Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to the 2017 school year. It has begun well for all students and staff, despite having to face the hiccup of an increase in student numbers in Year 7 necessitating the addition of two more contact classes. I'm looking forward to the year and engaging with all Year 7s.

Upcoming events, important dates for your calendar and other important information are listed below:

**BBQ:** We would like to invite you to our Year 7 social BBQ (sausage sizzle) on **Tuesday 21 February**. It will commence at **5.30pm** and finish up at **7pm**. It is a welcome to our school community for our Year 7 students and their families and is a free event where you will meet other parents, the Student Services team and some Year 7 teachers. We will also have **Bubble Soccer** on site and games will be facilitated for anyone that wants to have a go, so please come ready to get involved. Please RSVP to the college at woodvale.sc@education.wa.edu.au or 9309 0808 by **Friday 17 February** and include the number of attendees and any dietary requirements.

**Laptop distribution:** Year 7 laptops will be distributed throughout **Weeks 2 and 3** during HASS (Humanities and Social Science) lessons. If your child missed their session they will be asked to attend the Learning Resource Centre (LRC) with another class to receive their laptop and to participate in the laptop orientation. If they have any issues with their laptop they should see **IT in the LRC before/ after school, at recess or lunch** (not during lessons).

**Diary:** Students currently have a diary and we ask that you get them to take out the diary and show you any homework they have for the evening. Remember, they should be doing at least **thirty minutes homework or home study four nights a week**. They need to get into training for the increasing demands of home study. If they have nothing to do, then ensure they read a book. Their home study area should be quiet and free from distraction and they should not have their mobile for home study time. Some parents ensure the home study area is central in order for them to keep an eye on their use of the laptop.

**Student Council Nominations:** The year 7s will get the opportunity to apply for a one of four Year 7 positions on the student council. The process will be announced and applications handed out at the year group assembly on **Wednesday 15 February** and will be due on **Monday 20 February**. Students who are successful will then be required to participate in an interview on Wednesday 22 February. The final step in the process is a speech to their cohort that will be delivered in Week 5 on Monday 27 February. Voting will then be open until the end of Contact on Tuesday 28. We will support students through this process and encourage students to have a go.

**Swimming Carnival:** All year 7s are required to attend this fun event that will be held on **1 March**. It is a full day excursion and information and permission slips will be forwarded by the Physical Education Department next week.

**Smart Riders:** The smart riders are underway and student photos were taken during the ‘Big Day’s In’ to ensure that students have access to their Smart Rider asap. Transperth is in
the process of printing Smart Riders for all year 7s across the state and we appreciate your patience while this is taking place. These will be handed out in contact shortly.

**Student absences at assessment times:** Parents are reminded that a parent note (Year 7 and 8 only) must be provided for students who are absent on the day of a scheduled assessment or who claim medical grounds for the late submission of an assessment. Should you wish to apply for an absence approval at any time throughout the year, please complete the absence approval application which can be found on the College website. Allowances will not be made for students who miss assessments due to a family vacation.

**Whole school Assessment Policy:** The whole school assessment policy may be found on the College website and students are encouraged to ensure they are familiar with assessment expectations. Students and parents have access to results throughout the year via Connect. There is an expectation that students fully engage with the opportunity to check their progress and achievement on Connect regularly. Access to Connect for students is automatic and parents without access from their primary school are welcome to request a Log on via the form located on the College website.

**School Photos:** All students will be photographed by a professional photographer in their uniform from Monday 20 February.

**Transition:** Your child has been involved in our transition process over the last six months. At Woodvale our transition process is developed based on contemporary research about the needs of young adolescent learners at this very vulnerable time. Consequently we plan every phase of the transition with attention to detail, listening to student feedback and actively pursuing excellence.

Transition commences in Term 4 with activities such as parent tours of the college and the Student Services team going into our local primary schools to access student records, talk with teachers and Mrs Rebecca Lazarus, the year Coordinator met the students. Last year the system was improved thanks to our Lower School Coordinator, Ms Tina Nottle, who is passionate about student leadership and peer support. Consequently we had groups of Year 9 students in the local primary schools working with the Year 6 students and getting to know them. Those student leaders then conducted a number of activities for the Year 7 students in the orientation day in Term 4 last year as well as during the Big Days In. Throughout this process our amazing staff also completed demonstration lessons and the students engaged with the school and the curriculum. It worked a treat.

**Feedback from transition:** The student feedback from The Big Days In was overwhelmingly positive with 98.5% of students enjoying the two days. 98% of students also answered yes to the question “Have you made any new friends?” and 96% of students feel more comfortable about coming to high school after the two days of orientation. 94% of students said that there was at least one adult in the school they could ask for help if they needed to. Students most liked the activities and meeting new people while they least liked the workbook, the assembly, walking and waiting. Some constructive feedback was that 12% of students still felt that they did not know their way around the school that well and would have liked a specific school tour and 33% said they would have liked more time with their contact teacher. We will take this into account and ensure that these areas are built on now for our Year 7s and altered for next year’s orientation program.

Parents also met with us on a Parent Information evening in Term 4 and their feedback was very positive. Our transition is now finalised but if your child needs any further support please ask them to speak to their Contact teacher or see Mrs Lazarus.
I would like to thank all the parents who have contacted me commending the *Positive Parent’s Guide*. It was developed with strong parent input and it is reviewed annually to ensure it is helpful and relevant.

Feedback from staff is that the current Year 7 students are delightful. I hope to see all parents at the social event for parents and Year 7 students on 21 February.

Yours sincerely

Veronika Sutton
Associate Principal Year 7 and 8

14 February 2017