

REFERRAL NETWORK INFO SESSIONS

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Your Questions about Enrolments

- **Do you have specific criteria on what students can apply to enrol at GCH?**

- ✓ YES - as a registered Special Assistance School we are here for young people that might thrive in a small, personalised and positive learning environment that takes a different approach to the large mainstream environment.

We know there are a lot of young people who recognize that they want to reconnect with their learning and set a new direction in a smaller, new educational setting where they can benefit from extra, tailored support for their learning and belonging.

With a limit of only 30 young people in 2021 we are keen to provide this opportunity to those young people in our community that can make the most of a fresh start, are interested in learning, and willing to put in effort to succeed.

We will prioritise motivated young people who:

- Could benefit from extra support and attention to re-engage in their education;
- May have missed some language, literacy or numeracy fundamentals;
- Are looking for a place of belonging and safety;
- Are looking to build their pathway to future VET or Stage 6 (Year 11 & 12) studies;
- Will enjoy being outside a mainstream educational environment.

- **Are you looking for students for 2021 who are currently in Year 8 or Year 9?**

- ✓ YES - we are planning an intake for students that will commence Year 9 or Year 10 in 2021.

- **Would you consider taking someone who might have missed some of their Year 8 or Year 9 schooling in 2020?**

- ✓ YES - we recognise that students seeking to attend Gateway Community High in 2021 might have had interruptions to their schooling in 2020. For many reasons, including Covid and on-line learning, health, well-being or other issues our prospective students may not have been able or willing to have full attendance at school in 2020.

- **Some students have found learning difficult during COVID, would you take students needing to repeat year 10 that are still young?**

- ✓ YES - we are looking for motivated students. Gateway Community High will welcome a student who wants to attempt Year 10 again for any reason, including the impacts of Covid on their health, wellbeing or lack of engagement or access to online learning.

- **If a student, or their parent(s)/carer(s), are in Australia on a visa, is the student eligible for enrolment at Gateway Community High?**

Specific Visa rules and availability to government fee subsidies are complex issues that change from time to time. We will work with students and parents/carers on a case by case basis. As a

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small not-for-profit start up school in our first years of operation we unfortunately do not have the capacity at this stage to offer full or part scholarships or subsidies to students that are not eligible for government funding.

Your Questions about making a Referral

- **Will you be liaising with NSW Dept. of Education's Learning and Engagement staff directly?**

- ✓ YES - as an independent not-for-profit entity we are a small and accessible team that can be contacted by phone, Zoom, email or in person.

We are keen to be directly contacted by professionals working with young people whether that be from Government Departments or independent school systems, medical and allied health professionals, youth workers or agencies supporting teenagers.

As we get enquiries or referrals we will, with the permission of parent(s)/carer(s) and the prospective student, be in touch with their home school or any professionals that are supporting them with their learning, health and well-being.

- **How do we refer?**

We want to make it as easy as possible for you to get in touch with us directly or recommend that a student, parent/carers contact us.

In the first instance feel free to email info@gatewaycommunityhigh.nsw.edu.au, call (02) 8845 8835, complete an Expression of Interest on our website <https://www.gatewaycommunityhigh.nsw.edu.au/contact-us> or ask for a referral form.

A senior member of the team will contact you to discuss the young person you have in mind and their circumstances. Once we establish whether we might be the right place for the young person you have in mind we will work with you on collecting more detailed information.

Your Questions about Stage 5 Curriculum and Program

- **What subjects are on offer in 2021?**

The core curriculum includes all the standard Stage 5 course requirements to achieve the NSW Record of School Achievement (ROSA):

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- HSIE (Human Society & its Environment)
- PDHPE (Personal Development, Health & Physical Education)

We will also include sport and physical activities to support our student's access to fresh air, take part in exercise and maintain their health.

Once we get to know our students better over Terms 1 and 2, we will develop and offer enrichment activities with our networks of educators and with other community organisations that are attuned



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to their key interests. This might include engagement in the arts and culture, fitness and health, environment and horticulture, vocational skills for work through additional classes, incursions and/or excursions.

- **Will a project-based learning approach be implemented for students?**

- ✓ YES - we will design our teaching and classroom activities with variety, creative and engaging learning approaches in mind, including projects and collaborative team learning as well as time to catch up on areas that might need work or to more deeply pursue individual areas of strengths and interests.

- **Is wellbeing embedded into the curriculum?**

- ✓ YES - we will be spending time in subject areas (such as PDHPE) and in dedicated personal time to work, one on one and in classroom cohorts, on topics and activities that enhance students' knowledge and practices to enhance their well-being.

We expect that the individualised learning plan developed with and for each student, plus our approach to pastoral care/student counselling will factor in goals for each student's development, well-being and personal growth – and that this will be a “living document” referred to and updated regularly.

- **Will there be a focus on futures focus skills? 21st Century Fluencies?**

- ✓ YES - within the constraints of being a small school with core curriculum options we believe an outcome of collaborative and enquiry learning plus a strong focus on building relationships will be stronger skills in teamwork, collaboration, creativity and problem solving as well as spoken and written communication one-one, in small groups and through presentations, projects, use of computers and on-line learning/teaching tools.

Your questions about the Level of Support available at a Special Assistance School

Gateway Community High is registered by NESA as a Special Assistance School, targeting young people who will benefit from small class sizes, time, additional holistic, generalist support and personalised attention.

We are not a registered as a Special Needs or a Behavioural School - we do not have the very deep, specialist skill sets, funding and staffing levels focussed on the particular needs of their students.

- **How will Gateway also cater for those who are academically very bright?**

We recognise that every class is a composite class of individuals with a large range of abilities, interests, academic and personal strengths and areas for improvement. Our small class sizes and individualised learning plans will cater for students with diverse academic abilities. We think this is a chance for academically bright students who may have been unable or unwilling to attend school in 2020 to start afresh, catch up if they have missed some Stage 4 learnings and focus anew on achieving to their potential.

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- **What mental health support will be provided for these students?**

We recognise that mental health is one of the key challenges and causes for young people who are disengaging with their schooling. We are not qualified experts in mental health or mental illness but will work to support what works best for a student with mental health issues such as anxiety or depression. The student attending Gateway Community High must be well enough to attend and learn, so we expect that staff will work most effectively with students that have already interacted in some way with a medical or allied health practitioner in order to establish a diagnosis and treatment plan for managing and/or improving mental health.

Our highly experienced Head of School Roger Ashcroft is used to working inclusively with students with diverse abilities, from a wide range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, many of whom faced barriers to full engagement in schooling. Roger will be selecting our teaching and support team based on their ability to work effectively with a range of students and having the skills to work collaboratively with parent(s)/carer(s) and build relationships with other professionals taking a student-centred approach.

- **Is there a plan to deal with kids who have drug issues?**

As with mental health we will work best with students that are well enough to engage in their learning and make the most of the opportunity to re-set in a new learning environment. We will work on a case by case basis with the student and their family and a referral network, to support a pre-existing plan for any addiction or abuse of alcohol and other drugs. In keeping with the law and our policies enabling our registration as a high school, Gateway Community High will not allow the use or distribution of illegal drugs on campus.

- **Do you have the capacity to support students with extensive learning needs?**

We are not a Special School with deep, specialist expertise in significant learning needs or intensive high-ratio learning support. As a community college we have decades of experience working with students that do not have age-appropriate language, literacy, numeracy or digital literacy skills - particularly those from culturally and linguistically diverse migrant or refugee backgrounds.

We will assess an individual student's ability to benefit from being a part of Gateway's small, inaugural community of learners with our ability and resources to help them achieve their academic and personal goals.

Your questions about Future options for Stage 6

- **Will there be options in the future for students to complete HSC at the school or would the view be that the focus remained on stage 5?**

At this early stage we have not yet lodged an application to NESA for registration for Stage 6 studies. This formal application process closes each year in March. We will be basing our approach to developing Stage 6 options very much on the needs and interests for future pathways of the 2021 student cohort, as well as identifying the options available in the community. Our current plan is to grow the school over three years from 30 in year 1, 50 in year 2 and up to 80 by Year 3. That growth will be related to meeting the greatest needs in the community – which may mean offering stage 6 options, sticking only with Stage 5 or potentially offering Stage 4 programs.



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- **After Stage 5 will Gateway Community High support students transitioning to work, VET/TAFE studies or send them back to mainstream at their former school?**
 - ✓ YES - all of the above are possible options, including participating in vocational education and training at Macquarie Community College. We will work with our 2021 students to identify their interests in pathways early on and inform them and their families about options for 2022 and 2023.
- **Will year 11 enrolments open for a 2022 cohort?**

As above, at this early stage we have not yet lodged an application to NESA for registration for Stage 6 studies. It is in our plan to develop a pathways plan, but we cannot guarantee this will be in place at Gateway in 2022.

Your questions about other topics

- **Is there a Brochure/Flyer with info for parents/carers & interested parties?**
 - ✓ YES – these are available from our website.

We have set up 3 opportunities for students and parents/carers to visit the school, ask questions, meet the senior team and get an application pack.

BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL - our Covid-safe plan limits attendance to 30 for any given event.

<https://www.gatewaycommunityhigh.nsw.edu.au/open-day>
- **Are there fees?**
 - ✓ YES – but exceptionally modest at \$50 per term, based on the assumption of a given student's eligibility for government funding and meeting our enrolment criteria.
- **When will a student or their home school know if student is accepted into the program?**

The process for enrolment is a four-step one:

1. Initial enquiry – by phone, email, the contact form at our website, open days etc
2. In person interview with the Head of School, the student and parent(s)/carer(s)
3. Initial offer based on interview and comprehensive review of student information provided
4. Confirmation of acceptance

We will be keeping any referring agency, school or allied health professional informed of enrolment offers made, confirmed, waitlisted or declined.