



Dear Carmel Community

Welcome to the new school year, I hope everyone is well rested and enjoyed the break from school.

Carmel finished 2023 achieving exceptional academic results, with our graduating Year 12 class achieving a median ATAR of 91.18. Whilst school rankings are no longer published in a league table, some organisations still calculate the results which show Carmel finishing fourth in the State based on median ATAR.

With great delight we have welcomed 25 new students at Carmel this week (from other schools). We are very excited that children in so many year groups will have new friends in their classes. Joining a new school can be a daunting experience for students and parents alike, so please go out of your way to make these new families feel welcome and part of our Carmel community.

The recruitment of new students and the growth of enrolments at Carmel School adds to the strength of our school and the broader community, so please keep us informed of any families you think may be interested in or considering the Carmel experience. A huge thank you to those parents who have already been helping in this regard.

I would like to welcome our 28 new kindy children who started their Carmel journey this year and our five new teaching staff who I am sure bring with them fresh energy and enthusiasm for education.

A new year brings with it new opportunities and we plan to capitalise on as many opportunities to uplift the Carmel experience as possible. In 2024 this will include a focus on:

- Student wellbeing
- Social opportunities for students
- Behavioural expectations at Carmel School
- An increase in Jewish Life opportunities and experiences
- The launch of the new Carmel Academy of the Performing Arts
- Teaching & learning outcomes

Please look out for updates from Dr Harris on these exciting areas.

It is timely to remind ourselves at this difficult time for the Jewish People, of the vital importance of our mission - Am Yisrael Chai. Parents and friends will recall the Board's commitment through the processes of the last year to renew our Jewish Life and Learning program to ensure it is meaningful to the broadest range of students. As part of our commitment to Am Yisrael Chai, we strive to attract as many of our community's youth as possible, to enjoy an uplifting and enduring Jewish experience.

Many of the changes will be directed to providing a greater emphasis on Jewish experiential and informal programs for all students and optionality around less formal classroom tuition. At the same time the School is looking to provide enhanced Jewish learning enrichment programs for those students who wish to extend themselves in more formal Jewish learning. For students in Years 7 to 10, moving from 6 compulsory Jewish studies periods per week to 4 compulsory periods has given students the opportunity to choose from an array of new broadening units which include:

- Neuroscience
- Dance
- Financial Literacy
- Advanced Jewish Literacy
- Game Design



In addition to the above, Religion & Life is no longer a compulsory ATAR subject for students in Years 11 and 12 and more optionality has been incorporated into high school morning prayers, meaning that those students wanting to actively participate in a full minyan can do so and those students seeking a different Jewish learning experience can choose to engage in this instead. By week 3, High School students will have chosen from a fabulous range of learning topics including 'Interesting characters in Judaism', 'Great Jewish Stories' and 'What's going on in Israel?'.

These changes demonstrate our commitment to offering a diverse and inclusive Jewish educational experience and creating a range of ways for our students to engage in their Jewish learning at school. By providing more optionality, we hope to empower our students to take an active role in shaping their educational journey and Jewish identity, fostering a sense of ownership and independence. Jewish life and learning are the most critical components of our school ethos and mission, and we will continuously focus on evolving our offering to ensure it caters for our community's needs.

I appreciate this is a sensitive topic for some families, and as such we appreciate your support and understanding regarding these changes. We have given these a lot of thought and continue to take into account the feedback provided by the parent body.

I can also now provide an update in relation to the structure of our Jewish Studies department for 2024. For a variety of reasons (including listening to feedback), the decision was made that we would not proceed to appoint a Director of Jewish Learning. However, we have promoted Shohan Taub to the newly created role of Head of Learning Area for the Jewish curriculum, in which she will be in charge of the High School Jewish curriculum and Hebrew, to allow a more dedicated focus on Jewish learning outcomes for the High School. As previously announced, Mr Simon Lawrence will take on the critical role of Director of Jewish Life across both the primary and high schools. We very much believe that dedicating a senior member of staff to focus on enhancing the overall Jewish experience of our students is critical to the structure and success of our school, and as such, Mr Lawrence will oversee the implementation of a range of new initiatives and Jewish experiences for your children in 2024. I would like to congratulate and thank both Shohan and Simon for taking on these important new roles.

As we start the new year in extremely uncertain and difficult times for Jews all over the world, let's do so with positivity and pride in our school. The importance of a community school which provides Jewish education and fosters the development Jewish identity and connection with our Jewish culture, is more important now than ever.

Thank you and Shabbat Shalom.

Jonathan Schneider  
Board President