‘Let your journey continue at Pacific Pines SHS’

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why Pacific Pines SHS?

At Pacific Pines SHS, we support students to be the best they can be. Our values are for all students to be safe, be respectful, be responsible and be a learner. We foster student learning and encourage students to strive to reach their potential. How do we achieve this? In Junior Secondary, we work closely with the students to harness their strengths and support them to develop their abilities and interests.

We at Pacific Pines care about your child’s future and create opportunities for them to be strong, proud and successful young people. We achieve this by catering to individuals through differentiated teaching styles, high order thinking, varied pedagogical approaches and multiple approaches to genre.

Distinct Identity

Will there be a Junior Secondary only area within the school grounds?

Yes. The Junior Secondary will be around the General Studies (GS) and Junior Secondary (JS) buildings. The area includes seating, shade and play areas. The Year Coordinator and form teachers are also closely located to the year level area.

What measures will the school put into place to handle the influx of both Year 7 and Year 8 students in one year?

A new Junior Secondary area has been established to cater for each year level. Extra staffing will come in 2015. A Year Coordinator will also be allocated to each year level.

In 2015 both year levels will commence secondary schooling for the first time - this is an important milestone for both year levels and we are committed to ensuring it is treated as such. Each year level will have separate transition days at the end of the year.

Year 7 & 8 students in 2015 will have the opportunity to participate in a school camp experience as part of their introduction to secondary schooling.

Quality Teaching

What are the expected benefits of including Year 7 in the high school?

The Australian Curriculum has been written for Year 7 students with the understanding that it will be delivered in specialist settings by subject specialist teachers. It is also recognised that with the introduction of the Prep year of schooling that Year 7 students are ready for the move to high school. In secondary school, students will enjoy greater access to specialist facilities, e.g., science labs, kitchens and workshop facilities and specialist teaching in their subjects of study.
Will my student have the same teacher for a number of subject areas?

Where possible, students will have the same teacher for English/ SOSE and Mathematics/Science. This teacher would be a specialist in each of these areas.

Do you have extension programs for Junior Secondary students?

Yes. They are called Excellence programs. You need to apply to be involved in these programs. The Accelerate programs focuses on Academic Excellence and will run for Yrs 7 & 8; the Excellence programs in Dance, Sports and Japanese are for Yr 8 only.

Will students have laptops in Junior Secondary?

Not at this stage for Years 7 & 8. However, there are computer facilities available to students at lunch time, before and after school in the Resource Centre as well as during class time when the teacher has prepared computer room lessons.

Year 9 students will have access to the Laptop Hire Scheme but this is not compulsory.

How are student strengths and weaknesses identified and supported?

Prior to enrolment Pacific Pines SHS staff members meet with primary teachers to gain a detailed picture of each child, including any learning difficulties and strengths. This information is also sought from parents and the student at the enrolment interview.

Teachers regularly collect information regarding student achievement during the year. This can include a mix of in-class assessment or standardised tests such as NAPLAN. Reports are provided to parents three times each year with parent-teacher interviews held each semester. Parents are encouraged to contact teachers at any time to discuss student progress.

Students have access to a wide variety of support and extension opportunities.

Will students remain in the same classroom or move throughout the school day?

To ensure students access the most appropriate specialist facilities for the subject they are studying, students will move classrooms at times throughout the day however, they will have one ‘home room’ where their core subjects (Maths and English) will be held.

Will the teaching format be more like primary school or high school?

The Australian Curriculum is designed to increase independence and provide more complexity as students move from primary to high school. High school is designed to offer students a greater variety of choices and to develop in them a higher level of independence. Teachers cater for the various stages of development throughout students’ time in secondary school and teaching strategies reflect this.
What assessment workload will Junior Secondary students have? The number of assessment items students need to complete in a term is overwhelming.

Assessment is set in each year level to reflect the requirements of the Australian Curriculum. Assessment planners can be found on the school website at the beginning of each semester so that students can see when assessments are due and manage the workload as appropriate. Class teachers will often provide in-class time for assessment.

What is the average size of the class?

The average class size is 28 students.

How much homework is given each week?

Generally, one hour per subject per week. This amount may increase around assessment and exam time.

Student Wellbeing and Development

How much will my student interact with older students?

Students will be able to access shared spaces during break times and before and after school, e.g. hall, oval, library, canteen, bus stop. Each year level has a dedicated area for break times. Teachers, Year Coordinators and Deputy Principals provide supervision in all year level and shared use areas of the school.

What support is available for students if they have an issue – academic, social, emotional?

Pacific Pines SHS provides comprehensive support for students at various levels. Form teachers and the Year Level Coordinator provide an easy point of contact for most issues of concern relating to social and emotional wellbeing. The Guidance Officer, School Chaplain and Nurse and other staff support is provided if needed. Class (subject) teachers and subject Heads of Department are available to students and parents to discuss student academic progress or provide assistance with assessment requirements.

Does the school have a strong behaviour management program that is used by both teachers and administration?

Pacific Pines SHS has consistent practices to ensure all students feel part of a safe, supportive environment. Inappropriate behaviour is not acceptable and there are clear consequences consistently enforced to address issues that arise. Our Behaviour Management Flow Chart can be found on the school website. Parent communication is a critical aspect of ensuring that school and home work together to address inappropriate behaviours.

Good behaviour is recognised and celebrated as providing a solid foundation for student success at school.
What type of orientation program will you have to ensure students aren’t too overwhelmed with the complexities of high school, including workload?

Our contact with primary students is ongoing through a variety of experience days, primary visits or ‘Roadshows’ and subject specific programs. Some of our other transition procedures include an Orientation Day in Term 4 and specific Week 1 procedures which include a staggered start for our new students and extra time with their form teacher and student leaders with an extended Pastoral Care program. During the early weeks of the year teachers constantly revisit our practices, polices and structures to help support the successful transition of students into high school.

How will the school manage bullying?

*Pacific Pines SHS has a zero tolerance approach to bullying as outlined in our Behaviour Management Plan. As part of our Pastoral Care program students are regularly reminded of the consequences and effects of bullying including through social media. Bullying issues and consequences will also be outlined in the pastoral care program.*

**Leadership**

What leadership opportunities will be available for my student who will miss out on being a school leader?

*Leadership development will form part of our pastoral care program from the start of Year 7. If students wish, they can then nominate for a number of Junior Leadership positions which are awarded for the commencement of Year 7. In Year 9, students can nominate to become Junior Secondary School Captains.*

*All students have the opportunity to be a leader at Pacific Pines SHS. This can be achieved through simple actions such as being a good role model, being proud of the school, wearing the uniform correctly and being a responsible learner in the classroom.*

**Community**

In what ways will the school keep me updated about my student?

*The student’s year level team, in particular the pastoral care teacher, will regularly communicate with parents about all aspects of his or her schooling. This will often occur through a monthly newsletter and parent email. Subject teachers and Heads of Department will also contact parents as needed. Newsletters, the school website and Facebook are other ways that you can keep up to date with all that is happening at Pacific Pines SHS. Throughout the year, there are also parent/teacher interview evenings and other information sessions that you can attend to remain informed.*