Dear Parent or Carer,

The Essential Secondary Science Assessment (ESSA) test for Year 8 students will be held between Monday 10 November and Friday 14 November 2014. The test takes approximately 80 minutes. The test is an interactive, multimedia test completed entirely on a computer. It is called ESSAonline. CHS will take the test in class groups between Tuesday 11th and Friday 14th November. ESSAonline contains multiple choice, short response and extended response tasks that are grouped around real-world issues, including scientific investigations. This is a diagnostic test, with tasks framed on Stage 4 outcomes and essential content in the NSW Science Years 7–10 Syllabus. Students will be tested on their:

- knowledge and understanding of science
- understanding and skills in the process of scientific investigation
- ability to evaluate evidence, make judgements and think critically
- ability to access information and communicate scientific ideas.

Students also complete a survey about their opinions, attitudes and values.

Since students complete ESSAonline on a computer, each student needs to bring headphones or earbuds that plug into a school computer. Earbuds for an iPod or portable player are suitable.

If your child has a disability that needs special consideration or has been educated in English for less than one year, please contact your child’s school to discuss special provisions or possible exemption from the test.

Results of the test will be available during Term 1 2015. Information about each student is treated confidentially and held securely to ensure that the right to privacy of all students is maintained. A personal report for each student will be sent to parents/carers to describe the science knowledge and skills demonstrated by the student in the test. There will also be information about how your child’s results compare with overall performance of all students in the test. You will be invited to complete a parent survey about the test and science learning.

The principal of your child’s school is able to provide you with more details about the ESSA program if you require additional information.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Eric Jamieson
Director, High Performance
Department of Education and Communities

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