

SALTWATER P-9 COLLEGE NEWSLETTER



KEY DATES

Student stationery pack
pick up: 20th - 23rd
January, 2020 in the school
Gymnasium

Teaching Staff and
Education Support Staff
commence on Tuesday 28th
January 2020

Years 1-6 students
commence on Wednesday
29th January 2020

Prep students commence
on Monday, 3rd February
2020 - Please note that all
Prep students DO NOT
attend school every
Wednesday in February.
Full week attendance for
Prep students will
commence from Monday
2nd March 2020.

A NOTE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents,

It's time to say goodbye to Saltwater's inaugural year. This year has certainly flown by way too quickly. It was a super busy year for us all, as we worked tirelessly to meet deadlines, manage the influx of enrolments and space, trouble shoot and solve obstacles and challenges along the way, as well as meet our learning goals and objectives. It has been all systems go, with very little down time, in order to ensure that Saltwater's first year was a successful one. I think you would agree that as a collective group we have managed to build a highly effective school that not only focuses on results and student learning outcomes, but it also encompasses a culture of inclusiveness, trust, respect and positivity in and amongst all stakeholders.

I think by now we all know the school's vision and direction. Therefore, everything that we do and every decision that we make at the school level revolves around what's best for the children of Saltwater, academically, socially, physically and emotionally, followed by the needs and wellbeing of the staff, then the parents and then the wider community needs.

It's not until people point out the obvious, that makes you sit back and reflect on what has been created, and then you realise that together we have made history. So, during this holiday season, please take some time to reflect on the year that has been, and how far we have come.

I would like to officially thank my leadership team and staff for being the heart and backbone of this organisation. They need to be commended for their efforts, their hard work, flexibility and for being great advocates of and role models to our students.

On behalf of the Saltwater staff, our sincere thanks to every Saltwater parent who has been on this journey with us and has supported us along the way.

Wishing all families a very Merry Christmas and happy holidays. We look forward to a bigger and better 2020. I have no doubt in my mind that together we will continue to achieve whatever we set our minds to.

Regards,
Jackie Daniali
Principal



INTRODUCING NEWLY APPOINTED STAFF FOR 2020

Hi, I'm Katelyn Waldron.

I am a local to Geelong, but moved to Hoppers Crossing last year. I have been teaching for 2 years in Hoppers Crossing, as a Grade 5/6 teacher.

I got married last year, so I'm still adjusting to my teacher name. I went to Japan for my honeymoon, and was lucky enough to see the cherry blossoms in full bloom. My favourite place to discover was Himeji Castle, even though I got really scared of heights while I was climbing to the top. I even got to see the Japanese emperor.

I believe building a relationship with my students and their families is one of the most important parts of teaching. It allows me to better cater for the diverse needs of my students. I am excited by the opportunity to teach at a new school and to help shape Saltwater College while it grows.

I look forward to getting to know everyone in the school community in 2020.

Kind regards,

Katelyn Waldron,

Classroom Teacher, Saltwater P-9 College



My name is Ashleigh Bratby and I am delighted to introduce myself as a classroom teacher at Saltwater P-9 College for 2020. I have recently completed my Bachelor of Education (P-12) at Victoria University. I have always had a passion for teaching and over the last 4 years I have developed my teaching skills across multiple year levels. I have also worked as a swim teacher over the last few years. I aim to create a positive and inclusive classroom and build relationships with all of my students, colleagues and the community. I look forward to meeting many of you in 2020.

Kind regards,

Ashleigh Bratby

Classroom Teacher, Saltwater P-9 College

Dear Saltwater Community,

Hi, my name is Matt Symmons and I am very excited to be joining the team at Saltwater College in 2020. I will be working with Kelliagh Evans, teaching Physical Education. Over the last 15 years I have been at Wembley Primary School in Yarraville and before that I was at Mornington Primary School. I have been a classroom teacher, PE, Art and Music specialist in my teaching roles.

I live in Williamstown with my wife Fiona and two children Mia and Ben, Betsy the dog and Molly the cat. I love surfing, camping, reading, riding and going to the footy watching Essendon. I coach a 13/U Netball team that my daughter plays in at Altona and enjoy helping at my son's Sea Scouts with water based activities.

I look forward to meeting you soon,

Cheers,

Matt Symmons,

Physical Education Teacher, Saltwater P-9 College



INTRODUCING NEWLY APPOINTED STAFF FOR 2020

Dear Saltwater Community,

My name is Lucy Mackintosh and I am so excited to be joining the Saltwater team as a classroom teacher in 2020. I have recently completed my Masters of Primary Teaching at Latrobe University and have been working as a casual relief teacher this term. I have a passion for student education and wellbeing and have high expectations for all students. I focus on understanding how each individual student works so I can cater lessons to their strengths, needs and interests. I also believe in making learning fun and engaging for students to develop them into lifelong learners. I cannot wait to be part of the positive and supportive environment that Saltwater provides for the students, staff and wider school community and I look forward to meeting you all in 2020.

Kind regards,
Lucy Mackintosh
Classroom Teacher, Saltwater P-9 College



Hello Saltwater,

My name is Maree Caminiti and I am very excited to be joining the Saltwater community in 2020. Next year, I will commence my fifth year of teaching, as I have previously taught Year 3 and Prep at Wembley Primary School.

As I embark on a new journey at Saltwater I will be teaching Food Technology across all year levels, which allows me to combine my two loves of teaching and baking. When I'm not in the classroom I am in my kitchen cooking up a storm!

I am looking forward to the school holidays to rejuvenate down by the beach before I start at Saltwater, eagerly anticipating meeting so many new faces, students, parents and colleagues.

If you see me around, please come and say hello!
Enjoy the school holidays!

Kindest,
Maree Caminiti,
Food Technology Teacher, Saltwater P-9 College

Hola! My name is Anne MacKelvie and I would like to introduce myself as another Spanish teacher for 2020.

I have been a teacher for more years than I can count! I began my teaching career in country Queensland and since then have been a classroom teacher, Spanish teacher, Indonesian teacher, Special Needs teacher and an English teacher in Spain and Chile! I also taught for one year on exchange in Oregon, USA.

I live in the area and have two teenage boys who always want to drive my car! In my spare time I love sewing, reading and ballroom dancing.

I am passionate about teaching and learning languages and believe that if you can learn a first language, you can learn a second (or third or fourth)!

If you see me around the school, please come and say 'Hola'!

Anne MacKelvie
Spanish Teacher, Saltwater P-9 College





PERFORMING ARTS NEWS



What an amazing inaugural year in the Performing Arts Centre! We started this year 'wondering' what was going to unfold, and like our school motto, we come to the end of this year with 'wiser' children, confident in their talents and abilities.

Below are just some of the reflections that our performing arts students have expressed as we close this year....

Gabrielle (Gr6) - I have enjoyed every single minute of being a part of Saltwater's Performing Arts Concert 'Sakura'. I have been given so many opportunities, such as a scholarship for singing lessons. I have never sung in front of more than 200 people, but at Sakura I had to sing in front of 700 people. I had to be a risk-taker and I sang a bit of a solo to 'When You Believe'. Also, during Music classes, I loved that we got to learn the ukulele, guitar and the keyboard and in Drama we learnt so much about green screens and so much more. Overall, my time has been so amazing that it was a great experience and I have spent it with so many great people.

Rafaella (Gr6) - Being a part of Saltwater's Performing Arts Concert 'Sakura' has made me more confident, not only as a performer but as a person. I loved every minute of the performance and all rehearsals. I have been given so many opportunities to excel as a singer and performer. I will definitely remember Sakura as it was my first singing performance.

Erica (Gr6) - I have been given lots of opportunities which have made me become more confident and a risk-taker. I also felt very excited performing in front of almost 700 people and I will definitely remember this time. I have had a great time doing dance/drama/music with my classmates. Every moment has been one I will remember. Overall, it has been such an amazing experience with so many great people.

Jazz (Gr4) - Being part of Performing Arts was an amazing experience, especially being in Sakura. I took a big role in Sakura, having a solo part in 'You Will Be Found', and to be honest, it was an amazing feeling to stand up on stage and sing to 700 people. I've also learnt many things about the Performing Arts while being in 4B, we all learnt together about new things in Drama. We also got to act, and it was such a good experience.

Sienna (Gr2) - The Sakura concert was so good. I can't stop thanking you for having me in it. If it wasn't for Mr H and Mr Lapina, we wouldn't have had the show. Thank you so much.

We are so blessed to have been given the trust and support of all staff and parents in creating confident and self-reliant performing arts students.

Mr H and I would like to wish all of you the most joyous and restful Christmas holidays, and look forward to sharing our next exciting adventures with you in the new year!

Mr Lapina & Mr Haddad
Performing Arts Directors

PHYSICAL EDUCATION NEWS



Swimming Trials:

This Tuesday we held our first ever swimming trials. The idea behind having trials is so I can select children to represent Saltwater College in the District Swimming Sports. Well done to all of the children who participated and some children even going out of their comfort zone and becoming risk takers. In the future, I do ask parents to please only send your child if they are a competent swimmer. Yesterday we had a few children who really struggled and were clearly non-swimmers and this can become an issue for the safety of our children. I am all for children having a go at something but when it becomes a safety issue, we really need to reassess it.

The team has not been completely finalised as of yet and some children may be added to the team. No child currently in the team will be taken out of the team, however they may be taken out of some of their events as they are in too many. There will be before school swimming training beginning next year, more information will be distributed next year. Captains will also be announced at assembly next year. It would be great if you could take your child to a pool over the holidays so they can increase their fitness and improve their stroke technique.

I would like to congratulate the following children on making it into the Saltwater swimming team:

Girls:

Simone Deen
Mataya Von Nida
Jessica Tuara
Sarah Smith
Annika Lalev
Hanna Krause
Kelly Pike
Lana Van Der Westhuizen
Nieke De Wet
Oivia Chapman
Mikayla McBroom
Yulin Han
Amarachi Ezema
Sophie Arletos
Allegra Whitmore
Naledi Radihephi
Sophia quitlong
Jasmine Motoska

Boys:

Angus Walsh
Vishesh Vellampalli
Travis Maleko
Jarek Booth
Roy Biljoen
Riley Whitcher
Shanveer Sidhu
Demien Van Ray
Lincoln Norgate
Jakob Pandazopoulos
William Lopez
Max Walsh
Marcus Harding
Aiden Williams
Ben Belsey
Devan Nambiar
Lukas Elliott

Year 5/6 Beach Program 2020

In 2020, Children in Years 5 and 6 will be participating in a beach program as part of the school swimming program. This will be held at the Williamstown beach, run by the Williamstown Life guards. An information note was sent home with your child today. If you did not get the note, please pick one up from the office.

Kelleigh Evans
Physical Education Teacher

SPANISH NEWS



Hola Parents and students

It has been a pleasure teaching the students at Saltwater P-9 College during 2019, but the end of a great year is at our doorsteps and we are getting ready for a well deserved summer holiday. As a Spanish teacher I am always excited to walk into a classroom and find my students ready to learn new and fun things about the Spanish language and culture.

My primary goal as a teacher is to develop a child's receptive language skills, this means the children will begin to understand messages spoken to them in Spanish. Once they build a basic understanding of pieces of language, they can begin creating their own messages in Spanish.

During this term we focused in different themes and topics including greetings, weather, food, colours, seasons and also began using nouns and adjectives to describe animals. We did this with fun activities such as games, songs and conversation activities that combine speaking skills and physical movement. They also enjoyed listening to 'Rockalingua' all year long, which is an engaging tool containing fun catchy Spanish songs and vocabulary.

During the last weeks of the term, students have been working hard to become comfortable pronouncing Spanish words through songs and other activities, gradually adding new phrases and vocabulary to their long-term memories. They are always excited to learn the fun things that a new language can bring, and I am always there supporting their learning in a fun and safe environment and making them feel confident when they are speaking and learning Spanish. I look forward in seeing everyone in the new year to continue our learning journey. Till then...
¡Feliz Navidad y Prospero Año Nuevo!

Nelson Pasten
Spanish Teacher

NEWS FROM PREP

Dear Parents and Families,

To end the year, we thought we would ask the students to reflect on their year in Prep at Saltwater P-9 College. Here are a few of the student's reflections:

I have had a wonderful time at Saltwater because I have had fun with my teacher, Miss Turner. I have really enjoyed Maths as I have done lots of activities like the subtraction monster we made. My favourite memory was learning about being a risktaker as I have been a risktaker by trying to do the correct spelling when writing. I have found that running in sport was a little hard this year but I'm getting faster and faster. I have enjoyed making new friends this year and I'm excited for next year.

Jina Mehta
Prep E 2019



I have had a beautiful year at Saltwater because I had a good learning journey with my teacher and class. My favourite memory from school is the friends that I have made. Their names are Zoe, Mollie, Kevin, Sonny, Grace, Jamie, Francesca, Layla, Summer and Evie. This year has been challenging when I was learning how to count backwards from 100. I really loved writing sentences in my writing book. I also like reading books. My wish for next year is that I am still a kind and caring person.

Kayla Coertze
Prep G 2019



I have had a lovely year in Prep. My favourite memory this year was learning how to make different treats in 'Food Tech' and making new friends. I have learnt so much in Spanish, Writing, Reading and Maths. I love learning! Next year, I hope to continue learning lots and I hope my class and teacher are just as amazing as they were this year.

Esabella Cong,
Prep H 2019.



A message to the Prep Students

As the year comes to an end, the Prep teachers would like to congratulate all of the Preps for completing their first year of Primary School. We are so proud of just how much you have all grown, not just academically, but also socially and emotionally. We hope you continue displaying your caring, principled and balanced nature throughout your schooling. Thank you for being brilliant little learners and taking risks to grow and learn each and every day. We wish you all the best for Year One and your future learning.

A message to the Parents and Families

Thank you for your support over the year to ensure your child is happy and thriving in the school community. We appreciate your assistance in helping your child complete their homework and building a rapport with the teachers. Wishing you all a safe and happy holiday!

Regards
The Prep Team



NEWS FROM PREP

PREP 2019



NEWS FROM YEAR ONE

This year I enjoyed doing maths. I liked doing the test on location because it was easy and kind of hard. I also enjoyed writing a narrative with the whole class. We wrote a story about Geraldine the giraffe who lived in the snow and wanted to be tall like all the other giraffes. I loved P.E because we got to play games and learnt how to do stuff like swimming! Next year I am looking forward to being a big girl in Year Two.

Zara Fleet (1A)

This year I have loved writing summaries because when you do summaries you get to write the key parts in the story. I liked predicting in reading because we don't know what is going to happen and we get to guess what is going to happen in the story. I liked P.E this year because we got to play games and activities like basketball. I also really enjoyed music because we got to play the drums and make a lot of noise. Next year I am looking forward to going on excursions and doing new things.

Darius Williams (1A)

This year at Saltwater I have enjoyed mass activities because we got to see the weight of other objects. I have loved reading because I discovered big words in novels. I enjoyed participating in drama this year because we got to act, and I learnt how to act out good scenes. I mostly enjoyed being in 1B because Miss Jennings and the class are nice, and I learnt a lot being in 1B. Next year I am looking forward to seeing if I am in the double storey portables.

Oliver Belsey (1B)

During my first year in Saltwater I have really enjoyed P.E because we got to play games and it was fun and we got to run around. I also enjoyed art because we got to paint and be creative. I have loved being in 1B because we did different things every day and we got to learn new things. Spanish has also been one of my favourite subjects because we got to learn a different language. Next year, I am looking forward to writing because I want to work on my goal of sounding out big words.

Aarya Panvalkar (1B)

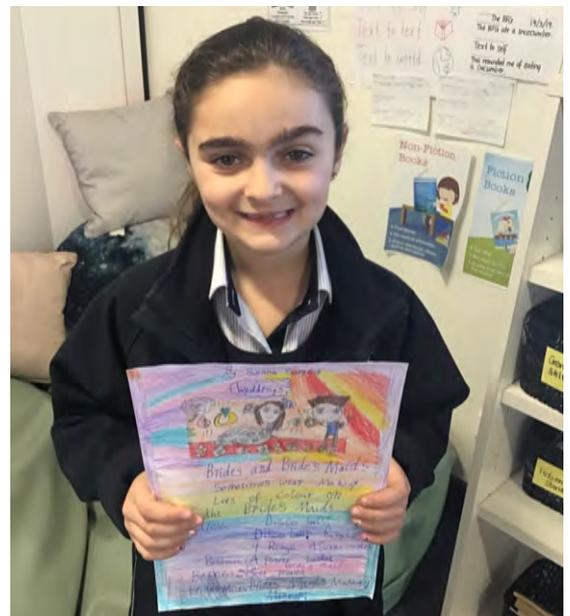


NEWS FROM YEAR TWO

In 2C we have learnt about read alouds. In read alouds you read to a partner and your partner helps you when you are stuck. You and your partner have to have elbows together. My favourite thing in 2C was measurement because I like measuring.

In 2C, I learnt about Unit of Inquiry'. In this unit I learnt about erosion and weathering. The Central Idea is 'Earth's surface changes over time as a result of natural processes'. The weirdest line of inquiry is that rocks tell stories about the Earth's surface. My favourite thing in 2C is doing the paper chains because it was really long and hard to connect. Next year I am looking forward to harder work.

My favourite part of the year was the Year 2 Sleepover because we did fun activities, like making the maze with the straws and cardboard. I enjoyed learning about the human body during the Unit of Inquiry 1 because there were so many interesting facts, that I was really satisfied learning about them. I enjoyed my first year at Saltwater College.



NEWS FROM YEAR TWO

Things they have most enjoyed:

Mahika 2B: “It was excellent dancing in Sakura and I loved the Christmas Carols!”

Fleur 2B: “I am really proud of how well I danced at Sakura! I enjoyed dancing with my friends!”

Dylan 2B: “I really enjoyed doing spelling and handwriting this year. At the start of the year my handwriting wasn’t that good, but now I have learned how to join my letters!”

Maya 2B: “I am really proud that I was chosen to perform in Sakura and everyone loved our dancing! I loved giving speeches to the students and parents at the IT night and at Sakura, too.”

Joshua 2B: “I liked when we sang the Christmas carols, it was really fun!”

Junior 2B: “I liked it when we made a spooky fidget toy at Halloween!”

Things they have found most challenging:

Adeife 2B: “This year I was challenged in Inquiry when I had to build a transport diorama. I made a road transport diorama and it turned out like a stick man world. It was entertaining!”

Funniest thing that happened this year:

Sienna 2B: “It was funny this year because the teachers were always making jokes!”

Things they are most proud of:

Dima 2B: “I am really proud that I got into Dance Extension and I didn’t give up. It was really fun to dance at Sakura!”

Most interesting thing they have learned:

Leyla 2B: “It was really interesting doing a litter survey at our school for Inquiry, because I learned about who was dropping the rubbish and who had to clean it up.”



NEWS FROM YEAR THREE

I have really liked having Miss Goegan as a teacher and learning the three minute challenge. I am really proud of how I have improved my work. I think I have improved the most in writing because my handwriting has come a long way. I have found my times tables a little difficult this year, as at the start of the year I only could do three sums in three minutes, but now I can do it! My favourite part about starting at a new school has been making new friends. I would also like to thank Ms Daniali for always being there for me this year and for looking out for me.



Jess Shirley 3B



My favourite part about being at Saltwater College has been making new friends and playing with them. I love playing down ball and soccer during break times, and especially the soccer training with Matt. I have really liked meeting new teachers and learning lots of new things. The most important thing I have learnt this year was about poetic devices. I learnt how to use onomatopoeia, alliteration, similes, metaphors and personification and it has made my writing so much better. This year I have found maths a little tricky as I didn't really know division. But I have been working really hard on it as part of my goal to make sure I get better. Next year I am looking forward to using the MacBooks and getting to know my new teacher better.

Elijah Petersen 3A



NEWS FROM YEAR FOUR



My First Year at Saltwater – Olivia Chapman

Hello, my name is Olivia Chapman from 4A. I am happy to be asked to give a reflection on my first year at Saltwater College. On my first day at Saltwater I was really scared. When we all got calm it felt like I had been in my classroom for months. Something I enjoyed this year was the 'Colour Run' because almost everyone in the school participated and it was so much fun. This year I also enjoyed having a new teacher, Mrs Costabile, to spend the rest of the year with. She is now my favourite teacher and has helped me a lot this year. I am very sad that she will not be my teacher next year. Next year I am looking forward to being part of the swimming team and learning more with my new teacher.

2019 in 4B – Jazz Williams

2019 has been the best year to be in 4B. We have experienced new things, inquiry units, and many other opportunities. During this year, I've learnt so many things in 4B that I had never learned before. Now I can demonstrate how to explain subjects. Learning new things was my goal at the start of the year and now my goal has finally been achieved. I've also made many friends from different year levels, and in my classroom.

I've enjoyed doing new subjects in my classroom, and I've also enjoyed doing projects and difficult work. A huge thing that changed for me this year was for me being nervous and having anxiety to meet new people and socialise. I overcame that challenge by being myself to the people around me. I've absolutely loved this year, and I'll never forget about the amazing and generous classroom 4B is.

What I have also liked this year was to have an amazing teacher, Mr. Howarth. He's one of the best teachers in my opinion and a very caring, hilarious teacher. This year was amazing, and I can't wait for next year at Saltwater College.

Looking back – By Tex Williams

I remember at the start of the year I was really nervous and I'm sure everyone else was too. I met all the people in my class, and we were all different, but we had the same connection of being at a new school. Now I have friends and I am more confident at school.

I love Saltwater because I feel like it is a safe community for new students. Some of my favourite memories from this year are going outside and playing with my friends and going to Camp Arrabri. At camp, I loved that I got to join in the talent show and be a risk-taker, miming a song in front of everyone.

In class, I have enjoyed Mr. Howarth's sense of humour and the jokes he tells us to make learning fun. I love that we are multicultural at Saltwater and that we accept everyone for who they are. I feel I have found a school where I don't have to follow what others do just to fit in- I can just be myself.



NEWS FROM YEAR FIVE

What a year it has been? Who can believe we have made it? Together we have survived our very first year at Saltwater College. What a journey it has been. No doubt it has been tough. We have had the highest of highs and battled together through our lows. We have become friends from strangers, and from friends to family. We have built each other up and supported each other with empathy and respect. On behalf of the Year Five team, we would like to sincerely thank everyone for their support on this journey. We are beyond proud of everything we have achieved, and we are excited to see what next year will hold.

My First Year at Saltwater – By Mina El Guendouf

This year has flown past so fast, in Term One we made time capsules to open up at the end of the year. I am excited to open mine up and see what is inside. I've made a lot of friends and my teacher is the best!

In Term Two, we started coding using 'Scratch'. We used Scratch codes to show the class about a leader who has left a legacy. My Scratch was on Captain Cook and his discovery.

In Term Three, we had our first excursion to Ceres – The Sustainability Hub. It was amazing to see how more efficiently we could be saving energy. We also had our first Year Five camp to Cave Hill Creek. I really enjoyed the canoeing and going to Sovereign Hill!

In Term Four, we started photography and went to Melbourne City to take photos and present them at our visual communications showcase! I felt really proud seeing my work on display.

This year has been very fun. I want to thank Ms. Grenfell for the best year!



A Joyful Year at Saltwater College – By Ariyan and Kevin 5A

FIRST ENTERING THE SCHOOL

The first day that I came to Saltwater P-9 College, everything was all new. I knew no one. It was easy to make friends as everyone was so caring, so I made new friends and we had fun.

ART - UGLY DOLLS

This year I enjoyed doing Art, with Miss Panda. We inquired into different artists and demonstrated our sewing and made 'Ugly Dolls'. My ugly doll was supposed to be a doughnut, but nothing went right, so it ended up looking like a burrito.

VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS

For photography we had an excursion to the Melbourne city. The main photos that we took were as a class, by working as a team to achieve our shot. The skills we learnt were frame within a frame, symmetry and continuity.

COLOUR EXPLOSION

We participated in a 'Fun Colour Run' with the whole school. We all got to run with a class as everyone got covered in coloured powder. I do hope that we get to do it again next year.



NEWS FROM YEAR SIX

Reflecting on our time at Saltwater College:

My time at Saltwater College is a year that will never leave my heart. The memories that we have all created with our teachers and friends is something that I will cherish forever. This year has been a challenge, but a positive challenge. I was pushed to my limits academically by Mr Nicolaides and because of his belief in me attitude, I am now confident that I am ready for secondary college.

Saltwater College has made me the person who I am today. My parents are the ones who raised me and my friends are the ones who have stood by me through every obstacle that I was faced with.

Unfortunately my time at Saltwater has come to an end but I will always treasure these moments. For me, this is not a goodbye... It is a See You Later!

Written by Noah Thomas



Although my journey at Saltwater College has been a short one, this year has been a year I will always remember. When I first met my teacher and classmates, I was super nervous because I knew no one except my friend Tanveer. As time passed by, I began to make friends as I became confident. I am thankful for the friendships that I have with Mishal, Maria, Busiso, Shreshtha and Harriet. I am very lucky to have Mr Nicolaides in my classroom, he is caring, kind and empathetic. I have learnt so much from him this year.

I have been given many opportunities this year to develop and grow as a person. I have thoroughly enjoyed all specialist classes but in particular... singing with Mr Lapina.

I am sad to say goodbye, but thankful for the opportunities that I have had.

Written by Erica Whitmore

A final message for 6A from Mr Nicolaides:

Dear Students,

We did it! Woohoo! We made it! Yes, certain days crawled by, but it seems like just yesterday that we were learning each other's names. Then we blinked and another year was in the books. I usually won't admit it, but a part of me gets a little emotional when I say goodbye and ship you off to secondary school, so I wanted to take a moment to reflect on our time together. Why you might ask? Because you matter...

Thank you for making my room full of life and laughter. Thank you for making me smile, and saying just the perfect thing to bring my spirits up on a bad day. Thank you for sharing your life with me through writing and conversations. Thanks for keeping me up on the modern lingo and newest YouTube videos and dance moves. You keep me young. You give my job meaning.

I'm sorry that there were times I was too overwhelmed and exhausted to chat with you. I'm sorry that there were times when I got frustrated, or lost my patience after stretching it as far as I could. But mostly, I'm sorry that we ran out of time. I'm sorry that this is our last time together, and I'm even more sorry that I won't be seeing any of you again next year. At least not regularly.

Truth be told, I'm going to miss you all quite a bit. I'll miss your jokes and your smiling faces. I'll miss the funny things you say that crack me up. But mainly, I'll just miss you. Even you, class clowns. You know who you are. Yep, I'll miss you too. You are much more to me than your actions.

I hope you learned something from my class. I hope you learned to like at least one book. I hope you feel more comfortable with writing. I hope that speaking in front of a large group isn't quite so scary now. But most of all, I hope that you saw my passion... My passion for teaching! My passion for kids like you! And my passion for life! It is my hope that I showed you that you matter and that you have potential and purpose in life. Because you do. Trust me, you do. I hope I taught you to laugh at yourself and to never be too busy to have fun.

You're off now to bigger and better things. In a few short years, you'll say goodbye to high school and hello to the rest of your life. I am so excited to see all the amazing things that you'll do, and the amazing places you'll go. Wherever life takes you, I hope you remember to live fully and enjoy every second of the moment you're in. Because trust me, they go oh so fast. Too fast. Then one day you wake up and you're my age and you wonder where the last ten years of your life have run off to.

So enjoy it, my dear students. Enjoy the time you have here. Make the most of it. Don't wish it away. Laugh daily. Love each other well. Sacrifice for others. And never give up on your dreams. Because if you think you're too cool for something fun or you think that you're better than someone else, you're really just hurting yourself. You're stealing your own joy before you even get to experience it. Be a kid. Live a life of fun and adventure. Support and build up; don't tear down and destroy.

For now, it's time to say goodbye. Come back and see me. You know where I'll be. I promise I won't forget you, and I hope you don't forget me either. I can't tell you how much joy it brings us teachers to have a student come back and say hi, or tell us how they're doing. Because you will forever be a part of our story here. Now go write your own.

Have a very Merry Christmas,

Mr Michael Nicolaides