

NEURODIVERSITY

If you do a search for Tintern Grammar then select 'Strategic Plan', you will find a statement stating we aim to "guide our students to develop the values, disposition and capabilities needed to achieve their potential and to experience a profound sense of belonging in the world." We believe this should be true for all students. Of course, there are also goals for our students around achieving personal excellence and striving with confidence in the Strategic Plan, but the focus on character and values is unmistakable, and is a hallmark of our school.

This week is Neurodiversity Celebration Week. As such there will be a focus during our Assemblies and Mentor sessions on developing a greater understanding of neurodiversity. In the lead up to the week, many people have asked "What is neurodiversity?". One internet search states: *"**Neurodiversity** is a viewpoint that brain differences are normal, rather than deficits. Neurodivergent people experience, interact with, and interpret the world in unique ways. This concept can help reduce stigma around learning and thinking differences. ADHD, Autism, Dyspraxia, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dysgraphia, and Tourette's syndrome are all examples of neurodiverse conditions. They are diagnostic labels used to explain the diverse ways of thinking, learning, processing and behaving."*

It is thought that between 30-40% of the population are neurodiverse, with the remainder said to be neurotypical. Most of us would work with or know one or many people who may be considered neurodiverse, and of course they are in our community. It is therefore helpful, if not essential, to take it upon ourselves to learn more in order to reduce pre-conceived ideas some may have toward others who are different from themselves. As our Strategic Plan suggests, it is our intention that all students achieve their potential and have a sense of belonging, whether neurodivergent or neurotypical.

It is hoped that by the end of Neurodiversity Celebration Week, our knowledge and understanding will be increased, stigma reduced and the opportunity for students to develop their values and character will be expanded as we foster a continued sense of acceptance and understanding of one another. During Assemblies this week, students will be introduced to neurodiversity, with the aim of increasing their understanding. We will hear and learn from current and past students who live with neurodiversity to gain deeper insight. Students will be able to increase current knowledge and understanding within this topic, and also for to purchase neurodiversity badges for \$1, with all proceeds going toward a neurodiversity organisation. More information can be found at

<https://www.neurodiversityweek.com/>