

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION (HPE) 2023

Health and Physical Education (HPE) in 2023 brings a renewed vibe, a new Studies Coordinator, Ms. Kylie Olsthoorn, and at the end of the first term we said farewell to Ms. Jenna Fisher and welcomed Mr. Tristan Beltrame permanently into the HPE team.

This year, students have engaged in high quality learning experiences to develop all areas of their health and wellbeing. Through the IB, HPE at Merici empowers students to understand and appreciate the value of being physical active and develop the motivation to continue to make healthy lifestyle choices. Students have been provided with opportunities to participate in a range of different sports and health units to foster their development of knowledge, skills and attitudes that will contribute to a balanced and healthy lifestyle now and in the future.

Year 7

In the Year 7 Health and Physical Education program, the main focus is on enhancing fundamental motor skills and fostering healthy relationships and a lifelong love for physical activity. At the start of the academic year, our students are introduced to a diverse array of invasion-based games, ranging from traditional sports like netball and basketball to favourites like Capture the Flag.

During the Lifelong Health and Fitness Unit, Year 7 students participate in a rotation of fun fitness-based activities, including Merici's Amazing Race and Monopoly Fitness. These activities are designed to help them develop different aspects of fitness in a fun and engaging environment. They also delve into the various disciplines of Track and Field in preparation for the upcoming Athletics Carnival.

In the latter part of the year, students explore both physical, emotional and social development through a health unit on Positive Relationships and Change. The year is wrapped up with a selection of hitting based sports.

Year 8: Thriving Through Transformation - A Journey of Sports, Health, and Life Lessons

The Year 8 students have journeyed through a year filled with dynamic experiences and valuable life lessons. In the Hitting and Kicking unit, they participated in a range of skills and games of hockey, AFL, and soccer. Beyond mastering the sports, they stepped into the shoes of coaches, designing their own drills and guiding their peers towards excellence, exemplifying their leadership potential.

Their education extended to critical life skills in the Health and Safety unit, where they learned to make informed decisions about alcohol, drugs, and vaping, equipping them to navigate the challenges of adolescence responsibly.

In a nod to the importance of physical fitness, students embraced a Skipping unit, exploring how exercise influences heart rate and producing skipping routines that showcased their creativity.

Moreover, the Net Sports unit saw them dive into sports where nets separate teams, including badminton, tennis, and table tennis. They honed their skills, fostering teamwork and communication.

Year 8 students have not only expanded their horizons but also grown as responsible individuals, ready to take on the world with resilience and wisdom. Their journey through these transformative units has paved the way for a bright and promising future. Congratulations, Year 8, on your remarkable accomplishments!

Year 9: Nurturing healthy bodies, minds and team spirit in Y9 HPE

The Year 9 Health and Physical Education program was a remarkable journey that encompassed the essence of holistic well-being. Throughout the year, students embarked on a comprehensive exploration of topics that aimed to empower them with the knowledge and skills necessary to lead healthier lives.

Their voyage commenced with a deep dive into nutrition, equipping them with the understanding of how our dietary choices directly impact their vitality. Students learned that fueling their bodies with the right nutrients was not just a choice but a commitment to their overall well-being. Students also researched various athletes and explored their nutritional requirements based on their sport and training schedule, in order to be fuelled correctly to enhance their performance.

The Athletics unit provided an exhilarating physical challenge, encouraging students to discover their physical potentials. From sprinting to long jump, students refined their skills on the track and field while understanding the value of perseverance and hard work. Students were also given the opportunity to improve their performance by participating in various coaching sessions ran by their peers, giving them the chance to step into a coaching role.

In both Team Sports units, students had the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge of strategies in a variety of sports including Netball, Hockey, Fijian Touch Football, Volleyball and Lacrosse. Students not only became players in this unit but embraced other roles in their team such as coach, captain, media manager, and referee. This allowed students to appreciate the multifaceted nature of sports, fostering leadership, communication, and conflict resolution skills.

The standout feature of the year was undoubtedly our exploration of mental health. This vital component of the students HPE education taught them the significance of emotional well-being and the tools to maintain a healthy mind. The students also had the opportunity to engage in the YAM program. The YAM program is aimed at addressing the mental health needs of young people, involves discussion and role play. It aims to get young people involved and talking about mental health. By doing this, young people will learn problem solving skills and gain knowledge about mental health; build resilience; and promote early intervention and help seeking behaviours.

As students celebrate the conclusion of their Year 9 journey, they should cherish the memories of camaraderie forged on the court, the knowledge gained about their health, and the realisation that a healthy body and mind are the cornerstones of a fulfilling life. Here's to their continued pursuit of well-being and the adventures that await them in the years to come!

Year 10: That's a Wrap! Year 10 at a Glance

Year 10 HPE began the year with an Inclusive Sports unit where they explored a variety of ways that we can adapt and modify sports for differing abilities and to increase participation and inclusivity.

We were lucky to welcome representatives from Blind Sport ACT/NSW who led students through Vision Impairment Soccer, Tennis and AFL. This opportunity gave students an insight into what it is like to play these sports and how the rules are adapted. We also had visitors from Canberra Wheelchair Basketball who led sessions and helped students learn the skills needed to play Wheelchair Basketball. These unique opportunities and experiences were pivotal for students who then went on to create their own inclusive sports and shared these with their peers as part of their assessment task.

We then moved into an Ultimate Frisbee Sports Education unit that aims to increase knowledge and expertise in playing frisbee, but also the processes required to deliver a sporting competition and other key components of sport administration. This unit was entirely student led from conducting team selections, structuring the competition, organising game times, rules, field size, equipment and set-up, as well as refereeing, scoring, updating results and hosting the end of competition awards presentation. Students had a lot of fun in this unit rocking their team costumes that ranged from tradies, tutus, shirt and ties to pyjama pants. This unit was a great way for students to develop leadership skills and initiative as well as demonstrate fair play and cooperation.

Year 10s then began their health unit Reality Bites, an interdisciplinary unit with English. Students explored current issues which impact their lives as they become young adults. The unit focused on learning how to manage and deal with 'reality' and the impact their decision making can have on a personal, social and community level.

Their final unit for the year was Aero Sports, where students got out their fluoro colours and set out to recreate the best of 80's style aerobics! Year 10 learnt some classic movement to music and applied this in their own entertaining aerobics routines that they taught to their peers. This was a vibrant and fun way to end their final year of PE at Merici before moving into their senior years.

We are really excited about two new courses in the HPE area for 2024 with a Year 9 Sports Science elective and an additional BSSS course at Year 11 - Sports Development, being offered for the first time.

GALA DAYS

Participation at Merici College has seen a resurgence in 2023 with many teams participating at Gala days and ACT sports events.

Merici College had so many students representing ACT in 2023, and we wish a huge congratulations to you all. We aren't going to name everyone here for fear of missing someone out.

Northside Volleyball Gala Day

On 17 May, we had two teams step on the court and compete at the Northside Volleyball Gala Day held in the 'ice box' of Lyneham Hockey Centre. It was a day filled with long rallies, close matches, fierce competition, outstanding sportsmanship, teamwork and lots of cheering.

The Year 7/8 team played exceptional volleyball to progress to the Semi-Final where they lost in a close game against the eventual winners. They then went on to win third place in a stunning display of skill and teamwork.

Our Year 9/10 team remained undefeated all day and went on to win a nail-biting and tense grand final game and were crowned Northside Champions! They then went on to compete at the ACT Finals coming away with third place.

Congratulations to both teams and a huge thank you to Mr. Gerard Ryan for helping out on the day.

Futsal Fever at Merici College: A Year of Triumphs

This year, the passion for Futsal has been on the rise at Merici College, with our Year 7/8 and 9/10 teams making their mark in two thrilling tournaments held in Term 1 and Term 3.

Our Year 7/8 squad showcased their talent at their first tournament by moving through the group stages undefeated, scoring plenty of goals and displaying large amounts of teamwork, despite only training a few times before the tournament. Unfortunately, they had a heart-stopping loss in the Semi-Final and finished in 3rd place. Determined to rectify their defeat, they trained hard as a squad to prepare for the ACT School Futsal Cup held in Term 3. Their hard work and dedication to training and working together paid off as they finished the day undefeated and crowned champions!

Our Year 9/10 squad delivered outstanding performances in both tournaments. The students finished with the Runners-up title at the ACT Schools Cup in Term 1, after moving through the group stages undefeated and displaying high levels of skill and understanding for the game. Due to their outstanding performance on the day, some students were selected to represent the ACT at the Australasian Champion of Champions National School Futsal Cup in November. After their success, students were determined to come out champions at the next tournament and committed to weekly training sessions and team

discussions. This dedication to their development as a team paid off as they were crowned champions at the ACT Northside Gala Day in Term 3, with an unbeaten record.

With these remarkable achievements, Merici College is excited to build upon this success in 2024 and we cannot wait to see our talented girls back in action for more unforgettable moments on the futsal court!

Year 7-9 AFL Squad: Rising Stars on the Field

Our Year 7-9 AFL Squad was a dynamic mix of students, ranging from those who had never played before to some who were regulars on the field, some even part of the prestigious GIANTS academy. Their journey this year was nothing short of impressive.

The girls dominated the Northside Gala Day, showcasing their talents and excellent teamwork, despite only having 2 sessions prior to the tournament. With an awe-inspiring display, they emerged victorious, moving through the entire day undefeated!

The squad seized the opportunity to compete at the ACT AFL Finals, where they battled fiercely against St. Mary MacKillop and were crowned runners-up. Their hard work and dedication were truly commendable.

A massive congratulations to all the girls who contributed to this remarkable journey. As we look ahead, our eyes are set on grabbing the coveted ACT School Champions Title next year. Stay tuned for more thrilling AFL action from our talented squad in 2024!

Year 10-12 AFL – From Beginners to Experienced

For the first time that many people can remember, Merici was able to enter a team into the Northside AFL Gala day. There was a mixture of experience on the field with those that have never played before, to those that play for clubs during the weekends.

The team did themselves proud throughout the day go from strength to strength and developing themselves as a team to be reckoned with.

They seized the opportunity to play in the final, made some huge tackles, and battled fiercely.

Their hard work and determination on the day was outstanding and they should be proud of the way they applied themselves.

A huge congratulations to all the team who played their hearts out on the day.

Swimming

Following the highly successful Merici Swimming Carnival, a team of 26 talented sportswomen, known as the Merici Mermaids, attended the AIS to participate in the Regional Swimming Championships. Many students swam PBs for various events and a total of 19 swimmers then qualified for the ACT Swimming Championships. Huge commendations must go to Zara Eglington, Year 12 Balgo House, for qualifying for her 6th ACT Swimming Championships whilst as a student at Merici College. The day was filled

with exciting races, PBs, some incredible sportsmanship and the desire to rise up to a challenge.

A total of 7 swimmers qualified for Nationals and we congratulate them on their athleticism. Whilst swimming is generally an individual sport, our Merici Mermaids demonstrated the power of teamwork and camaraderie which is testament to their collaboration.

Water Polo Gala Day

In March, students from Years 7 to 10 combined to compete for Merici in the ACT High Schools Water Polo Gala Day. This was a fabulous opportunity for students new to the game to learn from some of the more experienced players, while also fostering new friendships across the year levels. Our girls performed above expectations, finishing third overall.

Netball Gala Day – A highly anticipated annual event for our students

Year 7/8

In the 7/8 division the competition was fierce, and the young athletes displayed impressive skills, winning all their round robin games. They triumphed in the quarter finals with another big win but were eventually defeated in the final part of the Semi-Final by Belconnen High, who went on to win the competition.

Merici displayed great teamwork, precision passes and some good defense, which left the spectators in awe.

Year 9/10

This year Merici were fortunate to be able to send 2 teams to the competition.

Merici team 1 had a great start to the day displaying teamwork, skills and dedication and reached the quarter finals easily. They fought hard but were defeated. The players should be proud of their efforts on this day, and we hope they will come back next year with drive and enthusiasm.

Merici team 2 showcased a high level of skill and sportsmanship to win all their games at the Northside Netball Gala Day. Following this the girls remained undefeated to emerge as ACT Champions. Their exceptional shooting accuracy, relentless defence and unwavering determination of the centre court players were the keys to their success. This victory over Erindale marked a significant achievement for the Merici College team. The players should be proud of their ability to adapt to changing circumstances, excellent strategic decisions, and unbreakable team spirit.

Touch

The sun was shining, and the excitement was intense as students gathered for the North Side Touch Football Gala Day. The fields were set up, teams were ready and there was a

spirit of competition in the air as the participants geared up for a day of serious competition.

Merici College students displayed their skill, agility and teamwork in a series of games. The level of competition was good, as players executed evasive manoeuvres and lightning-quick touchdowns. With several ACT representatives and talented sportswomen, the Merici College teams proved too strong for the opposition. While victory at the end of the day was sweet, the spirit of sportsmanship was a consistent theme exhibited by our players throughout the event. Players cheered on their opponents and celebrated each other's successes with high fives and cheers.

Cross Country

Merici students competed at the North Schools Cross Country Championships at Stromlo Forest Park. The team won the overall Girls team prize from all the North Side schools in Canberra. Edith McKerracher won the 14 Girls race and ran a course record in the 4km. Merici had 11 qualifiers that went on to race at the ACT Cross Country Championships.

Other results: Olivia Ferrero - 1st U13 Girls Beatrice Morrison - 5th U13 Girls Josie Wise - 12th U13 Girls Edith McKerracher - 1st U14 Girls Tara Holmes 3rd U14 Girls Gretchen Creighton 4th U14 Girls, Emilia White - 7th U14 Girls, Milana Sadler-Pather 15th U14 Girls, Hannah Williams - 1st -U15 girls, Jasmine Vikan - 3rd -U16 Girls

At the ACT Championships there were again very strong performances from the Merici students. Edith winning the 14-year-old girls' event and six going on to be selected to compete at the National Cross-country championships that were held in Canberra. Edith, Beatrice, Olivia, Gretchen, Tara and Hannah.

At the National Cross Country Edith ran an amazing race and became the 14-year-old Girls National Champion.

Track and Field

Following on from our School Athletics Carnival, Merici students competed at the North Schools Track and Field event at the AIS. Merici students won the overall points score for the event, which is especially impressive considering the students were competing against co-ed schools. We had over 30 students qualifying for the ACT champs and Edith McKerracher broke a record in the 1500m. A highlight was seeing the vast number of Merici girls in the events, watching the girls cheer their fellow sisters and the student's placing 1st, 2nd and 3rd in the Northside U16 800m.

At the ACT Track and Field event, we had over 30 students competing with a few students coming either first, second or third in their respective events.

At the 12 years and under ACT champs another record was broken by Lily Martin for the High Jump.

We thank everyone for another great year of HPE and are very pleased to see continued participation in events.

Ms. Kylie Olsthoorn

HPE Coordinator