

# FROM THE DEAN OF BOYS' EDUCATION



## BOYS AND SPORT

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Participation in sport at Trinity Grammar School is an important and unique component of a boy's education. Boys benefit from such participation in many ways, including: improvement in physical well-being; learning to extend themselves; learning and experiencing team work; developing and refining skills; learning to cope with adversity; learning to lose with dignity; and to win with grace. Disciplined care of the body and the cultivation of temperate habits are essential for healthy living.

A recent synthesis of neuroscience research published by Dr. Michael Nagel also makes clear the role sport and exercise can play in improving cognition and other areas of brain functioning, especially for boys. Exercise increases blood flow to the brain and has been shown to augment the number and density of blood vessels in the motor cortex and cerebellum. Exercise has been proven to raise endorphins which enhance feelings of comfort and well-being, as well as increasing the brain's levels of dopamine, norepinephrine and serotonin which regulate mood, cognition and behaviour.

Further insight from Dr. Nagel's synthesis reveals how girls generally use more cortical areas of their brains for verbal and emotive functioning, whereas boys tend to use these same areas for spatial and mechanical functioning. The cortical trend toward spatial-mechanical functioning makes many boys more attracted to moving and engaging in sport. Reduced levels of serotonin and oxytocin in boys' brains also make them more likely to be physically impulsive and less able to neurally combat their natural impulsiveness to move and be active. Sport offers a wonderful outlet for boys to channel their energies in this regard.

Sport can also provide boys with a sense of structure and collective purpose. Many boys tend to be task-orientated, and understanding the rules, boundaries and operating procedures of what they do is important. The emphasis on team sports at the School also emboldens co-operation, camaraderie and mutual respect. Competitiveness is important for boys and is encouraged for the sake of enabling them to give of their best, rather than simply for the sake of winning.

Our aim at Trinity, in all that we do, is to provide the very best environment for our boys to flourish and develop their God-given talents. The unique programme of sport that we provide at Trinity, in many direct and indirect ways, plays a key role in this aim.



**Trinity Grammar School**

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