



Woodford, tradition and tuition in transition

Woodford International School is a renowned educational institution in the Solomon Islands with a history tracing over 60 years.

This is a bit of history about the school. The Honiara Woodford School for European children was housed in the British Red Cross Society's building (now the National Provident Fund Plaza) and the students were enrolled in the New Zealand Correspondence School. Because student numbers were increasing, in July 1954, the government decided to convert an



existing building into a school and to follow a normal curriculum conducted by a trained teacher.

In 1979, one year after the Solomon Islands achieved independence from Great Britain, Woodford School moved from their old location to new school buildings at the location where the school is today. A year later, a Board of Management was legally instituted to assume administration of the school, and in September 1989, the school's name was changed to Honiara International School.



“The government decided to convert an existing building into a school...”

In 1994, the name was changed again and the school is since then known as Woodford International School. The name Woodford, is taken from Sir Charles Woodford (1852-1927), a British naturalist who was an instrumental figure in the Solomon Islands prior to independence and its first British governor serving in office from 1896-1915.

Today, with many decades of students having since passed through its doors, Woodford International School's mission is to establish *"a community of learners that builds on each child's strengths, drawing from our diverse local context and a rich international curriculum, to develop globally ready*



“A community of learners that builds on each child's strengths...”



learners equipped to shape their future and achieve their dreams,” described Lerric Tito, the school's Information Technology Specialist.

With a staff of around 60, including teachers, administrators and ancillary staff, the school has the capacity to accommodate up to 500 students. Woodford is particularly popular amongst expatriate families, Members of Parliament and professionals.

Woodford introduced the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) in 2008. This is an inquiry-based programme and is used in WISE (Kindy and Pre-school) through

to Year 5. Year 6 through to Year 12 use the Cambridge Curriculum and in 2021, Solomon Islands Form 6 was introduced in the High School.

Lerric explained that Woodford's broad-based curriculum *"helps a lot of students to build that foundation very quickly in learning. They're exposed to a different kind of learning in terms of content."*

Students at Woodford are also encouraged to develop a sense of giving back to the community. This



“They’re exposed to a different kind of learning...”



is done in a variety of ways through different programmes in the school. The students have been involved in carrying out service projects through the school's donation of books to other schools around Honiara and much-needed medical supplies to local hospitals. Additionally, the students have travelled out to other schools to assist with cleaning and clearing, and are taught to advocate for climate awareness and the protection of the country's natural resources.

Unfortunately, like many businesses, Woodford has been heavily impacted by Covid. As the pandemic took hold in

early 2020, the school lost 1/3 of its students almost overnight. It is very fortunate that most of the students who left the country last year, have returned to Woodford.

To cater for the changing dynamics of its Secondary School student population, and to attract greater numbers of local students, Woodford now offers the Form 6 national curriculum. There are plans to further expand this diversification and establish the new Form 7 for next year, which is the equivalent to Year 13 Foundation for University level.



“We are trying to look at ways to attract more local children...”



“We are trying to look at ways to better cater for our students and to attract more local children and will be offering the national Solomons Form 7 curriculum. The Board has given approval to offer Form 7 next year. We are now waiting for approval from the University of the South Pacific,” explained Lerric.

Woodford set up its Facebook page in 2016 as a way of sharing information and promoting its activities to its students, parents, stakeholders, alumni and the general public. *“The school puts out notices such as what’s happening, announcements, and activities Woodford will be hosting or doing,”* said Lerric. He added, *“we also post our excursions and class projects that the students participate in.”*

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In sharing the educational journeys of its students, the use of social media has helped to enable Woodford to reach and interact with different audiences, and demonstrate what the school has to offer. It has also assisted Woodford in staying connected to its international students until they were able to return to Honiara and were welcomed once again into the school's classrooms.



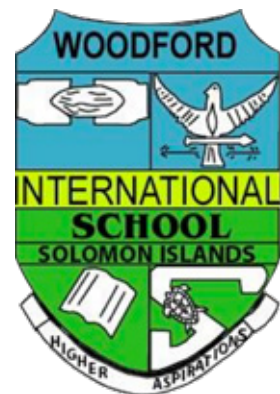


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