



**Pymble Ladies' College
Middle School Parent Group (MSPG)**

Semester 1 Meeting

Minutes

Date: Thursday 1 May 2014

Time: 6.30 pm to 8.15 pm

Location: Nancy Jobson Lecture Theatre, Senior School

Present: Zeeniya Abdul Bari, Karin Attebo, Anita Barrett, Nicola Bastow, Natacha Boyce, Rui Chan, Christie Charlin, Michael Chen, Jackie Choo, Joseph Chou, Vicky Chun, Merryn Cooper, Katrina Corcoran, Dorothy Crosby, Loc Cung, Miak Danbaras, Catherine Dean, Constance Epthorp, Kristen Faahan-Smith, Nicholas Fiennes, Karen Gifford, Cathy Gill, Katja Gordon, Kathy Guttman, Holly He, Carolyn Hunt, Catriona Hunt, Helen Jarvis, Liz Jones, Helen Kowal, Marina Kuo, Caren Lambinon, Tristan Laszok, Sharon Le Dan-Ferrier, Sandra Lee, Winnie Li, Michelle Li, Heather Liggett, Lucy Liu, Leon Luo, Alexei Mazin, John McGregor, Sue Moore, Sheila Nagaratnam, Freda Natale, Julia Nelson, Megan Nicholas, Linda Pahl, Nancy Parsons, Patrick Peng, Jane Powell, Annie Sargent, Donna Seidler, Ritu Sethi, Po Sim, Deva Siva, Dhama Siva, Robyn Soonius, Janet Stanley, Emma Surridge, Mike Surridge, Grace Tang, Stewart Thompson, Jo Tims, Joanne Trevitt, Richard Trevitt, Christine Tuon, Don Turner, Anna Virgona, Kate Walker, Vivien Walsh, Julie Ward, Rowena Warren, Joanne Wei, Sheila Westhuizen, Mano Wijetilaka, Martine Woodhill, Limin Xiao, Harriet Ye, Pat Yee, Keith Yee (unfortunately approximately 10 people didn't sign the attendance sheet so they are not included in this list)

Absent with apologies: Anne Riley, Natasha Stanfield

By invitation: Mrs Anne Maree Bennett, Ms Lindsay Bosch, Mr Paul Bulmer, Mrs Robyn Campbell, Mr Glen Dudley, Mrs Linda Kovacs, Ms Maura Manning, Mrs Annie Norfor Smith, Mrs Amanda Paterson, Mrs Irene Smith

1 Welcome

1.1 Ms Bosch introduced the MSPG Group Leader for 2014, Mrs Christie Charlin to the meeting. Mrs Charlin expressed her thanks to the staff of Middle School for taking the time to be present and the Director of Teaching and Learning and the Heads of Department for agreeing to speak that evening on the Australian Curriculum and how it would affect our daughters.

2 Acceptance of previous meeting minutes and business arising from minutes

2.1 Ms Bosch proposed and Mrs Shewell seconded that the minutes be accepted. There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

3 Year 7 Upcoming events

3.1 Mrs Charlin said that Mrs Anne Riley had sent her apologies as her child was sick and reported that Mrs Riley would like to express her appreciation to the Kowal, Freestone and Mitchell families for hosting the Year 7 Morning Teas on Tuesday 8 April which was attended by more than 100 families.

3.2 Mrs Riley would like to thank Mrs Cassandra Winter for agreeing to convene the Year 7 Mother Daughter event, which will be a movie sing along to Mama Mia. It will be held on Monday 16 June from 7.00pm. Details will be emailed out shortly. Participants are encouraged to attend dressed to the theme.

4 Year 8 Upcoming events

4.1 Mrs Merryn Cooper thanked Mrs Mano Wijetilaka for convening the Year 8 Father Daughter Laser Tag held on Monday 7 April at Xtreme Playzone in Asquith. Participants reported that they thoroughly enjoyed themselves that evening. She encouraged parents to register online for the Year 8 Parent Pizza Night, which will be held on Friday 9 May at Cavallino Italian Restaurant in Terrey Hills.

4.2 Mrs Cooper said the Year 8 Mother Daughter Dinner and Dance is likely to be held at Avondale Golf Club. This event may be rescheduled from Thursday 19 June to another date due to the venue not being available on that day. Details will be sent out shortly. This cost for this event is \$30.00 per student and \$40.00 per adult.

5 Introduction to key curriculum staff

5.1 Ms Bosch welcomed parents to the meeting and extended an invitation to all parents to attend the Centenary Precinct Presentation by Mr David Sexton, Head of Operations on Wednesday 7 May from 1.00pm to 2.00 pm in the Heritage Centre located below the College Chapel. Mr Sexton will speak about the Centenary Precinct which includes a walkway, aquatic centre and car park. This begins in July 2014 and is planned for completion by February 2016. If parents are unable to attend this talk Mr Sexton will be speaking on the same topic at the Upper School Parent Group (USPG) Meeting on Wednesday 21 May from 6.30pm – 7.30pm in the Nancy Jacobson Theatre, Senior School.

5.2 Ms Bosch welcomed the first speaker and informed parents that the Power Point presentations and handouts will be made available on the *Pymble* website in the MSPG *My Pymble* area.
<http://www.pymblelc.nsw.edu.au/MyPymble-Area/Parent-Support-Groups/Middle-School-Parent-Group.aspx>

6 Assessment for Learning - Stage 4 (Year 7 and 8) Australian Curriculum

6.1 Ms Maura Manning, Director of Teaching and Learning spoke briefly on how the Australian Curriculum came about. She noted the new emphasis in the NSW Syllabuses were Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Capability, Ethical Understanding and Intercultural Understanding, which dovetails nicely with Pymble's Learning Framework 2014 - 2016 and critical elements in *Pymble's* 2020 vision.

6.2 Ms Manning said that the challenge facing teachers would be how to apply the new general capabilities framework underlying all subjects and to get students to think inside and outside the classrooms. She noted that it was important for teachers and parents to let the girls 'struggle to understand, to be perplexed' and to encourage 'a habit of asking questions' and have many 'crunchy eyebrow moments'. This was because the school is moving away from the traditional Assessment of Learning approach to the Assessment as Learning and Assessment of Learning framework, where teachers learn with our daughters, where our daughters are encouraged to assess what her strengths and weaknesses are, to reflect on her abilities and how she could improve her learning. She encouraged parents to visit the Board of Studies website and to use it as a further resource to understanding the new curriculum (<http://syllabus.bos.nsw.edu.au/support-materials/parents-guide/>).

7 Implementation of English in 2014

7.1 Mrs Anne Maree Bennett, Head of Department English highlighted what were the similarities and differences on how English would be taught from 2014. She stressed that students would be taught to be more discerning (how language is used to manipulate and influence thinking), how to set personal goals and learning targets through the use of reflection (with the assistance of peers and teachers who would give feedback on their reflections) and incorporate a range of new skills to help them to become independent learners (such as film making, drawing comic strips, risk-taking, even failing in order to learn). She drew parents' attention to the slide on 'selection of texts', and said that the multi-colors were examples of the wide variety of textual forms our daughters would have to be exposed to each year when learning English.

7.2 Mrs Anne Maree Bennett said Year 7 would focus on the Individual and their World with students initially exploring self-identity in Term 1. The girls would use a variety of mediums such as film and poetry to look at children from other parts of the world (For example: Philippines, in the text 'Trash') and people from another time period (Shakespeare). In Year 8 the focus is on developing their moral compass and students studied how advertisements manipulate consumer behaviours. The girls will also look at the ethics of choices and decision-making, reconnecting their own experiences with others' and how a variety of reasons could present dilemmas.

8 Implementation of Mathematics in 2014

8.1 Mr Glenn Dudley, Head of Department Mathematics noted that internationally, more students were dropping out of Mathematics. At *Pymble*, the focus is getting our girls to enjoy Mathematics and to teach them to become Mathematicians. The school has adopted an investigative approach to the teaching and learning of mathematics (versus the traditional rote-learning method) with the aim to help broaden students' understanding of Mathematics (such as requiring them to express their ideas and to put their reasoning down on paper). Teachers help the girls to become fluent in Mathematics by learning a range of problem solving strategies and a toolbox of skills.

8.2 Mr Dudley said three strands of Mathematics would be taught from Year 9 (5.3, 5.2 and 5.1). The majority of *Pymble* girls do the advanced 5.3 course in Mathematics. The College also offers Year 9 students the opportunity to do an accelerated course, with most students taking the 2 Unit HSC Mathematics Examination in Year 11. Girls may then opt in Year 12 to do Extension 1 and/or Extension 2 Mathematics.

9 Implementation of Science in 2014

9.1 Mrs Amanda Paterson, Head of Department Science said under the new syllabus Science would be taught within three areas: Understanding, Human Endeavour and Inquiry Skills. The first area is basically knowledge of Science and covers Biology, Chemistry, Earth/Space and the Physical Sciences. The latter two are new with the second area covering the history of Science (how it developed) and how it can be used. The third area will look at developing skills to process and analyse data; evaluation; communication; planning and conducting studies; and questioning and predicting.

9.2 Mrs Paterson said that *Pymble* recently adopted the Whole Brain Model Index when developing the Science curriculum for Year 7-10. Traditionally, lessons were delivered based on a Fact and Form model only. However empirical research indicated that students learn best when lessons involve the whole brain that is, incorporating Herrmann model with four sectors including: Future and Feelings as well as Facts and Form. An example to illustrate this was the slide on 'what is the difference between solid, liquid and a gas'. The blue quadrant referred to factual information, the dark green quadrant included lessons modeled on form (ie. organized, sequential and detailed information), the lime green quadrant referred to lessons that would show the big picture and the red quadrant refer to lessons that required students to use interpersonal, emotional and kinesthetic elements to answer the question. Mrs Paterson said teachers would routinely use feedback from students to refine and improve the syllabus taught in *Pymble*.

10 Implementation of History in 2015

10.1 Mrs Linda Kovacs, Head of Department History stated that History was an excellent example of how *Pymble* implements the move towards enquiry based learning as students would be taught elements of critical thinking and asking questions (Science), how to write up a convincing analysis on what happened in the past (English) and how to make sense of graphical data (Mathematics). She said that the old syllabus of semestering History and Geography lessons ends with the current Year 8s. That is, Year 7 will study Geography in 2014 and Stage 4 History in 2015. When students are in Year 9, they will study Stage 5 History and when they are in Year 10, they can elect to do either Elective History or Geography or both subjects.

10.2 An overview of the new Stage 4 History course was handed out to parents (See Handout in MSPG My *Pymble* area on the website 9_Stage 4 History concept maps for 2015.pdf). Students will study following four areas:

- i Out of Africa
- ii Ancient Societies (China)
- iii Emerging Empires (Rise and fall of Rome and Islam)
- iv Emerging Ideas (How ancient and modern worlds are linked)

Mrs Kovacs said that students would be taught not to accept everything in front of them (critical thinkers) by examining how the past affects the future. She added that the department would adopt an integrated ICT base approach to learning in 2015.

11 Meeting Close

11.1 The meeting ended at 8.15pm and parents were invited to stay to watch a short video on the Year 7 problem-solving day at the start of 2014 prepared by Mr Dudley or to have a chat with the Head and Deputy Head of School, Student Co-ordinators, Director of Teaching and Learning and the Heads of Departments in the Atrium.