Dear Parents & Carers,

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself, Miss Loren Keir, as the Year 8 Coordinator for 2015 and to welcome you to the start of another year at St. Gregory’s College. I hope that you have had an enjoyable and relaxing holiday and your son is looking forward to everything this year shall bring. This letter is important in reminding both yourself and your son about the expectations at St Gregory’s College in order to start the year on a positive note.

**Motto – ‘Aspiring to achieve our Goals’**
Throughout Year 8 our boys will encounter numerous opportunities and challenges and I will be encouraging students to take on this year’s motto of ‘Aspiring to achieve our Goals’. My aim is to encourage our boys to set themselves goals this year in all facets of their lives; at home, in the classroom, in the playground, on the sporting field and in the community. This is an opportunity for our boys to set themselves new challenges this year or reflect on things they want to improve upon from last year that may not have gone so well. The boys will grow and mature this year and start to understand the responsibility they have to themselves to be the best they can be while here at St Gregory’s College. The boys will participate in activities in their Pastoral Care lessons throughout the year that will help them evaluate their progress. I urge you to encourage your son to set goals aimed at involvement in the academic, social, sporting and cultural dimensions of the College for 2015.

**Academic Life**
The classroom experiences presented to the students in Year 8 will allow them to foster a strong commitment to learning and regular study. Boys will continue on with many compulsory subjects from 2014, along with a few new Mandatory Technology units. This year the boys will also be given an opportunity to study the language of Italian which could possibly be continued into Years 9 and 10. I ask that you encourage your son with this subject as they often find it enjoyable but challenging.

It is also imperative that the students establish a regular study routine each day at home. This practice is most affective when you as parents are involved in monitoring your son on a regular basis throughout the year. This study may cover classwork homework, research, revision, class assignments and formal assessment tasks. If you would like assistance in helping to set up your son’s home study routine I have timetables and resources that allow them to get organised as early in the year as possible. If you email your interest in these resources I will gladly forward this to you to work on with your son.

I would also like to stress the importance of the student diary as a valuable tool for students, parents and staff. This is the most direct method of communicating between staff and parents and is a compulsory part of your sons schooling at St Gregory’s College. It is a way for your son to stay organised and monitor homework. It is necessary that you consult your son’s diary regularly and sign it every Thursday night. The homeroom teachers will be checking diaries each Friday morning during Homeroom and it will be expected that it is signed at the bottom as well as all red and green stamps initialled. Please ensure that your son takes care of this diary and that it is kept free of graffiti. Replacement diary for any reason will incur a cost and must be approved by myself.

**Discipline at school and home**
At the College we have a very clear set of boundaries, rules and expectations which can be found in the student diary. Along with these boundaries we also set very clear consequences that the boys understand (i.e. red teacher stamp for not completing homework or poor behaviour in class, Afternoon Detention for not completing an assessment task etc.) The most important part of consequences for boys is that they are realistic and prompt. This discipline works best when school and home work together and our boys see consequences for actions are consistent.

The College expects the boys review the College rules in the diary (p22-33) at the beginning of each school year and sign that they agree to follow by them and expect consequences if they do not. This will be required to be signed by the boys and their parents and checked by Homeroom teachers on **Friday 6 February 2015**.

**Uniform and Hair**
Just a reminder that at St Gregory’s we have a very **high standard of dress and grooming.** I encourage you to support the College and ensure your son’s uniform is in perfect condition and he is looking respectable with neat hair (no
colouring, streaks, gel or hair length past the collar, or over the brow, or shaved shorter than a number 4). Any student who does not meet our standards will be sent home with a letter explaining the issue. I would hate to have to send a Year 8 boy home so let’s all look sharp! Please refer to the front of the College diary for all uniform expectations. It is also suggested that all items of uniform are labelled, especially college hats and jumpers, so they can be easily identified if lost.

As part of the uniform during Term 1 all boys are expected to wear a hat in uncovered areas for sun protection. I will be spot checking that boys have hats with them at all times, especially on sport days when they can be out in the harsh summer sun in the afternoons. If your son has misplaced his hat please organise for him to purchase one from the College shop as quickly as possible.

Hygiene is also very important in making a good impression, the use of deodorant is necessary though no aerosol sprays are allowed to be brought to school, please make roll on varieties available for them.

Contact
The most effective way to contact me is via email, loren.keir@stgregs.nsw.edu.au. Generally I will respond within 24 hours, so if you don’t hear from me then please resend or check the address. Alternatively feel free to call me on (02) 4629 4237 however as I’m often in class you may need to leave a message. If you need to contact a specific teacher for any reason please send an email to me and I can pass your concerns onto them for you.

Friendly reminder - Call the main office in the morning if your son is going to be absent from school. You must also forward a note for the absence on the first day your son returns to school. In an emergency do not leave a message on my phone as I may not get messages until late in the day. Please call reception directly (02) 4629 4222.

Calendar Dates
There are a number of exciting events on the Calendar for 2015. A few I would like to especially draw your attention to concerning Year 8 are:

- **Wednesday 4 February** Commencement Mass 9am
- **Sunday 15 February** Y8 ‘Boys to Men at their best!’ Boys and Blokes Afternoon 1-5:30pm
- **Tuesday 17 February** Swimming Carnival, Gordon Fetterplace Aquatic Centre Campbelltown
- **Sunday 22 February** College Open Day 10am – 1pm
- **Thursday 19 March** Co-ed Ten Pin Bowling with St Pat’s Year 8 Girls
- **Friday 27 March** Year 8 ‘Boys to Men’ Day - Stanwell Tops
- **Friday 15 May and Sunday 17 May** Parent Teacher Interviews (times on the College Calendar)
- **Monday 25 May to Tuesday 2 June** Half Yearly Exam period
- **Tuesday 14 July** Athletics Carnival at the College
- **Wednesday 29 July** Y8 ‘Ladies and Young Gentlemen’ Evening (Mums & Sons)
- **Wednesday 26 August** Year 9 2016 Information Night
- **Monday 2 November** 7-9 Co-Curricular Awards Evening - Br Luke Hall
- **16 November to 24 November** Yearly Exam period
- **Wednesday 9 December** 2015 Year 7-10 Academic Awards Night

The first major event for Year 8 is the Boys and Blokes afternoon on Sunday 15 February. The invitation has already been emailed home and we ask that you encourage your son to attend with his father or a significant male in his life for a great day of fun and friendly competition. The RSVP needs to be returned with payment to the finance office by Monday 9 February 2015.

Finally...
I am looking forward to working with the boys and your families throughout 2015. If there are any questions or concerns regarding your son then please do not hesitate to contact either myself or your son’s Homeroom Teacher.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Miss Loren Keir
Year 8 Coordinator