Welcome to 2015 to all Western Heights College families, both new and returning, to what has begun a great year and I’m sure will continue to be a great year for all family members. I extend a very warm welcome to our Year 7 students who are beginning their secondary education at our College, and to the many new students who have joined our college.

The start to our year at the College has been like no other, for now we really are one college united on one site. And what an amazing site it is! The new buildings, the beautiful environment, the colour and vibrancy of the spaces – not to mention inside lockers and student toilets! We have 3 state-of-the-art specialist science rooms, 2 commercial kitchens, music instruction and practice rooms, a Performing Arts Centre with exceptional sound and light and new learning spaces in purpose built Learning Communities. I’ve been Principal of three different schools before joining Western Heights College three years ago. This is the best start to any new school year that I’ve experienced in any setting, a real credit to everyone who belongs and contributes to Western Heights College.

There has been a lot of time and effort spent planning what we want to happen, communicating these plans, moving out of one campus and into new buildings in our new school. Now we are putting our efforts into actioning those plans consistently within our college, beginning as one college on one site as we intend to continue. The attendance at mentor meetings for students in the Years 7 – 10 Learning Communities has really set our students up well for success in 2015. Thanks to families who attended their scheduled mentor meetings and who are providing support to their sons and daughters to make sure the great start to the year continues.

There are many people at Western Heights College who deserve credit for our exceptional start to 2015; staff, families and parents. As our college is centred on students, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of our students: their positivity, their ability to adapt to change quickly and effectively, their eagerness to work with us to make Western Heights College the best school in Geelong, one that we are all very proud of. It’s great to see students looking happy, smiling and chatting with their friends and teachers, as well as being on task and working hard during class time. It is our expectation that all students demonstrate their belonging to our college by wearing their college uniform with pride. And students are doing this, symbolising their connectedness to our college. I thank parents for your support in making this happen.

We have begun the year strongly in a year which we have called, “Our Year of Writing.” Last year you would recall the focus in the college on Respect, linked to our college values represented by SOAR – Safety, Organisation, Achievement and Respect. This was also demonstrated in our involvement as a White Ribbon Ambassador College. In our year of writing we aim to develop exceptional writing skills in our students, linked to our college value of Achievement. Courtney Crane, journalist from the Geelong News and the Geelong Advertiser, will be our Ambassador for our year of writing. She is looking forward to sharing with students her in-depth knowledge of the writing process, gained from her experience as a journalist who publishes articles for large audiences through the media.

You will have received the term one calendar of events with student reports at the end of last year, also accessible from our home page. These calendars outline the dates of events during this term.
You will identify from this calendar the dates of student photos, immunization, sports carnivals (both swimming and athletics), the Mufti Day, and the arrangements for feedback on your child’s progress and achievement at the end of the term.

I invite all families to visit the College Swimming Sports at the Kardinia Pool on Wednesday, 18 February where students will compete as members of our four houses -

- Quamby (Red)
- Vines (Green)
- Barton (Blue)
- Minerva (Yellow)

This is also a day of compulsory attendance, and while some students may not be strong swimmers, by dressing in house colours and supporting their house and the competitors, they are building and sharing their connection to their college, their house and their peers, setting themselves up for a great day.

I look forward to the work that we will do together, focused on supporting the achievement of every one of our students - your sons and daughters.

Robyn Jeffery
College Principal

WHC PARENT E-NEWSLETTER:
The College Newsletter will be posted on our external website every second Friday.

During term one these dates are -

- Edition 1: Friday February 6
- Edition 2: Friday February 20
- Edition 3: Friday March 6
- Edition 4: Friday March 20

WELCOME TO WESTERN HEIGHTS COLLEGE:
A most positive start due to the communication between students, school and home.

A big warm welcome to all Year 7 students and their families. We have had a most successful start to the school year in the Year 7 Learning Community with students being ‘Ready to Learn’. We know this because students have been in full school uniform, on time, with all expected equipment for every session of every day so far. I would like to thank all students for their commitment to their education journey at Western Heights College. Furthermore, this could not happen without the full support of students’ families. I would like to thank all family members who have supported their child to make the very best start to our college year.

ATTENDANCE:
We have high expectations that every student attends every day at Western Heights College. There are always going to be days where some children are unwell or there are circumstances out of the family’s control when a child cannot make it to school. We appreciate parents communicating this information to us. We have had 100 per cent attendance for the first two days of school, with only two students being absent on the third day. Those absences were ‘explained absences’ with parents calling in to let us know of appointments etc. Again, thank you very much for the communication. For all known absences please call the College Office on 5277 1177.

PLANNERS:
We will begin to sign planners each week, every Friday during Personal Learning Sessions. Please make sure that you are continuing the excellent communication between student, school and home by signing the planner on the bottom of the page on the right hand side, down the bottom where it says Parent/Guardian and write any necessary comments for that week. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure their planner is signed on the Thursday night of every week, so they attend Personal Learning with a signed planner.

CAMP NILLAHCOOTIE 25 – 27 FEBRUARY:
Camp is quickly approaching. Mentor Teachers have had many conversations with students and parents to inform them of camp payments and dates. We have had much success working with all students to ensure they will be attending camp. We are confident that all students will attend camp.

There are numerous benefits gained from attending camp. Some of these are: mingling with teachers and getting to know staff really well outside of the teaching spaces, students stepping outside of their comfort zone and overcoming challenges such as fear of heights, learning that takes place outside of the regular program such as resilience, communication, team work and other life skills, not to mention an extraordinary amount of fun. Don’t miss out!!
I would like to extend a warm welcome to the students in Year 8 and their families. Our community has made quite an impressive start with our students settling in splendidly, adapting to Year 8, 2015. I could not be more pleased when I look around our learning community and see right from the beginning of the year our students engaged and eager to achieve great results. This week we have achieved plenty with organisation, effort and our learnings. Well done on a very successful start.

Nicholas Chudoschnik
Year 8 Learning Community Leader

The Year 9 Team would like to welcome all the Year 9 students and their families to 2015. We hope that you had a very enjoyable break and are looking forward to the start of the new year. The Year 9 staff really enjoyed the mentor meetings, which allowed us to meet our Year 9 families and create the strong connection.

The Year 9 students have had the opportunity to start all their classes and complete their Personal Choice subjects. This has allowed the Year 9 students and teachers to start to develop strong learning relationships. This has also given the students the opportunity to use and experience the fantastic facilities Western Heights College has to offer.

This year the Year 9 students will have the opportunity to participate in the Geelong Tertiary Futures Program, which will run for 10 days over the first semester. The Year 9 camp will be taking place in Term 3 led by AUS Camp. Students will have the opportunity to complete a range of activities on the camp. Further information about the camp will follow.

Mr Greenhalgh and the Year 9 Team
Welcome and congratulations to Year 10 students who have made a very good start to term one during weeks one and two. There has been lots of exciting firsts and stimulating learning for our Year 10’s as their electives take them into the impressive new buildings around the school.

Some students will participate in the VET Taster at GTTC every Thursday starting this week and many students are commencing studies in VCE units 1&2 in a range of subjects.

Year 10 students have also commenced their MIPS (Managed Individual Pathway Meetings) with Tracey Jeffery and are enjoying discussing pathways and future plans with her. Tracey has sent information out and parents are welcome to attend.

Mr Roger Conron
Year 10 Learning Community Leader.

Firstly, I would like to welcome all of the Year 11 students into our new purpose built VCE building on the Vines Road site for the 2015 school year. I would especially like to welcome our five new students joining us at Western Heights College.

The excitement and enthusiasm around finally being on one site has been the overwhelming feeling for both students and staff as we moved into VCEWEST – the Year 11 side of our VCE building. Many of the conversations I have had with our 11’s have echoed positively the new learning spaces, science rooms and the canteen! As a VCE Science teacher I am delighted with the set out of the new Science rooms and their ability to be changed around to suit different activities.

I must make comment on how well our students have begun this year. I have been extremely pleased with the maturity and willingness in which they have thrown themselves into their work this past week and a half. Their movement to and from the various buildings their subjects are taught in, including the new Performing Art and Food Building (PAF), the DAT and Middle years Red building has been a credit to themselves and a great example for the other year levels of our college.

Year 11 is the start of a very busy, and at times stressful, two years for students completing VCE and VCAL and we are lucky enough to have an experienced team of mentors to support them. I am pleased to have Mia Atherton, Marli McCarthy, Nicole Henry, Adrian McCall, Breanna Loe, Leanne Jemmett, Zane McKeon, Ken Lundberg and returning to our college Nicky Veal as the Year 11 teacher team.

As mentors, these teachers are here to support and advise our students to be successful in all their studies.

As the year progresses, a range of things will and do pop up that can heighten the stresses that can be felt by students as they complete their VCE/VCAL. Over the next week, your child’s mentor teacher will make contact with you. Feel free to ask them any questions you might have regarding your child’s schooling and I urge you to contact them if you have any concerns.

I should also congratulate the majority of students who have returned to the college in full school uniform. Pride in the uniform enhances a student’s connectivity to the college and enhances the community’s beliefs in our college. If you are unsure of the student’s dress code it is found in the student study planner (a must for all students to cover the organizational requirements of VCE/VCAL). Specifically, the uniform requirement for the summer uniform is “Plain White Socks” for both males and females and black polishable shoes for boys. I ask you to please ensure that these rules are followed as this a priority at the WHC.

Students completing VCE/VCAL will also be exposed to a range of subjects and sessions that will help them learn and develop the skills required to be successful students. This includes:

**VET classes**: These will start next week for first year students at both the GITTC and Gordon TAFE. Other venues have a range of starting times that have been given to the relative students.

**Advisory classes**: 
- Topics covered in this session are designed to help students with the pressure of VCE and life outside/post high school. Study techniques, prioritising work, nutrition and note taking have all been included. Time will also be spent during the latter part of the year on pathways.

**Tutorial**
- The aim of these sessions is to develop the abilities of our year 11 students to work as effective and independent VCE students and to develop the habits of successful learners.
- Students spend this 100 minute block completing their choice of the work required for their other studies.
- The Tutorial Teacher is present to provide support and guidance to the students during these sessions.

**Independent Review and Preparation (IRP) Sessions**
- This is the 100 minute session held in the opposite day to the students’ tutorial session.
- Students are not directly supervised during these sessions.
- Students who live close to WHC are allowed to go to home to study; students who catch a bus home from Vines Road must remain at the college until 3:20pm. This is aligned with WHC policy for study sessions in Year 12.
- Most students in Year 11 have ONE I.R.P. session per week.
- Monday/ Wednesday VET students also have an extra IRP session.

Mr Brett Bullock
Year 11 Learning Community Leader
There will be a formal presentation that will address:

- Requirements of the Victorian Certificate of Education or the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
- Assessment
- Support and resources provided by Western Heights College
- Pathways planning
- Student wellbeing during Year 12

This will then be followed by an opportunity for parents/guardians and students to meet with staff in an informal manner to discuss learning options where refreshments will be available.

Students will also have the opportunity to try on, and order their Year 12 jumpers.

LEARNING RESOURCES:
A number of external organisations provide Year 12 students resources and workshops aimed at maximizing their learning. Many of these encourage you to subscribe, and then forward you information on an ongoing basis at no cost. I encourage you to go to the following information to get further details:

www.tsfx.com.au
www.neap.com.au

Ms Kerrie Hammond
Year 12 Learning Community Leader

MYLE:
Year 12 students have the opportunity to lease a laptop computer for the year. The deposit is $50, payments should be made at the College Office and the receipt taken to the Network Office for the computer pickup. It is terrific to note at this point two thirds of the Year 12 student population have actioned this and have put themselves in a terrific position to make use of our OneNote resources that support their learning.

YEAR 12 INFORMATION EVENING:
The Year 12 Information Evening is next Monday February 9 in the VCE Centre Centre. It is scheduled from 7.00pm until 8.00pm
WEARING THE COLLEGE UNIFORM WITH PRIDE

Students at Western Heights College wear the correct college uniform each day in order to promote safety, respect, pride and belonging. The image of our college in the community is influenced by the way students wear their uniform.

We have systems in place to support students and ensure that this routine is one that students adhere to. We have been talking to students and parents for some time about the key areas that some students have previously had problems with: white socks and facial piercings. In 2015 there is a non-negotiable expectation that students wear the full college uniform.

In newsletter articles last year we wrote about the expectation that we would have in 2015, today we are keen to explain how we support your child if they arrive and are not wearing the correct uniform:

- Students will be asked to remove any article of clothing or jewellery that is not part of the college uniform. This includes hoodies and all facial piercings.

- If the student is wearing an item that is not easily removable (e.g. tracksuit pants or t-shirt) they will be given a replacement item to wear for the day by their teacher. Their name is recorded and the time at the end of the day they return the item. If the item is not returned parents will be sent an invoice to cover the cost.

- In the case of students wearing black socks, they are given a pair of white socks and a $2.00 charge is invoiced to their parent account.

All students are aware of the process and the vast majority wear the uniform properly. Our processes are working and the students are looking fantastic as they walk the grounds of the college.

If you have any questions about the uniform processes please contact your child’s mentor teacher for clarification.

BREAKFAST PROGRAM IS BACK!

Each Wednesday morning beginning on 11 February, before school students will be able to buy a cheese or vegemite toastie and a fruit box for $1.00 from the Breakfast Program.

This year the Breakfast Program will operate from the PAF CAF in the Performing Arts/Food, (PAF), building from 8.00am. We appreciate the Western Heights Uniting Church volunteers who run this program each week and to Brumbys (Minerva Road) who support the program with bread.

MYKI SCHOOL BUS ROUTES:

McHarry’s Buslines website now includes timetable and route information for all myki school bus routes. The myki school buses are also commonly known as school specials or conveyance buses.


Congratulations to the VCE and VCAL students who have been working since Thursday last week in brand new spaces. It was a joy to see the students arrive at the VCE Centre organised and ready to learn. We started the day with year level assemblies and there was lots of information about the routines in the college that students have quickly adopted. We have been consistently impressed with the students’ mature approach to learning in classes and commitment to independent study in their IRP sessions. Our adult learning space is working well.

On Monday the Year 10s arrived and have had a similarly successful start to the year. They are undertaking their Arts and Science electives in the new facilities and working well in the DAT. Their teacher team met with them prior to lessons starting and this has given us a flying start to the year and their studies.

Carol Jansen
Later Years Principal

Robyn Anderson
Middle Years Principal
A warm welcome back to all! Our term has commenced as expected, using the old adage, “full steam ahead” – and this is very encouraging as it is both positive and exciting: positive because we are not a dormant community of school students and staff, rather we are a fast paced, interactive and engaging community of student led learning, exciting because we are seeing continual growth in a tangible way on a daily basis in our students.

Students have an exciting term ahead with the athletics and swimming carnivals in Term 1. They are fantastic days with students supporting their houses and wearing fantastic outfits in full voice.

It has also been great to see students coming to class with great excitement, eager to learn. Students have made a very positive start in relation to wearing the correct uniform. It is fantastic walking around the college seeing everyone in uniform.

ATTENDANCE AT WESTERN HEIGHTS COLLEGE:
At Western Heights we want our students to get a great education, and the building blocks for a great education begin with our students coming to school each and every day. Missing school can have a major impact on your student’s future – a student missing one day a fortnight means they will miss four full weeks by the end of the year. By Year 10 they’ll have missed more than a year of school.

There is no safe number of days for missing school, each day your child misses puts them behind, and can affect their educational outcomes. Coming to school every day is vital.

If students miss school regularly, they miss out on learning the fundamental skills that will set them up for success. Each missed day is associated with progressively lower achievement in numeracy, writing and reading.

The main reasons for absence are:

- **Sickness** – There are always times when students need to miss school, such as when they’re ill. It’s vital that they’re only away on the days they are genuinely sick, and setting good sleep patterns, eating well and exercising regularly can make a big difference.

- **Holidays** – It’s vital that holidays are planned during school holidays where possible, and not during the term if it can be avoided.

- **“Day off”** – Think twice before letting your student have a “day off” as they could fall behind their classmates – every day counts.

- **Truancy** – This is when students choose not to go to school without their parent’s permission. There can be many reasons for truancy. The best way to address this is for schools and parents to work together.

- Missing school can have a big impact on students academically and socially. It can affect their test results, including VCE, and, just as importantly, it can affect their relationships with other students, and lead to social isolation.

If for any reason your child must miss school, please speak with your child’s mentor teacher and find out what work your child needs to do to keep up.

It’s never too late to improve attendance. Going to school more often can lead to better outcomes. Every day counts! Western Heights is here to help – if you’re having attendance issues please speak to us about ways to address these concerns.

Have a great term

Mr Paul Rogers and the Wellbeing Team
THREE BIG CHANGES TO THE VACCINE PROGRAM:
In 2015 three major changes to the vaccine program will impact on parents of secondary school students:

- The Barwon Health Immunisation Service may contact you about the secondary school vaccine program. Schools have been authorised to provide parent contact details to local councils for this purpose. Contact Robyn Anderson, Middle Years Principal on 5277 1177 by 28 February 2015 if you do not want your contact details given to the Barwon Health Immunisation Service.

- In 2015 only the vaccine that protects against diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough will be offered to all students in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10. From 2016, this vaccine will be offered to Year 7 students only. This will provide earlier protection from these diseases.

- The time-limited human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine program for Year 9 boys was completed in December 2014. A catch-up program is being offered through Barwon Health Immunisation Service for those who have not yet completed the course until 23rd December 2015. HPV vaccine will continue to be offered to all students (both male and female) in Year 7 from 2015.

Look out for the vaccine consent form/s coming home from school with your child. You need to read, complete and return the form/s regardless of whether your child is being immunised at school.

To learn more about the changes, the diseases, the vaccines, or how you can prepare your child for vaccination go to: immunehero.health.vic.gov.au

@ the Library:
What a wonderful Library we have! A huge Western Heights College collection of books, magazines, ebooks, and other resources, as well as the Geelong Regional Library Corporation collection!

All members of our community are able to access both of these collections – including parents. Just pop in and see us, we are located in the orange building.

The Library supports all students in their learning, with the latest resources available, as well as new and popular young adult and adult novels for some leisure reading.

Some exciting initiatives at our Library offer students a range of lunchtime activities promoting thought processes, social skills and artistic ability, as well as providing a lot of fun!
Bell Park Junior Trials:
The Bell Park Football & Netball Club invites all existing netballers and new netballers to attend our Junior Tryouts for the 2015 season.

Sunday February 8 and 15 at the Bell Park netball courts
- Under 13’s: 10.00am - 12.00pm
- Under 15’s: 12.00pm - 2.00pm
- Under 17’s: 2.00pm - 4.00pm

Players are to arrive 10 minutes before start time to register. Please wear a plain white top and dark shorts/skirt. BYO drink bottle. The under 11’s will start training on Tuesday the 24th February 4.30pm at the BP courts.

If unable to attend or you have any enquiries please contact Carmen Williams on 0408 294 415
carmen.mary.williams3@hotmail.com
Welcome back to 2015. I have lots of exciting things to share with you at the beginning of this year and am looking forward to the many pathways events we have planned for this year.

THE NEW CAREERS CENTRE
I am now located in the new Careers Centre in our brand new Administration Building at Vines Road. The Careers Centre is located on the far side of the Administration Building closest to the VCE Centre and the car park on Vines Road. There is an external door to the Careers Centre that students and parents can enter. If I am in an appointment, students and parents can enter the Administration Building via the back door and wait in the waiting area to the left. Alternatively, parents can enter via the College Office and they will be directed to the Careers Centre.

YEAR 10 MIPS APPOINTMENTS
Year 10 Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs) appointments commenced this week on Tuesday the 3 February. All Year 10 students will have received their individual appointment time from their mentor teacher. If a student is unsure of their appointment time they can check on the Careers board in the Year 10 Learning Community or on the MIPS Page – from the Home Page under Curriculum>MIPS-Careers>Student Resources. Parents are most welcome and are encouraged to attend with their child. Please let me know if the time does not suit you and I am more than happy to reschedule.

MIPS ONLINE BOOKINGS
The new MIPS Online Booking system is up and running. Students can find this on the Home Page under Curriculum>MIPS Interviews. All scheduled appointments will be booked and students can then view their appointment through the online booking system. If students wish to reschedule, or if students would like to make a time to see me, they can find a blank appointment time on the schedule and click to enter their name. They will receive a web message with a confirmation of their appointment. Alternatively, students can send me a web message with their question or to request an appointment.

SCHEDULE FOR MIPS APPOINTMENTS IN 2015
The following schedule will be followed for the timing of MIPS appointments this year.
Term One: Year 10
Term Two: Year 12
Term Three: Year 11
Term Four: Follow-up appointments

BLOG
I have created a new Western Heights College Careers Blog. The blog will be used to communicate important information about different pathway options and will include information on University, TAFE, Work Experience and lots more. Please subscribe to the blog and keep an eye on it for regularly updated information. http://careerswhc.edublogs.org/

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2014 YEAR 12’S
Congratulations to all of our Year 12 students from 2014 who received University and TAFE offers last month and also to those who have secured full time employment.

WORK EXPERIENCE
I look forward to supporting our Year 10 students in Work Experience again this year. All Year 10 students will have received an introductory package with information and work experience forms from their mentor teacher. Students can access additional copies of forms and helpful information including a list of 2014 work experience employers from the MIPS page – Home Page>Curriculum>MIPS-Careers>Student Resources.

SCHOOL BASED APPRENTICESHIPS/TRAINEESHIPS
There are 15 students within our College currently undertaking School Based Apprenticeships or Traineehips. All students will have received information on days and times of work via a web message. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns relating to your child’s school based apprenticeship or traineeship.

AVALON AIRSHOW CAREERS & SKILLS STUDENT INFORMATION DAY
We have been given the opportunity to take 5 students to the Avalon Air Show on Friday the 27 February to participate in a range of student information sessions to assist students to consider this as a career. Students from Year 9 and 10 will be given the opportunity to apply and will need to submit an application of no more than 50 words stating how this opportunity would benefit them and help them in making their pathway choices. Applications will close on Friday the 13 February.

Miss Tracey Jeffery
MIPS Co-ordinator