



02 9999 4100  
02 9979 6928  
newport-p.schools.nsw.edu.au  
newport-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au  
Stuart St, Newport,  
NSW, 2106

Friday 27 November

## KNOWN, VALUED AND CARED FOR PROJECT (YEARS 5 AND 6 2021)

Dear Parents and Carers,

A trial is being piloted next year, to build on the strategies Newport is developing to ensure every child is known, valued and cared for at our school. Using case studies, research and our own experience of wellbeing/goal setting meetings to guide us, we have developed a plan for our Stage 3 students in 2021, to meet and connect with their teacher at the start of the school year.

**Goal** - Every student knows they are known, valued and cared for. This would be enabled through a one-to-one wellbeing/goal setting meeting with their new teacher at the start of the year to “fast track” student/ teacher connections and facilitate learning.

**Why?** Our experience of one-to-one meetings with students through Kindergarten “Best Start” and other one-to-one mentoring/goal setting meetings at the beginning of the year have proven invaluable for fostering connections and relationships between teachers and students as well as giving teachers an understanding of a student’s achievement levels. The inextricable link between wellbeing and learning in the context of schooling are well researched and reported (Murphy & Holste 2016; Wang, Haertel & Walberg 1997) and the social and emotional factors influencing academic achievement are largely via the contributions that they make to motivation and attention. Furthermore, a students’ ‘sense of belonging’, ‘expectations for success’ and ‘advocacy at school’ is enabled when each individual student has high visibility to at least one staff member to whom they can confidently turn for support and when students are known as individuals across years.

**How?** From Friday 29 January to Tuesday 2 February, all Year 5 and 6 students are timetabled for a 30-minute one-to-one meeting with their 2021 teacher. This meeting is structured with set questions to guide the conversation. The first day of school for all Year 5 and 6 students remains as Friday 29 January but they will not be with their 2021 class teacher until Wednesday 3 February.

***Below are some more ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ to assist with understanding this initiative:***

**Q. How will this benefit students?**



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A: We believe that this extra one-to-one time is an invaluable opportunity for teachers to establish positive connections with their students ahead of the school year in a calm setting, free from the competing energies of other students. At Newport, we seek to build strong pastoral connections with our students and this is just one of the ways we do this. Further, it is just as important for teachers to have the opportunity to have one to one time with the student in order to get a snapshot of students' thinking and learning and to plan targeted learning experiences to build upon students' skills and conceptual understandings. This would otherwise take much longer in the setting of the classroom with up to 30 students at one time.

We have seen the benefits of the kindergarten best start assessment which provides 30-40 minutes of individual meeting time with the new kindergarten students. These sessions provide invaluable information to the teachers and allow them to plan and create classroom environments that support each child. We believe that giving every teacher the opportunity to meet with their class one to one would allow each child to feel valued, share strengths and weaknesses as well as give the teacher information regarding learning abilities and social emotional needs. It would start the school year in a positive and focused manner.

**Q. What has been the consultation process to date?**

A. The school has consulted with Newport staff, the Director of Educational Leadership (DEL), the Relieving Executive Director, the P & C Executive and conducted a forum with senior students about the proposal.

**Q. Why can't teachers do this when school starts with their whole class?**

A. In a full school day with 30 students in the class, one-to-one meetings in a collaborative and relaxed atmosphere is not possible.

**Q. How will this benefit my child?**

A. Building rapport, giving every student the opportunity to get to know his/her teacher and providing time and a structure to start forming essential bonds between teacher and students is essential to a successful school year.

**Q: Is this meeting mandatory for every Year 5 and 6 student?**

A: Yes. All students will have a time allocated interview session time. Our school is setting aside time because we believe in the power of this type of interview for your child's emotional wellbeing and for their learning outcomes. It is therefore a joint venture between parents and teachers in supporting students to reach their potential.



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**Q. Why isn't this happening for students in Years 1-4?**

A. This is a trial and should it prove successful based on evaluation data from students, parents and staff, it may be extended to other grades in future years.

**Q. Is it compulsory to attend?**

A. Yes.

**Q. How long will the interview session be?**

A. 30 mins with a buffer as required.

**Q. Does my child need to prepare anything for the meeting?**

A. No. Starting to think about school again after the holidays (likes/dislikes/strengths/areas to work on/friendships/personal interests) is the only preparation needed.

**Q. Will the teacher at the appointment be my child's 2021 teacher?**

A. Yes. Unless there are unforeseen circumstances with teaching staff (illness), it is anticipated that the teacher conducting the meeting with your child will be his/her 2021 class teacher.

**Q. Will work be provided for students to complete over these 3 days?**

A. Yes. The students will be provided with suitable work to start the year.

**Q. What do the rest of the students do when they do not have a meeting with their teacher?**

A. A teacher will supervise and deliver the planned lessons for the 3 days while the interviews are taking place.

**Q. What are some of the questions my child will be asked?**

A. What do you like most about school? What do you like least about school? What is your favourite subject? What are you really interested in? What do you think you may like to be when you grow up? How do you get on with your siblings at home? Who are your good friends from last year? In your free time, what do you enjoy doing? What learning experience did you enjoy the most last year? What areas of learning do you feel confident in? Which areas do you wish you could understand better? What goals do you have for this year? What kinds of things do great teachers do? What are your overall goals for you while attending Newport and which high school will you be attending and why? The answers to these questions may influence the content matter taught and possible focus on areas of the curriculum. Eg, I want to have a rounded education but with a



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focus on music and dance as I want to attend a high school with a focus on performing arts. What other activities at Newport do you particularly enjoy (dance, sport ...)? What are your strengths? What do you find challenging? What is one interest you have out of school? How do you learn best? What can we do to help you learn best? The students will also be given a short maths problem to solve and will be asked to read to their teacher.

**Q. Will all students be asked the same questions?**

A. Yes. Teachers have worked together to design the questions and process.

**Q: Will the student's answers be available for parents or a report available (similar to the Best Start Outcomes Report)?**

A: No. A formal report will not be produced from the meeting. However, we plan to share some responses during the parent/teacher interview phase of Semester 1.

**Q. How will this information be used?**

A. The information will enable teachers to make personal connections with each student, support decisions made about class groupings and organisation, as well as the assisting the development of learning plans and individual goals.

**Q. Will the results be shared with anyone else apart from the class teacher?**

Possibly. The students' responses will be used in the context of the school only and for the purposes of understanding and supporting each student's educational needs.

**Q. What if I don't want my child to participate?**

A. This is a highly valuable initiative and we anticipate all students and parents taking advantage of the opportunity.

**Q. What are the next steps?**

A. Prior to the end of Term 4, the process will be discussed with our Year 5 and 6 students (2021), and student interview days and times scheduled.

If you have any further questions about the initiative, please contact the school office.

Kind regards,  
Natalie Baldi



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