



# Camps and Retreats

Brigidine College St Ives



# Holistic and Spiritual Development

**The compulsory Camps and Retreats program forms an essential element of the overall social, emotional and personal development of the girls.**

Brigidine College is committed to the holistic development of our students. The compulsory Years 7-10 Camps program forms an essential element of the overall social, emotional and personal development of the girls. It is also a key component of the College's Pastoral program based on positive education. In alternative educational settings students make connections with their own approach to life and explore and use their character strengths which help them to contend with the many challenges they experience as young women.

The Camps and Retreats program also addresses some contemporary social-cultural issues, such as the concern that many young people are retreating into a virtual world and losing contact with reality, which can lead to social dislocation and isolation. Enjoying one another's company in the calm of natural environments, students are encouraged to balance moderate reliance on technology with an appreciation that they can happily exist without many of the domestic comforts to which they have become accustomed. Our students experience time in God's creation; and their time away fosters the opportunity for spiritual growth as well as a greater respect for the natural world.

Through the Camps program, the girls develop skills and values that they need to ably navigate their journey from adolescence to maturity and to improve their capacity for future success through resilience building and a positive mindset.

Years 7-10 girls are given an opportunity to:

- discuss ways they can apply their insights learnt at Camp to real-life situations
- explain how social situations are enriched by the gifts of and differences between participants, as experienced at Camp
- demonstrate a greater capacity for resilience, more effectively bounce back from adverse situations and extend their ability to meet and overcome challenges
- appreciate their life situation and the blessings of life.

Years 11 and 12 students experience the Retreat program that builds on the Camps structure offered in the early years at Brigidine College.

- Retreats present quality time-out for staff and students to spend several days as a school sub-community away at a suitable site.
- Sessions are organised to engage in collective as well as small group activities in a relaxed atmosphere geared to building cooperation, mutuality and trust.
- Activities based on intrapersonal and interpersonal interaction heightens the spiritual component.
- Core to the outcomes is a fostering of positive relationships built on an appreciation for affirmation, reconciliation and the Eucharist. This develops with maturity and spirals from the Camps.





# Camps Program

**The compulsory Years 7-10 Camps are worthwhile experiences for all girls.**

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The Camps program is under the direction of the Deputy Principal Faith and Mission assisted by the Year Coordinators. Working in partnership with Lands Edge Foundation, an outdoor education provider with Year 7 and Year 9 camps, an effective sequential program has been implemented for the students over these years.

Brigidine College Camps for Years 7-10, and the Retreat and spiritual experience program for Year 11, are currently held in Term 1 in the same week. This reduces the impact on classes and creates an important collective sense of participation throughout the whole College. The Year 12 Retreat and spiritual experience program is held in Term 1 the week following the Years 7-11 programs.

The Year 7-10 Camps program includes:

- the implementation of extensive planning and risk management processes, with the safety of students and staff of paramount importance
- a range of learning environments that facilitate core outcomes being met in a variety of settings
- thorough briefing and preparation of parents, staff and students prior to participation.









# The Camps

The Camps offer a range of opportunities for young women to build their resilience and challenge themselves to reach their full potential.

## Year 7: Coming to Brigidine

### *Orientation and transition to secondary school*

Based at Chowder Bay and Cockatoo Island on Sydney Harbour, the key themes include relationship building and connection between students, developing positive attitudes to change and overcoming challenges. Activities and sessions cover physical and personal challenges, complemented by group activities designed to improve understanding and appreciation of each other. Some camping and cabin accommodation is provided at both sites with a middle day for the whole cohort to come together at Clifton Gardens for water activities and a shared experience.

## Year 8: My Gifts and Strengths

### *Personal challenge and exploring potential*

Year 8 Camp involves two nights in onsite cabins at Katoomba CCC. Students undergo a range of physical challenges and bush walks in this scenic area of the Blue Mountains. The girls participate in Mentor groups doing a range of activities including a visit to Scenic World and a final day at Cables Aqua Park in Penrith on the journey home.



## Year 9: The Great Outdoors

### *Personal and group challenges, goal setting and teamwork*

Year 9 Camp focuses on a challenging four-day experience in a coastal setting in Murramarang National Park on the South Coast of NSW. Students participate in Mentor groups in three hubs of three to four groups that engage in a cyclic journey through a range of beachside camping sites and activities in this pristine and beautiful part of the South Coast. Accommodation is in tents or cabins and activities include surfing, snorkelling, paddle boarding, Indigenous awareness sessions, hiking, outdoor challenges and preparation of meals by the group. The Camp is the ultimate challenge for the girls, providing an adverse situation for them to bond, work together and persevere to enable a real sense of collective and personal achievement after this camp.

## Year 10: 'See/Sea Change'

### *Teamwork, problem solving, decision making and challenge*

This Camp takes place in Wollongong and the students stay in their own cabins at Wollongong Surf Leisure Resort (WSLR) in Fairy Meadow. This independent setting requires them to plan meals and inclusive accommodation for the three days of camp. Students journey together in Mentor groups, spending one day at North Wollongong Beach doing surfing and stand up paddle boarding experiences, while the other half take in the Buddhist community at the nearby Nan Tien Temple. The Camp embodies a novel and effective approach to resilience and decision making, with different skills and gifts among the students coming to the fore. In 2024 the final day will be spent at Jamberoo Action Park as a fun way of celebrating the final day of their four years of Camp experiences.







# Retreats Program

**Retreats provide students with the time to reflect on God and on life, to be creative, and to interact with others in a Christian context.**

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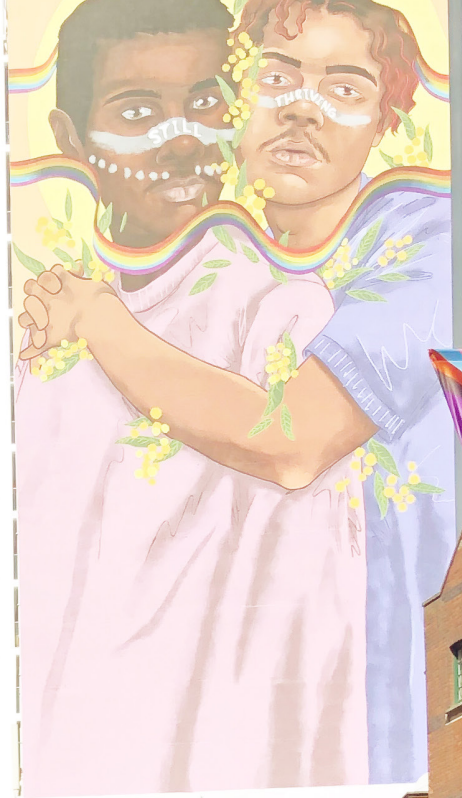
The Retreats Program is under the direction of the Deputy Principal Faith and Mission assisted by the Year Coordinators.

The compulsory Retreats for Years 11 and 12 at Brigidine College aim to:

- provide students with the time to reflect on God and on life, to be creative and to interact with others in a Christian context
- allow students the opportunity to make choices in an environment of guidance, discussion and prayer
- provide a climate where students can review their personal faith in the context of the whole Christian story
- ensure a memorable experience of school community, where the individual person is valued and communal experiences of liturgy, celebration and reflection are highlighted
- provide a variety of styles of retreat where students can explore issues which are relevant to their own needs and discern the type of experience which will meet those needs including social justice, spirituality and inner journey retreats.







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# The Retreats

The Retreats offer a range of opportunities for young women to develop a deeper sense of self in a time of change.

## Year 11: My True Self

In 2024 Year 11 will attend a Street Retreat. Using the theme 'My True Self – Rediscovering myself and Others' it is intended to stimulate and engage students as they prepare for their final years of secondary education. The Retreat focuses on the challenge to develop a deeper sense of self in a time of change. There is time for students to reflect on their own life and an opportunity to build a stronger sense of cohesion with others in the cohort. Community service is a key outcome that is additional to the Street Retreat.

## Year 12: To Everything there is a Season

The Year 12 Retreat builds on the Year 11 experience with a deepening of student reflection. With the theme 'To Everything there is a Season' the girls are motivated to prepare for the stresses and challenges of the HSC year. At the same time, it provides a collection point to evaluate past journeys with a focus on thanksgiving in anticipation of a life beyond school. This is held at Vision Valley in the Galston Gorge.









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