1. Expectations of Year 9 Students
Year 9 and 10 are considered transition years in which students build on their skills and understandings developing a deeper appreciation of how best to achieve. The work the students are presented with is significantly more challenging than that in the Junior School and students are expected to consume it at a faster rate. Many students fail to grasp this and the increased amount of time required in home study in these years in order to maintain high standards in achievement. Teachers also expect a stronger focus in class on the tasks at hand.

Specific expectations for Year 9s are:
• Be Goal directed, with solution focussed approaches
• Constant Self-Evaluation with an awareness of strengths and weaknesses
• Learn to Seek Help – who, when & where
• Be Innovative & Creative
• Manage Time on Social Media/Commitments

2. Pathways and Assessment
In line with Year 7 students moving to high school, the Western Australian Curriculum has been aligned to the Australian Curriculum. The four areas English, Mathematics, Science and Humanities have already migrated to the new curriculum. The other four learning areas will move over in the next two years. One change noticed by teachers has been the increasing level of difficulty of the curriculum at each year level. Our teachers are aware of this and all students are being managed through the change process by them.

In this new curriculum all students are required to cover the same curriculum content; however, there are varying levels of difficulty. We know students can take a little while to settle into high school when they first come from primary school, so we focus on giving all students the same experience in this initial stage. As students progress through high school, we base our class arrangements on student needs.

In Years 9 and 10, students are placed into different class pathways based on performance along with other factors such as work ethic, homework record, attendance and behaviour. The two main pathways are Accelerated and Core. Mathematics begins this process in Year 8. Some students need extra help so they are placed into the Essentials pathway. Primary school teachers often group students based on abilities within their own classes. In high school we have enough students to make the groups into classes in their own right.

Students are not fixed in their original pathways as they progress through school. Changes are made by each head of learning area at the end of Semester 1 and at the end of each year for the following year based on performance, behaviour and effort.

The reason this streaming takes place is to set the work at the level most suited to each student so they can achieve the most success. Also, the streaming enables us to ensure the Accelerated students are being prepared for the most challenging courses in senior school. If students are not “pushed” in lower school, they may experience difficulty coping with the pace and requirements of the high level courses in Year 12.

Student results in the end of semester reports are measured against Western Australian Standards set by School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA). Therefore, a C grade shown on a Woodvale report is the same comparable standard as a C grade on reports across WA. A student who is awarded a C grade from year to year is considered to be making good progress from one year to the next.

Often the work the Core class students are given is set at a state-wide C grade standard, and thus with this work students are not able to achieve to a state-wide A grade standard. If students in Core classes wish to attempt work at the Accelerated level then they can request to do this from their teacher. Much of the work is located on Moodle and students will be expected to access the appropriate resources themselves.

3. Examinations
The College holds exams for students for two reasons – to build capacity in all students to manage challenges, to learn to work hard towards meeting them and to prepare students heading for a university pathway to practise the major form of assessment used by universities. Because of this, we make use of the Year 10 exam results along with grades to determine whether a student will be successful in Year 11 university pathway courses and we limit student enrolment in these courses based on achievement of minimum results in the Year 10 exams and courses.

With so much depending on Year 10 exams, we cannot make these the first exams students sit in
their school life. In 2016, Year 9 exams in Mathematics, English, Science and Humanities (formerly called Society and Environment) will be held during the week starting Monday November 7. Teachers will indicate to your child the work to be covered in the exams. The exam timetable will be listed on the College website under Student Services.

4. Career Planning and the Senior School Subject Selection Process
Throughout Term 1 and Term 2 of Year 10, students will be taken through a range of activities to assist them with career planning and selection of Senior School courses. Students must enrol in six courses in Year 11, all of which, except an English course, are chosen by the child and their parents. Some of the Year 11 courses have prerequisites (many based on Semester 1 exam results) and these must be achieved in Semester 1 in order to secure automatic enrolment, otherwise students must achieve them by the end of Semester 2. The list of pre-requisites has been published on the College website in the Student Services section.

5. The WACE including the OLNA
The Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) is a certificate awarded by the WA school curriculum governing body, the School Curriculum and Standards Authority, and is awarded to students who complete a range of courses both in Year 11 and 12, complete an English course and achieve the literacy standard.

Our teachers take a great deal of time and effort to analyse NAPLAN results and identify learning challenges in our students. It has been shown that there is a direct pattern in how a student does in NAPLAN and their Year 12 results. Also, if a student reaches the level of Band 8, they will not have to sit the Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (OLNA) starting from Year 10. One of the requirements to achieve a WACE in Year 12 is for a student to achieve OLNA or Band 8 of NAPLAN.

6. The College’s Learning Management System (Moodle), Elevate Study Skills and After School Homework Class
Our students are here to develop their ability to learn. In order to support students with this, we have enlisted a private firm to provide a refreshing approach to learning how to develop ‘study’ skills, how to tackle assignments and how to write answers to challenging questions. The presenters used have been well received by the students and we hope students practise the approaches suggested. We also offer a homework class every Tuesday after school in the Learning resource Centre.

Teachers have also spent a considerable amount of time uploading coursework and resources onto the College’s learning management system, Moodle, for students to access both during school time and out of school hours. Please access these resources with your child. If your son or daughter is away from school for any reason, then this is the first place to access coursework.

7. How can I support my child through these important years?
You can support your child through this challenging school transition phase by encouraging him or her to complete at least two hours of homework a night, five days a week. They also need to develop a homework schedule and learn to stick with it. Information about this process is located on our website under Student Services.

In Year 9, students also need to understand the difference between completing an assignment or finishing off a task and study. Study means to go over notes, make notes from texts/ Moodle/ Internet and make mind maps to retain the information. Preparing for exams is where study is particularly vital.

By first semester of Year 9 we are expecting students to be able to focus for two hour blocks under examination conditions. For this reason it is important that parents support their child by ensuring they can focus for increasing blocks of time without distractions. They must train themselves to develop this skill. It helps if children are not distracted by mobile phones or social networking during homework time. Put the devices at the charging table in the house at this time.

Parents can also support their children by ensuring they get at least eight hours of sleep every night. Research has shown that removing mobiles and switching off technology in the bedroom has led to significant improvements in adolescent sleep patterns and consequent improvement in school results. Research also tells us that students should not work more than eight hours a week in part time employment if they are in a university pathway.

Balance between school, paid work, sporting and social commitments also plays a large part in the future success of students. Year 9 and 10 is a major period in which the balance in these time commitments may become skewed if not managed carefully. Parents play a very important part in developing their son’s or daughter’s understanding of keeping these things in balance.

Mr Richards Associate Principal Year 9/10