WELCOME to the 2014 Term 1 Pos Ed Enews. Pos-Ed was launched at MSM in 2011 and we continue to embed the positive psychology principles that are at the heart of our program: character strengths, gratitude, flow, savouring and mindfulness. We started 2014 with our excited new Year 8 girls entering the Year 12 guard of honour to the Pharrell Williams song HAPPY, and I believe we have had a very productive, successful and happy term. New research that is emerging shows that the brain is modular, communicates with other parts of the brain, is ever changing and multi-dimensional. Academic success is not only a function of academic knowledge or cognitive processing-success is a function of the connection to self and others and the world that shapes our brain. Positive psychology is brain compatible as it can assist in optimal functioning-both emotional and academic.
During Pos-Ed this term, the Year 8 students have discovered the keys for being the best that they can be. Tips and strategies used by the world’s elite performers that we have explored include:

- Discovering the champion within
- Finding their strengths
- Thinking for success

The Year 8 Team have consistently challenged the students to be the Captain of their own ship – to take charge of their own personal destiny. We will draw on this powerful metaphor throughout the year to encourage the students to deliver an outstanding performance across the range of activities they are involved in.

Additionally, a range of special events were integrated into the Pos-Ed Program to assist the students to settle into the College and allow them to be successful. These included wonderful opportunities such as the Year 8/12 Bonding Lunch and Learning Conference designed to develop confidence and diminish fear.

It matters not how strait the gate, how charged with punishments the scroll, I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul.

William Ernest Henley, 1875
In what ways do you think Pos-Ed can assist you?

Pos-Ed can help us learn to believe in ourselves and how to perform at our full potential. After only a few weeks I have grown to know myself more and how I can study best, I have also grown in my confidence and I feel a lot better about my learning.

**Mackenzie Pope 8D**

I think that Pos-Ed has helped me become a better student, more organised and has given me more confidence. It has taught me new ways to learn and has led me to find new strategies to apply to my studies. Pos-Ed is a great subject that encourages and helps develop a student’s potential. Within just a term of Pos-Ed it has helped prepared me for my studies and made me a better person and student.

**Bronte Vuocolo 8B**

Pos-Ed is a great subject where I have had the opportunity to take part in really helpful self-reflection. It has also given me the chance to get my study plan organised and learn how to stay on top of the range of activities I am involved in.

**Zoe Drynan, 8C**

The Pos Ed program is a fantastic way for

the pupils at MSM, especially the Grade 8s, to help build self-esteem, find our own strengths, and have fun at school! Pos- Ed also helps us learn how to study sufficiently, and handle Home Work.

**Sophie Lyons 8T**

I believe that Pos-Ed will help us to find success, to achieve our goals and to have a positive mindset. As Grade 8s, Pos-Ed is helping us get used to our new learning environment, to be more organised and to learn how to keep a balance in our lives.

**Rose Maloney 8W**
In the Pos-Ed Program I hope to improve in a range of performance areas and to learn new skills so that I can unleash my potential.

**Brooke Gillmeister 8W**

During Pos-Ed I hope to gain more self-confidence so that I can face challenges with an open mind and a great attitude. I want to achieve my personal best and become a leader who displays a positive attitude and a heart of gratitude.

**Claire Dempsey 8R**

“I hope to achieve a more positive attitude when approaching a difficult task and to be able to persist with problems that at first seem confusing. I also hope to achieve better study habits and learn to become more organised to help improve getting better results across all my subjects. I hope to be able to complete assignments and exams without getting too stressed.”

**Claire Sankey 8C**

By taking part in the Pos-Ed program, I am hoping that I will learn how to take notes and study properly and I think that this will help with my organisation skills immensely. Through Pos-Ed I want to learn to persist with my work even when I’m finding something very difficult.

**Milly Rodbert 8B**

Some wonderful foundations skills have been set by the 8 students this term and they look forward to building on their repertoire of skills in Term Two.
Student Reflections:

Throughout Pos-Ed this term, Year 9 has been focusing on the unit, Positive Relationships and Stepping Up Together in Year 9. One of the activities that we engaged in was Practical Team Building activities. We did these activities together as a whole cohort, with our teams being our Home Rooms. One of the activities, ‘Circle the Circle’, required us to pass a hoop around the group whilst holding hands in a circle. This assisted us to bond as a group by listening to each other’s ideas and use problem solving skills to reach the same goal. We have learnt each other’s strengths through a reflection of these activities, and we all voted on people in our team who portrayed particular character strengths and contributed to the activity in their own way. These activities helped us understand each other and our strengths, so that we may be able to work better as a team.

Piper Brady, Sophia Cassidy and Isabella Zammit
Goal setting has been a major focus for the first term of Year 9. During one of the earliest Pos-Ed lessons, the cohort was asked to write two goals in their Blessings Journal. One of the goals was to do with school life and one was to do with maintaining positive relationships. Some students planned to achieve certain marks in certain subjects whilst some planned to spend more time with their family. Some planned to work harder, some planned to make more time for leisure. Students were told to make their goals achievable but something that they would have to work for such as keeping their locker tidy. A Harvard Business study revealed remarkable statistics relating to goal setting and success. The study suggested that people who have goals written down are “thirty times more successful than people with no goals”. Therefore, through setting our personal goals in Year 9, we are setting the bigger goal of success this year as a cohort.
There were many aspects in this term’s Pos-Ed Program that inspired us all to strive to 'be better' (a quote from Mrs. Kelly). One example which truly started the spark for the busy year ahead was goal setting. This was a great way to start the term as we all set small achievable goals, such as consistent completion of homework or to make new friends. These small goals were key in the development of us as ‘New Year Nines’. In cohesion to the school theme Ignite your light, we held an open competition for the Year Nine theme, the winner was Light The Way (congratulations to Abi Schumann and all other student who contributed). Like the movie Tangled, our logo was a lantern, one to guide and lead us during the school year. All of these components created an exciting term with many key values to remember.

Hannah Rogan
Year 9 Pos-Ed has been an enriching part of our curriculum. We have covered team dynamics, team harmony, especially through the motivational presentation by Damon Joseph from Character Builders. We have learnt conflict resolution skills with Kathy James, through first reflecting on common issues amongst the cohort’s relationships, then finding practical techniques to avoid conflict with our peers. The Pos-Ed Program has also helped us find and set goals for personal, academic and social areas, which help me to aim higher and challenge myself. There have been many enjoyable occasions of team building activities that have enabled me to meet new people, and further develop my relationships with classmates. The cohort has created a unique theme, Light The Way which has fashioned a common goal for the whole year level, to light the way for others, and has brought us closer together. The Pos-Ed program has enabled me to develop my relationship with my cohort, define my goals and introduced important life skills such as team harmony and conflict resolution, to help me not navigate through high-school, but through life.

Caitlin Dempsey
The Year 10 girls are focusing on a positive mindset, purpose for all that they do and finding the activities that they are passionate about in preparation for SET Plan decisions and senior studies in 2015.

Our Pos Ed focus has been on teenage development, specifically mood and brain development and the effects of alcohol and drugs on these. We have begun our Year 10 Home Room Spirit Cup challenges and the girls have shown amazing team and leadership skills, resilience, persistence and creativity.

Here is what the students are saying:
Positive Education

This year’s Pos Ed program is helping me to keep a positive attitude by writing in the Gratitude Diary each Pos Ed lesson. It helps me to understand that keeping optimistic helps me to keep physically and mentally healthy and it is good to express my emotions from time to time. (Olivia Bennie) It is helping me learn more about my lifestyle and learning style and it is teaching me to improve the things that I already do so that I can be more effective. (Karla Torrissi) The Pos-Ed discussions in class are helpful because now I am more conscious of my moods and when I should be controlling them.

Karly Welsh

Home Room Spirit Cup

The Home Room Spirit Cup is a great opportunity for our homerooms and the whole cohort to have fun whilst applying ourselves in a positive way, to be part of a challenge in which we can make new friendships and gain lifelong skills. (Ally McDonough) There are so many benefits from participating in the Home Room Spirit Cup! Team bonding and developing friendships through games and challenges is the best part and it is always fun and exciting. (Olivia Bennie) Benefits from the Home Room Spirit Cup include participation, working together as a home room, demonstrating our many talents, perseverance and resilience as a whole to gain points for the trophy and prizes.

Abbey O’Keeffe
There is so much to enjoy about starting Year 10. Year 10 gives us an opportunity to try new things as we are heading into our senior years of high school and we are starting to discover personal interests in a range of different subjects. (Olivia Bennie) There are many positive things about being a Year 10 student, but overall the leap from Year 9 to Year 10 has been made a lot more comfortable from the help of our excellent homeroom teachers. (Claire Lewis) I am enjoying the fact that I have a different group of girls to bond with each class and new teachers for each subject. (Karly Welsh) Currently in Year 10 I am enjoying the Pos Ed program, especially the Home Room Spirit Cup as it gets all the girls in each of the homerooms working together for the final prize.
Year 11’s are in flow as they pursue their positive identity

Student wellbeing is at the heart of the new initiatives offered to the 2014 Year 11 students. We welcomed our new students to the senior school at the Opening Eucharist where they made their commitment pledge to their senior schooling. The team of teachers working with the year 11 students are in flow with a collection of enriching support initiatives for the Year 11 students. As teachers we are grateful for the Life Coaching and Study Skills programs that have been offered for the first time in Year 11. Programs such as these are integral to the positive education of your daughters, so please take the time to discuss these with them over the holidays. It has been an absolute delight engaging with your daughters and discovering their character strengths this term. Their spirit is burning brightly.

Term one was also an exciting term for the students through their involvement in their first leadership project, The Pay it Forward Markets. Your daughters demonstrated excellent initiative and leadership skills and raised a total of $1008 which was graciously received by Caritas. This event was followed by the long awaited semi-formal. The Year 11 students expressed their gratitude for this event with many personal thankyous and follow up emails. This is reflective of their family values and the work you do as parents and guardians, so thank you for your role as strong and influential mentors- it is paying dividends!

Article by Madonna Potter- Year 11 Coordinator
The Positive Education Program (POS ED) this term has focused on Positive Identity. The students have explored the importance of maintaining a positive identity within social media. We considered the role ‘selfies’ played in the perception we project to others. The students viewed the ‘Australian Story’ episode Turning the Gaze and the article The Dark undercurrents of teenage girls’ selfies by Olympia Nelson. The messages within these texts provided room for rigorous discussion within homerooms, gently guided by their homeroom teachers. Their teachers felt very confident that our young women are discerning when using social media and that they work towards maintaining a positive identity.

The final POS ED lesson was a culmination of the Year 11 programs: POS ED, Life Coaching and Study Skills. We invited past pupil Natasha Walker as a guest speaker. She was keen to pass on her experience and hindsight to your daughters. Natasha discussed how to ignite your light and keep it burning in the face of adversity. She also shared insights and advice on navigating the senior years. Natasha reinforced acknowledging your strengths and the importance of embracing a growth mindset when it comes to a love of learning. Natasha is passionately pursuing her dream in musical theatre at Queensland’s Conservatorium of Music, Griffith, at South Bank.

Finally, to bring closure to such a busy term, we enjoyed a trip down memory lane with a compilation of pictures as we farewelled Term 1. WE are blessed. WE are grateful.
The year 12’s Theme for the year, “*Ignite your Light!*” aligns beautifully with this term’s focus on ‘Positive Purpose’.

Early in the term, Dan Haesler, a teacher, writer and consultant, presented at the Year 12 Leadership Seminar. An engaging and thought provoking speaker, Dan’s work centres around the relationships between engagement, wellbeing and leadership. He spoke to the girls about how to perform at their best both now and into the future through

- **P**erseverance,
- **E**xercising, allowing time to
- **R**ecover,
- **F**ailing (only by being willing to fail, can we reach our full potential), being
- **O**rganised, forming strong
- **R**elationships, and finding
- **M**eaning in life by discovering what they are good at and passionate about.

The girls were then encouraged to formulate an Action Plan for Term One and, within the context of the presentation, asked to consider the following:

“If something seems a little too hard, it’s probably worth doing; if it seems a little bit easy, it’s probably not worth doing!”
Dr Suzy Green, Founder of The Positivity Institute, an organisation dedicated to the research and practice of positive human functioning, asserts that when we set authentic goals, that is, goals which are aligned to our values, we are intrinsically motivated to pursue them because they are our goals. In addition, a large body of research has found that authentic goal-striving correlates with not only high levels of goal attainment but also high levels of psychological well-being.

With further goal setting the focus, the girls viewed “Final Year Confidential – the Secrets You need to Know” by Michael Carr-Gregg, one of Australia’s highest profile psychologists who is passionate about the health and wellbeing of young people. Class discussion followed and time allowed for the girls to consider and complete the following two sentences:

I will have had a successful year if, by Graduation Day, I can say that I have…….

My vision of a successful future includes…….
Another presentation to the cohort was delivered by Kathy James, our College Psychologist, who spoke to the girls about Mindfulness and strategies they might like to employ to deal with the stress that comes with their increasingly busy lives.

The girls have had a busy and productive term and, being mindful of “Positive Purpose”, have set about establishing a happy, caring relationship with our Year 8s. The recent Year 8/12 Lunch was a wonderful way for the girls to bond with the House Captains leading twenty minutes of fun-filled games. The overriding sentiment of both year levels was that we must do this again!

To conclude the term, we had the first of our Home Room challenges which will continue in various forms throughout the year. Designed to encourage team building and positivity, the games on Friday were also lots of fun and a wonderful way to conclude the term together.