



YARRA VALLEY
G R A M M A R

Curriculum

PREP TO YEAR 6 2024

confidence to achieve



FOREWORD

A warm welcome to the Junior School at Yarra Valley Grammar!

This booklet outlines curriculum information and general arrangements for students in Prep – Year 6.

The educational experience offered at Yarra Valley Grammar provides a wonderful array of opportunities for self-discovery and achievement. With the School located on a magnificent 29-hectare site, students can enjoy all the benefits of a nurturing primary learning environment and experience, yet at the same time, they are able to access the outstanding facilities and opportunities offered as part of a 'whole-school approach', ELC to Year 12.

These first seven years of formal schooling, constitute some of the most formatively significant years of a child's life. It is during this time that children acquire the social and emotional skills and knowledge to interact with each other and maximise the potential for collaborative learning and growing. It is also a time when they begin to develop a strong sense of self, one that recognises the need for self-advocacy and independence within the framework of community connection and the wider world.

It is also a time of rapid development in key academic skills and knowledge, as this is when the 'magic' happens - the first reading experience, the mastery of the written word and key mathematical skills. It is a journey of learning to learn where we establish and foster a mindset of stepping confidently into the 'learning pit' and promote a love of life-long learning.

Together, in partnership with our parents, every educator at Yarra Valley Grammar has a strong desire and commitment to support every student at their point of academic, social and emotional need to ensure that their experience of the primary years is positive and productive.

With our feet firmly planted on the ground, we 'lift up our eyes' to the promise and potential of outstanding opportunities and community connection.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long, sweeping tail that curves upwards.

Mrs Deb Krumples
Head of Junior School

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Junior School

The Learning Environment.....	1
Facilities	2
Pastoral Care and Wellbeing.....	4
Orientation and Transition Program	5

Teaching and Learning

Curriculum Development and Review	6
Individual Programs.....	8
Assessment and Reporting.....	10
Homework Policy.....	11

Core Subjects

Integrated Studies	12
English.....	13
Mathematics	14
Science	15
Digital Technology	16

Specialist Subjects

Visual Arts	17
Physical Education and Sport.....	18
Languages.....	19
Resource Centre	20
Outdoor Education	21
Music and the Performing Arts	22
Religious Education	23

About the Junior School

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The Junior School is a vibrant and active environment, which provides opportunities for intellectual, creative and social abilities to be developed fully. Its educational climate is one of fostering self-discovery within the context of positivity and inclusivity. School is seen as a welcoming, friendly and safe place where each student takes increasing responsibility for their own personal learning journey within a framework of support and encouragement.

Students are expected to promote and contribute to a caring and positive learning environment in which each student is treated fairly, can develop a feeling of self-worth and belonging and is able to learn effectively.

More specifically, the Junior School environment seeks to:

- develop a love of learning and desire to achieve one's personal best in all areas of school life
- provide learning spaces, rather than mere classrooms, that include outdoor and specialist areas to promote both inquiry and explicit teaching and learning
- support students taking risks in their learning by making attempts and exploring
- encourage students to view challenging or difficult tasks as a way of learning and to see continued effort and persistence as a way of achieving outcomes
- promote thoughtful teacher practice, which supports the exploration of various strategies for teaching and learning
- foster the core values of the school by encouraging students to make positive choices that demonstrate the value of diversity and inclusivity
- develop the skills of constructive collaboration and communication to enhance learning and leadership of self and others
- promote thoughtful, respectful and courteous behaviours from all members of its community to support the growth and achievement of all members
- create an awareness of self in relation to others and how we can contribute meaningfully to both the Yarra and wider communities.

George Wood Performing Arts Centre

Located in the heart of the School, the George Wood Performing Arts Centre is a modern 900 person capacity auditorium. It provides students with a space to explore many opportunities in music, speech, dance and drama for a range of group sizes.

Music School

Located alongside the Performing Arts Centre and expanding over three levels, the Music School provides an enriching opportunity for all Junior School students to discover music. The Music School serves the needs of many musically minded students through its specialist staff, wide variety of instruments and music groups, and practice and performance space for groups of all sizes. During regular Music classes, students have the opportunity to play more than twelve instruments. In addition, students may also participate in one or more of the five musical ensembles or choir groups that operate in the Junior School.

Resource Centre

The School has two resource centres available to Junior School students. The Carter Resource Centre has a primary school focus and is located in the Junior School. With teacher permission and supervision, students also have access to the Pascoe Research Centre in the Secondary School and its extensive range of resources to further expand their learning should that be appropriate.

Sports Complex

The School's John King Sports Complex and extensive platform of ovals provide space for a wide range of games, sports and other activities. Students in Years 3 to 6 regularly enjoy the Sports Complex facility, which can cater for basketball, netball, volleyball, badminton, table tennis and other physical activities. In addition, it contains a dance studio, fully equipped weight room, change room facilities and seating for up to 200 spectators.

Swimming Pool

A contemporary six-lane, 25 metre indoor swimming pool is located on the School's premises. Two fully qualified staff are in attendance at every swimming lesson. Junior School students use this facility on a regular basis within their Physical Education program. The facility also allows for squad training, inter-house and inter-school competitions. A program for our younger students is offered, with the focus of acquisition of water confidence, buoyancy and stroke development.

Outdoor Education

Students are exposed to overnight camps and outdoor education, beginning at Year 2 with a day of excursions linked to class-based curriculum, followed by an overnight stay at school. This is extended in Years 3 and 4 when they attend a 3 day camp off site and Year 5, when they engage with a 4 day camp. Year 6 students visit the Federal Capital of our country, Canberra, spending 4 days exploring and learning about leadership, government and our history. With the exception of the Canberra camp, all other camps are conducted at various locations around Victoria. Activities are varied and include bushwalking, bush craft, initiative games, environmental activities, snorkelling, orienteering, low ropes course challenges, rogaining, and archery.

Hearing Unit

The Hearing Unit allows all students who are deaf or hearing impaired to participate in the full range of school activities. Students are encouraged to develop their listening skills, to use their personal hearing device appropriately, to trust their residual hearing and to develop spoken language skills. Each classroom is fitted with a Soundfield system to further support students. The program for each student is flexible and is constantly reviewed in line with student needs. Receptive and expressive communication, and speech and language development are carefully tracked. Participation in all regular school curriculum activities with others, promotes the social and personal development of all our students, not only those with hearing impairment.

Foundation Hall

This large, multipurpose space is used for a range of Junior School activities including parent information sessions, incursions, concerts and assemblies.

The health and wellbeing of each student is fundamental to the School's educational philosophy and underpins our extensive curricular and co-curricular programs and pastoral care structures. With parents and carers as partners in the education process, we seek to provide success-rich opportunities for all children where a sense of respect, connectedness, resilience and well-being are fostered.

Our students learn and develop within a caring, inclusive and supportive environment that acknowledges their individuality and the unique contribution each child is able to make. Making extensive use of resources from The Resilience Project, The Cyber Safety Project and other curriculum, students develop the skills and knowledge necessary for effective self-management and the successful navigation of relationships with others.

Students are encouraged to consider the choices they make and own the resulting consequences, both positive and negative. They are supported to engage in restorative dialogue to repair relationships and manage conflict constructively, affording them agency and nurturing student empowerment.

In addition to promoting student voice, safety and value, we also seek to provide carefully considered challenges that encourage resilience, flexibility, creativity and initiative as part of their growth into well-balanced and successful young adults. A concern and appreciation for others, together with valuing service to people in need, is highly valued and encouraged.

Regular opportunities to monitor, discuss and reflect upon the pastoral care and progress of our students are seen as important mechanisms in facilitating and delivering a comprehensive pastoral program. This is achieved through:

- classroom meetings and discussions
- cross-age buddy activities
- peer mentoring and support
- leadership groups and opportunities
- student awards and recognition of individual and team achievement
- parental support meetings and Individual Learning Plans
- regular whole staff pastoral care meetings and section meetings
- regular student academic and wellbeing meetings involving the Deputy Principal - Dean of Students; Head of Junior School; the Junior, Middle and Senior Section Coordinator; the Director of Learning Support and Head of Student Wellbeing
- regular communication with parents and carers
- comprehensive handover and transition opportunities
- involvement of outside experts for professional development and support
- onsite Educational Psychologists, Student Counsellors and Speech Pathologists as members of staff
- engagement with the restorative process of problem solving and conflict management to develop accountability and sense of ownership as well as promote opportunities for forgiveness and reparation.
- Whole School programs to develop resilience, empathy and understanding, gratitude, mindfulness, positive social skills, conflict resolution and problem solving (e.g. partnership program with The Resilience Project).

ORIENTATION AND TRANSITION PROGRAM

The smooth transition for parents and their children is viewed as crucial in a successful commencement and journey within the School and there are numerous opportunities for new students and their families to attend School activities throughout the year. It is the School's intention that through these activities new families have the opportunity to meet staff, other students and parents and receive detailed information to help them to settle in successfully.

Throughout the year, students connect with many different teachers in various settings, allowing them to build greater capacity for transitioning to new contexts, classes and teachers. We also collaborate closely with our school psychologists and wellbeing teams to ensure we are working with all our students at their point of need.

New students and parents are invited to an Orientation Day towards the end of the year. On this day, new and current students are introduced to members of staff for the following year and they spend some time with their peers discussing the coming year with their class teacher.

Features of the process include:

1. viewing the School at work with both group and individualised tours
2. gathering student details – including school reports and other relevant information to inform us of how best to support students
3. orientation morning, including information relating to curriculum and daily procedures
4. preparation day for new students immediately prior to the start of the School year
5. further information evening and several informal gatherings for parents to meet others in a social context at the beginning of the academic year.

Teaching and Learning

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

Curriculum development and review is central to successful students and a high-performing school. Our work here should never be finished!

The curriculum at Yarra Valley Grammar is informed by the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authorities (ACARA). This is a national curriculum used across all states in Australia and is based on an understanding of our students – their development, needs, talents, interests and the way they learn best. More specifically, the Junior School curriculum is one that has breadth and depth, provides access to a range of knowledge and skills, makes connections between learnings, relates practice and theory and links them to their social context. It provides for continuity in, and progressive development of, knowledge, skills and values. The following General Capabilities are addressed:

- Literacy capability
- Numeracy capability
- Information and Communication Technology capability
- Critical and Creative Thinking capability
- Personal and Social capability
- Ethical Understanding capability
- Intercultural Understanding capability.

Within this context, students are encouraged and expected to respect others and work co-operatively, helping them to take responsibility for their own learning and grow in confidence and self-worth. The curriculum takes account of the variety of individual capabilities and adapts teaching strategies accordingly. It promotes high expectations of students, engages them in challenging tasks and learning opportunities, maximising each student's progress towards identified, individual goals. Skills and significant knowledge that encourage problem solving, flexibility, enterprise, technological awareness, collaboration and responsible digital citizenship are given high priority.

Curriculum review is seen as an ongoing process. Within this process of continual improvement is the notion that all key learning areas undergo refreshment and review each year, relevant to latest research and evidence and according to the different needs, talents and interests of our students.

The involvement of parents in our programs is valued and seen as a means of optimising the potential of each student and the learning environment. This is achieved through regular and open communication.

Class Teacher			Specialist Staff									
Student Personal Development, Values Education and thinking skills												
English	Mathematics	Integrated Studies <i>(Incorporating Science, History, Technology, and the Environment)</i>	Visual Arts	Music	Physical Education	Sport	Languages	Religious Education	Resource Centre	Outdoor Education		
Digital Technologies												
Individual Student Support Program Individual Learning Support Teachers and Assistants												
<p><i>Below are the values and virtues the teachers weave through the daily curriculum in a practical way:</i></p> <table><tr><td><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acceptance• Co-operation• Helpful• Honesty• Empathy• Compassion• Recognition• Courage• Determination• Gratitude• Inclusivity</td><td><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fairness• Respect• Responsibility• Trust• Pride• Success• Confidence• Assertion• Value• Self-worth</td></tr></table>											<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acceptance• Co-operation• Helpful• Honesty• Empathy• Compassion• Recognition• Courage• Determination• Gratitude• Inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fairness• Respect• Responsibility• Trust• Pride• Success• Confidence• Assertion• Value• Self-worth
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INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMS

It is the expectation that every classroom offers a differentiated program to meet the needs of all students. Within that context, the Individual Programs Department (IPD) operates within the framework of a tiered intervention model, whereby trained staff work individually or in small groups with students either in the classroom environment or in a withdrawal space. The aim of the IPD is to provide a specialised service to students with individual and specific needs as well as providing support to parents and staff in differentiating the curriculum.

The Department plays a central role in the needs-identification process, together with delivery of relevant programs and ongoing monitoring of student achievement. Staff work closely with the class teacher, specialists, parents and outside providers in the implementation and review of these programs.

Specialised programs are available to high-achieving students with a special interest or talent, as well as to students who require support programs in order to experience success in areas of skill and knowledge development.

Please note that support places in our Individual Programs Department are limited to students with a diagnosed or imputed learning difficulty and are allocated according to needs. We reserve the right to prioritise places.

Considerable time is devoted to devising individual programs specific to the needs of each child. The following strategies provide the main framework through which this is achieved:

Individual Learning Plans (ILPs)

Individual Learning Plans or Action Plans are devised to support the learning program of specific children. In the development of these plans, relevant information is gathered from testing, parents, the class teacher and others. Goal setting, regular monitoring and review meetings are key elements in this approach.

Ongoing Monitoring

As part of the regular program, student achievement is continually monitored using formative assessments such as formal and informal observations, work samples, review tests and student reflections.

Regular Meetings

Regular meetings to set goals, note progress and reflect upon the effectiveness of strategies form a key aspect of Individual Learning Programs. These are needs-based and include teachers, parents, students (as appropriate) and specialist providers.

Standardised Testing

This information provides valuable insight into student achievement against age-appropriate measures and feedback concerning program effectiveness.

Diagnostic Testing

In the key learning areas of English (reading, writing, spelling, comprehension) and Mathematics (number, space, measurement, chance and data), diagnostic testing provides a further platform for the development programs specific to each child.

Specialised Assessments

Where required, assessments involving Educational Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, Audiologists, Behavioural Optometrist and Speech Pathologists are recommended to gain specific information in the construction of appropriate programs and support.

Handover Information

Comprehensive social, emotional and academic information on each child provides important background detail for the new teacher each year, facilitating a smooth transition and program continuity.

All of these strategies are used to ensure each child reaches their individual potential whilst taking into account their personal interests and abilities.

ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

Assessment is seen as an integral part of the learning process and crucial to the acquisition of skills and knowledge. The Junior School participates in a continuous assessment and reporting approach to support effective learning feedback and development.

Formative and summative assessments, together with observations and reflections, inform the provision of feedback to parents, students and teachers about a student's strengths, interests, talents and areas of growth. This in turn, supports the future direction and action of both learners and teachers.

Assessment is viewed as a continuous process occurring prior to, during and at the completion of units of work. Staff employ a range of practices with which to gather this information. They include:

- teacher observation and questioning
- structured interviews and conferences with students
- digital and paper-based formative testing tools
- oral tests and assessments
- practical skill-based tests and assessments
- work or project-based assessment
- collected samples of students' independent work
- individual home learning approach to consolidate key skills
- group and individual project-based learning
- anecdotal records
- self-assessment and peer assessment.

The School encourages the free flow of communication amongst students, parents and teachers, and recognises the importance of this partnership in the educational process.

In addition to the continual assessment and feedback shared throughout the year, a Statement of Results is made available to families twice yearly at the conclusion of each semester. This will include an overview of student performance across the semester and a statement from the class teacher.

A Progress Statement providing information on each student's approach is provided prior to the online Parent-Teacher Interviews twice a year. The interviews provide a valuable opportunity to discuss progress, areas of personal and social development and individual academic achievement. Throughout the year, parents are invited to make contact with their child's class teacher to share any information that would support their child in managing school life socially, emotionally, physically and academically. Similarly, additional meetings may be organised by the school to share any further relevant insights pertinent to the student's wellbeing and learning.

HOMEWORK POLICY

Whilst valuing the benefits of completing various forms of home learning, the School also places significant emphasis on students being able to have time to play, rest and sleep. Research and experience have taught us that children who do not have enough time to play and sleep are at a distinct disadvantage both emotionally and academically. For further reading on this subject, please click on the following link:

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/sleep> and <https://raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/videos/free-time-to-play>

At Yarra Valley Grammar, homework serves a number of purposes:

- revision for purposes of consolidation
- reflection on learning experiences
- remediation where a student completes extra work aimed at overcoming problems or clarifying skills
- completion of tasks undertaken in class
- preparation for future activity
- enrichment and extension of the program
- encouragement of self-direction and self-discipline.

Students will receive homework as is required on a weekly basis. This begins with Prep students who bring home readers for practice and extends to Year 6 where students are required to complete set activities in various subjects such as Mathematics, English and Integrated Studies. Homework will be clearly outlined and shared in a timely manner with students and parents, and the expectation is that students complete these tasks on time. Students are encouraged to self-advocate and seek help from their teachers as and when they need support with this aspect of their learning.

INTEGRATED STUDIES

In an integrated curriculum, the key learning areas relevant to a particular unit of study are drawn together to create a rich and meaningful learning pathway which includes both explicit and inquiry-based approaches, and where appropriate, information and design technology is incorporated.

As children explore these integrated units of work, they begin to appreciate the interdependent nature of their studies and understand how discipline specific thinking can support their learning.

Disciplines such as those found in Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS: History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship, Economics and Business) as well as the field of general Science, are addressed in units of work which are age appropriate and relate to our daily lives.

Integrated units are developed directly from the curriculum as outlined in ACARA and include a focus on the following General Capabilities:

- Critical and Creative Thinking capability
- Personal and Social capability
- Ethical Understanding capability
- Intercultural Understanding capability

and the three Cross Curriculum Priorities:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures
- Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia
- Sustainability.

When working with these integrated units, students are encouraged to explore courageously and supported to work collaboratively.

Core Subjects

ENGLISH

We understand that English proficiency is a vital skill that opens doors to opportunities in academia, career, and personal growth. Our program combines effective teaching strategies with a supportive learning environment to foster a love for English and empower students with the necessary skills to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world. Our program combines the power of evidence-based practices with the research of the Science of Learning to unlock each student's full potential and set them on a path to success.

Across the Junior School, our experienced and passionate teachers utilise the benefits of direct explicit instruction within the framework of the Gradual Release of Responsibility to guide your child towards mastery of English language skills. Through clear, structured, and step-by-step lessons, we eliminate confusion and ambiguity, allowing your child to fully grasp and apply language concepts with confidence. By providing explicit modelling, guided practice, and independent application, we empower your child to take ownership of their learning journey.

In the Junior Primary years (Prep - Year 2), we have integrated InitialLit, a research-based early literacy program, into our English curriculum and in Years 3 - 6, we apply the evidence-based principles and practices of the Science of Reading and Writing. By focusing on essential skills such as phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, we ensure that your child develops the fundamental building blocks of reading and writing. Through targeted instruction and individualised interventions, we address any learning gaps and provide your child with the tools they need to become confident readers and writers.

Across all levels and stages, we believe in harnessing the power of proven principles and latest research to maximize your child's learning experience. By activating their prior knowledge, we help them make meaningful connections and deepen their understanding of English language concepts. We also understand the importance of minimising cognitive load, breaking down complex skills into manageable steps, and providing ample practice and retrieval opportunities. With timely and specific feedback, we ensure that your child receives the guidance they need to excel and grow.

We believe that every child has unique talents and abilities, and our program is tailored to unlock their full potential. By fostering a love for language and empowering your child with essential skills, we set them on a path to future success. With a strong partnership between the school and home environments, together we can unlock the doors to endless possibilities and equip your child with the language skills they need to thrive in the world ahead.

Our expert teachers employ a balanced approach to teaching Mathematics that integrates process and knowledge of the fundamental mathematical proficiencies of Understanding, Fluency, Reasoning and Problem-Solving. We recognise the importance of a gradual release of responsibility in nurturing independent and confident learners. Through explicit direct instruction, stimulating hands on activities and thought-provoking problem-solving tasks, we ensure an engaging learning experience that captivates students' interest and fuels their enthusiasm for mathematical exploration.

A strong foundation in mathematical skills is vital for success in acquiring and utilising advanced concepts. In the Junior Primary years (Prep - Year 2), we hone essential skills such as number sense, fluency, and problem-solving techniques. Following the teaching principles of the Extending Mathematical Understanding (EMU) program, students are empowered to acquire the necessary skills to confidently tackle mathematical challenges. This approach supports students at every stage of their mathematical development, ensuring they comprehend and internalise fundamental mathematical principles with confidence and precision.

Across all levels in the school, our Mathematics program highlights the practical applications of concepts, making the subject authentic, relevant and meaningful. By establishing connections between Mathematics and everyday life, scientific discoveries, technological advancements, and other disciplines, students learn to appreciate the significance and applicability of mathematics beyond the classroom.

At Yarra, we promote a collaborative and cooperative learning environment, where students actively participate in group discussions, exchange ideas, and collectively solve mathematical challenges. This approach fosters strong communication skills, critical thinking abilities, and the confidence to articulate mathematical reasoning effectively. Our program seamlessly integrates cutting-edge educational software, interactive applications, and online resources. Through these innovative tools, students engage in interactive activities that reinforce concepts, cultivate digital literacy skills, and prepare them for the demands of our 21st Century world.

One of Yarra's core values is inclusion. We value and celebrate the unique strengths and learning styles of each individual and create a positive and supportive classroom environment where students feel encouraged to take risks and explore new ideas. By fostering a growth mindset, emphasising that effort and perseverance are key to mathematical success, students learn to view mistakes as valuable learning opportunities. In addition, our program encompasses targeted differentiation strategies, allowing students to progress at their own pace and receive personalised support or enrichment where required.

At Yarra Valley Grammar, we understand the importance of fostering scientific curiosity and skills in our young learners. Science education in the Junior School is a critical period when children develop their scientific literacy, curiosity, and problem-solving abilities. We are committed to implementing evidence-based practices that promote a love for Science as well as nurture our students' scientific inquiry skills.

Our Science program explores three interrelated strands: Science Understanding, Science Inquiry Skills and Science as a Human Endeavor. By integrating these strands, we provide a holistic approach to Science education that enables students to explore, investigate, and communicate scientific ideas effectively. Collaboration and communication are vital aspects of our Science education approach. We encourage students to work in teams, engage in discussions, and deliver presentations, allowing them to share their ideas, learn from their peers, and develop effective communication skills. Our teachers create a supportive learning environment that encourages active participation, curiosity, and respectful dialogue among students.

Applying the lens of a scientist, students engage with the scientific process through exciting experiments, practical investigations, and real-world applications, to emphasise the relevance of science to the real world. Your child will have opportunities to investigate scientific issues and phenomena that are connected to their lives and local community. This approach also engages with the ethics of Science, enhancing their understanding of the impact of Science on society, fostering a sense of responsibility, and nurturing environmental awareness.

In line with the advancements in technology, we integrate digital tools and resources into our science lessons. By utilising online platforms, interactive simulations, and educational apps, we enhance your child's learning experience and broaden their exposure to scientific concepts. This integration of technology equips our students with essential digital literacy skills while deepening their scientific knowledge.

By immersing your child in our research-based and curriculum-aligned science education, we aim to inspire a lifelong passion for scientific exploration and discovery. We believe that nurturing critical thinking, scientific literacy, and a love for science will empower your child as a lifelong learner and future contributor to scientific advancements

At Yarra Valley Grammar we recognise that our students live in a rapidly changing, increasingly technological world. As members of the 'information age' it is therefore essential that students are exposed to a range of opportunities that develop and refine their skills in this area.

Central to this approach is the meaningful use of Information, Communication and Learning Technologies as everyday tools for learning and delivering curriculum throughout the key learning areas. Prep to Year 6 students are progressively exposed to a variety of technological opportunities and applications which encourage them to engage not only as users of technology, but also as producers of new knowledge and understanding.

All students in the Junior School are provided with a device in a 1:1 model. Students in Prep to Year 4 receive an iPad which remains at school and is used to support an effective and contemporary approach to enriching learning experiences and fostering creativity and curiosity. Additionally, where appropriate, classrooms have networked computers, which allow access to a wide range of software including multimedia applications. Students in Years 5 and 6 are provided with a computer device in the same 1:1 model as the younger years, however, students in these year levels are permitted to take their devices home each day.

In line with the latest methods and tools available in education, all classrooms are equipped with a fully interactive touch-screen board to ensure learning is collaborative and the students can access contemporary resources.

Ongoing, systematic cyber safety and digital wellbeing sessions are an essential component in the respectful and responsible use of technology. In line with Yarra Valley Grammar's values, students are explicitly taught how to keep themselves and each other safe online, and how to manage interactions to the benefit of all. We believe that it is imperative that we partner closely with parents on this rapidly developing area of teaching and learning and appreciate the continued support we receive.

Specialist Subjects

VISUAL ARTS

Visual Arts at Yarra Valley Grammar aims to extend students' confidence, artistic ability and social skills through establishing an environment where individual effort and creativity is valued and where intent, process and product are considered. The teaching of skills combined with the freedom to be creative encourages student success at every level.

The course is planned on a sequential basis, offering a balanced program within the main areas of art (drawing, painting, construction, collage, printing, threads and textiles, modelling) and the elements of line, form, colour and texture, while also considering the creative focus of each session - experience, imagination, feelings or ideas and concepts.

Through integrated units of work, students are exposed to artists across the world, drawing inspiration from different cultures and countries. They explore the use of multimedia, matching purpose with process and presentation.

Students are taught to understand and use the language of art to develop aesthetic awareness and perception, which can be applied to the creation of their own work and the appreciation of the work of others.

At Yarra Valley Grammar, Junior School students enjoy outstanding sporting facilities as part of an extensive Physical Education (PE) and Sport program, covering 20 different sports and activities. Using a sequential skills-based program which develops fundamental movement skills, object control and movement concepts at age-appropriate levels, students are taught explicit skills and techniques as well as applying those to movement situations and minor games.

Physical Education classes are structured to cater for students of varying abilities through stimulating and challenging activities in an inclusive environment. House, School Sport Victoria and Associated Grammar Schools of Victoria competitions allow students to develop and display their skills in both individual and team settings. Through whole school events such as House swimming, cross country and athletics carnivals, students establish strong connections and learn to value the individual contributions that each makes to the success of the collective.

During regular PE lessons, students engage with a swimming program onsite in our Swimming Centre, ensuring that all students develop an understanding of water safety and fundamental stroke technique. Students also have the opportunity to engage with further aquatics training as a co-curricular activity.

There is also the opportunity to participate competitively in various sports, which are represented at district, division, regional, state and national levels. In Junior School, we do not engage in sport on the weekend; however, it is an expectation that from Year 7 onwards, students will choose and participate in a sport which is often played on the weekend.

The emphasis of the Junior School Physical Education and Sport programs is on enjoyment, participation, skill development, fitness and sportsmanship; the major aim is to establish a love of physical activity which will continue into secondary school years and beyond.

In the early years of education, ie, ELC to Year 6, we offer two streams of language:

- in the ELC – Year 1, students develop an understanding of Auslan, learning the fundamentals of a signed language.
- from Years 2 – 6, students study French, incorporating the use of fundamental vocabulary, grammar and sentence structures as well as an appreciation of the French culture as it exists in various parts of the world.

AUSLAN

‘Auslan (Australian sign Language) is a language that uses hand, arm and body movements to convey meaning’ (http://www.ndp.org.au/images/factsheets/NDP_Factsheet04.pdf). Students in the ELC have already been exposed to Auslan through an early years program and from 2024, all students from ELC to Year 1 will learn Auslan.

Operating as a diverse and inclusive school community, students who learn languages other than their own spoken and written language, develop an appreciation of different cultures and ways of communicating. At Yarra, we have a proud history of offering an inclusive education to all students and their families, which incorporates a fully functioning Hearing Unit for a number of our students.

Students will engage with the fundamental signs used in Auslan through play-based activities, learning to communicate simple messages. They are encouraged to learn how to sign familiar songs, days of the week, colours and numbers, and gain a greater understanding of how Auslan supports members of our wider community.

FRENCH

The Junior School French program has been designed especially for our students using the principles of content-based language learning. The program aims to make children aware not just of ‘things French’ but also of the multicultural society in which we live. This serves to develop an appreciation of the background and cultures of all students. Aware that students enter the language program with various levels of ability and experience, learning activities are designed with multiple entry and exit points, which support differentiation of the curriculum.

Resources from France provide authentic models of language and a deeper and more meaningful learning experience. The topics studied relate to the students’ own lives and interests and are linked to the integrated curriculum and both vocabulary development and grammatical understanding become a focus as students move through the school.

Emphasis is initially placed on listening and speaking together with simple literacy activities, which develop into the ability to read and write simple sentences and phrases. The French program reflects an approach that acknowledges individual differences and various styles of learning. Activities frequently include songs, poetry, games, movement activities and multimedia. Students engage with various incursions, such as the French Puppet Theatre and cooking experiences.

Students in the upper years are encouraged to enter various competitions and engage with oral presentations to practise their spoken language skills. Students also have the opportunity to participate in sharing their understanding and skills in assemblies and other forums, including during the whole-school ‘French Day’ event.

Through access to the Carter Resource Centre, we promote a love of literature and the pleasure of reading with activities such as visiting authors/illustrators and displays of new literature and materials relating to integrated topics of study.

The Resource Centre and Library program aim to:

- teach information literacy skills through specifically planned units. Students are shown how to locate appropriate print and electronic resources and use the information to produce work that answers target questions in their own words;
- develop literature-appreciation through reading and discussion of character, plot and theme.

Progressing from the younger years where students learn how to take care of a book and delight in the enjoyment of reading and being read to, they move towards a greater appreciation of various genres and literary structures. In the upper years, students learn to use the information process to define, locate, organise, synthesise, present and assess information when completing a research task. They discuss effective research strategies and begin to critically appraise information sources, including the internet, for validity and appropriateness to their set task.

Students attend learning sessions regularly in the Resource Centre and are also encouraged to visit at other times to browse and borrow.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

At Yarra Valley Grammar the outdoor education program starts at Year 2 with an overnight sleepover at school, culminating in Year 6 with a four-day trip to our federal capital, Canberra. In Years 3, 4 and 5, students will participate in an external camp program of three to four nights. The opportunity to spend time in a destination outside of school and home affords students the opportunity to forge strong connections with peers and experience a variety of environments.

The Outdoor Education program aims to:

- provide opportunities that assist students to develop empathy and respect for the environment
- promote the spirit of adventure as a value and worthy personal trait
- provide students with opportunities to develop their confidence and self-esteem
- foster teamwork, leadership and an appreciation of others' beliefs and personalities
- ensure students are exposed to a diverse range of environments.

Programs embrace and promote the value of play and fun in a safe and structured environment as well as connecting to classroom-based curriculum.

MUSIC AND THE PERFORMING ARTS

The Yarra Valley Grammar community celebrates and values Music and the Performing Arts. Students in the Junior School attend music classes once a week with a qualified music teacher, drawing upon many methodologies including the Orff Schulwerk method of teaching, which fosters a holistic approach to music education. It integrates singing, speech, movement, folk dance and tuned and non-tuned percussion instruments to develop creative music making. The students will also experience and develop music literacy through the Kodaly methodology

Offering opportunities for multi-age and cross curricular activities throughout the school, the Junior School Music and Performing Arts program is diverse. It is designed to enable students to perceive, value and judge what they come to know through their senses. The program strives to foster a life-long involvement and appreciation of music and the performing arts. It is an approach to which all may contribute and experience success, and students are provided with multiple opportunities for performance and creativity.

An Instrumental Program is offered at the Year 2 and Year 5 levels, where students in Year 2 learn a string instrument and the Year 5 students participate in a band program. The Junior School also offers an extensive range of co-curricular ensembles and musical groups in which students have the opportunity to participate regularly, such as choirs, orchestras and bands.

All students in the Junior School have the opportunity during the course of the year to showcase their learning for audiences from fully staged productions, to assemblies and gatherings as well as small group and solo performances.

An extensive range of instrumental tuition is also available during school hours through the Music School.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Central to the School's mission and aims is the goal to provide a quality, co-educational learning environment based on Christian Principles.

The teaching of religion promotes, through guided discussions, stories, songs and activities, a view of life in which concepts of meaning and purpose are explored. The promotion of religious principles such as goodness, right action and a sense of moral accountability are emphasised, as is the exploration of ethics and values.

An understanding and respect for diversity is fostered and encouraged at all times, placing importance on celebrating the many cultures and peoples we have in our community and ensuring an inclusive approach.

Through a weekly class taught by our School Chaplains and Religious Education class teachers, students explore Biblical stories and how they apply to modern life. They are encouraged to wonder and explore the stories as they are introduced to the language of liturgy and faith.

Chapel services for each year level will be held in the School's Chapel during the year.