

Life in the Wilderness

Term 1 Issue #0 | Tuesday 31 January, 2023



FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Welcome to 2023

[Belinda Arnfield, Principal](#)

Welcome all to the new school year. I hope that you had a happy summer break with your families and friends. We are looking forward to seeing your daughters on Wednesday morning for the first day of term—and, for some of them, their very first day at Wilderness.

There are a few things that the Heads of School and I would like to share before term begins tomorrow. If you are a new parent and this is your first time receiving Life in the Wilderness, in the future, you can expect this online newsletter in your inbox regularly as a way for us to share news, advise upcoming key dates and important information and celebrate your daughter's learning experiences.

Many of our girls have remained active in their co-curricular interests throughout the holidays. Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award applicants travelled to Tasmania in December to trek the Walls of Jerusalem National Park, as part of their Adventurous Journey. Our rowers have also been busy, working hard at their annual January camp. The day girls amongst the squad have enjoyed the novelty of living in the Boarding House, in between their on-water sessions at West Lakes. We also christened two new boats—fittingly named after the outstanding and sustained efforts of Jen Guest and Ben Manifold. With many talented girls in our ranks, we are greatly anticipating the upcoming regattas.

Over the break, you may have heard about 'ChatGPT' in the news, and the various ways in which educational organisations are responding to this artificial intelligence technology, which was launched in November last year, and amassed millions of users in mere days. The tool allows you to type in questions, to which it will provide a conversational answer—however, it has already been proven capable of writing a basic essay, and some studies have found that it meets the minimum requirements to pass university exams.

South Australia, unlike some other states, has been positive about educating our young people with, and about, emerging technologies. At Wilderness, in preparing our girls for their futures, we also believe that it is important that they understand the capabilities, limitations and ethics of technological use. As teachers, we will continue to ensure that our girls have the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary for a successful future and that our learning design and assessment practices reflect this.

There is always a hum of excitement as we await the first day of school. We are preparing to launch right into the term with a major celebration on Friday night: the Year 11 and 12 Formal. We hope that this will be a beautiful night for our Senior School girls to reflect and celebrate the friendships they have formed throughout their education, before they delve into the challenging but enriching learning that awaits them in their final years of school.

I am once again excited for our girls to begin another year of learning tomorrow, and look forward to seeing all of their endeavours and achievements.



EARLY LEARNING

Learning Awaits in the ELC!

[Rebecca Williamson, Assistant Head of Junior School – Early Years](#)

Welcome back for 2023! We are delighted that your daughters will be attending our Early Learning Centre and are very excited about the learning ahead. It is a great privilege to be educating your daughters and including your family in our community, so thank you for choosing us.

By the conclusion of our first week, you will have received all the information you need to know via email, Seesaw and your daughter's Welcome booklet. Therefore, I will make a start here and continue to share information as we progress into the term. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions along the way using the contact details below.

Contact Details for the Educational Team

At Wilderness, we have a small, core team of educators in each House and an additional small team of co-educators who support the team over lunches and during planning time. Please see below for the names of the staff members and the key contact details.

Assistant Head of Junior School/ Nominated Supervisor: Mrs Rebecca Williamson

I will oversee your daughter's journey through the ELC and the Lower Junior School. You can contact me via [email](#) or on my direct line of (08) 8343 1070 (please leave a message when prompted, as this will be emailed to me) with any questions about the overall day-to-day running of the ELC, events, policies, procedures, the Quality Improvement Plan

and/or to make changes to your booked days of attendance.

Annie House class teacher: Miss Danielle Moir, [email](#) or (08) 8343 1063

Annie House co-educators: Mrs Pamela McCrea and Ms Anne McLinden

During teacher and co-educator lunches and planning time, Mrs Rebecca Williamson, Miss Brooklyn Kennedy, Ms Julia Neophytou and Mrs Meagan Steffensen will also teach in the Annie House.

Mamie House class teacher: Mrs Wendy Menzies, [email](#) or (08) 8343 1067

Mamie House co-educators: Mrs Kathy De Silva and Ms Lauren Thorn

During teacher and co-educator lunches and planning time, Mrs Rebecca Williamson and Miss Ashlee Thiele will also teach in the Mamie House.

Specialist Lessons

Your daughters will participate in the following specialist lessons on the days listed below:

- Monday – Physical Education
- Tuesday – Yoga
- Wednesday – Music
- Thursday – Library

Arrival and Departure Times and Details

Opening Time

The doors will open in each of the Houses at **8.15am**. Prior to this time, you are welcome to wait outside the House with your daughter. The educators will be inside from 8.00am; however, the doors will not be opened until 8.15am as this is vitally important preparation and discussion time for the team.

We encourage you to say goodbye to your daughter at the door as this may make it easier to maintain a consistent goodbye routine, and your daughter will quickly learn how to independently complete her morning jobs. Having said that, we will ensure that we do everything we can to support you to have a happy goodbye each day, even if it means making changes to the above routine.

Closing Time

The Mamie House closes at **3.00pm**. For collection, please wait in the side area for the team to open the doors. Girls who are only attending for a half-day session will conclude their day at **12.00pm noon**. Please wait outside the Mamie House door to collect your daughters.

The Annie House closes at **3.25pm**. You may arrive to collect your daughters from 3.00pm onwards. Please wait outside the House and an educator will bring your daughter to you. It is important that you have collected your daughter by 3.25pm, as the Annie House closes at this time.

Authorisation of Collection

Please remember to advise one of the team in writing (via Seesaw or email) if you need to add another person to the list of people who are authorised to collect your daughter.

We will check photo identification at the point of collection.

Allergies

Several of our special girls have life-threatening allergies, so we kindly ask that you do not pack anything containing nuts, whole eggs/egg sandwiches and that you do not bring balloons into the school grounds. We thank you very much for helping us to keep our community safe.

Outdoor Play Spaces and Playground Usage are Not Permitted After School

As tempting as it is for our little people, we ask that you do not allow your children to play in the outdoor play spaces or on the Lower Junior School playground after school. We know this is difficult so I will be sure to support you with this tricky task at the beginning of the term.

Once again, you will receive all the information you need to know as the term commences. We have no doubt that your daughter will thrive in our environment, and we look forward to being on this special journey with you.

School ID Photographs

On **Monday 6 February**, Event Photo will be taking School ID photos in the Gym for all girls.

Please view the following [schedule](#) to see when your daughter is required to be in the Gym to have her photo taken.

Girls are required to wear their Summer uniform.

Girls who are absent on Monday will have their photo taken at another time.



JUNIOR SCHOOL

A Positive Start to the Year

[Liz McCarthy, Head of Junior School](#)

Welcome to the 2023 school year! I am very much looking forward to welcoming you and your daughters back to school on Wednesday. To our new families, I am so pleased you are joining us at Wilderness and I hope that this beginning is a positive and enriching one. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your daughter's class teacher or myself should you have any questions or concerns. To our continuing families, I look forward to sharing another year working in partnership with you, supporting your daughters as they grow, learn and thrive.

[Reception to Year 6 Parent Information Night](#)

I would like to invite you to attend our Reception to Year 6 Parent Information Night, to be held on **Monday 6 February** at 6.00pm in the School Gym. The evening will begin together, to hear general information about the Junior School, specialist lessons and co-curricular offerings. Parents will then move to their daughters' classrooms, where class teachers will share information about their specific year level, teaching and learning routines, upcoming events and expectations. As this is a Parent Evening, we respectfully request that children do not attend this event.

Reception Morning Tea

Reception parents are warmly invited to attend a welcome morning tea from 8.30am on **Wednesday 1 February**. This will be held in Hender Hall and will be with myself; Rebecca Williamson, Assistant Head of Junior School – Early Years; and our Principal, Belinda Arnfield.

Arrival and Dismissal Time

I am very happy that we will be returning to our pre-COVID-19 finishing time of 3.25pm this year. You may remember that at the beginning of the pandemic, we moved to conclude the day in the Junior School at 3.15pm to reduce the number of people gathering at one time. The commencement of the school day remains the same at 8.30am, with classrooms opening at 8.10am.

Girls can be left at school from 8.00am onwards each day, when yard supervision commences. Girls are not permitted to arrive before this time (unless a co-curricular activity requires so). Girls will be supervised on Hawkers Road at the conclusion of the school day until 3.50pm, after which time they will be taken to After School Care. Families will receive accounts from Camp Australia for any After School Care attendance.

Junior School Assemblies

Junior School assemblies are held each Thursday morning in the School Gym, commencing at 8.40am and usually concluding by 9.00am. Parents are most welcome to attend. Our first Junior School assembly for the year will be held in Week 2 (**Thursday 9 February**). Every year level will have an opportunity to host an assembly throughout the year and you will be invited to attend when it is your daughter's year level's turn.

Once again, I look forward to commencing our year together and working with you and your daughter. I hope to see you at our upcoming events. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact either your daughter's class teacher or myself should you have any questions.

Stationery Reminder

Families in the Junior School whose stationery and book packs were delivered to their homes are asked to please bring the entire pack into school on Wednesday morning. The class teachers will sort and organise the packs to suit the structures they have decided upon for each year level. Please do not cover books as this will also be done at school.

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MIDDLE SCHOOL

Ready for the New Year

Rhiannon Giles, Head of Middle School

I extend a warm welcome to new and returning Middle School families. I hope that you have been able to enjoy a break over the summer holidays and that both you and your daughter are ready to begin the new academic year.

Below I have summarised some important information for the beginning of the year. Further information can be found for students and families in the front pages of the School Diary.

Absences

Please notify the School of any absences using [SEQTA Engage](#) by 9.00am. This is crucial to ensure the safety of all students.

Homework Timetables

Girls in the Middle School are provided with a Homework Timetable, and they should complete a maximum of 20 minutes for each of the subjects assigned that day. Girls are encouraged to discuss any flexibility they require around their other commitments with their teachers.

Mobile Phone and Smart Watch Policy

Middle School students should not bring phones or smart watches to school unless their parents seek written permission from me. Phones and smart watches must be kept in their lockers at all times throughout the day. If a girl is found using a phone or smart watch during the day, it will be confiscated for a period of time to be determined by their Head of School.

NAPLAN

Year 7 and 9 students will undertake NAPLAN testing in March this year. Information about the testing will be made available on SEQTA Engage for families to read soon.

Heads of House and Form Teachers

Mr Andrew Mittiga will be the Acting Head of Cedar House for 2023. There have been a few changes to Middle School Form teachers that are summarised in the table below.

AMARYLLIS

- Head of House: Elyse Purkis
- Year 9: Thomas Keller
- Year 8: Liana Rossi
- Year 7: Brad Waller

ANTHOLIZA

- Head of House: Maria Criaris
- Year 9: Emma Phillips
- Year 8: Sarah Wheeler
- Year 7: Brittany Neeb

CAROB

- Head of House: Tansy Chen

- Year 9: Cassie Pope
- Year 8: Kari Doyle
- Year 7: Angela Sciberras-Xiong

CEDAR

- Head of House: Andrew Mittiga
- Year 9: Cathy Juniper
- Year 8: Bella Drioli-Phillips
- Year 7: Isabella Cansdell

SPARAXIS

- Head of House: Julie Grant
- Year 9: Brigette Lee
- Year 8: Isabella Silvestri
- Year 7: Ruth Shrimpton

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to your daughter's Form teacher, Head of House or feel free to contact me via [email](#) or by phone (8344 6688).

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SENIOR SCHOOL

Key Information for Senior School

[Ben Manifold, Head of Senior School](#)

Welcome back to the 2023 school year. I am excited to work closely with your daughter and connect with you at the upcoming parent functions. As we start a new year, I felt it was important to remind all parents/caregivers of some key information.

Upcoming Events

The Year 12 Parents' Information Evening will be held in the Gym **tonight** from 6.00pm to 7.00pm. This is an important session for Year 12 parents and their daughters. At this meeting, we will provide information about key dates, SACE, career guidance and student support to ensure that we can work in partnership with you to assist your daughter in achieving the best possible outcome in Year 12.

The School's annual Formal will be held at the National Wine Centre on **Friday 3 February** for all Year 11 and 12 girls and their partners. I look forward to sharing this important event with your daughter.

The Parents and Friends Welcome Drinks for new parents to the School will be held on the Memorial Lawn on **Friday 10 February** at 6.00pm.

Finally, the Year 12 Dedication Service will be held on **Monday 13 February** in the Gymnasium at 8.30am. All Year 12 parents are invited to attend this important service which will be followed by morning tea at the conclusion of this service. Please RSVP via

[TryBooking](#).

Absentees

The School monitors your daughter's attendance at every lesson, including Form in the morning. Parents will be notified by SMS if their daughter is absent with no explanation. Unexpected absences must be notified using [SEQTA Engage](#) by 9.00am. This is crucial to ensure the safety of all students.

If your daughter is going to be absent for a day or more for reasons other than illness, permission must be requested in advance from the appropriate Head of School. Please see your daughter's diary for a copy of the Attendance Policy on Page 21.

Assessment Calendars

All girls in the Senior School will receive a live electronic copy of the Assessment Planner for Term 1 in the first week of school. All girls are encouraged to review this document so they can manage their assessment tasks for the term. In line with the Assessment Guidelines found on Page 23 of the Student Diary, it is important that all girls meet deadline dates for all their assessment tasks. Deadlines support the processes of teaching and learning to ensure girls receive timely feedback on their progress. While extensions may be granted in extenuating circumstances, they do disadvantage students in the next sequence of their learning.

HP Laptops

The school continues to upgrade the ICT infrastructure to ensure girls have access to appropriate services for their educational needs. In line with the School's policy of upgrading laptops every three years, all Year 10 students will receive their new HP Laptop, which they will use until the end of their time in the Senior School. I encourage all students and their parents to review the ICT Policy, specifically the student guidelines for laptop and social media usage. This can be found on Page 18 of the Student Diary.

Vehicles

As you are aware, available parking around the School is limited. While students in Year 12 are able to drive to school once they have obtained their licence, girls are not permitted to drive to school until they have completed a Permission to Drive Form that has been lodged with me as their Head of School, in accordance with the School Student

Driver Policy. I ask girls who live in close proximity to the campus not to drive to school for the sake of driving, and girls are asked not to park on Herbert Street.

Finally, I encourage you to keep the lines of communication open. Your daughter's Form teacher and Head of House are your primary point of contact for all matters concerning your daughter. However, should you wish to make contact with me directly, please feel comfortable to send me an [email](#) or call me at school on 08 8344 6688.

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BOARDING

Happy New Year

[Renee Coventry, Head of Boarding](#)

I wish a very special welcome to our new Boarding families, who we welcomed on **Monday 30 January**. We acknowledge that the beginning of the Boarding journey is a transition not only for girls to navigate, but equally so for families to adjust to.

I encourage new Boarding families to reach out to the Year Level Boarding Parent Representatives.

- Year 7 and 8: Anne Cooper
- Year 9: Denise Johns
- Year 10: Michelle Sanders
- Year 11: Sally Paterson
- Year 12: Melanie Michael

Gratitude

Gratitude practices can have a positive impact on personal wellbeing. For this reason, in 2023 each girl in the Boarding House will receive a beautiful gratitude journal to commence the year. Maintaining a gratitude journal will be encouraged for all our girls.

To support them in this practice, we have special guest [Adèle Basheer](#) joining us on **Thursday 9 February** from 6.30pm to guide boarders through the art and practice of gratitude journalling. Please note that while we encourage this practice for our girls, it will not be enforced.

Save the Date: Boarders' Parents Weekend, March 3 - 5

The Boarding Parents Weekend is scheduled for **Friday 3 to Sunday 5 March** at the beautiful Fleurieu Peninsula.



WHOLE SCHOOL

New Staff and Role Changes

Belinda Arnfield, Principal

We extend a warm welcome to all the new faces who have joined our staff in 2023. I am sure these names will become familiar to you as the year goes on, and we look forward to how their skills and expertise will benefit our team.

Tracey Pope – PA to Head of Senior School

Alex Plazas – School Psychologist

Bec Keller – Junior School PE Teacher

Garry Parsons –Property and Facilities Team Manager/2IC

Alison Draca – Teacher of Mathematics.

Jodie Hitch – Teacher of Mathematics

Liana Rossi – Teacher of Languages (French)

Kara Bigg – Teacher of English

Kari Doyle – Teacher of Art

Meagan Steffensen – Co-educator

Mellony Semmler – Teacher of Geography and Psychology

Sheree Gordon – Nurse

Sarah Vella – Nurse

Sophie Bonner – Co-educator

Kate Woodbridge and **Natasha Loh** – Outdoor Education instructors

Joshua Francis – Adelaide Uni Internship Program (Science and Mathematics).

We also have several Instrumental Teachers commencing this term:

Alana Dawes: Bass

Ann Vanlint: Piano

David Goodwin: Jazz Piano and Accompanist

John McDermott: Drums

Joseph Freer: Cello and Strings Coordinator

Please also note the following role changes.

Brad Snell – Director of Teaching and Learning

Heather DeBlasio – Director of Leadership and Human Potential

Hal Bruce – Head of Media Arts

Dawn Davies – Acting Head of Mathematics

Andrew Mittiga – Acting Head of Cedar House

Emily Lewis – Acting Head of Extended Curriculum (Term 1).



PARENTS & FRIENDS

RSVP for Parents and Friends Welcome Drinks and Nibbles

[Jen Guest, Parents and Friends Association President](#)

I am pleased to warmly invite you all to our annual welcome event for 2023.

Friday 10 February

6.00pm to 8.00pm

Memorial Lawn

Please RSVP your attendance through [TryBooking](#). There is no cost to attend.

This event is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy a pleasant casual evening with canapés and refreshments, chatting with existing and new parents, teachers and friends.

The Wilderness School Parents and Friends Association looks forward to a year filled with fun, friendships and community.

