

## End of Year Communication 2018

Dear Parent/Caregiver

### Your Feedback and the IFTTS Strategic Plan

With the ever changing landscape of Education and Sport and with the frantic pace that has been 2018 we felt it important to tie off our year with an end of year communication to our school community, firstly to clarify where we are at and also to provide some key insights into the very exciting year ahead of us.

As you may recall, the School engaged a firm in late 2017 to survey our school community. From this survey a strategic plan was formed which we have been continuing to work on, refine and implement at different stages throughout the school. Our overarching vision as a school is to:

***“Create an organisation that inspires all to find their life purpose and the courage to live that life.”***

From this vision we articulated a set of core values, these are:-

- We believe that being open to take on new ideas is fundamental to growth and success.
- We believe that creating an environment that encourages people to be open and honest with one another can only happen when we take a genuine interest in one another and spend time invested in others success.
- We believe that to have an impactful life you must lead by example and take ownership of your own actions and behaviours.
- We believe that it is important to understand how to be gracious and open to receiving positive things in your life.

From these sets of values we were able to articulate a mission statement which is:

***“We exist to create an environment where we inspire individuals to be the best they can be.”***

The last phase of our strategic planning process was to establish a set of key goals that we could measure ourselves against. A summary of these goals are:-

1. We are recognised for our holistic approach to wellbeing
2. We enable students to reach their academic aspirations
3. We are renowned for our child centred approach to sport

4. We collaboratively engage and inspire all stakeholders
5. We have effective and efficient governance and management.

As you might imagine this work has been the underpinning framework for many decisions throughout 2018 and will continue to have an impact over the coming years.

## Academics

As we continued to reflect during 2018 on how do we continue to deliver on our goal of enabling students to reach their academic aspirations, we discovered a pedagogy out of Melbourne known as

Walker Learning. This is a way of teaching that renowned Early Childhood Educator, Kathy Walker, developed more than 20 years ago and has been successfully implemented in numerous schools in Victoria and internationally. When we discovered this approach we were very inspired to realise that the underpinning belief behind the pedagogy aligned very closely to our beliefs at IFTS.



During the July term break all of our teaching and coaching staff attended a study tour in Melbourne where we engaged in an intensive immersion of Walker Learning and toured a few schools who have implemented this way of teaching. The most exciting part of their approach is that it aligned so well with our intention. Walker learning appeared to be a well thought through approach that was based on evidence and science and provided a strong framework allowing for children to develop as young people and learn very effectively. Students were allowed to follow their interests which leads to deeper engagement and more confidence in their areas of passion. It was clearly a no-brainer that we had to see if we could make this work at IFTS as although our approaches over the past six years have been very innovative, we most certainly felt alone in our journey and we finally believe we have found some kindred spirits.

Since July this year we have been rolling out various aspects of the Walker Learning pedagogy with the introduction of Home rooms in our morning sessions. In 2019 students and families will see more aspects of Walker Learning impacting on our students and staff and we are very excited about the journey ahead. The impact of this approach is not just on what the teachers do each day, it is on what the students do, how we interact with each other, how their day is structured and even how we set up their spaces. It is very intentional and will have a significant impact on them over time.

## Mastery Teaching

As a sneak peak to the Principal's message in the 2018 Yearbook, I make reference to a TED talk by Sal Kahn, the creator of Khan Academy. I would encourage parents to watch the video entitled "Let's teach to mastery - not test scores".

[https://www.ted.com/talks/sal\\_khan\\_let\\_s\\_teach\\_for\\_mastery\\_not\\_test\\_scores/up-next?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/sal_khan_let_s_teach_for_mastery_not_test_scores/up-next?language=en)



This video helps explain what underpins our struggle as a school. Platforms such as Maths Pathways are a great example of tools we are already using that provide an educational environment that allows for mastery teaching to occur which we truly believe is ground breaking. We believe that when we look back in 20 years time we will be able to recognise a shift in education that started right here at IFTS (and other

progressive schools) that were willing to challenge the status quo, regardless of the challenges we face through compliance. We believe in our hearts that our students desire the best education we can provide them and we will do all we can to make that happen.

When thinking about what we ask our staff to do each day, I am reminded of Steve Jobs (the founder of Apple) - one of my inspirations about passion. I recall reading when he recruited John Scully, the then CEO of Pepsi Co, as he was walking with him and trying to get him to consider coming to work with Apple. The words have stuck in my mind since I read his biography, he asked John Scully if he wanted to sell sugar water for the rest of his life or if he wanted to help Steve change the world. We also believe that is what we are doing at IFTS. We challenge our staff to consider that the work we do will have such a significant impact on our student's lives and the lives of others and that we are genuinely changing the world through the work we do.

## Electives in Years 9 and 10

When parents and students choose to come to IFTS we inform them that we do not run electives the way mainstream schools do. All NSW schools have an option to run NESA endorsed electives or not. At IFTS, we have been developing our own version of electives for our students in years 9 and 10. We have been running a small trial of these in 2018 and will launch the full program in 2019.

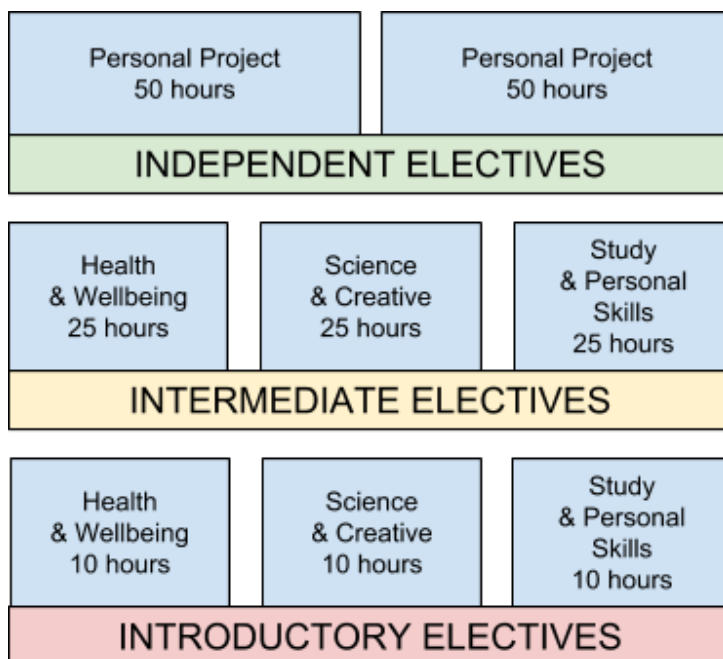
The elective program consists of three main areas as identified below which aims to encompass a variety of courses that may be of interest to our students.

**The Introductory Level:** This aims to expose students to short 10 hour courses in a chosen category. For example, within the Science & Creative category, there are approximately 12 courses available for students to ‘try’. Students will choose to engage with some or all of the ‘taster’ units allowing them to experience subject content which is of interest or something they have not really known about and wish to pursue, or areas in which they need to upskill that have been identified by their teacher.

Once students have accumulated a number of units, they are able to begin choosing electives from the intermediate level.

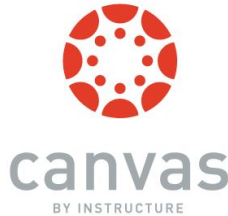
**The Intermediate Level:** This level allows students to build on the knowledge obtained from previous levels and deepen their understanding of the unit topics. For example, should students complete cooking 1 in the introductory level, learning fundamentals, they may have enjoyed it and want to progress this more. They may, therefore, choose to undertake the 25-hour cooking unit which sees them learning cake baking for example. They will undertake two or three 25 hour units, which will once again lay a foundation for the independent level.

**The Independent Level:** This affords the students the opportunity to design and develop their own study or research project based on their interests and skills gained throughout the earlier elective units. The intention is that this level would be student directed with support from a mentor teacher who will facilitate and guide the project.



Overall, the elective model aims to foster personal growth alongside exposure to differing study topic areas and content. In turn, this aims to lay a pathway in which students can recognise and build upon their interests and strengths putting them in a better position to understand what they enjoy and what they would like to do post Year 10. It is hoped that students will be inspired to choose and have a better understanding of HSC subjects or post-school options and have the confidence and courage to pursue their goals.

## Edumate, Canvas, Skoolbag and other Communication Platforms



As you may know, the school uses a platform called Edumate which is our Student Admin system. This is the system we use to mark rolls, manage our enrolments, keep information about student welfare and a host of other data. It is also the platform that we store student's historic reports. Edumate are in the process of making some significant changes to their interface which we believe will make this tool a much more useful platform for our parents. We look forward to providing more information to our parents over the coming months as these updates come to fruition.

Our school also uses Canvas, which is a learning management system. On a very basic level this is where the teachers can place the learning that we want our students to work through. It is an industry leading platform used across thousands of schools and universities around the world and we have been using the platform for approximately 18 months. It is heavily used in the High School space and we expect to see continued use of this platform as our staff and students learn more and more how to use it effectively. One significant benefit for our staff and students, is it allows us to keep track of each student's progress without having to manage multiple books, pieces of paper and traditional tools that have become highly inefficient. It also allows for a student who might be away from school for a period of time to keep up with their work.

We are continuing to investigate other platforms to provide an even more powerful experience for our junior school families and will provide more updates when we have substantial confidence about how best to meet the needs of our students and families in providing you timely updates on how your child is progressing.



## Sport

2018 has been a massive year with some significant decisions that will change the future of our school in the coming years. One of these decisions has been the move toward bringing in multiple sport disciplines to the school and over the years to come, offer a number of more sporting specialisations. Netball is coming online in 2019, and many more sports are in progress. Another major area of growth is the extension of our general sports programs that we have referred to as Multi-sport in the K-2 program. In 2019 students will have the option to participate in a variety of sport right through the whole school and not necessarily have to specialise on a particular discipline. That being said, the option to specialise will always be there and the focus on attention we are bringing to each individual's plan is improving again in 2019.

There have also been some changes to our staff within the sport program in 2018. Greg Brownlow has been promoted to Head of Sport and has oversight of our entire sporting programs and with the help of Will Piriz (Head of Football), Steve Hamburger (Head of Tennis) and Gavin Thomas (Head of Athletic Development) he is well supported. We launched on a small scale our Athletic Development (AD) program in Term 4 of this year under the direction of Gavin Thomas. The AD program will be the underpinning of all student sport programs going forward with a strong focus on identifying each student-athlete's needs and then designing a program with their passion in mind. We are working hard to create an environment where our students will be the best they can be with no compromise.

## Yoga and Mindfulness

Back in 2013 when we started IFTS, our desire was to create an environment where we helped our students gain control of their emotions and mental health. Through our sport we were able to address their physical development, however we believe that we had a unique opportunity to address much more than this in that, if we were willing to be open to some innovative ideas we could create some opportunities to allow our students to develop healthy minds and bodies. At this point we felt that Yoga was a perfect supplement to our program. It allowed our students to practice mindfulness and at the same time benefit from improved flexibility and body movement. One of our frustrations with how we have utilised Yoga over the past few years is that we have wished we could make this become a daily practice. During 2018 the management team listened to feedback from students, teachers and coaches to reflect on how we can improve this aspect of our program.

During 2018, our primary school staff implemented some mindfulness techniques throughout the primary school with the introduction of a number of mindfulness exercises throughout the day helping students to learn and understand how to take control of their mental state. We recently appointed two staff, Cameron Moon and Tim Walsh as our Wellbeing Coordinators for Senior School and Junior School respectively. Cameron and Tim will be rolling out a number of initiatives in 2019 with the introduction of Rock and Water as a whole school approach, innovative programs such as 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens for our year 7 and 8 students, a service program called Invictus for our year 9 and 10 students and a number of other exciting programs which will continue to allow us to develop the young minds and emotional wellbeing of our students. We want to be proactive in our approach which we believe will have a lasting impact.

With that in mind, we have realised some of the goals of our Yoga program will be addressed on a daily basis through the practices we develop within our home rooms and the continued rollout of our whole school wellbeing programs.

The other missing piece then, if we do not have yoga as a regular practice at IFTS, is how do we address the physical benefits of yoga. During Term 4 we have utilised the services of an

Exercise Physiologist who has been working directly with a small group of high school students as a trial. The intention was to analyse these students, work out what an individual program needed to be to address their individual needs and then deliver on that. The physiologist completed some analysis, developed programs and provided these to the students and Gavin Thomas (as our Athletic Development expert) and the outcomes have been extraordinary. The level of engagement we have seen from this test group of students has been incredible and we are very excited where this updated approach will take us in 2019.

It is important to acknowledge the amazing work that Helen has done at our school as our resident Yoga expert. She has helped change the lives of many students and we will be forever grateful for her work.

## **Staff**

One piece of advice that Richard Branson from Virgin is often renowned for, is that if you look after your staff they will look after your customers. With that in mind we continue to work on ensuring that we have the best possible staff who are experts in their domain, are passionate about children's wellbeing and development and are keen to help change the world. The structure of our school is about creating teams where each team member's needs are well looked after by creating smaller units that can work together cohesively. Tracey Dean is our CFO and looks after our support staff which includes Admin, Finance, Cafe and Operational staff. Greg Brownlow with support from his heads of sport looks after our coaching team. Damian Mitchell as Head of Junior School works closely with his primary school staff and then Sally Bennellick as Head of Senior School supports and manages our high school teaching staff.

During 2018 there have been some staff changes with some new additions and also some staff moving on. With a staff of 60, staff movements are part of normal operations of any organisation and we thank these staff for their time at IFTTS and wish them the best in their future endeavours.

## **Buildings and Infrastructure (our master plan)**

During 2018 we published our master plan with respect to our sporting infrastructure on the site. Part of our hope with this master plan was hinged on the success of a grant that we had applied for through the NSW State Government. We were unfortunately unsuccessful with this grant application which has delayed the start of some parts of the plan, however we can confirm that the plan is still relevant. There have been some refinements to the master plan, however, the overarching goals are still in place. As a school, the management team and Board are working through the priorities on what is affordable in the short term so that we can deliver on the first few elements of the master plan.

We are pleased to inform parents the priority list (in order of execution) of major capital works projects that we are working toward:

1. Installation of a portable building to house the IFTTS Athletic Gym
2. Construction of 5 x multi-purpose outdoor courts that will be utilised for Netball, Tennis, Basketball, Futsal and other court sports.
3. Construction of 1 x artificial field on Village Green 2.
4. Construction of 1 x indoor multi-purpose court plus indoor gymnasium

We believe the list above are our short term objectives with some of these projects being completed within the first half of 2019 (pending finance and compliance approvals).

Some other minor works that we plan to complete over the coming 12 months are:-

1. Purchase of 8 x portable projectors for the classrooms, 4 x Promethean Touch Screens for our K-2 space.
2. Installation of a rabbit proof fence around Village Green 1.
3. Building 27 renovations (eventual K-2 space) -which includes installation of internal walls, internal painting and major renovations of the toilet block.
4. Air conditioning installations in Buildings 21, 25 and 27.
5. Internal painting of Building 21.

## School Times

Our school day is a busy time and we are always reviewing and reflecting on how to ensure we are providing our students with the best possible experience with the limited time we have available during the day. We wish to advise families that there will be some minor changes to our school day in 2019 to ensure the needs of our students are being met. One of these changes will see our school day broken into one hour sessions allowing students more flexibility in how we run our program. The other change will be the start time for our students.

As mentioned above, during 2018 we introduced aspects of the Walker Learning pedagogy which is fundamentally about creating an environment where we develop and enhance student's skills for life (thinking for yourself and others, being creative, strong in literacy and numeracy, being able to navigate the work, being intrinsically motivated, emotionally intelligent, self-initiators, reflective and strong communicators) and the skills they need within their academic program.

With all of this in mind, we are planning to extend our school day by twenty minutes to allow more time to fit in all the activities, experiences and programs that we believe will benefit our students on a daily basis. You may recall we completed a survey a few months ago asking the question if our families would like us to move the whole day earlier or leave it as is. The response was surprising with approx 55% of families wishing the start and end time to stay as it



is. We were initially considering moving the whole day up to an hour earlier, however after reviewing the survey results and then further observing our student's movements we have seen that approx 75-80% of our students arrive at school on or around 9AM currently.

Due to train connection times in the afternoon, there did not seem to be any real solution to move the afternoon times without causing significant disruption and based on this, we do not intend to make any adjustments to our afternoon finish time which is currently 4PM.

In 2019, our intention is to start our school day at 9:05AM with a twenty minute home room session. Students will then move off to either their sporting or academic sessions depending on their schedule. All students will also complete their day with a final ten-fifteen minute reflection time with their home room teachers. We understand the main group affected by this new start time is potentially students who catch the late train that travels from Newcastle in the mornings and we intend to make contact directly with those families who may be affected .

If there are any major issues with these proposed school times please contact me via email or phone call to discuss. There may be ways to work with individuals if special arrangements are required. Please know we do not make decisions like these lightly and have done so as we believe the extra time during the day will bring even better outcomes for our students.

## **Mandatory Camps**

As always, our outdoor camps/programs start in year 3. All students from year 3 and above are expected to attend our annual camps. These will continue in 2019 with some minor tweaks to ensure we make them memorable experiences and are well linked to our well-being program.

- Year 3-8 camps are scheduled for early Term 1 2019.
- Year 9 trek final date will be advised asap with some preparation treks being added to their schedule.
- The Year 10/11/12 HSC camp is scheduled for Term 4, week 5 (11th Nov - 15th Nov)

## Trips

2018 certainly saw many of our students participate in a number of new and exciting trips. 2019 will be no different with many experiences being planned. Please find below a list of some of the trips that we are in the process of planning. Further details will be sent to families asap with Expressions of Interest for many of these experiences either going out before the end of the year or early in 2019.

## Optional Trips/Tours/Tournaments

Age Group	Details	Approximate Dates	Estimated Cost
Years 3-5 (U9-U11)	Kanga Cup (Football tournament) - Students in these age groups will be encouraged to express interest to attend Kanga Cup. Students will need to stay with their own families during the week with the school providing a staff member to coach during games. Approx costs of Kanga Cup for these age groups covers Tournament Registration and Provision of a Coach/Teacher for game day	7th - 12th July (End of Term 2)	\$300
Years 3-5 (U9-U11)	Gold Coast Cup (Football tournament) - Students in these age groups will be encouraged to express interest to attend. Students will need to stay with their own families during the week with the school providing a staff member to coach during games. Approx costs covers Tournament Registration and Provision of a Coach/Teacher for game day	25th September - 28th September	\$300
Years 3-8 (U8-U14)	National Primary Games - Sports carnival celebrating football, tennis, netball, rugby league and other sports. Held in Tamworth.	20th-21st July	\$250
Years 5-6 (U11-U12)	Far North QLD Cup (Football Tournament) - highly competitive football tournament.	14th April - 19th April	\$1200
Year 5-12 Tennis Students	NZ Tour/tournament - travel to NZ and participate in a locally run tournament.	October School Holidays	\$2000
Year 6	Far North QLD Cultural Experience - travel to far North QLD to visit Indigenous communities and immerse our students in local culture	28th July - 3rd August (Week 1 Term 3)	\$600-\$800
Year 6 Football (U12)	South Cardiff U12 Tournament - 1 Day tournament	3rd February 2019	\$75
Years 6-12 Football Students (U12-U18)	Kanga Cup (Football tournament) - Students in these age groups will be encouraged to express interest to attend Kanga Cup. Students will stay with the school group, all food, accomodation, tournament fees etc will be covered.	7th - 12th July (End of Term 2)	\$800
Years 6-12 (U12-U18)	Gold Coast Cup (Football tournament) - Students in these age groups will be encouraged to express interest to attend. Students will stay with the school group, all food, accomodation, tournament fees etc will be covered.	28th September - 5th October	\$950

Years 7-8	European Sports Tour - Country to be confirmed. Following the success of our European Tour in 2018, we look to head to Europe again in 2019. Tennis and Football students are welcome to attend and have an experience to remember. Parents are welcome to come along on this trip.	15th September - 30th September	\$4,500-\$5000
Years 7-12 Football Students	Gothia Cup China - International Football Tournament. A highly reputed international football tournament. Teams formed will be based on expressions of interest.	9th August - 17th August	\$1500-\$2000
Years 9-10	Borneo Community Service Trip - travelling with Camps International students will participate in community work and be exposed to South East Asian Culture.	21st Oct - 5th Nov	\$5000
Years 10-12	Annual Snow Sports Tour - stay on the slopes at Thredbo and enjoy the Australian slopes.	28th July - 2nd August	\$1720
Years 9-12	USA College Tour - visit a range of USA colleges and gain a deeper understanding on what the US College system has to offer. Opportunities exist for all student regardless of sporting focus.	Nov 24 - December 10th	\$4000-\$4500

This list is not exhaustive, however will provide families with a good guide as to the trips that are being planned. Please note that many trips are dependant on a sufficient number of students to ensure the trip is viable. Final confirmations will be sent post the expression of interest process.

Please note, the Tennis tournament schedule is very vast and will be communicated directly with families with students in the tennis program.

## School Fees

We are pleased to say we have continued to keep downward pressure on our fee structure with only minor increases across the board. The updated fee schedule can be found on our school website and any families needing to change their payment arrangements or register for the first time, should have already received an email in this regard. We have also extended our fee payments for those on weekly plans allowing an extra week to pay your fees to reduce any additional pressure the minor increases may have on families week to week cash flow.

## Our Identity

Now, for some very exciting news and a bit of a secret heads up. Since the schools inception we have continued to challenge the status quo and our name has elicited certain reactions and assumptions about us. We have been reflecting and seeking advice for some time now on how to ensure that family, community and enterprise all truly understand the school, its ethos and its offering. We wanted to let you know that we consider our current name and branding do not truly reflect who we are and what we do. We are no longer the International Football and Tennis School. It is our belief we are so much more than that and it is time for a fresh new look into the future and a name and brand to truly reflect who we are and what we do.

Recently the school engaged a professional marketing firm who is working with our Board and management team to help us through the journey of establishing our new look for 2019 and beyond. The exciting news is that the name has been decided, we can't let the cat out of the bag just yet, however, we would like to share that we love it and can't wait to share this news with you all. All aspects of our brand is under review so watch this space for some exciting news which we hope to share with you all prior to Christmas.

We believe our new name and a new fresh look will allow our students to identify with the school on an even deeper level. With that in mind the rollout of our 2019 uniforms has been temporarily paused to ensure they embody the schools awesome new look, brand and name. This will cause a minor delay with the availability of the uniforms next year but we are sure it will be worth the wait and in the meantime we really appreciate your patience.

## **End of Year Celebration**

Last, but certainly not least, we would once again invite you to our end of year School Carnivale. For the past 5 years we have always celebrated our end of year with a celebration evening to replace a traditional speech night or award ceremony. We want to celebrate the year that has been 2018 and allow everyone to enjoy themselves. The final day of the school year for students will be Thursday 13 December. We will start the day with our traditional staff v students games. The day will then transition to a Carnivale in the afternoon with rides, games and good old fashioned fun for all to enjoy each other's company and wish our entire school community a happy end of year. We look forward to seeing you all on the 13 December and as always please let us know if you have any questions, concerns or feedback.

Kind Regards

Paul Chapman and the IFTS Team