

2019

PRAHRAN HIGH SCHOOL

Q&A - Edition #2



As I engage with the community, I'm collecting many questions.

I will provide regular written 'Q & A' updates to share my responses with you. I hope this is helpful.

Q: How many year 7s are you taking in the first year? Class sizes – how many students will be in each class?

A: At this stage, it's not possible to provide a totally accurate answer to the first part of the question as the enrolment process is not yet at that stage. I am however tentatively planning for approximately 100 children in the first year but we just don't know yet. Classes will be planned for 25 students.

Q: Security: How will the school keep the kids in and the public out, given that it is a very busy area?

A: There will be secure entry points on all sides of the school. Visitors will sign in electronically at the front office before coming in. This is required to meet our Child Safe obligations and we take that seriously. Students will enter other entrances with personal swipe cards. Teachers will be on grounds supervision before, during and after school as you would expect.

Q: The school will teach a foreign language. How are you going to make that decision - what's your process for this? And how will you consult with the community? How many languages are you going to have at the school?

A: We will teach one language. It's a big decision and one that won't necessarily please everyone. That's the nature of a decision like this where so many students and families have had different experiences in primary schools and also have different experiences themselves as adults which informs their world view.

I'm still working through this decision and will continue to seek further feedback from primary schools, families and experts at places like the University of Melbourne. On balance, the decision I make will be finally driven by what we believe to be best for our children in this context.

I plan on sending a simple survey to the community to seek feedback regarding three possible choices and then I'll move to a final decision. This will happen within the week.

Q: For the recruitment of teachers, are you going to recruit specialists for (e.g.) maths and science, or will it be generalists? When will teacher recruitment be undertaken?

A: The teacher recruitment process will begin in Term 3 and all staff will be recruited to the culture that we're developing at Prahran High School. I have an extraordinary opportunity to recruit every team member and I'll be very clear about our beliefs and values at Prahran High School during this process. We will recruit teachers who are qualified to teach particular subjects. For example, your child's Maths teacher will be a trained/qualified teacher of Mathematics, not a generalist teacher.

Q: We live in a digital and creative world, what do you see the students will be using that will give them a digital advantage? Will you provide laptops for us or will we have to go buy them?

A: Prahran High School is extremely well equipped for us to make an excellent start in the area of digital technology. Students will be encouraged to use technology to communicate, collaborate and create. We are really only limited by our imaginations and through subjects like 'Design Lab' we will endeavour to facilitate pathways to learning, supported by technology, in which students lead the learning. Often, our students know more than we do about technology, but we understand the pedagogy required to support their learning. It's an exciting opportunity.

Students will be asked to bring their own device to Prahran High School. We will be quite flexible with what the device is, as I know that students are used to different tools (iPads/PC laptops/MacBook Pro, etc.) and as long as it works well, is connected to the web and they are comfortable with it, we'll make a great start.

Q: What is your philosophy about teaching practices? What are your thoughts about teaching styles?

A: At my last school, we developed a very clear, shared approach to learning and teaching. We developed our instructional framework based on collaborative work with the staff and it was largely informed by Robert Marzano's The Art and Science of Teaching. That's the research base we used. I'll be looking to develop something similar-ish at Prahran but I'll work through this more with the staff team and students. We will definitely have a very clear, evidence-based approach to learning and classroom teacher practice which holds student learning at the centre of all we do.

Q: Will students be asked to do homework?

A: Yes, we will require some homework of students in Year 7. Completing some homework – the right sort of homework, has been proven to make a difference to student learning. Homework must build on what has been done during the day. It must not be 'busy work' or be asking new learning of students. Students can expect up to about an hour of homework most nights. I am not supportive of Year 7 students doing hours and hours (2+) of homework, but homework will be a part of our approach to learning and teaching.

Q: What time roughly does the school day start and finish? Are there before and after school activities that will run?

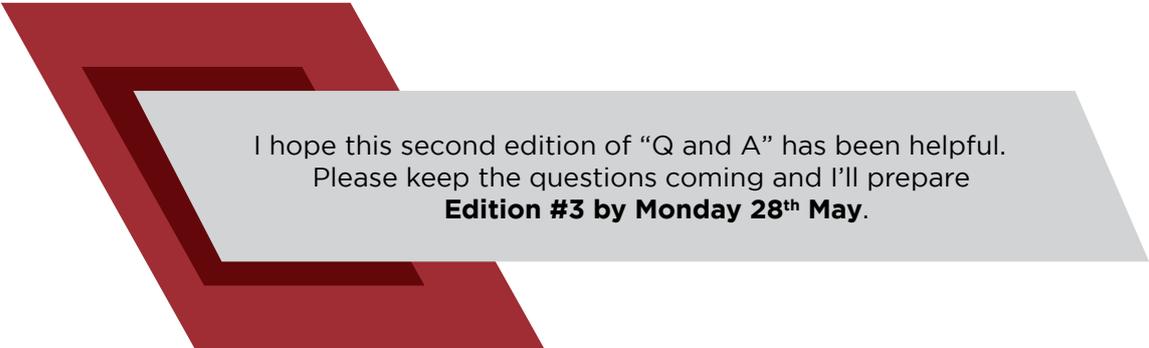
A: I am yet to make the final decision around school times but you can be assured that the day will begin at around 9am and be completed by just after 3 pm. I am planning a shorter lunch break than what you might be used to, due to the nature of our buildings and also to allow for after-school sports training for those students involved.

There won't be structured before or after-school activities per se, but there will be days when some students are involved in sports training after schools. We will also have a significant approach to 'clubs' during the school day. We'll plan these together with the incoming Year 7s. For example, we may have a Community Action group, a foreign language club, chess club, etc.

Q: Will there be an orientation day later this year? Is there any opportunity for a transition process into the new school?

A: Yes, students who are starting at Prahran High School in Year 7, 2019 will join the teaching team and me for Orientation Day in early December. We will unlikely be in our new buildings, but we will work together off-site, somewhere nearby.

The transition process is flexible and some children may need to meet with me more often, and before Orientation Day. This will be dependent on individual needs.



I hope this second edition of "Q and A" has been helpful.
Please keep the questions coming and I'll prepare
Edition #3 by Monday 28th May.