Letter to Parents

I am delighted to write my first Newsletter report as the new principal of East Hills Boys High School. I have been impressed with the wonderful tone of the school and the very warm welcome that I have received. I have spent a great deal of time meeting students and staff and discussing with them their views concerning the school and their hopes for the future. Overwhelmingly there is consensus regarding maintaining high expectations in all aspects of school life. A clear message as well has been the pride and genuine affection held by so many for the school.

Today we launched our Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) program with a full day of activities and discussion centred on our core values –

RESPECT
RESPONSIBILITY
LEARNING

PBL is a whole-school systems approach to preventing problem behaviour and academic failure and has relevant applications to educating ALL students in schools. It is a process that supports the adoption and long-term implementation of efficient and effective discipline throughout the school environment. PBL has been implemented in schools across Sydney and overseas for well over a decade and has proved highly successful in promoting positive behaviour, reducing negative behaviour and improving educational outcomes for students. I encourage you to discuss PBL with your son and ask him to tell you about the activities that they have participated in today.

Andy Patmore was our special guest today, he is the Bulldogs Under 20’s Rugby League Coach and the 1986 East Hills Boys High School Captain and Sportsman of the Year. Andy gave the boys examples from a high level coaching perspective of how to motivate people, make best choices, think positive and aim high. A great motivational and positive speaker.

I have had a busy but very enjoyable first week, media attention regarding asbestos fibro sheeting fragments has side-tracked my attention and I have provided a statement on the next page to update you with the situation. I can assure you that the health and safety of our students and staff is always my highest priority. I look forward to meeting you and discussing our school and your son’s progress.
Asbestos Media Reports

You may have heard media reports this week about asbestos in schools. Our school was mentioned in this discussion on Sydney radio. I would like to give you an update of progress to date and assure you that the health and safety of students and staff is paramount in investigation and dealing with these issues.

Fragments of fibro sheeting containing asbestos surfaced in an area of the school in the first half of last year as a result of normal erosion. The matter was reported, the area was fenced, and qualified contractors collected all the visible fragments. Air quality testing showed there to be no asbestos in the air, and the fence was removed.

More fragments surfaced in the same area early in Term 4, the area was again fenced and the visible fragments were removed. During the recent holiday period, the area and a substantial buffer around it were concreted, except for that next to surface tree roots, which had borders of sleepers put round them before covering with geofabric and a thick layer of mulch.

Recently some more fragments were found in another area nearby. As a precaution this area has been fenced and the Department of Education and Communities has engaged a specialist health hygienist to assess the whole school site. This assessment will begin today and once this audit is complete a remediation plan will be developed to address any recommendations.

Fencing the area prevents these materials being disturbed while assessment of the area takes place. Any remediation work that needs to be conducted will be carried out at a time when students and staff are not on site.

As stated previously, the health and safety of students and staff is paramount. I thank the DEC for prompt and thorough support in this matter. I will keep you informed on the progress of this project through the newsletter but if you have any concerns regarding this issue please contact me at school on 97737806.

Kevin Elgood
Principal