

The Shuttle

Time flies faster than a weaver's shuttle.

Our Middle Schoolers 'Journey With Joy' at Abbotsleigh

Mrs Megan Krimmer
Headmistress

Welcome to our next instalment in our *Shuttle* series exploring the unique and fabulous character of the different schools within our school at Abbotsleigh.

Mrs Clare Haymen, our Head of Middle School, has written an excellent article highlighting the wonderful programs and opportunities experienced by our Middle Schoolers (girls in Years 7-9) as they 'Journey With Joy' at Abbotsleigh.

I warmly commend Mrs Haymen's article to you.



'Journey With Joy' in the Middle School

Mrs Clare Haymen
Head of Middle School

We have certainly had a wonderful start to 2026 in the Middle School! The corridors have been filled with joyful energy, and the girls have immersed themselves in a variety of school events. I have been so proud of the way they have carried out our School values, in both their interactions with others and their learning.

Research suggests Middle School students thrive in environments where:

- individual identity and wellbeing are prioritised
- effort and growth are valued as much as achievement
- students are empowered to ask questions and take academic risks
- strong, respectful relationships are intentionally fostered.

Abbotsleigh's focus on the 'whole girl' recognises that girls' development is multidimensional and that thriving in school and life requires far more than

subject mastery. This balanced development helps our Middle School girls connect learning to real world challenges, think critically and grow creatively. Our extensive co-curricular offerings, including lunchtime service and enrichment clubs, encourage cross-year group connections and skill development.

Additionally, robust Outdoor Education programs provide experiential learning opportunities and strengthen resilience, which is vital for our girls in coping with life's challenges. At the end of Term 1, Year 7 enjoyed a wonderful few days at the CRU Camp, Lake Macquarie. They took part in sailing, canoeing and rock climbing, as well as several team initiatives and problem-solving activities. New friendships were formed and existing connections were strengthened, and, as always, the girls embraced each challenge with a positive mindset. This week, Years 8 and 9 have visited the Somerset camp at the Colo River, where a fabulous program was organised to challenge the girls. We are also delighted that a large number of our Year 9s completed their Duke of Edinburgh qualifying journey throughout the week.

Central to wellbeing at Abbotsleigh is our tutor group system, which ensures that each student has a trusted adult who knows them well, celebrates their successes and supports them through challenges. In Middle School, programs such as 'The Resilience Project' help build important social and emotional literacy skills, such as resilience and self-regulation, so vital for thriving in school and beyond. Peer Support and Peer Mentoring see our Years 7 and 9 students collaborating and interacting with Year 11 students, who model compassion, integrity and inclusion for our younger girls. This year, we are also proud to introduce 'You Can Sit With Me', an evidence-based, peer led program that encourages inclusion and supports positive social connections. The program has been formally acknowledged in Australia's National Anti-Bullying Rapid Review (2025) for its contribution to fostering positive school cultures and strengthening communities. Our Year 7 students have shown a strong and positive response to this initiative, and we look forward to strengthening our culture of compassion and respect through engagement with the program.

We continue to support the development of character and leadership skills in the Middle School through our Years 7 and 8 Tutor Group representatives and Year 9 House Leaders programs. This year, we have increased the number of positions, so that more students have the opportunity to contribute to student voice and to build on the everyday leadership skills we encourage all our students to demonstrate.

A central part of our Christian purpose is the development of compassion for others, demonstrated through a commitment to service. This year, Middle School students will continue their partnership with Bunda Girls Secondary School in Tanzania. Working collaboratively for the past three years, our girls have raised funds to support six students' education, and we are excited to sponsor an additional two students in 2026. Throughout the process, our students have received heartfelt letters of thanks from the Bunda girls, which have helped to build genuine connections across continents. This exchange has been a powerful reminder of what can be achieved when compassion and collective effort come together. It reflects the values we seek to nurture in our Middle School, including empathy and perseverance, and a desire to make a positive difference in the world.

When families and schools work together, students experience better academic, social and emotional outcomes. Our goal is to strengthen this connection by empowering families at home and creating authentic opportunities for partnership in learning and community. The Middle School Pastoral Care team, including Year Coordinators, Assistant Year Coordinators and Tutors are here to support you and your daughters, and I encourage you to reach out should you have any queries or concerns.

We look forward to a wonderful year ahead, building a strong partnership as your daughters 'Journey With Joy' in 2026.



Chaplain

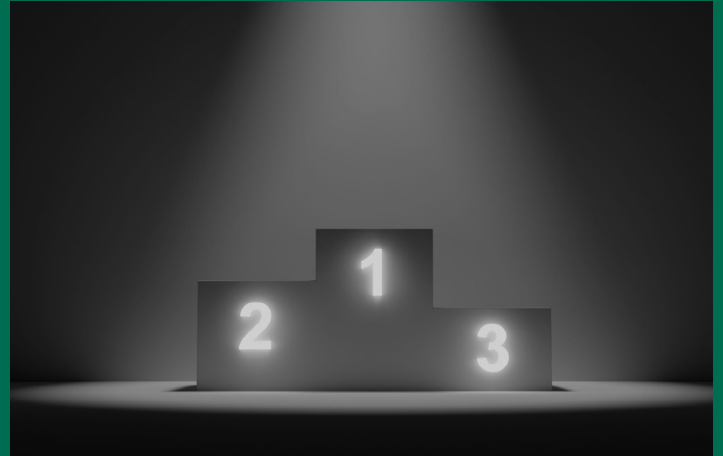
Excellence

Rev Polly Butterworth
Chaplain

'I will show you the most excellent way' (1 Corinthians 12:31). Over the next few weeks, students will be looking at the concept of 'excellence' as inspired by a stained-glass window in the Chapel. The designer of the window said that its components celebrate Abbotsleigh's love of music, performing arts, public speaking and learning. There are ribbons that represent the houses and great sporting achievements. This is appropriate imagery for the Chapel, as the Bible speaks of excellence, telling us three key truths.

Firstly, God says that excellence is a good thing. For example, the skills of craft (Exodus 31:2-5), of music (Psalm 33:3), of leadership (78:72) are all celebrated as good gifts from God.

Secondly, the Bible preaches that excellence is nothing without love. This is what the apostle Paul is referring to when he says, *'I will show you the most excellent way.'* He continues to rebuke the Corinthian church for focusing on outward excellence while neglecting love. To be truly excellent, we need to love others.



Thirdly, excellence, as spoken about in the Bible, doesn't make someone more valuable. God bestows dignity, value and worth on all humans by creating us in His image, and Ephesians 2:8-9 reminds us that *'it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.'*

How wonderful that while we pursue excellence, we need not neglect love, nor feel as though our achievements will dictate our worth.

Upcoming events

WHOLE SCHOOL

Parent Wellbeing Hive – parent wellbeing resources	Available to all parents on the Parent Portal	Click here to visit
Pacific Highway pedestrian overpass overnight closure	Tuesday 28 April to Friday 31 July 9 pm-5 am	15 temporary overnight closures to complete work on pedestrian overpass
Juno Gemes exhibition	Friday 8 May to Wednesday 3 June	Grace Cossington Smith Gallery

APA Trivia Night	Saturday 23 May 7-11 pm	SS Gymnasium
National Reconciliation Week	Wednesday 27 May to Wednesday 3 June	Various activities and locations
Coonabarabran Equestrian Expo	Friday 29 May to Tuesday 2 June	Coonabarabran
Junior and Senior School Band Festival	Thursday 4 June 5.30-6.45 pm	PDCH

JUNIOR SCHOOL

K, Years 3 and 5 Grandparents' Day	Thursday 28 May 10.50 am-1.30 pm	Various JS locations
Cinderella Kindness Day – Transition	Tuesday 2 June	Transition classroom
Year 4 Maritime Museum excursion	Wednesday 3 June	Sydney Maritime Museum
Year 2 LEGO WeDo	Thursday 4 June 8.30-11 am	
Jump Rope for Heart jump off	Friday 5 June	

SENIOR SCHOOL

Saturday sport	Saturday 23 May	Click here for times and venues
Year 9 Visual Arts incursion	Monday 25 May	
Year 9 Photography and Digital Media incursion	Tuesday 26 May	
IGSA Archdale Debating – round 3	Tuesday 26 May 4-8 pm	Various school locations
Year 8 Parent Teacher night	Wednesday 27 May 3.30-8.30 pm	Online
Year 11 yLead	Thursday 28 May	Sports Hall
Year 7 Study Skills evening	Thursday 28 May 6.30-8 pm	PDCH
Years 7-12 Lyhra Music Incursion	Friday 29 May 1-4.30 pm	PDCH
Year 8 Parent Teacher night	Wednesday 3 June 3.30-8.30 pm	Online