

## FERNY GROVE STATE HIGH SCHOOL

### JUNIOR SECONDARY FAQs

Below is a comprehensive - but not exhaustive - list of Frequently Asked Questions from our future and current parents. If you have any further queries please contact Hayley Williamson, Head of Junior Secondary, [hwill308@eq.edu.au](mailto:hwill308@eq.edu.au). We will continually update the information provided here.

#### **Distinct Identity**

##### **Will there be a Year 7 only area within the school grounds?**

*Yes. Every year level has its own area at FGSHS. The Year 7 area, like all areas, includes seating, shade, play areas and lockable bag storage. The Year Coordinator and form teachers are also closely located to the year level area.*

##### **Where will the Year 7 precinct be?**

*Year 7 2015 has been allocated the area around the Music auditorium (V Block)*

##### **What will you do that is different to what you do for the Year 8s now?**

*FGSHS is investing a significant amount of time and research into our Year 7 and 8 programs in 2015. We want to ensure that our subject offerings, teaching methods, pastoral care and transition programs and processes are designed to cater for the age appropriate needs of the cohort. Staff will collect information from primary schools to best match student needs and ensure that the programs for Year 7 are best suited to their stage of intellectual, emotional, physical and social development.*

##### **Will Year 7 students be allowed to participate in GBS (Greater Brisbane Schools) sports?**

*Yes. Year 7s will become part of the Junior teams which will consist of Years 7 – 9; Senior teams are Years 10 – 12.*

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

*A staged refurbishment program has been commenced to ensure that the school has the capacity for extra students. A new year level area will be established to cater for each year level. Extra staffing will be provided.*

##### **Will interschool sport still occur for Year 7 students?**

*Across the district schools are currently investigating options to maximise opportunities for students to participate in interschool sport.*

##### **Will Year 7 students be able to participate in the whole school instrumental music program?**

*Yes. Currently Year 7s are involved in the program and this will continue.*

##### **How will the Year 8s starting in 2015 have their own introduction to high school experience?**

*In 2015 the Year 8 students will commence secondary schooling for the first time - this is an important milestone for them and we are committed to ensuring it is treated as such. Working with our primary feeders schools we continue to refine our transition program to cater for the needs of new secondary students. Year 8 subject offerings, teaching methods, pastoral care and transition programs and processes are designed to cater for the age appropriate needs of the cohort.*

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

**Where will the Year 8 2015 precinct be?**

*A new year level area will be created and Year 8 2015 has been allocated the area around Science Block (G Block).*

**What sports will be available for Junior students?**

*A range of sporting opportunities will be available to Year 7 including volleyball, touch football, futsal, Rugby League, Rugby Union, soccer and netball.*

**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 access to a locker?**

*Yes, students will have the opportunity to access locker facilities.*

## **Quality Teaching**

**Will my student have the same teacher for a number of subject areas?**

*Where possible, students will have the same teacher for form and Pastoral Care. In the Junior School, students could also have the same teacher for a couple of subject areas. This teacher would be a specialist in each of these areas. FGSHS is investing significant time and research into ensuring our Junior Secondary teaching and learning model is the most appropriate for students in Years 7-9.*

**Will students be exposed to all subjects available in Year 7?**

*The subjects students study in Year 7 are derived from the Australian Curriculum. It is our intention to ensure this subject range is as broad as our facilities and teacher expertise is able to provide.*

**Will Dance be included as an Arts option?**

*New subjects are regularly introduced at Ferny Grove State High School based on student demand, available facilities and teacher expertise. Dance is presently not offered but could be considered in the future.*

**Will students have the opportunity to do both Indonesian and German?**

*We are investigating options where students will be able to experience both languages that Ferny Grove SHS has to offer.*

**Will students be able to complete languages other than Indonesian and German?**

*Students are able to access languages other than Indonesian and German through Distance Education.*

**Will students in Year 7 have the opportunity to do German Immersion?**

*Yes*

**I'm concerned that Business/Information Technology and Industrial Technology might be too advanced for students in Year 7. What types of topics might they cover?**

*The Australian Curriculum has been written to include topics that suit the appropriate maturity level of students.*

**Will students have laptops in Year 7? If so, will this one laptop last 6 years of school or will it be replaced after 3 years?**

*The current school policy for the roll-out of 1:1 devices for students is to include Year 7 2015. However, this will be dependent on a variety of factors including financial support from parents and government funding as appropriate. It is planned that a replacement device would be available during the six years of secondary school.*

**Do we have to be involved in the take home laptop scheme?**

*No. Participation in the 1:1 device take home scheme is at the discretion of the parent/guardian. Laptops will still be provided for day loan to non-participating students.*

**How do you monitor laptop use?**

*Ferny Grove SHS has processes in place to monitor the use of electronic devices in the classroom. These processes are a part of our **Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students** and **Student ICT Policy and Acceptable Use Agreement** that all parents and students sign upon enrolment. Security is installed on each laptop to ensure that students are unable to access inappropriate internet sites.*

**How are student strengths and weaknesses identified and supported?**

*Prior to enrolment FGSHS 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. Individual support and extension programs flow from this information.*

*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 four 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, e.g. Learning Support, Numeracy and Literacy Intervention Programs, Extension Maths, Science & English classes plus German Immersion program, Impact Maths and Science, Greater Brisbane Schools Sport, university experience days, Opti-MINDS, competitions, and online programs.*

**Will there be extension classes?**

*Yes – Science, Maths & English, Gifted and Talented program, specialised programs and on-line extension programs.*

**Are core classes streamed according to student capacity?**

*Our practice mirrors the results of many years' international research showing that full streaming is not the most beneficial way of grouping students. Individual student needs are identified through the collection of data during enrolment processes and students are placed in support or extension classes as appropriate. This practice continues throughout all year levels at FGSHS.*

**How will the curriculum + Core subjects/subject offerings compare to the current primary school model?**

*Whilst many subjects will be familiar, The Australian Curriculum introduces new subjects in Years 7 and 8. Many of these new subjects will be offered to students as electives.*

**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 throughout the day.*

**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 Year 7 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 are distributed 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 or vary due dates according to student workload. Various learning strategies such as study skills and time management are taught by every teacher but with a particular focus in their Pastoral Care program.*

## **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 and students from other year levels are not permitted in an area that is not their own. 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?**

*Ferny Grove 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. Guidance 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. A core group of Form Teachers, Year Coordinators, Guidance Officers and Deputy Principals remain with each year level from the commencement of high school until the completion of Year 12.*

*Please follow [this link](#) for more information.*

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

*Ferny Grove SHS has consistent practices to ensure all students feel part of a safe, supportive environment. A recent Discipline Audit of our practices and processes by Education Queensland confirmed that the **Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students** provides a consistent framework to support students in demonstrating appropriate behaviour in school and the community. Inappropriate behaviour is not acceptable and there are clear consequences consistently enforced to address issues that arise. 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.*

### **How do you provide individual attention in such a large school?**

*A large school provides many curricula and extra curricula opportunities not available in smaller schools. Over many years as a large school we have established a range of practices, structures and relationships that ensure that individual student needs are met throughout their enrolment at FGSHS.*

*Our sub-school year level structure provides a solid platform to ensure students are individually provided for.*

*Each year level team consists of a form teacher/Pastoral Care teacher, Year Level Coordinator, Year Level Deputy Principal, Year Level Guidance Officer, designated Head of Department Junior/Senior Secondary and access to Year 11 Peer Mediators (Junior School).*

### **Will students be able to play sports during lunch?**

*Play and sport equipment is available to borrow every lunch time. The hall and oval are supervised daily with activities regularly run by Year Coordinators, Chaplains and our Defence Mentor.*

### **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 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. During the early weeks of the year teachers constantly revisit our practices, policies and structures to help support the successful transition of students into high school.*

### **How will you address issues related to exposure to much older students?**

*Our sub-school structures help ensure that each year level has their own area within the school as well as access to shared areas. Appropriate interaction between students of differing year levels has been a strong practice at Ferny Grove SHS for many years. Careful teacher supervision ensures that students have their own space and are confident in their ability to mix with those from other year levels.*

*Our Pastoral Care program is specifically designed to support students with their whole high school experience. We also have regular year parades and assemblies where any issues that arise are discussed.*

### **How will the school manage bullying?**

*Ferny Grove SHS has a zero tolerance approach to bullying as outlined in our **Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students**. As part of our Pastoral Care program students are regularly reminded of the dangers of bullying including through social media.*

### **Will Year 7 and 8 students go on camp?**

*In 2015 both cohorts will attend camps separately and then the camp structure will be Year 7, 9 & 11 in subsequent years.*

### **What opportunities are available for students at lunch times?**

*There are many activities available for students each day. These are read out as part of the daily Student Notices by form teachers at the start of each day.*

*Examples include: Reading Challenge, Debating, Magazine Committee, Opti-MINDS, 'Chappy' activities, FG Radio, Maths Teams Challenge, Science Week, Various Curriculum Weeks, Library activities, Concerts, Talent Quest, Interact, Student Representative Council, designated year level precincts lunch time groups, subject ambassador led activities.*

## 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. Students with leadership aspirations and/or potential will also be identified through pre-enrolment conversations with their primary school. If students wish, they can then nominate for a number of Junior Leadership positions which are awarded for the commencement of Year 9. They provide leadership in: Student Representative Council, sport, Music, Instrumental Music, The Arts, Science, Languages, Humanities, Technology, etc.*

## Community

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

*The student's year level team will regularly communicate with parents about all aspects of his or her schooling. This will often occur through a year level 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 Ferny Grove. Parents are encouraged to phone the office at any time if you're unsure of who to speak with and office staff will ensure that the appropriate person contacts you. Throughout the year, there are also parent/teacher interview evenings and other information sessions that you can attend to remain informed.*

### **In what ways can I be involved with my student's school?**

*There are a number of parent and community groups that you can become involved in, such as P & C, Language Parents Support Group, Instrumental Music Support Group, various subject specific parent reference groups, Canteen, Book/Stationery Store, parent guest speakers, sports events and the Kokoda Challenge. We also encourage past students to come in and facilitate workshops.*

### **How will the school communicate assessment/exam timelines and dates?**

*Assessment is set in each year level to reflect the requirements of the Australian Curriculum. Assessment planners are distributed at the beginning of each semester so that students can see when assessment is due and manage the workload as appropriate. Class teachers will often provide in-class time for assessment or vary due dates according to student workload. Various learning strategies such as study skills and time management are taught by every teacher but with a particular focus in their Pastoral Care program.*