

Supporting a positive and successful transition into school and the boarding environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at The Scots College

Purpose

To support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to successfully transition into Year 7 and ensure that they and their families feel confident in navigating The Scots College community through providing academic, social, cultural, and emotional support and connection to community. This will contribute to reducing homesickness and ensure that the challenges of away-from-home schooling can be overcome.

Target group

All four Year 7 students and their families, and Year 7 Boarding House and staff.

Activities

An audit of existing school planning transition was undertaken and as a result a strategy implemented to develop a culturally supportive transition plan for each student based on best practice. The transition process began with the appropriate selection of students, allowing them to sample the College prior to accepting a position and working closely with the boys' families in their home communities. This included providing a Trial Sample Stay (Term 4, 2019). Visits were undertaken to each new student's home community, particularly for interstate students, to build strong relationships with the students' families, creating a circle of trust and two-way commitment. Abstudy Travel was utilised to enable interstate parents to visit during Term 1. All students were provided with organisational skills support including preparing for their day, understanding school timetabling, responding to emails, developing good study habits, goal setting, working towards deadlines and completing assessments.

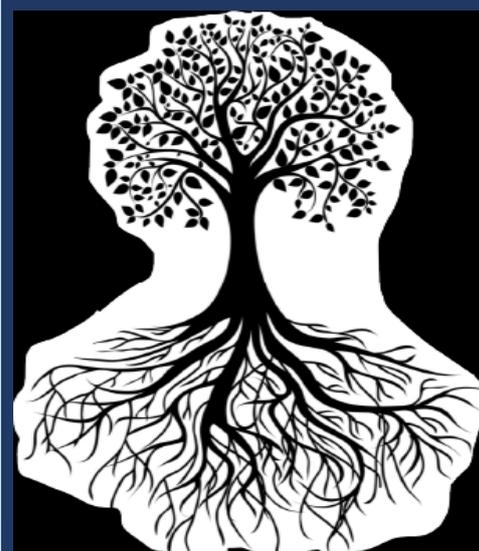
Outcomes

One hundred per cent of Years 7, 8 and 9 students completed Personalised Learning Plans and interviews were held with 90 per cent of parents to discuss and share their child's PLP. The students have developed good study habits and are responsive. Parents are very supportive and respond well to the regular communication from the College, and their feedback is always positive. There has been an increase in academic results for Term 1 2020.

Learnings

Our students come from diverse communities and home situations. Each boy and his family's barriers will be different to other boys in the program. It is important for the school to always have high expectations for boys and families, what this looks like and the support that is delivered will be different for every situation.

An important element of supporting student transition is working with the student to develop a Transition Statement as part of their Personalised Learning Plan. Students are provided with an Indigenous focused template which has a strong emphasis on personal and cultural beliefs. It includes the tree image below with spaces for students on the parts of the tree to complete with their personal details.



My roots: Where I come from and what my family hope for me

Ground: Where I live

Trunk: What makes me happy, motivated, and strong

Branches: My hopes and dreams

Leaves: People who are important to me

Fruits: My special gifts and talents.