THE WAY

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FROM THE HEAD OF SENIOR SCHOOL

Finishing Strong: Helping Our Children Through the Final Stretch

Back in Term 1, starting the school year well was relatively easy. Fresh notebooks, new goals and high energy carried many students smoothly through those opening weeks. However, as any parent knows, the real test of a school year rarely happens in February. It happens in November.

At a recent College assembly, we challenged students with a simple truth: starting runs on excitement, while finishing runs on character. It is easy to begin something when it is new and exciting. By November, however, that initial enthusiasm can begin to fade. Everyone is tired, the weather is warming up and many students are already looking forward to the summer holidays.

To illustrate what can happen when we ease up too soon, we looked at popular YouTube and TikTok compilations titled Athletes Celebrating Too Early. You have likely seen them: a cyclist sits up just metres from the finish line, takes their hands off the handlebars and raises their arms in celebration, only for a competitor who continued pedalling to overtake them at the last moment. Or a sprinter slows down before crossing the finish line to glance at the big screen, only to lose gold by a fraction of a second. The mistake is clear: they acted as though the race was over while they were still on the track.

In the final weeks of the College year, it is easy for young people to fall into the same trap. Yet how they approach their responsibilities when they are tired, and when recognition is not always forthcoming, is what helps define them as students, teammates and friends.

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Towards the end of his life, the Apostle Paul wrote in **2 Timothy 4:7**: "*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.*" Reflecting on everything he had endured, Paul did not focus on how quickly he started or how popular he was along the way. His confidence came from faithful endurance. He did not simply run the race; he finished it.

As parents and educators, we share the goal of raising young people who are committed to seeing things through. Over these remaining weeks, we encourage families to partner with the College by reinforcing the four practical habits we have asked of our students:

- ● **Keep showing up consistently:** Encourage your child to attend College every day and arrive on time, ready to learn, even when fatigue begins to set in.
- ● **Stay focused on learning:** Remind them to maintain their efforts in class by listening, following instructions and giving their best to final assessments rather than allowing their focus to drift.
- ● **Lead with patience and respect:** Encourage them to continue treating their peers and staff with kindness and consideration, particularly when energy levels are low.
- ● **Practise daily gratitude:** Encourage them to acknowledge the teachers, family members and friends who have supported them throughout the year through simple acts of appreciation and kind words.

These final weeks of the school year matter. With continued encouragement and support at home, we can help our students resist the temptation to ease up before the finish line and instead complete the year with commitment, perseverance and pride.

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