



Dear Parents,

Following a review of the NSW Higher School Certificate (HSC) as a credential, Minister for Education, the Hon. Adrian Piccoli MP, has announced several major reforms that will come into effect over the next four years along with the implementation of new Year 11 and 12 English, Mathematics, Science and History syllabuses.

The first major reform is the establishment of a minimum standard in literacy and numeracy for the award of the HSC from 2020. From 2020, students will be required to reach a minimum literacy and numeracy standard to be eligible for the HSC in addition to the existing requirements, students can meet the standard by achieving a Band 8 or higher in Year 9 NAPLAN (National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy) in each of their reading, writing and numeracy tests from 2017. From 2018, an online literacy and numeracy test will be available for students who have not achieved a Band 8 to demonstrate they have met the standard. The online test standard is set at Level 3 of the Australian Core Skills Framework, which is nationally agreed as the functional level of literacy and numeracy. Students with disabilities undertaking Life Skills courses, and students from a non-English speaking background who have been learning English for less than one year will be exempt from meeting the standard.

The second major reform will be in curriculum and assessment. A common scale will be introduced for Mathematics, to encourage students to study the course best suited to the level of their ability. A Science Extension course will be introduced. The new English, Mathematics, Science and History syllabuses will focus on students developing mastery of skills and deep understanding of content. Year 11 students will begin their senior secondary studies with the new syllabuses in 2018. The number of assessment tasks set by schools for Year 12 will be reduced to address the need for deep learning rather than coverage with conceptual and analytical skills being privileged.

Knox is well positioned to respond to these reforms that are viewed as a positive opportunity to further enrich and refine our approach to teaching and learning so that our boys can take their place in the world as confident and informed citizens. The senior management team and the curriculum team are in the process of assessing the implications and curriculum opportunities the new standards present to Knox students. The result of this assessment process will be communicated to parents, students and teachers. The proposed reforms of HSC assessment, syllabus and examinations are currently being reviewed by the Heads of Department, with planning underway for their implementation in 2018 for the Year 11 cohort.

Yours faithfully,

John W Weeks
Headmaster
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