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1. ENROLMENT

A. Do you have specific application and enrolment criteria?

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YES - as an "Alternative" High 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 recognise 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. This is in keeping with our registration with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESAs) as a Special Assistance School.

With a limited enrolment in our small school setting 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 the effort to succeed.

We will prioritise motivated young people who:

- Will thrive outside a mainstream educational environment
- Are looking for a place of belonging and safety
- Are interested in learning, and willing to put in effort to succeed
- Could benefit from extra support and attention to reengage in their education
- May have missed some language, literacy or numeracy fundamentals
- Are looking to build their pathway to future Year 11 and 12 studies or Vocational Education Training (VET)

B. Are you looking for students for who are currently in Year 9 and/or Year 10?

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YES - we expect to start a full cohort of new students each year into Year 9 (up to 25 places available).

We expect we may have some capacity for a limited number of new Year 10 students each year.

Due to limited spaces in our Stage 6 Years 11 and 12 HSC program we preference Gateway Community High's Year 10 Graduates. We are not generally open to enrolling new external students into Year 11 however enquiries are very welcome. Due to the compressed curriculum model we cannot start students at all into Year 12.

C. Would you consider taking someone who might have missed some of their schooling in Years 8, 9 or 10?

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YES - we recognise that students seeking to attend Gateway Community High might have had significant interruptions to their schooling or missed some of their schooling due to poor attendance.

We are open to students who may not have been able to have full attendance at school for many reasons, including Covid and online learning, health, wellbeing or other issues.

We work very actively with all students to identify and address any gaps in their learning and to improve and maintain a high level of attendance at school.

D. Do you take students needing to repeat a year?

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YES - Gateway Community High will welcome a student who wants to attempt Year 9 or 10 again for any reason, including the impacts of Covid on their health, wellbeing or lack of engagement or access to online learning. Our approach of teaching as a stage cohort rather than in individual year groups means that every classroom in Stage 5 has a mix of Year 9s and 10s and a range of ages and abilities.

E. 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?

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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 small, low-fee not-for-profit high school, unfortunately we do not have the capacity to offer full or part scholarships or subsidies to students that are not eligible for government funding.

F. When will a student or their home school know if student is accepted into the program?

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After making an initial enquiry – by phone, email, the contact form on our website, and/or attending an Enrolment information Session/Open Day the process for enrolment is as follows:

1. Complete the enrolment application form and return to the School
2. In person interview with the Head of Campus, another senior staff member, the student and the parent(s)/carer(s)
3. Initial offer based on the interview and comprehensive review of the provided student information

4. Completion of a successful trial period
5. Confirmation of enrolment

We expect to make offers on a rolling basis in Term 3 and Term 4 of each year and complete all enrolment offers for students commencing in Term 1 by mid-December.

Offers made are subject to the provision and review of information, the timing of interviews and the ability to complete the above steps.

Limited places are generally still available for applications lodged after the start of the school year, applications are received each term and we keep an active waiting list.

We undertake to keep any referring agency, schools where students are currently enrolled or allied health professionals informed of enrolment offers made, confirmed, waitlisted or declined.

2. STAFF

A. Who does what at Gateway Community High?

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Our team has grown each year since we opened in 2021, to keep pace with our growing enrolments. Each year we adapt and change to keep meeting the learning and connection needs of our students and stay true to our vision of being a place where everyone can Achieve. Belong. Grow.

We have a very high staff/student ratio which we know is a real positive about Gateway Community High. We get to know each other well in our small school community. We know that our students like this small setting because they know the staff, and also do not have to worry about changing and finding rooms.

Gateway Community High is led by the Head of Campus.

The School currently employs more than 25 staff within three "teams".

- Curriculum and Teaching
- Student Wellbeing and Support
- Administration

B. How many teachers are there at the School?

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Gateway Community High currently has more than 10 fully qualified Teachers on staff, including the Gateway Leadership Team.

Our teaching team members are recruited for their skills and experience working with individual learning plans and taking diverse teaching approaches, as well as for their patience, compassion and empathy with young people.

Our Teachers work closely with our student learning support officers and wellbeing team members.

C. What other staff work with the students at the School?

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The Administration Team are our friendly first point of contact for our students, families and enquiries.

Students and families interact every day with our Admin team. They manage all student academic and attendance records, payments, enrolments and enquiries, communications, medication and events.

Our Wellbeing and Support Team is growing and evolving in keeping with our vision for the School and our Wellbeing Framework. Team members provide support for individual learning and wellbeing and our holistic approach to being a place of personal growth, safety and belonging for all.

The role of the Wellbeing and Support Team is to support students individually and to help with supporting a school-wide wellbeing culture. The Wellbeing and Support Team works closely with all staff including our teachers and admin staff to ensure that students and their families feel connected and supported.

Part of our approach is to work with any external professionals or agencies our students may be connected with before and after they enrol.

The team includes Student Learning Support Officers (SLSOs), our Learning Support Teacher, and Wellbeing Officers.

3. STAGE 5 CURRICULUM AND PROGRAM

A. What subjects are on offer?

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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 also offer additional activities and programs (on-site and off-site) with individuals and organisations that enrich our offering and deliver learning opportunities, wellbeing support and engage students in activities that interest them and build their skills and knowledge or self-confidence.

We include sport and physical activities in our timetable to support our students' access to fresh air, take part in exercise and maintain their health.

As we get to know our students and their interests better, we are developing and offering a broader range of enrichment activities each year, engaging with our network of educators and with other community organisations that are attuned to their key interests. This has to date included a program of scheduled activities for Wellbeing Wednesdays, incursions and excursions involving guest speakers, volunteering activities, development of vocational skills for work and other skills for life, and celebration days, arts and culture, fitness and health, environment and horticulture.

B. How can I do "stuff I love" that are not one of Gateway's official core subjects?

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- I want to be a tradie and really like my woodwork class – since there is no TAS is there any chance I will be able to do that?
- The only subject I like is my food tech class – will there be any of that at all?
- What if I am in Year 10 and have nearly finished my elective in.... (ART, music, DT etc.)
- I'm enrolled in distance education now and really like some of those subjects – can I still do one of them by distance ed?

Our approach is to keep the formal, assessable curriculum for the RoSA uncluttered, which is in keeping with our registration application with NESAs. More importantly, this has proven over the past 5 years to be working for our students. In our small school setting we cannot offer any guarantees that new electives will be added to the current compulsory curriculum subjects.

However, we are always seeking to understand and meet the needs of our students - particularly as we grow and develop as a School. In keeping with our approach to individual learning we will discuss this on a case-by-case basis with applicants.

Gateway Community High students in Years 9 and 10 have more time after school than most students in mainstream schools to stay engaged with the "stuff they love". We have additional time built into the timetable and the curriculum for engaging actively in classroom learning, a shorter than usual school day (to 2pm) and a no-homework policy for our Stage 5 students.

C. Does Gateway take a different approach to classroom learning than mainstream classroom teaching?

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YES - we design our teaching and classroom activities with variety, creative and engaging learning approaches in mind, including differentiated approaches, projects and collaborative team learning. We also aim to ensure students have time to catch up on areas that might need work, especially the fundamentals of literacy and numeracy, or to more deeply pursue individual areas of strengths and interests.

Our holistic approach is based on our vision of enabling every student to achieve their educational goals and to their academic potential with equal emphasis on wellbeing, belonging and personal growth. We have a rigorous and proven Wellbeing Framework, and have implemented the Berry Street Educational Model across the School with all staff trained in this approach. Staff are also trained in Universal Design for Learning.

D. Is wellbeing embedded into the curriculum?

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YES - we spend time in subject areas (such as PDHPE) as well as in one-on-one, small group and in classroom cohorts, on topics and activities that enhance each student's knowledge and practice to enhance their wellbeing. We also offer specific wellbeing programs from time to time. For example, we run programs internally and with external presenters such as Love Bites, RAGE, GPs in schools and have a range of other presentations.

Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are developed with, and for, each student with the dedicated expertise of our Learning and Support Teacher. This is a "living document" referred to and updated regularly and considers learning as well as wellbeing and personal goals. We are focussed on how to ensure our students can Achieve, Belong and Grow at Gateway Community High so we include learning, wellbeing and health factors in goals for each student's development, wellbeing and personal growth.

We have adopted the Berry Street Educational Model which is centred around learning, engagement and wellbeing.

We have a timetabled approach to wellbeing, including “Wellbeing Wednesdays” and Circle Groups.

We have a dedicated Leader of Student Wellbeing and Support who leads the student wellbeing and support team including the Learning Support Teacher, Wellbeing Officers and the Student Learning Support Officers.

E. Where will we do sport and what kind of sports? What if I hate sport?[Back to Table of Contents](#)

We think fresh air, movement and exercise is very important to wellbeing and health - regardless of whether or not you love sport.

Each year we will find out early on what our students love and are interested in doing and plan our activities around that where possible. On site we have a table tennis table and a small green space to enjoy. We try to have a range of different sports and skills development opportunities ranging from gentle to vigorous exercise – for individuals, groups and teams.

We have planned programs with organisations such as a local gym, and an indoor climbing centre. All students are expected to participate in these organised external sports activities.

We also use local nearby facilities (reserves, ovals, bushwalks) within walking distance from time to time.

Since we are a “no homework school” for our Stage 5 students we also think this gives students a great chance to stay fit and/or play sport in a local team or comp and/or with friends near home.

F. Will there be a focus on futures focus skills? 21st Century Fluencies?[Back to Table of Contents](#)

YES – we believe our approach helps foster stronger skills in teamwork, collaboration, creativity and problem solving. Within the constraints of being a small school with core curriculum options we believe these are outcomes of collaborative and enquiry learning plus a strong focus on building relationships. This in addition to what our students can develop in spoken and written communication in their subjects, one on one, in small groups and through presentations, projects, use of computers and online learning/teaching tools.

G. Can students complete the HSC at the School?[Back to Table of Contents](#)

YES - We are registered to deliver Stage 6 studies and accredited to offer the Higher School Certificate. We commenced our first cohort of students in 2024 and our first cohort of 14 HSC graduates finished in October 2025. This aligns with our approach to growing our enrolment numbers and programs steadily over the first 5 years of operations – starting small and aiming high.

Our Stage 6 program is offered under a “compressed curriculum” approach - students complete up to 3 subjects in each year. This has been developed based on the needs and interests of our enrolled students for future pathways.

Subjects currently offered on a two year cycle include English, Ancient History, Business Studies, Certificate II in Hospitality, Community and Family Studies, Mathematics Standard 1, Modern History, Numeracy, Visual Arts, Visual Design.

Depending on the courses chosen students may also achieve their Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).

We offer first preference entry to our continuing cohort of Year 10 graduates that meet the suitability requirements.

Given the fast pace of the compressed curriculum and a limited subject offering Stage 6 at Gateway Community High will not suit all of our Year 10 RoSA graduates. Each cohort of new Stage 6 students commences the Preliminary Course in mid-November each year.

With a small cohort of approximately 30 students only across Year 11 and 12 we do not expect to offer more than 1 or 2 Stage 6 Year 11 places to new students at the present time. We are always happy to receive expressions of interest. If you have a young person who has completed their RoSA and is interested and available for mid-November commencement of Stage 6 please contact us.

4. LEVEL OF SUPPORT AVAILABLE AT A SPECIAL ASSISTANCE SCHOOL

Gateway Community High is formally registered by NESAs as a Special Assistance School, targeting young people who will benefit from small class sizes, time to learn and complete their work, additional holistic, generalist support and personalised attention.

We are not registered nor resourced as a Special Needs School for a Specific Purpose nor as a Behavioural School. We do not have the specialist skills or experience, funding or staffing levels that needs to be focussed on the unique needs of some students.

Our highly experienced teaching staff are used to working inclusively with students with diverse abilities, from a wide range of academic, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, many of whom face barriers to full engagement in schooling. The selection of our teaching and support team is 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.

A. How will Gateway also cater for those who are academically very bright?[Back to Table of Contents](#)

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 Individual Learning Plans cater for students with diverse academic abilities. Every year we work with some very talented students and provide extension activities in areas of strength.

Gateway Community High provides a chance for academically orientated students who may have been unable or unwilling to attend school to start afresh, and catch up if they have missed some key learning time in their secondary years. At Gateway they can focus anew on achieving to their potential by attaining their RoSA and ensuring they are ready for completing Stage 6 HSC studies, Vocational Education and Training and/or pathways to employment.

B. What mental health support will be provided for students?[Back to Table of Contents](#)

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 together to support students with mental health challenges such as anxiety or depression.

Any student enrolling at Gateway Community High must be well enough to attend and learn. We work most effectively with students with mental health issues who 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 mild to moderate issues of mental health.

We also require that parents and carers share all mental health history of students, and if relevant, family history or circumstance that could impact on a student's mental health.

While we have a dedicated wellbeing team, if students have needs above and beyond what the school can assist our students with, we have an expectation of students and families to either have, or be in the process of putting in place, an external support network for their young person.

C. Do you have the capacity to support students with extensive learning needs?[Back to Table of Contents](#)

We will assess an individual student's ability to engage in the Stage 5 curriculum and be able to benefit from being a part of Gateway's small community of learners, based on our ability and resources to help them achieve their academic and personal goals.

We are not a Special Education School. These special purpose, schools of a kind, have deep, specialist expertise in significant learning needs and/or or intensive, high-ratio learning support that Gateway Community High cannot offer.

Students need to be able to fully engage with the standard Stage 5 curriculum which does not, at this stage, include a Life Skills program.

D. Will Gateway Community High support students transition to work, VET/TAFE studies or send them back to mainstream at their former school?[Back to Table of Contents](#)

YES - all of the above are possible options, including participating in vocational education and training through attendance at a Registered Training Organisation such as Macquarie Community College or TAFE, undertaking a traineeship or apprenticeship as well as Stage 6 at Gateway Community High or elsewhere.

We work with all students to identify their interests in pathways early on and inform them and their families about options for continuing their learning after Year 10, post-secondary, tertiary and employment pathways.

5. QUESTIONS ABOUT OTHER TOPICS

A. Can I let other people I know about Gateway Community High?[Back to Table of Contents](#)

YES - We generally get most of our enquiries and enrolments from referrals through our education and professional networks and recommendations from students and families that have benefitted and valued their experience at Gateway - or know someone who did. The best starting point is to direct them to our website: <https://www.gatewaycommunityhigh.nsw.edu.au>

B. Are there fees?[Back to Table of Contents](#)

YES - Gateway Community High is a private, independent school. However, we have set our compulsory school fees at an exceptionally modest rate - currently \$100 per term. This is based on the assumption of a given student's eligibility for government funding and meeting our enrolment criteria. We are passionate about inclusion and affordability for all. If families experience genuine financial hardship in paying these modest fees we can arrange a payment plan or discuss options.

Students that are not citizens or permanent residents may not be eligible to enrol. If eligible to enrol based on an eligible visa status a significant school fee would apply.

In addition to modest school fees families are required to pay for excursions and external activities or learning resources.

C. How is Gateway Community High funded?

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The creation of Gateway Community High in its establishment phase was funded by Macquarie Community College as an investment in the empowerment of young people in our community.

Gateway Community High as a registered Special Assistance School receives funding from the Commonwealth and State governments as an independent, private school. The funding is generally only available for Australian citizens and permanent residents.

We are not registered for the enrolment of overseas students or the majority of temporary visa holders.

Our funding comprises a base rate of funding per student plus loadings aligned to the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data so that we can provide the support our students need to successfully achieve and complete their education.

We are eligible to seek grants. We can also receive and welcome voluntary donations, which are tax deductible, but fundraising and grants are not a primary source of funding (see below).

D. Who runs Gateway Community High?

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The proprietor of the School is a not-for-profit charitable entity - MCC Child and Family Services (CAFS).

Macquarie Community College established the wholly-owned subsidiary organisation in 2018 to implement our vision of inclusive, affordable school education for young people in our communities.

CAFS is registered with the ACNC and has both Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) and Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) status. MCC Child and Family Services as the proprietor has a Board of Directors who are responsible for the proper governance of the School. The Group CEO of Macquarie Community College is a member of the CAFS Board and is the nominated representative of the proprietor.

E. Does the School do fundraising?

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Because MCC Child and Family Services is a registered charity with Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) and with Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status, individuals and organisations can donate to the School.

The School has received grant funding through Independent Schools NSW (IS NSW) as well as from local community organisations, encouraged by the commitment we have made to meeting the unmet needs of young people in our community.

In the future as we grow, we expect to engage in further fundraising through grants and donations in order to extend our programs to a wider range of enrichment activities and a bursary scheme.

If you are interested in making a tax-deductible donation to help us grow please contact us at info@gatewaycommunityhigh.nsw.edu.au

6. YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT TRANSPORT

A. Where are the nearest bus stops and train stations?

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Current information about bus and train services can be located at the [Transport NSW website](#) or the [Hillsbus website](#).

Bus

The following bus lines have routes that pass near Gateway Community High:

- 513 (Meadowbank Wharf ⇄ Carlingford via West Ryde)
- 546 (Parramatta ⇄ Epping, via Oatlands & North Rocks)
- 550 (Parramatta ⇄ Macquarie Park, via Epping)
- 625 (Parramatta ⇄ Pennant Hills)
- 630 (Blacktown ⇄ Epping)

Train

The closest train station is Epping Station. From Epping Station several bus lines have stops near Gateway Community High.

Epping Station can be reached with the following train lines:

- CCN (Hornsby, City)
- T1 (Penrith, Richmond, Blacktown, City)
- T9 (Turramurra, Homebush)
- M (Metro Kellyville, Castle Hill, Cherrybrook, North Ryde, Chatswood)

B. Is the school eligible for bus pass options?

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YES – The [School Student Transport Scheme \(SSTS\)](#) gives eligible school students free or subsidised travel between home and school on NSW public transport, including trains, buses, ferries and light rail. If the student currently has a School Travel Pass, they will need to re-apply if changing schools.