



WINMALEE HIGH SCHOOL

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Term 2 Week 3 Communication – Thursday 7 May 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Warami. Thank you for your support for the **World's Greatest Shave**. As a community, we have raised just over **\$16,000!** Our brave shavers, along with the SRC, have led an outstanding campaign this year. It is an inspiration to watch young people be so aware and active, and bringing attention to and supporting such an important cause. We are very proud of our students. Thank you to all students, staff, family and friends who donated and provided emotional support. It is our great pleasure to share the before and after photos with you!

Raised \$16,070	Our Goal \$10,000
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Students: Darcy Teather, Aurora Edwards, Zoe Callan, Simon Hunt, Luka Planinic, Bonnie Heath, Sienna Valentini, Julian Jawor, Kaine Alguerno, Lincoln Hockings, Zae Every, James Graycon, Billy Summers. **Staff:** Rose Skinner, Luca Herbert Rice.



Our **Athletics Carnival Age Champions** and **Record Breakers** were congratulated on assembly yesterday. We look forward to hearing results from the upcoming Zone event. Well done to these students for their continued commitment to excellence.



The Student Representative Council are partnering with the Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Co-operative to lead a **Winter Food Drive**. During the month of June, SRC will be inviting our school community to pitch in and donate cans of food and other non-perishable items which will be used to create hampers for families and people in need.

So, when you are doing your next shop and there is a suitable item on special, consider grabbing an extra item to contribute to a hamper. Donations can be dropped off at the school office during the month of June. See the flyer attached for more information and ideas about suitable items. Once again, our SRC are leaders in their community, thinking of others and influencing the world around them.



Duke of Edinburgh – we wish our Duke of Ed team of students and staff a wonderful and safe expedition. They set off this morning for Kedumba. Always the way that the very first snap of very cold weather coincides with our first expedition for the year!

Plain Speaking, Public Speaking Competition – best of luck to Year 11 students, **Elouise Tailford** and **Aurora Edwards** as they head off today to this public speaking competition, held at Cambridge Park.

Regular attendance is vital to your child's success at school, as it ensures they do not miss out on important learning opportunities and social interactions.

Each day at school builds on the last, so frequent absences can create gaps in knowledge and affect overall progress. We understand that sometimes absences are unavoidable due to illness or other genuine reasons. When this happens, please notify the school promptly and provide a brief explanation for your child's absence. By

working together to prioritise attendance, we can help your child achieve their full potential and develop positive lifelong learning habits. **You can explain absences by replying to the daily text messages sent, emailing or calling the school, or through the Sentral Parent Portal. You can also check the Parent Portal to view your child's overall attendance percentage.**

If you miss explaining any absences, please do respond to our follow up emails and provide an explanation. If your child does have a pattern of unexplained absences, the school will be in contact to discuss this with you.

Please review the attached letter on **Compulsory School Attendance**.

Days missed = years lost

A day here and there doesn't seem like much, but...



The next issue of *Stems and Stories* by **Year 12 student Jenna Bryant** is at the end of this Newsletter. Read on to find out about Mr Joseph's favourite plant!



Dear parents and carers of Year 10, 11 & 12 students

Our Senior Parent-Teacher Interview evening is scheduled for **Tuesday, 2 June 2026 from 3:30pm – 7:30pm** in the school hall. **Please save the date in your calendars.**

This year, bookings will again be made online via **the Sentral Parent Portal**. If you have not yet registered for access to the portal, we encourage you to do so and activate your account prior to interview bookings opening.

Please contact the school via phone or email if you require an activation key for the portal: 02 4754 2822 or winmalee-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au.

Interview bookings will open at 4.00pm on Monday, 18 May 2026 and close at 4.00pm on Monday, 1 June 2026.

We will release detailed information about booking Parent-Teacher Interviews shortly before bookings open.



Our Year 10 support class, and Teacher Ms Walbank, have finished growing zucchinis for the season.

Our largest pictured here at 34cm. Possibly the largest zucchini Winmalee High has ever grown. Thanks to **Morgan Chicco** and **Jasmine Carn** for allowing a photograph.

This term we will be planting sunflowers to brighten our coolest months ahead.



Another term, another round of Wednesday Grade and Recreational Sport for our Year 9-10 students. All grade sport teams have been competing well and Rec Sport continues to have good behaviour, uniform and high levels of participation. Some students this week visited Penrith Tru Ninja and Flipout and all reports were that the kids had fun.





A huge congratulations to one of our youngest sporting stars, **Isabel Preval (Year 7)**, for her achievements at State AFL this week.

Being a soccer player and touch footballer, Isabel has raised her game playing for the Sydney West U14s team in Byron Bay, even battling more than 20mm of rain.

With the conclusion of the competition still to come, the SW team is currently mid-table and performing well



Whilst last Friday was indeed a bit of a mayday for three of our Knockout teams, we are still proud of all students willing to don the Winmalee colours and represent the school with their friends.

Unfortunately, we didn't get the results we hoped for but well done to the Open Boys Volleyball and U15 Girls Soccer teams (Regional Quarter Finalists) and the U15 Boys Soccer team who had an incredibly tight 1-0 loss in the Bill Turner Cup.

There are many teams still alive in Knockout competitions, including the Open Girls Soccer team, playing their Regional Quarter Final as this edition goes to publishing.



U15 Boys Soccer Team



U15 Girls Soccer Team



For the latest student career opportunities please check out our [Careers page](#) and read the latest Careers Bulletin.



Last month, **Eli Schroeder (Year 10)** travelled to Shepparton in Victoria to compete in a week of racing at the BMX National Series and the BMX National Championships.

On Tuesday, Eli competed in Round 2 of the National Series, where he raced exceptionally well to finish in a very commendable 3rd place. This result now sees Eli leading the National Series standings heading into Rounds 3 and 4 at Camden later this month.

On Friday, Eli suffered a spectacular crash in the semi-final of his age class at the National Championships. Unfortunately, the crash forced him to sit out the finals.

Showing great determination, Eli bounced back on Saturday to continue his strong form, placing 4th in the highly contested Junior Superclass category of the National Championships.

These races also served as qualifiers for the World Championships, and Eli has now officially qualified for the event, which will take place in Brisbane in July.



🎓 **WHS Alumni Spotlight: Kasey Fox (Class of 2020)**

We're thrilled to share the stories of our former students with the school and wider community, highlighting their experiences at WHS and the diverse journeys they've taken since graduating.

This week **Kasey Fox** shares her reflections on her time at Winmalee High and where life has taken her since.

Check out Kasey's Q&A at the end of the Newsletter and stay tuned as we continue celebrating the amazing paths our alumni are forging!

We would love to hear from as many former students as possible across a wide range of years and pathways for our Alumni Spotlight feature. Former students can go to [WHS Alumni Q & A](#) to fill out the form and share their experiences with us.



This Saturday 9 May 2026 Fire & Rescue NSW (FRNSW) are having their annual **Fire Station Open Day** between 10:00am and 2:00pm.

The team at 445 Springwood would love to see as many people as possible come through the Station on the day to say hello, get hands on with some of our equipment and to discuss key safety messages.

OPEN DAY 26
Saturday 9 May 10am - 2pm



Best wishes,

Winmalee High School

Stems & Stories

By Jenna Bryant



THE PLANT - THE AZTEC LILY

This month's pick is the Aztec lily (*Sprekelia formosissima*), a bulb known for its vibrant, orchid-like red flowers that appear in spring and early summer. Flowers are on a single hollow stalk, and long, strappy, dark green leaves emerge at the same time as the flower.

Native to rocky slopes of Central America, it is believed that this lily may have been used in rituals and ceremonies in the Aztec empire.

CLASSIFICATION

Scientific name: **Sprekelia formosissima**
Common name: **Aztec lily, Jacobean lily,**
Family: **Amaryllidaceae (Amaryllis family)**
Origin: **Mexico & Guatemala**
Conditions: **Full sun, well-drained soil**
Size : **30–45 cm**

THE PERSON - MR. JOSEPH



If you have had Mr. Joseph as a Science teacher, you know he loves plants. So why is the Aztec lily one of his favourites?

"Part of what I love about this plant is how I learned about it. The previous owner of the house I live in was a keen gardener, and as he handed over the keys, he told me that he had left **surprise bulbs** in the ground for me to enjoy. The next spring, the most **beautiful red flowers** appeared. It has been over a decade and I still love those few days when these flowers are in bloom."

SPREKELIA TRIVIA

The Aztec lily is **not a true lily**. Lilies are in the genus *Lilium*. *Sprekelia* is actually in the Amaryllis family.

The flower is '**zygomorphic**' which means it has bilateral symmetry. It is the member of the Amaryllis family (we think) that is 'zygomorphic', like... the human face.

The name '**formosissima**' means '**most beautiful**' or '**best formed**' in Latin.

GROW IT YOURSELF

In our area, plant *Sprekelia* bulbs in late Winter to early Spring (August/September) in a spot with full sun and, most importantly, **excellent drainage**. Plant the bulb with its neck just above the soil line.

Water regularly during the growing season, but keep the soil dry during winter to prevent rot, as this is a bulb that prefers to be left undisturbed once established.



WHS ALUMNI Q&A



class of
Kasey Fox '20

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO SINCE GRADUATING FROM WHS?

When I left school, I wasn't sure what path to take. I decided to begin a traineeship in Early Childhood, and it quickly became something I was genuinely passionate about. I completed my Certificate III and Diploma in Early Childhood Education and am now finishing my Bachelor of Education. In that time, I have grown professionally into the role of Educational Leader and 2IC at my workplace. Becoming a parent in 2023 to my two beautiful daughters has further strengthened both my personal growth and my commitment to making a meaningful difference in the lives of children and families.

HOW DID YOUR TIME AT WHS INFLUENCE OR HELP YOU DISCOVER YOUR PASSIONS AND INTERESTS?

Being able to explore many options and not be forced to go down a particular pathway. This helped me explore all my options and enjoy myself.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVOURITE MEMORIES FROM YOUR TIME AT WHS?

Year 12 Muck Up Week, Wednesday Sport, Musicals

WHAT EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES WERE YOU INVOLVED IN AT SCHOOL?

Basketball, Vocal Groups, Band, SRC, Musicals

WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES OUR SCHOOL SPECIAL?

There's so many opportunities to explore your interests and passions, from sport to creative arts, science and design, cooking and academics. There's something for everyone.



Careers Bulletin

Term 2, Week 3, 4 May 2026

Opportunities:

NSW Fire and Rescue – Fire Station Open Day

Come behind the scenes of Australia's busiest fire and rescue service at our Open Day. From fires, chemical spills, car crashes, natural disasters and humanitarian relief across the state, the country and even overseas – our firefighters are prepared for anything! Open Day is your chance to meet a firefighter, see our trucks in action, check out our equipment and find out more about what we do. We'll be on scene to answer your questions, show you around and help you prepare your home for a safe winter. We can't wait to see you and show you what we have been up to. Find out more [HERE](#)

Parents: Supporting your Year 10 student with ADHD and Subject Choices

May 21st 7pm: This webinar is designed for students and parents in Year 10 to understand how to make subject selections that support motivation, confidence, and wellbeing. We'll help you understand how ADHD can affect learning, workload and engagement, and how to choose subjects that work with your teen's strengths and capacity – not against them. Register [HERE](#)



Cyber Spotlight

The 11 Second Club – Animation Competition

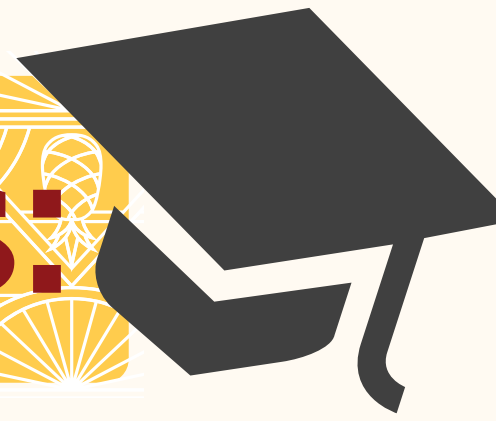
The 11 Second Club runs a monthly competition – Entries can be character animations in any medium, from CG animation (Maya, 3DS Max, Blender, Animation:Master, etc.) to traditional 2D animation to stop-motion. Consider posting your progress videos in the Work in Progress forum. Feedback and criticism will make your animation stronger! Comments should aim to be professional, polite, and constructive for participants of all skill levels. More info [HERE](#)

Wings Over Shellharbour Airshow – Careers Day

15 May

Get ready for an unforgettable experience at the Wings Over Shellharbour Careers Day 2026. This immersive, hands-on day is designed to inspire students, engage educators, and excite families about the many career opportunities in aviation, defence, and STEM. Find out more [HERE](#)

For Seniors:



Sydney Design School Info Sessions

Find out everything you need to know about our world class courses and personal support. Our Director, Amanda Grace will introduce you to our industry focused approach to learning. Register below. Find out more info [HERE](#)

UNSW Portfolio Entry Early Conditional Offer Scheme

Round 1 Applications Open 4 May

The UNSW Portfolio Entry Scheme offers early conditional offers for select degrees across UNSW Arts, Design & Architecture, giving you the opportunity to showcase your passion and talent alongside your ATAR. Successful applicants will receive an early conditional offer with an adjusted ATAR entry requirement of up to 10 ATAR points below the lowest selection rank for a specific degree or range of related degrees. Find out more [HERE](#)

Open Day - Australian Institute of Music

16 May -

Join the Australian Institute of Music's Sydney Open Day and experience firsthand how we transform your passion into a profession. Step inside our vibrant campus, explore world-class facilities, and see how AIM prepares the next generation of performers, producers, composers, and music industry leaders. Throughout the day, you'll have the opportunity to hear from and connect with our industry-leading academics, meet current students from each of our courses, and experience interactive workshops and live performances that showcase the creative energy at the heart of AIM. Find out more [HERE](#)

Automotive Apprenticeships - Apprenticeships R Us

Apprenticeships Are Us is a Group Training Organisation (GTO) that has been supplying quality Automotive Apprentices to the industry for over 15 years. We Specialise in Mechanical Apprenticeships for Light and Heavy Vehicles, Accident Repair trades such as Panel Beating and Spray Painting. Check out our current vacancies for Light Vehicle, Panel Beating, Spray Painting and Spare Parts Apprenticeships. Check out availability [HERE](#)

TAFE NSW Degrees

You don't need an ATAR to study a degree with TAFE NSW, but you will graduate with a qualification that will change your future. Study a Bachelor degree, post graduate or higher education qualification with TAFE NSW, and graduate with strong theoretical knowledge, practical experience and industry connections that will give you a head start on your career. Plus if you have previously completed a higher education or vocational diploma or certificate qualification, you may be eligible for credit transfer or recognition of prior learning (RPL) towards your degree, which means you could graduate sooner. Find out more [HERE](#)

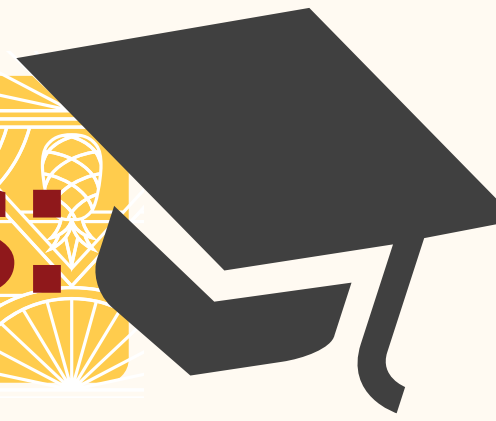
Western Sydney Uni - Discover Western - Pathways, Alternative Entry and Early Offers

9 June

This webinar is aimed at students in Years 10 - 12. We will explore and explain our HSC True Reward Early Offer Program, Alternative Entry Pathways and more.

Find out more [HERE](#)

For Seniors:



Charles Sturt University - Careers in animal, equine and veterinary sciences webinar

Uncover caring careers that help creatures big and small. From livestock industries, clinical settings, government and biosecurity, animal welfare or the wildlife sector. Discover careers that help change the way we look after animals.

Companion animal health, veterinary hospitals and clinics, livestock production, equine nutrition, herd health, zoos and cutting-edge research. Think big when it comes to where your animal career can take you. Discover how you'll build real-world skills and learn to support animal health, welfare and care through hands-on experience. Find out more [HERE](#)

Macquarie Uni - Campus Tours

Students and their families can get a first-hand look at where they could study, connect, and thrive - and chat with current students about what life at Macquarie is really like.

Upcoming tours:

Saturday, 16 May at 10.00am and 11.30am

Saturday, 30 May at 10.00am and 11.30am

Saturday, 13 June at 10.00am and 11.30am

Saturday, 27 June at 10.00am and 11.30am

Macquarie Uni Open Day - 15 August

What you can do on Open Day

- Attend an info session on some of our most popular degrees
- Speak with our academics about our degrees, majors and specialisations, and how they'll uniquely prepare you for your first career, or help you upskill or reskill if your career is already underway
- Learn about our scholarships, adjustment factors and pathways; and RPL (recognition of prior learning) if you've studied before
- Chat with current students about uni life
- Jump on a campus tour and check out our awesome facilities

Find out more [HERE](#)



Compulsory school attendance

Information for parents

Education for your child is important and regular attendance at school is essential for your child to achieve their educational best and increase their career and life options. NSW public schools work in partnership with parents to encourage and support regular attendance of children and young people. When your child attends school every day, learning becomes easier and your child will build and maintain friendships with other children.

What are my Legal responsibilities?

Education in New South Wales is compulsory for all children between the ages of six years and below the minimum school leaving age of 17 years. The Education Act 1990 requires that parents ensure their children of compulsory school age are enrolled at, and regularly attend school, or, are registered with the NSW Education and Standards Authority for home schooling.

Once enrolled, children are required to attend school each day it is open for students.

The Importance of arriving on time

Arriving at school and class on time:

- Ensures that students do not miss out on important learning activities scheduled early in the day
- Helps students learn the importance of punctuality and routine
- Give students time to greet their friends before class
- Reduces classroom disruption

Lateness is recorded as a partial absence and must be explained by parents.

What if my child has to be away from school?

On occasion, your child may need to be absent from school. Justified reasons for student absences may include:

- being sick, or having an infectious disease
- having an unavoidable medical appointment
- being required to attend a recognised religious holiday
- exceptional or urgent family circumstance (e.g. attending a funeral)

Following an absence from school you must ensure that within 7 days you provide your child's school with a verbal or written explanation for the absence. However, if the school has not received an explanation from you within 2 days, the school may contact you to discuss the absence.

Principals may decline to accept an explanation that you have provided if they do not believe the absence is in the best interest of your child. In these circumstances your child's absence would be recorded as unjustified. When this happens the principal will discuss their decision with you and the reasons why.

Principals may request medical certificates or other documentation when frequent or long term absences are explained as being due to illness. Principals may also seek parental permission to speak with medical specialists to obtain information to collaboratively develop a health care plan to support your child. If the request is denied, the principal can record the absences as unjustified.

Travel

Families are encouraged to travel during school holidays. If travel during school term is necessary, discuss this with your child's school principal. An Application for Extended Leave may need to be completed. Absences relating to travel will be marked as 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. This should be discussed with your child's school principal.

My child won't go to school what should I do?

You should contact the principal as soon as possible to discuss the issue and ask for help. Strategies to help improve attendance may include a referral to the school's learning and support team or linking your child with appropriate support networks. The principal may seek further support from the Home School Liaison Program to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan.

What might happen if my child continues to have unacceptable absences?

It is important to understand that the Department of Education may be required to take further action where children of compulsory school age have recurring numbers of unexplained or unjustified absences from school.

Some of the following actions may be undertaken:

- Compulsory Schooling Conferences

You may be asked, along with your child, to attend a Compulsory Schooling Conference. The conference will help to identify the supports your child may need to have in place so they attend school regularly. The school, parents and agencies will work together to develop an agreed plan (known as Undertakings) to support your child's attendance at school.

- Application to the Children's Court – Compulsory Schooling Order

If your child's attendance at school remains unsatisfactory the Department may apply to the Children's Court for a Compulsory Schooling Order. The Children's Court magistrate may order a Compulsory Schooling Conference to be convened.

- Prosecution in the Local Court

School and Department staff remain committed to working in partnership with you to address the issues which are preventing your child's full participation at school. In circumstances where a breach of compulsory schooling orders occurs further action may be taken against a parent in the Local Court. The result of court action can be the imposition of a community service order or a fine.

What age can my child leave school?

All New South Wales students must complete Year 10 or its equivalent. After Year 10, and up until they reach 17 years of age, there are a range of flexible options for students to complete their schooling.

Working in Partnership

The NSW Department of Education recognises that working collaboratively with students and their families is the best way to support the regular attendance of students at school.

We look forward to working in partnership with you to support your child to fulfil their life opportunities.

Days missed = years lost

A day here and there doesn't seem like much, but...



More information

Further Information regarding school attendance can be obtained from the following websites:

Policy, information and brochures:

Please visit the Department of Education's Policy Library AND The Department's Attendance Matters Website

The school leaving age:

Please visit the Department of Education's Wellbeing and Learning website

Do you need an interpreter?

Interpreting services are available on request, including for the hearing impaired. The Telephone Interpreter Service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week on **131 450**. You will not be charged for this service.



SRC JUNE WINTER FOOD DRIVE: HELP US MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

There are many locals doing it tough at the moment. Bring in a can, or create a hamper of non-perishable food for families and people in need.

Items Needed:

- Cans of vegetables, soup, fruit, legumes etc
- Coffee, hot chocolate etc
- Biscuits, crackers, cereal, pasta, noodles etc
- Jars of pasta sauce, condiments, spreads etc
- Treats such as chocolate, nice teas, packaged desserts etc



Donations can be dropped off at the school office during the month of June.

Springwood Neighbourhood Centre will distribute the food to individuals and families who are trying to make ends meet.

Your generosity is very much appreciated.

For further information contact the SRC or school office.