



## Educating Students to think clearly

As a Quaker School, The Friends' School has a commitment to service, to equity of relationships, and to fostering independent and creative thinking.

The School strives for a curriculum that moves beyond teaching for knowledge and understanding towards a curriculum that includes exploration of values and ethics.

To achieve this, it has devised a Connections Program for our Year 7 students. The program is interwoven with teaching within the faculties of Arts, English, Health, Humanities, Languages, Mathematics, Science and Technology. It allows for extended periods of time where students have responsibility for their own learning and the opportunity to pursue individual learning programs.

These inquiry-based programs provide opportunities for students to think creatively and to link learning across subject areas in new and exciting ways. The School believes these skills are vital for young people to live well and contribute productively in uncertain futures.

The program is offered to Year 7 students as part of their transition into High School, extending the inquiry-based learning that occurs in the primary years at Friends' as part of the International Baccalaureate curriculum.

During the Connections Program, students at Friends' explore a range of global issues. They are encouraged to develop their own ideas, to support these ideas with a strong knowledge base, and select a variety of media to share their work.

Students also have the opportunity to work beyond the confines of the classroom within the natural environment to improve their sense of connectedness with the earth. Interwoven in this outdoor program are opportunities to make curriculum connections in areas such as environmental science, geography, Aboriginal history, and creative writing and journal keeping.

Connections activities in 2016 that have been completed in Term 1 include:

- *Learning to Breathe* Mindfulness Program
- camping at the School's Far South property near Dover
- the Science-based activity 'Paper Pilots', exploring Forces
- 'Walk in Her Shoes', where students explore the impact of accessing clean drinking water in some communities.

Later in the year, activities will include:

- puppet-making
- nutrition
- excursion to a sea salt industry



- family history
- statistics.

The program culminates with a Film Week, which requires students to produce a short film that demonstrates all of the skills they have acquired during the year. Students are required to work cooperatively and collaboratively to produce the films, which are up to three minutes long and produced within specified parameters.

The Connections Program seeks to provide our students with a personal connection to the School's Purpose and Concerns – to help our students develop as people who will think clearly, act with integrity, make decisions for themselves, be sensitive to the needs of others and the environment, be strong in service and hold a global perspective.

During Connections days, students have the rare opportunity to live simply, which is perhaps the most challenging of our Quaker values in today's complex society.