From the Founder

Setting standards is something we are often afraid to do these days as parents and educators because our kids have an unfounded sense of their own power and are more often than not hell bent on breaking standards just because we set them! This however, in my opinion, is not a reason to avoid setting standards.

Deciding what a standard is can be difficult. Cultural, social and generational differences all make it tough to keep up with what is and is not, acceptable. For this reason, my own philosophy is this. Decide for yourself what your personal standards are. Live them over time to see that they stand the test of rigorous societal interaction. Finally, given criminal law is the social basis for what is ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ test your standards against the law and if they pass, it is a fair chance they are worth living by. If your standards break the law, either fight the law, or adjust the standard.

As far as the JCS goes, our standards are these.

Attend every school day from 9.30 to 3(+).
Complete set work to required standard.
Be enthusiastic and honest.
Be kind and respectful.

You will note the first two points are measureable. In my book, they are also very achievable and while a tiny minority of people have legitimate reasons for not attending, in my opinion school should be compulsory and attendance should be enforced.

The big question is.... How do you enforce it?

To find out the answer to that question, you’ll have to tune into Bring Da News next month because I have run out of room.

Speaking of Standards . . .

In our school community, most of us have been affected by depression, anxiety, trauma or mental illness. It seems to go with the territory of ‘Alternative Education.’

This month Jon spoke at the MCG on trauma. The day before he spoke, he asked the class whether they had experienced trauma (100 per cent of the group had). But when asked if they know how to cope with this trauma, or felt they were supported; zero per cent said ‘yes.’

Shortly after Jon’s talk we were visited by some leaders in the field of youth re-engagement in education. When asked ‘what works’, these professionals, struggled to answer the question and admitted after being in the industry for 22 years that they didn’t really know.

Frankly this isn’t good enough for me and I don’t think it should be good enough for the young people in our society who have experienced trauma.

Time to raise the standard Australia.

So what works?

• Forming relationships with students works. But teachers aren’t allowed to do that
• Education first works. But it’s easier to medicate, counsel, lock up.
• Going into bedrooms of kids who aren’t attending school works. But teachers can’t do that either.
• Taking kids into the bush, overseas, into challenging situations works; but this is becoming increasingly difficult.
• Staying up overnight with a kid to finish an art piece or an English essay works. But that’s got sexual harassment written all over it.
• Going to pick up kids at home when they are severely depressed, or are crying out for help works. But bureaucrats make this impossible or at best illegal.

And how do we know what does work? Well we have done it. Hard work helps, but all the hard work in the world won’t help if we don’t listen. And that starts with asking. Our students say it is the encouragement and support from staff and other students, relationships and the feeling that we are all in this together that works. And while it is not always the case, at JCS that is what we aspire to do - for all of us to be in this together, because in reality there is a traumatised child in all of us. Thankfully most can deal with that trauma, but it takes faith, compassion and understanding. And no matter how hard you try to legislate you will only ever find those things in people... not policies.
Term 3 Holidays

Parents and students will be provided with a Term 3 holiday timetable which will indicate times that students can come in to complete work. The first week of the holidays is still a DECV submission week and the centre will be open from 9am to 5pm in this week for students who want a place to study or some assistance. We recommend students set the goal of completing work over the holidays to maintain a routine and keep focused throughout this period.

Art

Art is a medium through which those who have not found a voice in mainstream education can communicate their message and have it heard. Next week the Year 12’s final folios are due. This year our year 12’s expressed themselves using the techniques of photography and collage; exploring the themes of identity, music, the subconscious mind, mental illness and dreaming. These pieces will be showcased as part of the Jon Carnegie School Media exhibition in Term 4.

DECV

DECV submissions are still due during camp week and week 1 of the holidays (September 9th - 20th). We urge students who are attending camp set the goal to get a week ahead. Students and parents will be emailed a list of tasks to complete over this period and the centre will be open during holiday times for students to complete work (and say hi!)

Exams

This year will see our first group of Year 12’s sitting for exams. There will be an exam preparation session run in the holidays. Any year 12’s sitting the exams will be expected to attend. More information to be provided.
First Aid Day

Basic first aid training is about helping someone in need, but it is also about confidence. When you have the skills to assist in an emergency situation not only are you equipped to help another you are also more likely to step forward. A lack of confidence holds people back. The students have not only gained experience, they have gained the confidence to help others.

The annual Carnegie First Aid Course was a success for all who attended...we now have seven newly qualified lifesaving professionals in our midst. This makes us one of the best covered schools in the country! Thanks to all who attended and for those who missed out...there is always next year!

Parent Workshops

Over the course of the term we are running parent workshops. Parent workshops form part of our integrated personal development program. This is an opportunity for parents to learn more about the personal development program we offer, by being a part of it. This program encourages all members of the family to take responsibility for themselves and their emotions. In this way families come to acknowledge that the root of many problems lie in the family unit- as well as seeing that, more importantly, so to do the solutions.

Please contact Hannah for more information.
Birthdays
August was a busy month for Birthdays. New comer Dean celebrated his 17th Birthday. Gabby Depierre turned 16 and Maddie Hopkins turned 17. Kate also celebrated her 29th Birthday.

Thailand Camp
Thailand camp departs on the 6th September. Students who are attending should have received information about passports, safety and vaccinations. The purpose of the trip is to teach independence so we encourage you to let your child ask the appropriate questions, pack their own bags, earn their spending money and arrange their passport, insurance and vaccinations.

Student Voice
This semester Gabrille Depierre was nominated for the DECV student representative council ‘Student Voice’ (introduced by DECV this Semester). She was nominated by her student support teacher and initiator of the council, Sean Tehan. Sean nominated Gabby because she was a ‘very conscientious student who was able to clearly express her opinions (and) demonstrated a very worldly outlook on life.’

A number of students have expressed frustrations with the DECV process, in particular Launch Pad. Gabby’s involvement in ‘Student Voice’ will give them an avenue in which to communicate their frustrations and suggestions.
Usually it is the person who cares the least who has the most power...sometimes it’s just whoever is most laid back!