

Ravenswood School for Girls (often referred to as Ravenswood or Ravo) is an independent, Uniting Church, day and boarding school for Prep - Year 12 girls, situated in Gordon, an Upper North Shore suburb of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

Established in 1901 by Mabel Fidler (1871–1960),<sup>[6]</sup> Ravenswood currently caters for approximately 1100 students from Prep to Year 12, including 20 boarders from Years 10 to 12.<sup>[4]</sup> The school has been an IB World School since June 2004, and is authorised to offer the IB Diploma Programme.<sup>[7]</sup>

Ravenswood is affiliated with the Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia (AHISA),<sup>[8]</sup> the Independent Primary School Heads of Australia (IPSHA),<sup>[9]</sup> the Australian Boarding Schools' Association,<sup>[10]</sup> the Alliance of Girls' Schools Australasia,<sup>[11]</sup> and is a member of the Association of Heads of Independent Girls' Schools (AHIGS).<sup>[12]</sup>

Contents

- 1 History
- 2 Principals
- 3 Campus
- 4 Curriculum
- 5 Co-curriculum
  - 5.1 Debating
  - 5.2 Sport
- 6 Community
- 7 Notable alumnae
- 8 See also
- 9 References
- 10 External links

History[edit]

Ravenswood was established with eight students on 28 January 1901 by the first Headmistress, Mabel Fidler, as a non-sectarian private day school for girls, with preparatory classes for boys. The first classes took place in a schoolroom erected on the block adjacent to Fidler's home, "Ravenswood", in Henry Street, Gordon. The school remains on this site.<sup>[13]</sup>

Fidler retired from Ravenswood in 1925, a year after the school was purchased by the Methodist Ladies' College, Burwood, thus becoming a school of the Methodist Church. Subsequently, the school name was changed to Ravenswood Methodist Ladies' College.<sup>[13]</sup> At this time, Ravenswood was the largest non-residential, private secondary school in Sydney, with an enrolment of 180, and was highly regarded for the quality of its teaching and its achievements in sport.<sup>[6]</sup> Ravenswood became a day and boarding school in 1935, with the enrolment of the first two boarders.<sup>[13]</sup>

The 1960s saw the introduction of the school anthem, *Kindle the Flame* and a fourth school House, all houses being named by the students after Royal Houses of Britain: Stuart, Tudor, Windsor and York.<sup>[13]</sup> In 1977, as the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational churches came together to form the Uniting Church, the school name changed to the current Ravenswood School for Girls. The royal blue and gold uniform was also introduced at this time.<sup>[13]</sup>

In 2015, the Head Girl of the school used her end-of-term speech to accuse the school of peddling an "unrealistic image of perfection", and providing some students with more opportunities than others because "schools are being run more and more like businesses, where everything becomes financially motivated, where more value is placed on those who provide good publicity or financial benefits." [14] She also alleged that the school had attempted to censor her speech by requiring prior copies. [15] Her parents later sued the Uniting Church, which runs the school, because of disciplinary action taken against their younger daughter. [citation needed]

Principals[edit]

Period Details[12]

1901–1925 Mabel Fidler, Founder

1926 Ethelwyn Potts

1927–1928 Clarice Ashworth

1928–1931 Francis Craig

1932–1961 Kathleen Crago

1962–1986 Phyllis Evans

1987–1992 Coral Dixon

1993–2004 Lorraine Smith

2005–2015 Vicki Steer

2016–present Anne Johnstone

Campus[edit]

Ravenswood is located on its original site, a single campus in suburban Gordon. The school has progressively expanded since 1901, with the acquisition of new properties and the upgrading of facilities. [16]

The school grounds feature quadrangles and courtyards, a multi-purpose complex with heated swimming pool, gymnasium, a "Strength and Conditioning centre" and an Athletics Field. The Ravenswood Centenary Centre includes a Performing Arts theatre, music centre and exhibition areas. [16] Junior School students are catered for within the Junior School centre with a Resource Centre, playground and play equipment area, adventure playground and Assembly Hall. [16]

Curriculum[edit]

In Years 11 and 12, students may choose to take either the Higher School Certificate (HSC) course or the International Baccalaureate Diploma Course (IB). [7]

Co-curriculum[edit]

Debating[edit]

Ravenswood has a tradition of debating, [citation needed] and students are offered opportunities to participate at competitive or social levels. Ravenswood competes in three inter-school debating competitions: the Independent Schools Debating Association (ISDA), the Archdale Debating Competition and the Independent Primary School Heads of Australia (IPSHA). Girls may also participate in House debating. [17]

Sport[edit]

Primary School students may partake in competitive sport through the Ravenswood's membership of the Independent primary schools Association of Australia (IPSHA). These

competitions are usually held on Saturday mornings and include sports such as: Softball, Tennis, Netball, Cricket, Hockey, and Soccer. Secondary School students compete against 28 other similar type schools in the Independent Girls' Schools Sporting Association (IGSSA) competition. These competitions occur on Saturday mornings or in the form of carnivals and include sports such as: Softball, Swimming, Diving, Cricket, Tennis, Hockey, Soccer and Gymnastics. Students who perform well at IPSHA or IGSSA level may be invited to compete in NSW Combined Independent Schools' (CIS) competitions.[17]

Community[edit]

It has been nominated for an Employer of Choice for Women classification by the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA).[18]

Notable alumnae[edit]

Media, entertainment and the arts

Julia Baird – journalist, author and host of The Drum[citation needed]

Gretel Killeen – author and host of Big Brother[19]

Tammin Sursok – Dani from Home and Away and Jenna from Pretty Little Liars[20]

Medicine and science

Grace Cuthbert-Browne, MBE, doctor and Director of Maternal and Baby Welfare in the New South Wales Department of Public Health from 1937 to 1964[21]

Politics, public service and the law

Juanita Nielsen – publisher, anti-development campaigner, heiress to the Mark Foy's retail fortune. Disappeared in mysterious circumstances (believed kidnapped and murdered) from Kings Cross, in 1975. Subject of films, Heatwave (1982) and The Killing of Angel Street (1981)[22]

Catherine West – Labour Party politician[23]

Jillian Broadbent – economist, company director, director of Sydney Dance Company[24]

Sport

Tiffany Thomas Kane, world record holding Paralympian[25]

See also[edit]

List of non-government schools in New South Wales

List of boarding schools