Mathematics at ERC

The aims of the Mathematics Faculty at Edmund Rice College are to develop in each student:

- Confidence and enjoyment in doing mathematical activities
- Knowledge, skills and understanding in specific topic areas
- Awareness of the place of Mathematics in solving real life problems and of its contribution to the development of society.

Of course achieving these aims is easier said than done!

We believe that students learn best when motivated and challenged and when individual differences are taken into consideration. Because of this, we endeavor to place each student in the course that best suits his ability level.

Currently we offer two levels in each year group from Year 8 to Year 10 – Advanced (or Level 3 Maths) and Intermediate (or Level 2 Maths). We stopped teaching the Level 1 Maths course a few years ago because it did not adequately prepare students for the senior General Maths course and Mathematics is a compulsory subject in Year 11 at Edmund Rice College.

However a non ATAR General Maths course is now available for the current Year 11 cohort so we are considering the option of reintroducing Level 1 Maths classes in the junior school next year.

At the moment our Year 7 classes are ungraded for all subjects. However, starting next year, there will be one graded class for English, Maths and Science. All other Year 7 classes will remain ungraded.

Within certain guidelines each Year 11 student is able to select the Mathematics course that he will study for the HSC. Most senior students choose wisely but, despite our recommendations, some of them select an unsuitable course and this can have a negative impact on their HSC results. Many of them drop to a lower level during Year 11 or even in Year 12.
Our focus as Mathematics teachers has always been to encourage each student to be actively involved in the learning process. I often remind my students that Maths is not a spectator sport – it is a practical subject. I tell them that they don’t learn to drive by sitting in the passenger seat!

While ipads and laptop computers are used by some year groups, Mathematics remains largely a pen and paper process.

As classroom teachers we tend to use the technology to enhance our explanations and demonstrations. It is much more efficient and effective for us to be able to display tables, graphs and diagrams on the whiteboard via a data projector than it is to draw them. Hopefully this facility allows us to engage our students more closely in the learning process and assists them to better understand each new concept.

Besides being actively involved in the Mathematics classroom each student needs to spend time at home studying, practicing and revising all concepts.

When he gets home from school each day, your son should review what he learnt in his Maths lesson that day before commencing the four steps of his homework task.

**Step 1** Complete the homework thoroughly and to the best of his ability, showing all necessary working.

**Step 2** Correct his work from the answers at the back of the textbook.

It is IMPORTANT that these two steps are done in the correct order and NOT in reverse order if homework is to be a worthwhile activity.

**Step 3** Redo any questions that he answered incorrectly.

**Step 4** Seek assistance from someone at home or from the teacher in the next lesson or at homework club after school if he does not understand a concept. Year 7 students also have access by email to a tutor via the Your Tutor facility.
In preparation for Common Tests and Formal Exams your son needs to constantly revise previous topics. The textbook contains a diagnostic test and a revision assignment at the end of each chapter. In addition to this, every student has access to the on line teaching and learning resource called My Maths, which he can use to revise the basic concepts of each topic and then attempt the accompanying practice questions. He can also redo any topic tests that were conducted by the class teacher earlier in the semester.

The important message here is that each student needs to be actively involved in every Maths lesson and take greater responsibility for his own learning.