



Parafield Gardens High School

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Quality Learning Quality Futures

Dear families,

Our new school year commenced this week and our students quickly moved into their new classes and met their new home group teachers. These staff will be an important point of contact for you if you have questions about your child's well-being and learning progress.

Students at PGHS have performed well in their studies in 2017 and our expectation is one of continued improvement in 2018. Our first newsletter in week 2 will detail our successes. We're particularly pleased that our 8-12 curriculum design has led to a 98% SACE completion, with more than 90 % of our yr. 12 students moving on to University, TAFE or employment, an increased number of students moving on to university and a top ATAR score again above 99 (out of 100).

A new feature of our school in 2018 is a revised timetable with different start and finishing times. I want to acknowledge that this change has led to some issues for families. I thank the families who have written to me and come into school to express their concerns.

The intent of the changed timetable was to improve student learning outcomes through;

- making better use of 5 x 15 minute home group period
- reallocating equivalent time into 2 x 45 min times where students receive Individual Learning Plan (ILP) support and learning coaching (ie monitoring of learning goals, discussing health and well-being issues and Careers planning)
- addressing the late arrival of students (ie after 8.30)
- providing a more even distribution of teaching time across curriculum areas
- addressing issues raised by our middle school student survey around careers activities

To achieve these things it was necessary to extend the school day to 3.25pm on 4 days. In addition we changed our staff professional learning time from Monday afternoon to Wednesday morning.

Over the last few weeks, families have indicated to us some issues that we did not foresee. Some of those issues include;

- Non alignment of our timetable (now) with our neighbouring primary school, with consequential issues around collecting siblings from school and different collection times for families
- Potential clashes with student sports and work arrangements, and our involvement of students in the change process
- The timing of our changes and our associated communication, especially with new parents, and the time we gave the parents on Governing Council to consult with the community.

On reflection we should have noted the close linkages between our timetable and that of our neighbouring primary school, and what that meant for families. We should also have communicated these changes in a more timely and detailed manner, making special effort to contact families new to the school. I apologise for this and give you an undertaking that we will learn from our experiences.

If our later finishing time has resulted in you needing to place a younger sibling in Out of School Hours Care (OSHC), this is currently available on the Parafield Gardens Primary site. If you enrol them there and this creates financial issues, please contact us here at the High School and we will come to an arrangement to support you.

We will now undertake a review of the new timetable arrangements, with our Governing Council. Governing Council will review the educational advantages and disadvantages, and make a recommendation to the Principal. The process will take several weeks as we need to allow time to see if the changes have been effective and also to allow time for parent consultation. Letters to parents, surveys, family conversations with Governing Council members and Governing Council discussions will guide our decision making.

If you require any additional information, please contact the school.

Yours sincerely

Martin Lippett
Principal



Government of South Australia
Department for Education and
Child Development



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