



# GET A HEADSTART IN THE BOARDING COMMUNITY

The Headstart program commenced in 2016 to assist boarders new to Wesley College who find the academic transition a challenge. In some cases, boys experience gaps in their English and numeracy skills. The introduction of structured homework (PREP) can also be a huge change. This program gives every student a chance to get used to what's expected, before they start.

The Headstart program is free for Wesley College families. It's delivered over the internet, with the assistance of the Year 7 Boarding Coordinator and teachers from Wesley's Middle School.

In recognition of the vital part that comprehension plays across the Senior School curriculum, the program is built around English skills and numeracy skills. For both of these learning areas online education programs are used—Reading Plus and Hotmaths.

## ENGLISH SKILLS

Reading Plus is a research-based online program that targets specific reading skills for each student, supports vocabulary development and trains the eyes to read correctly. Students can select the texts they wish to read, further motivating them to succeed and improve. The program is monitored and teachers are able to direct the boys to additional materials, such as video tutorials and worksheets.

## NUMERACY SKILLS

Hotmaths is the digital program used by Middle School students at Wesley. It offers interactive investigations (widgets), complete lessons, diagnostic

tests and assessment activities that can be tracked through the learning management system. This program is curriculum linked and has the ability to be set at a number of levels appropriate to the capabilities of each student.

## COMMITMENT FROM THE BOYS

In order to prepare the boys for academic life at Wesley, in particular PREP (structured homework), the boys have to commit a minimum of two hours per week to the program. Ideally, they would get used to completing this work in the evenings at a similar time to when they would do PREP when they start at Wesley (roughly 7.00 to 8.00pm on Sunday through to Thursday).

# Q&A

## WHAT DO THE STUDENTS THINK?



PICTURED (LEFT TO RIGHT) Campbell Taylor and Kye Macnamara



We asked two boarders, **Kye Macnamara** and **Campbell Taylor** to share their experience of the program and how it helped them prepare for life as a boarder at Wesley.

### HOW HAS THE HEADSTART PROGRAM HELPED YOU, NOW YOU ARE AT WESLEY?

**KYE:** The program helped me understand what the workload at Wesley would be like, and made sure that I wouldn't be behind with the other boys when I started at Wesley. At my old school I didn't get much homework, so it was a bit of a shock to begin with.

**CAMPBELL:** The boys who were already at Wesley would have been prepared for this type of homework and I wouldn't be, so it has helped me a lot. I was able to start getting used to doing PREP every night, as I used to do all my homework on Sunday.

### WAS IT EASY TO DO THE HEADSTART PROGRAM AND YOUR NORMAL SCHOOL WORK?

**KYE:** I didn't have much homework at my last school, so I found it easy to fit in each evening.

**CAMPBELL:** For me it was easy to fit

in once I had learnt to do half an hour of Reading Plus and Hotmaths every evening, instead of letting it build up.

### HOW HAVE YOU FOUND THE WORKLOAD SINCE JOINING WESLEY, AND PREP?

**KYE:** Some things have been a shock to me, as my previous school did not prepare me for this level of work and I really wanted to be prepared. But, the Headstart program has helped me a lot.

**CAMPBELL:** The homework side has been as I expected, as I had a fair amount of homework from my last school, but the school work has been a surprise as there are things that was not taught at my previous school that the boys who have been here since Junior School seem to know.

**KYE:** Luckily, the teachers do go through what we should have been taught in the class as they understand there are students who have come from different schools who also haven't been taught this stuff, so we are able to catch-up.

### HOW ARE YOU ENJOYING BOARDING AT WESLEY? WHAT IS THE BEST THING ABOUT IT?

**KYE:** Yes! There are a lot of things that I like. I think a lot of the boarders would say the recreational activities that we get to do are the best part. All of the boarders got to go to Adventure World, which was so much fun. But my favourite thing is that I get a laptop.

Another thing is that I have made loads of close friends. It is basically like having a bunch of brothers. Sometimes brothers are annoying and sometimes brothers are good, and boarding friends work that way too.

**CAMPBELL:** I like the freedom that Wesley gives us, we can go down Angelo Street or the foreshore. Whereas at other schools you are only allowed to go off campus when you are with your parents. It is also good having the Boarding tutors around, as they come down every night and you can ask them for help with your homework.

To find out more about the Headstart program at Wesley, contact [enrol@wesley.wa.edu.au](mailto:enrol@wesley.wa.edu.au)

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