

**2021 PHILOSOTHON**

**INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS**

The following information is for teachers who are interested in entering a team in the 2021 South West Philosothon. In conducting the Philosothon we hope to raise the profile of Philosophy and Ethics in regional secondary schools. We also want to provide young people with an opportunity to reflect deeply on philosophical and ethical issues fostering good critical thinking and communication skills.

Schools can enter a team of five students to participate in the Philosothon, made up of one student from each Year level (Years 7-11), and one reserve.

The following information will help you in preparing your students for the Philosothon.

* Your students will need to familiarise themselves with this resource material before the Philosothon. I have attached a copy of the resource materials.
* There is no expectation that students will have studied Philosophy and Ethics before or after participating in the Philosothon.
* The fee for participating this year is $150 per school.
* All students attending the Philosothon will need to be in their school uniform.
* The Philosothon uses a Community of Inquiry (COI) model of discussion (see below for details).
* Whilst not absolutely necessary, schools are encouraged to enter a reserve student. If a reserve student participates on the evening then their score will count towards the overall team score, however, a Year 10 or Year 11 reserve student cannot participate in the place of a Year 8 or Year 9 student in the first two COIs. If a reserve student participates in the final two discussions, their score will count towards the initial student who they replaced. If the total score of the initial student and the reserve student totals a score ranked in the top three places, a single medal will be presented to the original student representing that year group. The reserve will, however, receive a medal if their school is placed in the top three schools on the evening.
* Organising teachers will need to notify me of student names and questions by the end of Term 3, **Friday 24th September**. Any changes in team member names and questions can be made up until then. Please email these details to [bta@gmas.wa.edu.au](mailto:bta@gmas.wa.edu.au) .
* Organising teachers will be asked to email their students questions on a template which will be provided to you. Each student will need to provide one question from each 2021 topic.
* Topic 1: What does ecological consciousness involve or require?
* Topic 2: Is the main value of sports to entertain spectators and participants?
* Topic 3: Could our computer be our friend?
* Topic 4: In what ways should ‘sacred spaces’ be respected?

**Further details on the Philosothon evening are below.**

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**Georgiana Molloy Anglican School**

**Wednesday 27th October 2021**

**5.15 pm – 9.00 pm**



**FURTHER DETAILS ABOUT THE PHILOSOTHON EVENING**

All participants, teachers and parents will gather in the Staff Room at 5.15pm for the welcome introduction and explanation of the format of the evening. The Community of Inquiries (COIs) will take place in the English and HASS blocks and snacks during the evening will be provided in the Staff Room. There will be a half hour break between the second and third COI. The awards ceremony will take place in the Staff Room shortly after the final COI. GMAS students will provide directions to participants, teachers and supporters.

During the evening, there will be four 30 minute COIs for each participating student. There will be four groups of up to eight students meeting at any one time, all groups will be dealing with the same topic and then moving on to the next topic after 30 minutes. **Group members will remain in Year level groups (7, 8, 9, 10 and 11) for the first two COIs, for the final two sessions the students will be in mixed age groups labelled groups A-E.** Each COI will be assigned a facilitator to co-ordinate the discussion and a judge will award marks using the attached marking key. Each participant in the COI will be scored separately, and these scores will contribute towards a final score for each school. These scores will also be tallied to decide Year level medals and the schools’ totals.

First place, second place and third place medals will be awarded for each Year level and for first, second and third placed schools overall. A perpetual trophy will be awarded to the first placed school. An individual trophy, the Alison Freeman prize, named after our chief facilitator, will also be awarded to the Most Promising Philosopher on the night. All students will receive a certificate in honour of their selection to represent their school.

Participating students are encouraged to make themselves familiar with the basic guidelines from the COI outlined below.

**If you have any further questions, contact:**

**Brad Taylor**

**Senior School Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator**

**Georgiana Molloy Anglican School**

**9752 5252**

[**bta@gmas.wa.edu.au**](mailto:bta@gmas.wa.edu.au)

**Basic Guidelines for Community of Inquiry**

Be prepared for a discussion.

One person speaks at a time.

There is a need to ask questions.

Deep listening is integral to the process.

Give reasons for opinion.

Check assumptions, reasoning, evidence – your own as well as others.

Define and discuss points of difference as well as points of agreement.

Ask others for reasons, definitions, evidences, examples, assumptions if necessary.

Admit when you disagree with something that you may have thought earlier.

**Remember!**

Sense of community is essential.

All opinions are respected.

The discussion makes the pathway not a leader.

Differences are a fundamental part of the process.

Accept that others may disagree with you.

Conflict and mistakes made in good faith are to be seen as opportunities for learning and growth.

This is a thinking process that can challenge assumptions and preconceived ideas.

It may be that you need to change your mind.

It is NOT about winning an argument.

It is about thinking more deeply about matters of importance to you as a member of the community.

ALL CHALLENGES ARE TO IDEAS EXPRESSED AND NOT TO THE PEOPLE EXPRESSING THE IDEAS.

**Philosothon Community of Inquiry Marking Key**

| **Marks** | **Performance** |
| --- | --- |
| **54 – 60** | Assists in the facilitation of procedural inquiry e.g. students contribute to the smooth running of the inquiry with a clear understanding of the importance of rules, procedures, dignity and respect.  Develops a substantive dialogue with peers about stimulus materials e.g. students engage in a detailed way with ideas and assumptions about stimulus materials put forward by peers. |
| **45 – 53** | Articulates with some clarity conceptual difficulties held by self / peers e.g. students make an honest attempt to make clear difficult ideas and assumptions put forward by peers.  Prepares a conceptually sound explanation in relation to key views / issues e.g. students offer the best explanation based on reason and evidence. |
| **36 – 44** | Adjusts responses as new arguments arise; students correct thinking in light of evidence from the inquiry.  Tests ideas held by peers against one another for their validity e.g. students weigh reasons offered by peers against one another to come up with the best reasons.    Questions peers about views on core issues and concepts in stimulus materials e.g. students endeavour to see alternative ideas and assumptions. |
| **27 – 35** | Formulates open questions which employ reasoning e.g. students ask questions to gain information and clarify difficulties.  Shares observations about core issues in the stimulus materials e.g. students are willing to share ideas with peers in a dignified manner.  Responds to open questions generated by stimulus materials e.g. students explain to peers in a respectful manner. |
| **18 – 26** | Exchanges ideas and builds on the ideas of others e.g. students use ordinary questions to help build examples and counter-examples in an argument.  Identifies some core issues and concepts in the stimulus materials e.g. students focus on a concept and an issue and make an attempt to explain it to peers.  Identifies the consequences of an action in a given context e.g. students explain the relationship of cause and effect between two or more ideas. |
| **9 – 17** | Simplistic / limited engagement with questions / peers in light of the stimulus materials, e.g. students need to make ideas and assumptions clear to peers.  Limited interpretation and explanation of the stimulus materials e.g. students need to explain the concepts and issues in the stimulus material fully and clearly. |
| **1 – 8** | Asks rhetorical questions and/or disjointed questions/answers to stimulus material/issues/peer questioning e.g. students provide unclear questions and/or answers to peers.  Mere assertions about stimulus materials / issues / peer questioning e.g. students make claims with no reasons and no evidence. |
| **0** | Dominates / monopolises the inquiry e.g. students need to treat peers properly and need to contribute to the running of the inquiry. |