

# Highlands School

## School for Specific Purpose (SSP) Positive Education



At Highlands School, our vision is to prepare every student to become a valued and productive citizen in the community.

### Our School

Highlands School is a School for Specific Purpose (SSP) located in Renwick, near Mittagong in the Southern Highlands.

The school has a current enrolment capacity of 42 students from schools in Wollondilly and Goulburn Networks in Years 5-10 that exhibit challenging behaviours, emotional disturbance and/or autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and the effects of Adverse Childhood Experience's (ACE's).

The school is in a semi rural setting and is well resourced with a Science Laboratory, working Industrial kitchen and Café, Basketball Court, School

Hall, Playing Field, Music Room, Art Room and Sensory Room. On site we also have an Aboriginal Men's and Women's Groups that operate after school and maintain links with local sports teams.

### Rich Quality Learning Experiences and Strong Personal Goal Setting

Students engage in rich learning experiences that develop skills for now and the future.

Personal and collaborative goal setting is a strong focus, and we foster a culture of high expectations, mutually enriching community partnerships and success.

### Student Engagement and Attainment

We engage strategies to assist students with challenging behaviours, so they are supported to reach their educational goals. Every student is given the opportunity to build the social and emotional skills required to successfully exist within their local community.

Our students are shared enrolments with their local Public School so they can maintain a connection and transition back when the time is right and when they wish to do so.

We have a sustained approach to wellbeing that supports every student and every family to engage with local community resources and services when needed. We actively connect our students to their learning and empower them to succeed.

Highlands School Statement of Purpose 2019-2023



Student attainment is achieved through positive relationships and outstanding teaching and learning experiences.

We aim to support our students to be confident, resilient young people who feel valued by their teachers and peers.

## Student Care and wellbeing

Our wellbeing programs, including Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL), are strongly based in whole-school Trauma-Informed Practices (TIPs) and are regularly reviewed with enhancements implemented as required. Staff are all trained in the Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) and adjust practice to ensure the five domains: Body, Stamina, Engagement and Character, are all anchored by positive Relationships that informs student learning and engagement.

Student goals for attendance and engagement are set through a strong collaborative process that involves a positive relationship with parents and carers culminating in a Personal Learning and Support Plan (PLSP) which is reviewed regularly. Our parents/carers attend the review and goal setting sessions three times a year so that a supportive partnership between school and home is formed. At these meetings adjustments and supports are discussed to inform learning and improve wellbeing outcomes.

Highlands School is committed to creating quality learning opportunities for children and young people. This includes strengthening their physical, social, emotional and spiritual development.

Through a strong supportive relationship with Bowral High School, Moss Vale High School and Picton High School as well as the Primary Schools in the Wollondilly Network a strong transition program is maintained to support students in successfully transitioning back to

a mainstream setting where desired and appropriate.

## Our Staff

Our Staff are all trained in Trauma Informed Positive Education (TIPE) practices and are reflective, collaborative and actively involved in the life of the school and its students.

The highest levels of professionalism are expected of all teaching and support staff, with a demonstrated commitment to the provision of engaging, differentiated and evidence-based teaching strategies and ongoing professional development.

Our teachers are highly qualified, experienced, specialists who build capacity in their students to re-engage with education, experience success.



Our students are encouraged to feel a sense of belonging and are provided a with positive, safe, supported learning environment.

## Our School Community

Our school community is inclusive and models collaborative, respectful. Communication. We provide opportunities for our families to develop connections with other agencies to support our student's education and wellbeing.

Our parents believe that Highlands School provides the best opportunities for their children. We ensure our shared values are practised daily by all members of our community through effective and meaningful partnerships.

We actively connect our students to their learning and empower them to succeed. Every student is known, valued and cared for so they can do well and prosper.

## Quality teaching and learning

We offer our students learning experiences in all the core subjects such as Mathematics, English, Science, PD/H/PE, History and Geography that lead our students to obtaining the NSW Record of School Achievement (RoSA) at the end of Year 10. We support this with an extensive vocational program, delivered through taster sessions and excursions that cater to the individual talents of our students in the the Arts, Hospitality, Retail and Agriculture.

Our staff are accredited to deliver several learning experiences and qualifications offered through Vocation, Education and Training (VET).

## Special Programs

The school has a range of initiatives and special programs to support student learning. A MultiLit specialist oversees the engagement of students with limited literacy and numeracy, so student reading and mathematic skills are developed and improved.

Students are supported to develop reading skills in a structured, sequential manner.

Individual learning plans are developed using a robust and effective data-driven decision-making process.

Each student follows a personalised learning path, with adaptive placement and pacing in activities designed specifically for the NSW standards and targets.

Our Student Support Officer has a pivotal role to play in connecting character development in students to individual and collective wellbeing, which in the longer term will shape the values and attitudes of the society in which they live.

Staff play an important role in providing learning experiences and opportunities that develop and shape the character and wellbeing of children and young people.

We provide experiences that develop character by promoting mindfulness (self-regulation and behaviour), curiosity, courage, resilience, ethics and leadership, that benefit children and young people as they grow and develop. Highlands School focuses on giving students a voice, encouraging active learners and developing strong character qualities that will enable them to succeed, thrive and contribute positively throughout their lives.

## Core Values

We follow the Behaviour Code for Students of NSW Public School



**'All students will be able to thrive and flourish in a safe positive education environment that values the richness and diversity of the Southern Highlands community.'**

**Nic Morris Principal 2020**

The wearing of a school uniform assists the school community in:

- defining an identity for the school within its community developing students' sense of belonging to the school community
- providing an opportunity to build school spirit
- enhancing the health and safety of students when involved in school activities
- promoting a sense of inclusiveness, non-discrimination and equal opportunity
- increasing personal safety of students and staff by allowing easier recognition of visitors and potential intruders in the school
- promoting positive community perceptions of public education making school clothing more affordable for families by eliminating the risk of peer pressure to wear transiently fashionable and expensive clothes.

## Mobile Phone Free Zone

Our school is a Mobile Phone Free Zone. There is evidence that phones distract students from learning and that the use of a mobile digital device may hinder social interaction which can lead to lower levels of psychological wellbeing. The banning mobile phones can improve academic outcomes for low-achieving students.

*(DOE Impact of mobile digital devices in schools. Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation 2018)*

At Highlands we support the learning of our students with the following procedures: -

- Phones must always be off and out of sight at school. Students will be able to hand them into school to be store in a safe place until the end of the day.

- If a phone is accessed during the day the student will be given one warning to put it away.
- If the phone is not away and a warning has been given, then the phone will be locked away into a phone pouch for the rest of the day.
- At Highlands we believe students need to be taught 'digital literacy' and this includes when the use of phones is appropriate and when they are not. School class time is not a time when students should access their phones.

## Enrolment

Enrolment is via your home school. Please speake to the Counsellor or Principal.

Student's are offered opportunities at Highlands School through a Regional Placement Panel although we do encourage you to visit us prior to application.



which expects all students in NSW public schools to: -

- Attend every school day, unless they are legally excused, and be in class on time and prepared to learn.
- Maintain a neat appearance, including adhering to the requirements of the uniform policy.
- Behave safely, considerately and responsibly, including when travelling to and from school.
- Always show respect for teachers, other school staff and helpers, including following class rules, speaking courteously and cooperating with instructions and learning activities.
- Treat one another with dignity and respect.
- Care for property belonging to themselves, the school and others.

## Benefits of Student Uniform

Highlands School promotes the wearing of a school uniform which has been agreed upon by the Highlands community and students are encouraged to wear it with a sense of pride.

The uniform is provided at no cost to the student or their family.

## Contact us.

**Highlands School**  
**2 Maxted Street**  
**Mittagong**  
**NSW 2575**

**T: 02 4872 3088**

**E: Highlands-**  
**s.school@det.nsw.edu.au**

© Highlands School  
NSW Department of Education

**Principal Nic Morris**

