

28 January 2022

Principal's Message - College Operations in Term 1, 2022

As-Salaamu Alaykum & Greetings!

Dear Parents/Carers & Students,

Welcome to our new families and students, and welcome back to all our existing families and students!

We have reached the new academic year alhamdulillah. I am very excited about the many new initiatives and advancements in progress at our College this year, and I pray these changes bring about much benefit, ease and happiness for our students, staff and families.

Please read carefully the important detailed information below regarding our College operations for Term 1, 2022:

NEW INITIATIVES IN 2022:

I am very pleased to inform you about the many new initiatives at our College in 2022:

- ✓ **Accelerated Classes** (Years 8-9) (pilot program) (info letter attached)
- ✓ **Tutor Learning Initiative** (TLI) (Years 1-12)
- ✓ **Full-time Teachers' Aides** in all Foundation classes
- ✓ New **'Student Services Department'** (info letter attached)
- ✓ We have changed from **Seqta to Compass** (*info letter attached)
- ✓ **1 to 1 Laptop Program** (Years 7-10) (info letter previously sent)
- ✓ **Enhanced wellbeing programs** for all students and staff
- ✓ **Additional extra-curricular activities** for all students
- ✓ New **exclusive playground for Years F-1 students**
- ✓ **New Student Bathrooms**
- ✓ **New Middle School Building** (currently under construction)

NEW UNIFORM SUPPLIER:

From **4 February 2022**, Mt Hira College's school uniforms **will no longer be supplied by Beleza School Uniforms**. *Parents will receive detailed information soon about how they can purchase our school uniforms after this date.

In summary, parents/carers will have two easy options for purchasing school uniforms:

- 1.) Parents can **shop online** and use our new **Click & Collect** system, whereby uniform items can be purchased and paid for online and then collected from school.
- 2.) Parents can shop in person at our **on-campus uniform shop** (specific location, opening & closing times, etc. to be provided soon). The uniform shop will be operated by our new uniform supplier.

Please note – **Despite changing supplier, our school uniform colours and designs remain the same.** We have been working on enhancing the design of our school uniform, but no changes to our current school uniform requirements will take effect until the start of the **2024 academic year** (in two years).

COVID-SAFE PRACTICES:

The measures currently in place to keep our staff and students safe include –

- ✓ Separate **entry** and **exit** points for staff and students, as follows:
 - **Years F-1** (Front Office)
 - **Years 2-5** (Back Gate, carpark entry from Greens Road)
 - **Years 6-9** (Middle School - Pedestrian Gate)
 - **Years 10-12** (Senior School Building - Front Entrance)
- ✓ **Parents/visitors are kindly requested NOT to enter the school buildings beyond the Front Office area until further notice.**
- ✓ Surveillance testing using **Rapid Antigen Tests** (RAT tests) are 'strongly recommended' by the Victorian Government for all primary and secondary school students and staff, and early childhood education and care staff, **twice weekly at home before school or childcare.** *Parents/carers will be notified very soon when to collect the **free** RAT tests supplied by the government to the College.
- ✓ Compulsory **mask wearing indoors (All staff (F-12) and students in Years 3-12).** (***Note - students must leave home with their masks and not request disposable masks at school.**)
- ✓ Social distancing
- ✓ Regular hand hygiene
- ✓ Classroom windows and doors open (increased ventilation)
- ✓ Portable air purifiers in classrooms
- ✓ College assemblies will be run online with students in their classes (not in the gym)
- ✓ Staff meetings involving all staff will continue to be run online
- ✓ **Staff and students are to stay home if feeling unwell or experiencing flu-like symptoms.**
- ✓ The isolation period for all people (including students) who test positive to covid-19 is now **seven (7) days from the day of testing positive via a PCR test.** *Seven (7) days quarantine is also required for 'close contacts' (people who have spent more than four hours indoors with someone who has COVID-19) and they must get tested on Day 1 and Day 6 with a RAT or PCR test. **Staff and students must NOT return to school if they are still symptomatic after this time period.**

We have been very blessed these past two years to have almost zero transmission occur onsite at our school, whether from 'student to student', or from 'student to staff' or vice versa, despite high community case numbers. We pray for continued success in this area and for the ongoing safety of our entire College community.

The above measures will remain in place as per government directives and depending on case numbers and specific circumstances within the College and wider community.

FIRST COLLEGE ASSEMBLY (DAY 1):

The first **College Assembly** for 2022 will be held **online** on **Monday 31 January 2022** commencing at **9:45 am**. The assembly is expected to run for about one hour. Students will participate in the assembly online from their normal Period 2 classes via Microsoft Teams. Our 2021 Year 12 DUX Award and VCE Higher Achiever Awards will be presented at this event.

Our parents/carers are **welcome to watch the College Assembly live online** and can use the following link to access this event on **31 January 2022 @ 9:45 am** - <https://bit.ly/3L15NBg> (*No sign in is required for this event). You will need to ensure you have the Microsoft Teams App downloaded on your phone or device.



DAY 1 ARRANGEMENTS FOR ALL NEW STUDENTS:

FOUNDATION / YEAR 1 STUDENTS:

Foundation students will have half days (**9:00 am-12:00 pm**) for the **first week of school**. The students will be walked out to the area **in front of** the Front Office at **12:00 pm for dismissal**. Parents will not have to walk into the College buildings for this.

On **Day 1, Foundation students will commence at 8:40 am**. A special segment will be held for all **Foundation and Year 1 parents/carers** where they will be able to meet and greet their child's teacher and teacher's aide, ask any questions, and farewell their children **outdoors on the back Basketball Courts** for the first 10-15 minutes before the classes proceed indoors to their classrooms. *Teachers' Aides will be on hand at the Front Office to escort / usher new parents to the back Basketball Courts.

Parents should **not** enter the Junior School building thereafter, as this will only prolong any detachment young students may experience when adjusting to attending school independently for the first time. It will also be in breach of our CovidSafe protocols at this time.

NEW YEARS 2-5 STUDENTS:

All **new students in Years 2-5** will be escorted from the **Front Office** to the **Library** (by Ed Support staff Ozlem, Jenny N & Mariam M) when the bell goes at **8:40 am**. The students will then be escorted to their **Form Classes**. All new students will then be partnered by their teachers with a class "buddy" for the first two weeks of school. The class teachers and class buddies will ensure these students are given a tour of the school and they know how to locate the bathrooms, the canteen, sick bay, what to do when arriving late, and so on.

NEW YEARS 6-12 STUDENTS:

All **new students in Years 6-9** will be escorted to the **Gym** (by Ed Support staff **Rihab & Osama**) at **8:40 am**, where they will be grouped in year levels, seated and given a hard copy of their **Semester 1 timetables** by Mr Eroglu (Head of Middle School). **Years 10-12 students** will be escorted to the **Lecture Theatre** (Senior Building). During the session, students will be given a quick rundown of the role & office location of the Head of School, College rules and policies (e.g. uniform, mobile phones, arriving late, being absent, etc.), how & where to access wellbeing services, how to read their timetables, etc.

Students will then be given a tour of the College (to locate bathrooms, canteen, prayer facilities, counsellors' offices, sick bay, library, etc.) and will be informed where and when to go for lunchtime prayer. Students will also be given the opportunity to ask questions. Students will then proceed to their **Period 2** classes for their first online assembly.

EDSTART TO PAY SCHOOL FEES:

Mt Hira College has partnered with **Edstart** to help our parents/carers manage their school fee payments. Edstart is an easy-to-use service that assists parents to set up flexible payment plans (weekly, fortnightly, monthly) without charging ANY transaction fees, interest or otherwise. This is a **free service for our parents**. To find out more or to sign up, please visit: <https://edstart.com.au/mthira>

Parents/carers who normally pay their school fees upfront annually or per term will continue to do so via the Front Office or by direct deposit.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us on (03) 9709 0100 or as follows:

- Dr Toni Pikos-Sallie, College Principal – Principal@mthira.vic.edu.au
- Mr Tim Campbell, Vice Principal (Administration) – tim.campbell@mthira.vic.edu.au
- Dr Mohsen Khalife, Vice Principal (Curriculum) – mohsen.khalife@mthira.vic.edu.au
- Mr Jack Franklin, Head of Senior School (Years 10-12) – jfranklin@mthira.vic.edu.au
- Mr Serdar Eroglu, Head of Middle School (Years 6-9) – seroglu@mthira.vic.edu.au
- Ms Hulya Ucler, Head of Junior School (Years F-5) – hucler@mthira.vic.edu.au
- Mr Muhammed Sezgin, Head of Religious Affairs (F-12) – msezgin@mthira.vic.edu.au
- Ms Halime Yenilmez, Office Manager – admin@mthira.vic.edu.au

Welcome again to the Mt Hira College community. We are very excited to see our students back at school in 2022 insha Allah and to supporting their intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual growth and development, as our future leaders and community members.

May Allah grant our entire College community safety, prosperity, and success in 2022 and beyond.

Thank you as always for your ongoing support, commitment and the trust you have placed in us with the education and care of your child.

Kind regards,



Dr Toni Pikos-Sallie
College Principal

Attachments below:

- 1.) Accelerated Classes (Years 8-9)**
- 2.) Student Services Department (Years F-12)**
- 3.) Compass Parent Guide (link will be sent)**



...the choice for quality, harmony, safety and care.

Introduction of Accelerated Classes

Dr Toni Pikos-Sallie, 24 January 2022

How will accelerated classes be structured?

In 2022, an accelerated class will be introduced into both Years 8 and 9, as a pilot program. In 2023 and beyond, accelerated classes will be offered across Years 7-10.

'Accelerated classes' mean that an accelerated or advanced academic program will be provided to 'eligible' students across the four core subjects: **English, Mathematics, Science and Humanities.**

Students are selected for the accelerated program based on their performance in their previous NAPLAN tests (Literacy and Numeracy). These scores are used to support the selection process because they are highly reliable, objective, independently marked and the tests are standardised. Students' performance in the accelerated program will be monitored over time to ensure they are in the most suitable program to meet their academic needs and interests. Likewise, the performance of all students will be reviewed periodically and students can be moved into or out of the accelerated program from year to year based on their academic progress and needs over time.

What is the Rationale for Introducing Accelerated Classes?

At Mt Hira College, we currently have mixed-'ability' classes for all subjects from Years 7-9. However, when there is a wide spectrum of learners in a single class, it can be very challenging for teachers to cater fully for students at the lower and upper ends of the learning spectrum (i.e. students who are significantly behind or advanced). Further, it is an all too common phenomenon in the modern education system that students who are struggling, continually slip through the cracks and remain behind with minimal progress throughout their school lives. Similarly, students who are very advanced for their age, are often not sufficiently extended by the mainstream program and hence do not reach their full potential.

Teachers often face time constraints and other demands, and find it difficult to provide separate instruction, resources and assessments to cater fully for the full spectrum of

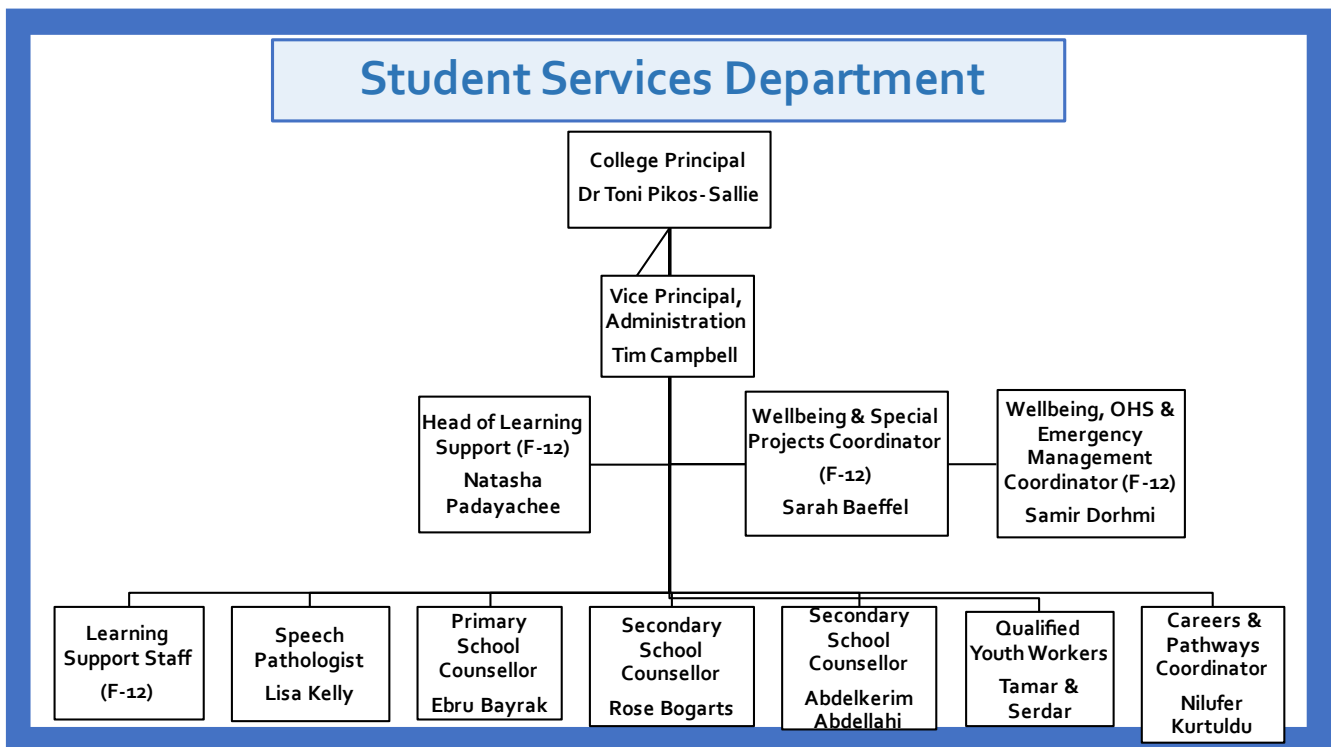
learners in the class. This situation leads to a range of negative outcomes, particularly for students at the lower and higher ends of this spectrum.

It is important to note there is NO 'ideal' class structure, whether streamed or mixed-ability; both models have their benefits and drawbacks. However, in order for either model to be successful, schools need to carefully consider and genuinely address the drawbacks.

Therefore, it is our hope that by introducing accelerated classes for our academically advanced students, as well as providing additional academic supports and interventions for our students who are behind (which includes one-to-one and small group tutoring, after-school support classes and tailored instruction and assessment), we will better meet our students' learning needs and achieve greater overall learning growth for all our students.

Student Services Department

Student Services Department Structure:



About Student Services:

The purpose of Student Services is **to assist children and young people facing a range of barriers to learning** to achieve their educational and developmental potential through the provision of a range of strategies and specialised support.

The Student Services department provides comprehensive programs and services to promote the academic functioning and wellbeing of all students. Student Services professionals work in partnership with teachers, parents/carers, and external organisations to support the academic and social emotional needs of all students throughout their schooling and help each student prepare for their lives after finishing school.

The primary functions of the Student Services department include:

- Student attendance and engagement
- Student (and staff) wellbeing
- Student (and staff) safety
- Intervention and support for students with special needs
- School counselling
- Speech pathology
- Careers counselling

Head of Learning Support (F-12):

The primary role of the Head of Learning Support is to:

- Oversee the successful inclusion of children with disabilities and/or learning difficulties by ensuring the development and maintenance of quality Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) and working closely with classroom teachers, learning support staff, students, parents/carers, school counsellors, and outside specialists.
- Ensure a safe, stimulating and supportive learning environment for all students with additional needs.
- Ensure implementation of the relevant College Duty of Care policies.
- Participate in and co-chair termly meetings with all members of the Student Services Department.
- Provide a written report once per month to the College Principal on the activities above, as applicable.
- The Head of Learning Support is a member of the College's Leadership Team and reports to the College Principal.

Wellbeing & Special Projects Coordinator (F-12):

The primary role of the Wellbeing & Special Projects Coordinator is to:

- Oversee and work collaboratively with the school counsellors in relation to student wellbeing and well-being initiatives.
- Oversee, initiate and schedule special student wellbeing programs throughout the year (e.g. anti-bullying workshops/posters/sessions, body image workshops, cyber safety workshops, youth mental health awareness & skill building workshops, anti-racism education, Aboriginal education, respectful relationships education, etc.).
- Oversee, initiate, plan and provide input on College excursions/incursions/lunch-time & after-school social clubs and extra-curricular activities for Years F-12 (to ensure a whole-school and consistent approach) (note – approvals are still required from the Vice Principal, Administration and the College Principal).
- Oversee and manage all staff wellbeing programs and events with the assistance of the Staff Social Committee and staff volunteers.
- Ensure implementation of the relevant College Duty of Care policies.
- Participate in and co-chair termly meetings with all members of the Student Services Department.

- Provide a written report once per month to the College Principal on the activities above, as applicable.
- The Wellbeing & Special Projects Coordinator is a member of the College's Leadership Team and reports to the College Principal.

Wellbeing, OHS & Emergency Management Procedures Coordinator (F-12):

The primary role of the Wellbeing, OHS & Emergency Management Procedures Coordinator is to:

- Oversee and work collaboratively with the school counsellors in relation to student wellbeing.
- Assist the Vice Principal, Administration with the follow-up of student attendance and engagement concerns, including the reporting of chronic absenteeism to DET and Child FIRST.
- Oversee allergy awareness for staff & students (organise PDs, posters, etc.), staff anaphylaxis training, ensure all student allergy and asthma records are up-to-date and kept in key locations.
- Oversee excursions and camps safety procedures / student health plans / first aid kits.
- Oversee the safety of the College grounds, conduct regular OH&S checks and staff surveys.
- Oversee annual staff first aid training and ensure staff first aid credentials are kept up-to-date (including ELC staff).
- Plan, schedule and oversee all evacuation and fire drills, lock downs, etc.
- Lead the Emergency Management Team (EMT) and ensure yearly training for all EMT members and for all staff, as relevant.
- Ensure all staff know the roles and contact details for the Emergency Management Team (EMT) members – conduct all-staff information sessions twice a year.
- Keep the College's Emergency Management Plan up-to-date.
- Oversee the implementation of the College's CovidSafe plan and CovidSafe practices.
- Oversee and maintain the College's **Accidents and Incidents Register** for students and a separate register for staff. Follow-up on the health and wellbeing of injured students and staff.
- Oversee and maintain the College's **Safety Hazard Register**.
- Conduct safety and maintenance surveys and checks at the end of each semester.
- Provide the College Principal full details of all incidents and accidents leading to injuries of staff and students.
- Ensure implementation of the relevant College Duty of Care policies.
- Participate in and co-chair termly meetings with all members of the Student Services Department.
- Provide a written report once per month to the College Principal on the activities above, as applicable.
- The Wellbeing, OHS & Emergency Management Procedures Coordinator is a member of the College's Leadership Team and reports to the College Principal.

School Counsellors:

The primary role of the School Counsellor is to:

- Provide direct counselling support and other intervention services for individual students and groups identified as at-risk and/or experiencing or demonstrating mild to moderate mental health needs.
- Co-ordinate supports for students with critical needs both within and external to the school, including working proactively with other health professionals to engage further support as required.
- Enhance promotion and prevention activities in the school by contributing to the whole school health and wellbeing plans, building the capacity of teaching staff and school leadership to manage student health and wellbeing, and helping to embed mental health promotion and prevention programs and strategies in the school.

Speech Pathologist:

The primary role of the Speech Pathologist is to:

- Conduct diagnostic evaluations and assess students' communication skills.
- Work with students with a range of learning, physical and auditory disabilities or disorders that adversely affect their educational performance.
- Identify students who may be at risk for future communication and swallowing disorders or challenges.
- Consult with and inform teachers, administrators and families about the prevention of and treatment for communication disorders.
- Perform classroom-based services as well as facilitating small-group and individual speech sessions.
- Work collaboratively to develop a treatment plan tailored to an individual student's communication and swallowing challenges.
- Develop and implement Individualised Family Service Plans and Individualised Education Programs.
- Document as required by federal, state and local agencies.
- Participate in schoolwide curriculum and literacy teams.

Youth Workers:

The primary role of the Youth Worker is to:

- Advocate and be a role model for teenagers and children and provide them with support and guidance to enhance their current situation and improve their future outlook.
- Build strong relationships with students and successfully support and positively influence them utilising a range of people management skills.

- Be a strong leader, have a sensitivity to individual and cultural differences, and be very flexible, patient, and understanding.
- Work both independently and as part of a team.
- All Youth Workers have a minimum of a Certificate IV in Youth Work.
- Our Youth Workers also run the following programs –

SPARC STUDENT GROUP PROGRAM

SPARC is an eight-week social and emotional student small group program that focuses on five key areas. The program encourages students to dream big, set goals, work in teams, and equips them with basic fundamental skills to navigate life's various challenges.

JUMP MENTOR PROGRAM

JUMP is a strengths-based program in the form of a workbook, for a young person to work through with a facilitator or wellbeing worker. This program aims to develop skills, build resilience and a positive sense of identity, and is comprised of 5 key topics.

Careers & Pathways Coordinator:

The primary role of the Careers Coordinator is to:

- Provide individual career counselling as requested by students.
 - Teach job application letter and resume writing, and interview techniques to students on request.
 - Provide VCE subject selection advice to Year 10, 11 and 12 students.
 - Distribute and show Year 12 students how to use Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) Guide.
 - Administer Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) applications.
 - Counsel students on Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) preferences.
 - Oversee Special Entry Access Schemes (SEAS) applications.
 - Organise Year 10 Work Experience Program.
 - Oversee University of Melbourne Kwong Lee Dow Young Scholars Program for Year 10 students.
 - Organise various university and TAFE College incursions.
 - Organise Tertiary Information Session excursions for Year 12 students.
 - Organise Age Career Expo excursion.
-