

# Sayonara to our Japanese exchange students

On Friday 9 August, we said goodbye to staff and students from our sister school, Kwansei Gakuin Senior High School in Japan. Twelve girls travelled to Sydney and stayed with Meriden host families, while boys from the school were hosted by families at Trinity Grammar School.

The group at Meriden was joined by trip coordinators Mr Saunders (English teacher) and Mr Kojima (Deputy Head of English Department and International Division).

The Japanese exchange girls attended lessons at Meriden for a week with their host students, which provided them with an invaluable taste of what being a student at Meriden is like. They sat in subjects they had never done before, joined school excursions, Chapel services and visited some Japanese classes to introduce themselves and help with speaking activities.



On their arrival day, the Japanese girls were welcomed by their Meriden exchange students.



First day of school for the Japanese group. Year 11 students Zehn Lim and Olivia Choi took them on a tour of the school.

Since they were wearing their own school uniform, it was easy for all our students to spot the exchange girls; this turned them into 'overnight celebrities' in the school playground, with some even signing autographs!

It was fascinating to hear from them about the differences and similarities between Meriden and their school in Japan.

One of the highlights for the whole school community was attending the school assembly where Mrs Brown and her counterpart from Japan, Mr Edagawa, spoke about this partnership. We also heard a speech in English from one of the Japanese exchange students, Aoi Fujimoto, and two Year 11 Meriden girls studying Japanese, Olivia Choi and Zehn Lim, who introduced and welcomed the girls to Meriden.

Mr Kojima and Mr Saunders visited some of our classes and commented on the small class sizes compared to Japan and how, despite the distance, our schools share similar values and expectations.

There were some tears on Friday amongst the Meriden girls and their Japanese exchange students, showing that in just over a week of living together they had forged solid friendships.



Three of our Japanese exchange students

I would like to thank the Meriden host families, students and teachers for providing such a positive experience for the Japanese students.

We are now counting the days until Meriden's visit to Japan (in January 2025)!

**Ms Teresa Alonso-Lasheras**

Head of Languages



Mr Saunders, Mr Kojima, Mrs Brown, Mr Edagawa and Mr Loane

