30 March 2015

Dear Parents and Guardians

STUDENT WELFARE INITIATIVES

As part of our ongoing focus on student welfare, many exciting new initiatives have been put into place and several are still to come in 2015. One of the key changes is the expansion and redefinition of my role as the Student Welfare Coordinator for the Senior School. Others initiatives include “Wellness Days” and assemblies that will run throughout the year. Additionally, guest speakers will be invited to speak at Huntingtower on topics ranging from resilience and mindfulness to drug, sex and alcohol law.

Welfare of all students, staff and parents is a major focus at Huntingtower. Consequently, in my role as Student Welfare Coordinator, I will be developing a curriculum for the mentor programs to educate our Year 7 to 12 on drugs, sex and alcohol that support our vision of “uplifting” each person’s experience.

As stated earlier, we are planning many wellbeing programs, events and initiatives for the coming months and years. These programs will be introduced to you and students at appropriate times in the future, but right now, I would like to let you know about a few wellness initiatives that will be running in Term 2.

STUDENTS IN YEAR 7 TO 9
Firstly, we have been able to organise for Hugh Van Cuylenburg from the Resilience Project to come and work with our Middle School students for two 1 hour sessions during week 3 of next term. Hugh is passionate about educating young people about the importance of empathy and gratitude. He will help our students further develop their skills in these areas and to use those skills to increase their resilience and coping abilities. Hugh’s first session will run on Tuesday, 28 April from 2:25pm to 3:25pm. That Tuesday is usually an early dismissal day from class, due to Parent Teacher Interviews that afternoon. Instead of going home at 2:15pm, though, our Year 7 to 9 students will be participating in Hugh’s Resilience Project, and then will be dismissed at 3:25pm. The second session will occur on Thursday, 30 April for an hour during the school’s house assembly time.

ALL PARENTS
In addition to Hugh’s sessions with the students, we invite all parents to attend Hugh’s parent session, which will be held on Monday, 11 May from 7:00pm to 8:30pm in the PAC. It is the philosophy of the Resilience Project that all members of a community share a common language about resilience and empathy. Consequently, the staff will be having their own workshop with Hugh, and we encourage you to attend the parent workshop. We hope to see you there!
STUDENTS IN YEAR 10 TO 12
Secondly, our Year 10 to 12 girls on Thursday, 30 April, will have the opportunity to Skype with Katie Walter, from the USA, for an hour. Katie is a plus-size model with Ford Models in the United States and currently travels to different schools across the country to talk with their students about body image and self-confidence issues. Katie will give a 30-minute talk and then will open up the space for our students to ask questions.

At the same time our Year 10 to 12 boys on Thursday, 30 April, will have the chance to participate in a workshop run by the One Punch Can Kill Campaign Queensland. The campaign is a community awareness program, created by the Queensland Homicide Victims Support Group. The members of the campaign seek to help reduce youth violence, specifically single hits to the head caused by excessive drinking. As our students prepare to be adults, it is a wonderful opportunity to have someone speak to them about some of the possible issues they may face in adulthood and how to navigate their way around those problems.

It is my hope that these first wellbeing events will be engaging for all involved and will show the school’s dedication to educating our students about resilience, anti-bullying, healthy self-image and responsibility. We hope these discussions will continue far beyond the closing of each event and provide students with one more aid in piloting through the waters of adolescence.

If you have concerns or comments, please do not hesitate to call me at the school on 9807 8888. Email me at bborbely@huntingtower.vic.edu.au, or speak to me at the Resilience Project Workshop on 7 May. I truly hope to see you there!

Kind regards

Brett Borbely
Student Welfare Coordinator