role in promoting anti-racism and supporting members of our school community; I work closely with school leaders and teachers to promote understanding, respect and cultural safety across the school. It is important for everyone in our school community to know that racism has no place in our school and there are clear processes in place to address it. If you, or someone you know, has a concern related to racism, I encourage you to reach out; I will listen, support and help guide the next steps in a respectful and constructive way.

Together, we can ensure that our school remains a place where diversity is celebrated, and everyone feels safe and respected.

Application for Extended Leave (Travel)

Families are encouraged to travel during school holidays. If travel during school term is necessary, please discuss this with the principal, Ms Natalie Hale. An Application for Extended Leave will need to be completed. This can be done electronically https://birronggir-h.schools.nsw.gov.au/school-life/attendance or on paper. Absences relating to travel will be marked as approved or unapproved leave on the roll and therefore contribute to your child's total absences for the year.

In some circumstances students may be eligible to enrol in distance education for travel periods over 50 school days.

Ramadan

To everyone celebrating,