

SCHOOL INFORMATION HANDBOOK



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# WELCOME TO DRIPSTONE MIDDLE SCHOOL OUR COMMUNITY OF ACHIEVERS



**Dear Students and Families** 

We are delighted to welcome you to Dripstone Middle School and to be a part of our 'Community of Achievers'. Dripstone Middle School has a proud and strong history as an outstanding middle school that caters for the academic and wellbeing needs of every student in Years 7 to 9.

As part of the Casuarina Education Precinct, we take enrolments from the Nakara, Leanyer, Wagaman, Tiwi, Muirhead, Lyons, Brinkin, Alawa and Wanguri suburbs and feeder primary schools. Our Year 9 students progress onto Casuarina Secondary College to continue their final years of secondary schooling from Years 10 to 12.

Dripstone Middle School takes pride in catering for the wellbeing and learning needs of every student by building strong relationships and a sense of belonging, and engaging students in rich learning experiences to ensure every student is given the best opportunity to achieve success.

Our committed and dedicated staff fully appreciate that the middle years are a crucial stage of schooling for ongoing educational success. They strive to deliver evidence-based teaching and learning practices to provide every student with the right support to engage, grow and achieve.

The school enhances students' learning opportunities with a variety of extracurricular activities, programs and real-life experiences.

We look forward to meeting our new students and families and hope that you enjoy your time with us.

Sincerely,

Nektaria Pikolous

Principal



## **MISSION**

Dripstone Middle School is committed to achieving success for all members of the school community. The school provides a flexible, safe and innovative environment based on the values of safety, ownership, achievement and respect with consistently high expectations.

## **VALUES**

Dripstone Middle School provides high quality education to students from Years 7 to 9 in a positive learning culture. The school provides an innovative and challenging learning environment for students. The school values of Safety, Ownership, Achievement and Respect (SOAR) provide a strong foundation to achieve high expectations for learning. The school logo, an Aquila (Eagle), symbolises these values and visually represents the SOAR concept to aim high and achieve their personal best.

## **TEACHING & LEARNING**

The **Dripstone Middle School Teaching and Learning Model** has been developed to ensure that there is a common understanding of the learning sequence of a lesson in all subject areas. It reflects evidence-based teaching and learning practices to provide rich, meaningful, varied and challenging educational experiences for all students.

Dripstone Middle School believes that successful education in the middle years requires an intentional approach to teaching and learning that is responsive and appropriate to the needs, interests and achievements of young adolescents.



## **CORE ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

#### **LEAP EXTENSION PROGRAM**

The Learning Enrichment for Advancing Pupils (LEAP) Program supports, extends and challenges our academically high performing students. Students are encouraged to develop their curiosity and creativity through inquiry based learning and problem solving. This program prepares students for success in the senior years of schooling and beyond.

#### **RISE EXTENSION PROGRAM**

The Recognising Individual Student Effort (RISE) Program supports, extends and challenges students who have demonstrated a commitment to learning by achievement of their personal best. RISE students are given the opportunity to further develop their literacy, numeracy and critical thinking skills. The RISE Program is a pathway to LEAP.

Dripstone

#### **AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM**

Year 7		
Core Subjects	Electives	
English	The Arts:	
Mathematics	Technologies:	
Science	Health and Physical Education:  Judo PE/Health Food and Wellbeing	
Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)	Stars     Clontarf     Languages     Greek     Japanese	

Year 8			
Core Subjects	Possible Electives		
English	The Arts:		
Mathematics	Technologies:		
Science	Health and Physical Education:  Judo PE/Health Food and Wellbeing		
Humanities and Social Sciences	Stars     Clontarf     Languages     Greek     Japanese		

Year 9		
Core Subjects	CHOICE OF ELECTIC PATHWAY	
1000 5 7 7 10 5 1 4 7 10 00 m 10 0 0 4 0 5 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	Elective Subject	VETIS
English	The Arts:	Certificate I or Skill Set:      Automotive     Small Motors     Conservation Land Management     Retail     Hospitality (Cooking)     Food Retail Banking     Meat Retail Assistant     Salon Assistant
Mathematics	Technologies:	
Science	Health and Physical Education:  Judo PE/Health	
Humanities and Social Sciences	<ul> <li>Stars</li> <li>Clontarf</li> <li>Languages</li> <li>Greek</li> <li>Japanese</li> </ul>	

# GENERAL CAPABILITIES 21ST CENTURY SKILLS AND TRAITS

Developing the right traits and skills for the 21st century is just as important as learning content from the Australian Curriculum subject areas. These are referred to as the 'General Capabilities' in the Australian Curriculum and include critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and research skills. Our teachers understand that using a problem-based or inquiry-based approach to learning, assists students to develop the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century.

Further information about General Capabilities and the Australian Curriculum can be found at:

https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general/capabilities/

## **LEARNING THROUGH STEAM**



STEAM education is based on the idea of educating students in four specific disciplines — science, technology, engineering and mathematics — in an interdisciplinary and applied approach. STEAM integrates learning based on real-world issues and improves students' problem solving and critical analysis skills in novel and creative ways.

Students at Dripstone Middle School are given a variety of opportunities to learn through STEAM education including coding and robotic classes. Students have access to a media studio which includes recording in a 'Green Room' to enhance their use of digital technology. Dripstone Middle School is continuing to invest to enhance STEAM opportunities further.

# EXTRA-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS



The Duke of Edinburgh Award is a structured youth development program that empowers students to achieve their personal best through a challenging journey of self-discovery. Students will:



- Learn to take responsibility for their goals and choices
- Become connected to and actively engaged within their immediate community
- Make a real difference to society through their positive contributions and involvement
- Learn to persevere and overcome barriers to success
- Learn important life skills; and
- Increase their career opportunities

Entry to the Duke of Edinburgh Award is open to Year 8 and Year 9 students.

#### **TOURNAMENT OF MINDS**

Tournament of Minds is a problem solving program for teams of students in both primary and secondary years. The aim of the program is to enhance the potential of our youth by developing diverse skills, enterprise, time management and the discipline to work collaboratively within a challenging and competitive environment.

In Tournament of Minds, teams of students compete against teams from other schools, from across Australia and also around the world.



Students at Dripstone Middle School have the opportunity to be part of a school debating team. Students will debate against students at their own school as well as travelling to compete against other schools in the Darwin region. This is a wonderful program that increases the mental acuity and vocabulary of our students as well as improving and developing their skills in public speaking.

# WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT

The middle years of schooling is at a unique period of growth for adolescent learners. We acknowledge that our students are developing intellectually, emotionally, physically, socially and ethically. Our teachers in the middle years are trained to understand the unique needs of young adolescents.

All students are allocated to a Personal Learning (PL) class with a dedicated teacher. The focus of this lesson is to explicitly teach Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) using the Learning Curve Student Diary.

All staff understand the importance of developing a positive relationship with our young adolescent learners.

The school has a committed and comprehensive Wellbeing Team who take an integrated approach to supporting students.

#### **ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS**





Our Assistant Principals, Irini Pikolous & Charleen Conroy are happy to assist you with any concerns regarding the wellbeing and educational needs of your child.

#### YEAR LEVEL COORDINATORS

The Year Level Coordinators are often the first point of contact for students who require wellbeing support to improve their learning outcomes.







TIM WEBB



KAARYN JAKOBSON

#### **EDUCATION SUPPORT**

#### FOR STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

Our Special Education team is made up of a Special Education Teacher, Special Education Support Officer and classroom support assistants who work directly with students, teachers, parents and outside services to achieve successful outcomes for our students. Individualised plans are developed to address the unique needs of each student.

#### **SCHOOL COUNSELLOR**

We have a dedicated school counsellor whose role is to support students to improve their social and emotional wellbeing so they can successfully engage with education and learn to their full potential. The school counsellor works with students, parents, teachers and outside service providers, in a confidential and safe environment.

## **HEALTH PROMOTING SCHOOL NURSE**

Our qualified school nurse provides information and care regarding the health and wellbeing needs of our students. The role of the school nurse at Dripstone Middle School encompasses a wide range of areas. This may include; Immunisation, health advice — both mental and physical, nutrition information, first aid and medical assistance where required and health education through the use of pop up stands from various health bodies and excursions.



Mary Burnell

### **HOME LIASON OFFICER**

The Home Liaison Officer (HLO) develops strong relationships with families and assists them with attendance and engagement issues. Parents are required to report absences to the HLO, or discuss issues that are impacting on their child's attendance.



Laqui Papalii

## **ABORIGINAL EDUCATION WORKER**

The Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW) supports all indigenous students and provides a point of contact for parents who wish to discuss attendance, behaviour and engagement concerns.



Karen Newman

## **CLONTARF ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM**





Jeff Cameron

Hirini Murfitt

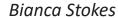
Clontarf Academy provides The important school-engagement program for Aboriginal males to improve the discipline, life skills and self-esteem to participate more meaningfully in society. This assists students to engage positively in the school. Any Indigenous male student enrolled can apply to be part of the program, but need to show commitment towards the education program, school activities and training.



## **STARS FOUNDATION**









Chantelle Ilett

STARS has been established to assist schools to provide extra support for female students to successfully progress through schooling. Dedicated their mentors help to develop, shape strengthen students in their effort to gain a rewarding educational experience through the middle years and beyond. **STARS** female is open to Indigenous students and their non-Indigenous friends.

#### **CANTEEN**

#### **POLICE AUXILIARY**

The School Based Policing Program was introduced in 2018. Dripstone Middle School has a Police Auxiliary who works with the school to maintain a safe and supportive learning environment for all. A key aspect of the role is to build positive relationships with students, families and the school community and provide assistance to those who require support.

#### **GOOD STANDING**

Middle School Dripstone aims student's positive to recognise contribution to the school by adhering to the schools expectations of work habits, timeliness and behaviour. We encourage students to make positive choices to avoid negative consequences. All students will start each year with Good Standing and work their way toward Gold Standing.

#### **ASSEMBLIES**

Whole school assemblies are held on Fridays in Weeks 5 and 10 of each term. These assemblies showcase musical talent and celebrate student achievement. Regular year level assemblies are also held throughout the term to discuss year level specific issues.

At Dripstone Middle School all students are encouraged to eat a healthy and nutritious diet. Our school canteen provides a wide range of nutritious and delicious choices for recess and lunch. Prepared fresh daily on the premises, students can choose from a variety of dishes designed to suit a wide range of dietary requirements. Students do not need to pre-order lunch from the canteen, in the middle school years we encourage independence and students are able to purchase food at lunchtime with their peers. Take away food is strongly discouraged and chewing gum and lollies are not to be brought to school.

LOCKERS

Students are able to hire lockers for use during the school year. The use of a locker incurs an annual fee plus a key bond in case the key is misplaced and the student requires a new one. The key bond is reimbursed at the end of the school year. Three locker sizes are available for hire:

- Large locker recommended for students who have a musical instrument they need to store between classes. \$20/year + \$15 key bond.
- Medium locker \$15/year + \$15 key bond.
- Small locker ample size for storage of books, change of uniform, bike helmet etc.
   \$10/year + \$15 key bond.

The use of a locker is strongly recommended to keep personal items secure. Please note that the front office is unable to store student's personal items for safekeeping.

All mobile technologies are banned on school grounds from the time you arrive at school until the time you leave the school grounds. This includes break times.

OFF AND AWAY ALL DAY.

## **BREACH 1**

· Confiscation of the device by any staff member, stored

## **BREACH 2**

 Confiscation of the device by any staff member, stored at front office.

## **BREACH3** OR REPEATED BREACHES

- Refusal to follow instructions of a staff member.
- Loss of privileges to have mobile phone in their possession during the school day and other consequences.

 Entered on Compass. A parent/care giver will be required Red Standing. at front office. LAR PODS ARE BANKED Parent meeting. Entered on Compass. to attend to claim device. Returned to student at the DEVICES OF SIGHT **Power off** out of sight until end of school day SOAR: Be Prepared To learn, Focus On learning, Achieve

## **ATTENDANCE**

Dripstone Middle School students are expected to attend school every day, on time, Monday – Friday. Any absences must be notified through the front office, the Compass communication app, our Home Liaison Officer or our Aboriginal Education Worker. Parents and carers are required to provide a reason for the absence. Please notify all absences or early departures by 2.00pm each day. All school phone numbers can be found on our school website. Our school email address is dripstone.middle@education.nt.gov.au

## **ENROLMENT**

Enrolments for Dripstone Middle School come primarily from our feeder primary schools – Wagaman, Leanyer, Wanguri, Nakara and Alawa. Out of area enrolments are conditional and require an interview with our Assistant Principal.

New enrolments are required to complete an enrolment form, provide proof of residency and a copy of the prospective student's birth certificate and up to date immunisation record. Enrolment packs can be found at our front office or alternatively, enrolment information including an enrolment form can be found at:

https://nt.gov.au/learning/primary-and-secondary-students/enrol-your-child-at-school

Please also note that enrolment into LEAP and RISE require an additional form to be completed with supporting documentation.



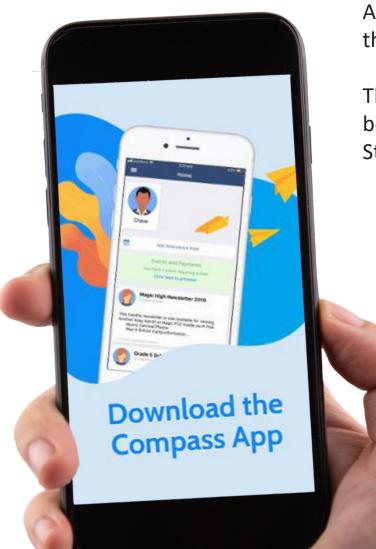
## COMMUNICATION

Effective and timely communication with our families is important to us at Dripstone Middle School. We communicate to our families through a number of channels. These include:

## **COMPASS**

#### **COMMUNICATION APP**

The Compass School Manager app is the main source of school to parent communication. Important information is posted on Compass, such as general school information, upcoming and current school events, School Council information, newsletters, events, announcements, uniform shop and canteen.



Absences are also able to be notified through the Compass School app.

The Compass School Manager app can be found in the App Store or Google Play Store and is free to download.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

You can follow our social media pages to stay up to date with events happening at Dripstone Middle School.



Dripstone Middle School



@dripstonemiddle

#### **NEWSLETTER**

Our school newsletter is in a digital format and is published every two weeks. It is uploaded to Compass. It contains important information such as important dates, upcoming events and celebrates student achievements.

#### WEBSITE

Our school website is updated regularly and contains all current school information. General school information about uniforms and bookshop, enrolment, canteen, transportation, curriculum and programs is included. You can also find copies of our school policies and procedures on our website. The school website address is www.dripstone.middle.nt.edu.au

## **EMAIL**

All families are required to provide a current email address when enrolling their child. All urgent information is emailed home. It is essential to keep your email address and phone number up to date for the duration of your child's time at Dripstone Middle School so that we are able to easily contact you.

## WHO TO CALL

- 1. A staff email list will be distributed to families at the beginning of the new school year. If you have any concerns regarding your child's learning or wellbeing in a particular subject, please contact the class teacher via email or phone.
- 2. If you have any concerns regarding your child's learning or wellbeing generally, please contact the Year Level Coordinator.
- 3. For all major concerns about your child's wellbeing or learning please contact the Assistant Principals or Principal.
- 4. For any absences please contact the HLO (Home Liaison Officer), the front office, or submit an absentee form via the Compass app.
- 5. Any absences, wellbeing or other concerns relating to our indigenous students and families, please contact our AEW, Clontarf or STARS staff.

#### **HOMEWORK**

Homework provides students with opportunities to consolidate their classroom learning, adapt behaviour for lifelong learning beyond the classroom and involve family members in their learning. The setting of homework takes into account the need for students to have a balanced lifestyle. This includes sufficient time for family, recreation, cultural pursuits and employment where appropriate.

In the middle years, homework should be approximately:

- 3 hours per week in Year 7
- 4 hours per week in Year 8
- 5 hours per week in Year 9

While some of these hours will include compulsory homework set by classroom teachers, students are also expected to



engage in independent learning to complement work undertaken in class.

Compulsory homework will include:

- Independent Reading
- Wider Reading Journal and Maths homework books purchased through the Bookroom
- Various educational online programs
- Extension of classwork, projects and research

Student Responsibility – It is up to each student to:

- Inform their parents of set tasks
- Manage time appropriately to complete tasks
- Complete work to a high standard
- Submit completed work to their teacher by the due date
- Discuss any difficulties with their teacher

Parent Responsibility – Parents are asked to:

- Encourage and acknowledge independent learning
- Take an active interest in their child's homework
- Assist in establishing a homework routine
- Communicate with your child's teacher if they are having difficulty

The school has an expectation that every child will attend dav in full school each uniform. The Dripstone Middle School uniform was designed collaboratively with students and teachers and features the Aguila, representing our SOAR values. Created for our tropical Darwin climate in mind, our uniform is worn by our students with pride.

Students must wear the Dripstone shirt and black Dripstone shorts. If students wear a jacket to school in the cooler months it must be a plain black jacket, or one of our Dripstone jackets available for purchase at the front office.

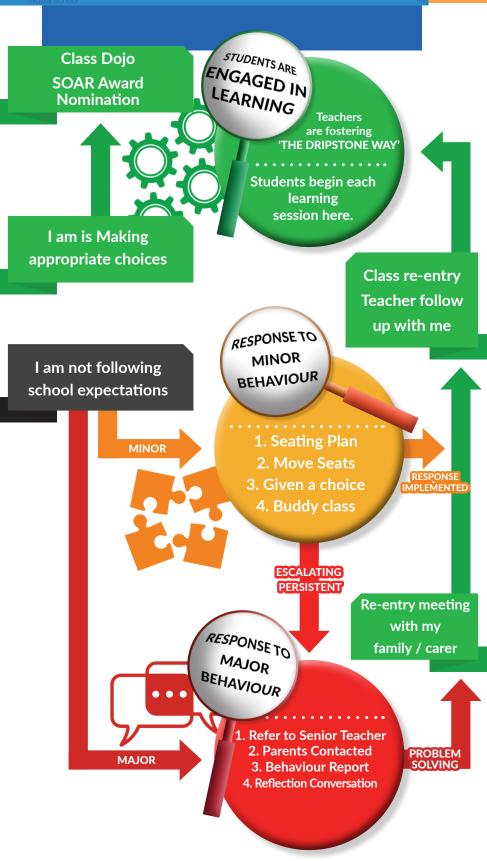
START OF DAY	8:30AM
LESSON 1	8:30am – 9:35am
LESSON 2	9:35am – 10:40am
RECESS	10:40am – 11:00am
LESSON 3	11:05am – 12:10pm
LESSON 4	12:15pm – 1:20pm
LUNCH	1:20pm – 2:00pm
LESSON 5	2:00pm – 3:00pm

A sports uniform (shirt in house colours) can be purchased through the Bookroom at the front office. This is not to replace the standard uniform. Students must change into their sports uniform at the beginning and end of each PE lesson.

Footwear is to be enclosed shoes only. No sandals or thongs are to be worn. Jewellery is limited to small earrings or sleepers only. No long necklaces or earrings are to be worn as they can present a safety risk to students. Full details on the Department of Education's Uniform Policy can be found on our website.



#### **BEHAVIOUR PROCEDURES**



#### **LEARNING LOOKS LIKE**

- Come to class on time and be ready for learning
- Be prepared with books and pens
- Listen to the learning Intention and Success Criteria
- Ask questions if I don't understand
- Make mistakes and learn from them
- Ignore distractions from my classmates
- Try my best

#### MINOR BEHAVIOURS

- Teasing: An unwanted comment to peer
- Late to class: 1 to 5 minutes after the bell
- Out of bounds: Being in an out of bounds area
- Disruption of your own and others learning
- Disrespect: low level rudeness to the teacher or support staff
- Refusal to follow staff instructions
- Swearing: Consistent non-targeted or directed at peer
- Device: Phone/Headphones out inside the building
- Fighting: Play fighting / pushing / shoving

#### MAJOR BEHAVIOURS

- Bullying: Ongoing teasing
- Lateness: Ongoing lateness
- Wagging: Not going to class
- Out of Bounds: Second or more offence of entering an out of bounds area
- Stopping the learning: In 3 or more lessons
- Disrespect: High level rudeness to the teacher or support staff
- Refusal to participate in learning in 3 or more lessons
- Verbal Abuse: Targeted swearing at staff
- Device: Refusal to hand in phone/ earphones
- Fighting: Physical contact with intent to hurt
- Threat: Online or face to face
- Inappropriate physical touching

## **POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR (SWPBS)**

At Dripstone Middle School we are committed to ensuring all students are supported to achieve their best both academically and socially. School-wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) is an evidence-based framework that focusses on a proactive and preventative approach to behaviour. It is a tiered framework that adjusts the level of support required based on the student's individual need.

## **MOBILE TECHNOLOGIES POLICY**

At Dripstone Middle School students are not permitted to have mobile phones in their possession during the school day. Smart watches must be placed on flight mode so phone calls and messages cannot be sent or received during the school day.

Mobile phones owned by students at Dripstone Middle School are considered valuable items and are brought to school at the student's or parent's risk. Please note that Dripstone Middle School does not have accident insurance for accidental property damage or theft of personal items.

The only exemption that is available under this policy is if a student has a health condition and their phone is used to monitor it and the student has a medically approved documented Health Care Plan.

## **SCHOOL COUNCIL**

We welcome and encourage parent involvement on our School Council. Meetings are held in the conference room in the front office each month and meeting dates can be found on our School Stream app and school website. If you are interested in becoming a member of the School Council, you will need to attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held in Term 1 when elections are held. The date for the AGM will be advertised at the start of Term 1.

## **VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS**

Voluntary contributions are \$100 per year. They are greatly appreciated and the money from these go towards new library books, Smartboards, science equipment, text books and information technology items.

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#### **BACK TO SCHOOL VOUCHERS**

Back to school vouchers are a Northern Territory Government incentive to help families with the cost of school related items. Vouchers are \$150 and are sent directly to the school. Families are offered a range of items that the vouchers can be used to pay for, including Elective Fees. Further information is sent home to families at the beginning of each school year.

#### **ELECTIVE FEES**

Elective Fees assist to pay for additional costs associated with various electives, providing materials and resources, eg; Judo uniforms and equipment, Home Economics equipment, Musical Instruments and Information Technology.

#### **EXCURSIONS**

Many opportunities exist for students to go on excursions each year. These may include outings such as: school camps, sporting cluster days, excursions associated with class subjects and electives, music opportunities and much more. Appropriate permissions are obtained from families through a permission form and we appreciate the prompt return of all forms to ensure our excursions run smoothly and can continue in the future.



# TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM SCHOOL

Your child's safety is our priority when travelling to and from school.

- Walking Students should use footpaths and designated crossings wherever possible.
- **Riding** Students need to wear a bike helmet when riding to school. A bike shed is available for students to store their bike during the day and a bike lock should be brought by the student and used.
- **Bus** There is a bus stop across the road from the school on Tiwi Gardens Road for students who travel to school by bus. The NT Government runs a school bus system for students in Darwin. This bus network is for school students only and members of the general public are not permitted to travel on these buses. Timetable information can be found on the NT Government website.
- **Car** There is a drop off and pick up zone at the front of the school on Delamere Street. Please be mindful of traffic flow when picking up and dropping off your child.

## **CYCLONES**

In the event of a cyclone, Dripstone Middle School will wait for official advice from the Department of Education before closing the school. Notification will be sent to parents via our school communication app if the school closes. Students who are able to make their own way home are dismissed and students who are unable to get home are assembled in the front office area with the Assistant Principals to contact parents.



## **NEW STEAM CENTRE**















## **NEW STEAM CENTRE**















