

# Victoria University Secondary College



Create The Future

## Year 7-8 Handbook 2024



Create The Future

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Create The Future



## Foreword

At Victoria University Secondary College the vision which our students, staff and parent / guardian community work towards each day, is

### **“Create The Future”**

We work towards this vision by:

- **Aspiring to Achieve**
- **Strengthening our Community**
- **Respecting Ourselves and Others**

### **Our College Logo**

The symbol is based on the appearance of a wreath. Wreaths are commonly associated with success and eternity. Each leaf of the wreath is intended to represent the school’s success and the success of the students.

The flowing movements of the leaves stand for the progressive journey of students. This is accentuated by the dots on the side, which gradually enlarge to indicate students going through each year of secondary school.

The final leaf separated from the wreath symbolises the successful students brought up by the school, who enter and strengthen our community. The fact that leaves fly to new and unknown places relates to the multitude of students’ aspirations beyond their secondary schooling.

Wreaths are also evergreen plants lasting throughout all seasons. The strength of these plants signifies the strength of the school community and the bond between teachers, students and their parents / guardians.



At Victoria University Secondary College we teach and learn within the College's core values.

We expect students to:

**Create the Future**

by

**Aspiring to Achieve**

**Strengthening the Community**

and

**Respecting Themselves and Others**

## *Message from the College Principal*

Welcome to Victoria University Secondary College - a learning community where students are guided to discover their talents, set aspirational goals for themselves and grow and develop into independent, resilient and adaptable individuals.

Our vision at VUSC is for our students to be educated and enabled to Create the Future: their own future, their communities' future and the global future.

The Year 7 and 8 curriculum is grounded in the areas of Literacy and Numeracy, with Information Communication Technologies and AVID strategies also at the foreground of each subject area. Students undertake a breadth of discipline areas, allowing them to explore their interests.

Lifelong learning skills such as good organisation, strong work ethic and a desire to achieve their full potential are promoted throughout these years.

At Year 7, the focus is on the student and their transition from primary to secondary school. The Year 7 teaching team work closely with Grade 6 teachers to ensure the transition into Year 7 is a smooth and positive experience. Much care and thought is put into the placement of students into classes. Year 7 is administered by a Middle School Leader, Year Level Coordinators and the support of Home Group teachers.

Each student works with their Home Group teachers, meeting with them each Monday in their homeroom. The Home Group teacher also teaches that group throughout the week so that a strong and trusting relationship can be built. This enables teachers to take an active interest in each student's wellbeing and get to know their family. Students have the opportunity to attend a three day pastoral camp to help them strengthen newly formed friendships and familiarise themselves with their teachers.

Regards,

Elaine Hazim  
College Principal



# Our College

## Transition to Year 7

The transition from primary school is seamless for our Year 7 students. Our orientation program brings Year 6 students into the College where they quickly begin to develop new friendships and familiarise themselves with their teachers. Students start the secondary school year with confidence, supported by the Middle School Leader and Year 7 Coordinator.

At Year 7, each student works with their Home Group teachers, meeting with them every Monday morning to participate in a session around building strong, respectful relationships and resilient and engaged learners. The Home Group teacher also teaches that group throughout the week so that a strong and trusting relationship can be built. This enables Home Group teachers to take an active interest in each student's wellbeing.

Each student is provided with a locker in a separate area to the older students within the College, as well as being situated close to all of their classes and school facilities such as the General Office and Canteen area.

## Junior Campus in Deer Park (7, 8 and 9)

As students progress through Year 7 and 8, their curriculum is grounded in the areas of Literacy and Numeracy, with Information Communication Technologies also at the foreground of each subject area. Students undertake a breadth of discipline areas, allowing them to explore their interests. Lifelong learning skills such as good organisation, strong work ethic and a desire to achieve their full potential are promoted throughout these years.

Throughout Year 9, students have the opportunity to engage in exciting new programs within a range of electives and specialised classes. Students focus on developing their life skills by strengthening and engaging with the broader community. Students are also involved in a range of programs and initiatives designed to build their self-confidence, foster independent learning and develop a greater sense of respect for themselves as well as others. Through a teams approach, students prepare for the challenges and decisions they will make as they move into the final stages of their secondary education. The program ensures our students enter the Later Years with confidence and a clear sense of direction.

## Senior Campus in Cairnlea (10, 11 and 12)

Victoria University Secondary College takes pride in guiding and supporting students as they travel through secondary school life and beyond. Our expert staff coordinates our Managed Individual Pathways (MIPS) and Careers programs. Together we help plan individual learning needs and preferences. Subject selection and VCE (Victorian Certificate of Education), VET (Vocational Education Training) and VCAL (Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning) programs are discussed with each student. Industry based work experience and structured workplace learning is also offered at all levels within the Later Years.

The Later Years staff work to ensure the individual success of every student, with extensive support for all to achieve their goals in the final years of their secondary schooling and beyond. They are supported by the Senior School Leader and Coordinators, with a separate study area and continual support programs in the areas of study techniques, well-being, additional tuition and careers advice.

Students have access to a wide range of aspirational opportunities and partnerships. These include:

- The Kwong Lee Dow Young Scholars Program
- The Hall & Wilcox Aspirations Program
- Victoria University
- The Beacon Foundation
- Western Chances Scholarship Program
- Orchestra Victoria
- Sport and Rugby Academy

As students progress through to post-compulsory education, we look at every opportunity to pursue tertiary studies, traineeships and apprenticeships. Each step provides exciting new possibilities for the future of each of our students.

This handbook contains all of the information that students and their parents / guardians need to know about the Year 7 and 8 learning program at Victoria University Secondary College in 2024. We have created a curriculum that provides students with a broad range of learning experiences and allows them to begin to sample a range of subjects in order to recognise their talents and identify their own personal interests and strengths for future pathways.

## Student Responsibilities and Parent / Guardian Information

### School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support

The College has a focus on positive behaviour to encourage students to do their personal best. Introducing, modelling and reinforcing positive social behaviour is an important component of a student's educational experience. Teaching behavioural expectations and rewarding students for following them is a much more positive approach than waiting for misbehaviour to occur before responding.

<i>Aspire to Achieve · Respect Ourselves and Others · Strengthen the Community</i>			
	<b>SAFE</b> We Will...	<b>RESPECTFUL</b> We Will...	<b>RESPONSIBLE</b> We Will...
<b>All Settings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep our hands and feet to ourselves</li> <li>• Use facilities for their intended purpose</li> <li>• Follow staff instruction</li> <li>• Stay in designated areas</li> <li>• Sign out when leaving early</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and encourage others</li> <li>• Include others</li> <li>• Use our manners</li> <li>• Wait our turn</li> <li>• Walk between classrooms quietly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear the correct school uniform</li> <li>• Attend school every day</li> <li>• Keep our mobile phones in our lockers</li> <li>• Arrive to school and class on time</li> <li>• Put our rubbish in the bin</li> <li>• Use equipment and facilities respectfully</li> <li>• Sign in when arriving late</li> </ul>
<b>Learning Spaces</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom</li> <li>• Library</li> <li>• Study Centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep our bag in our locker</li> <li>• Bring our planner to class</li> <li>• Leave class with a signed planne</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask to use others' equipment</li> <li>• Line up when waiting for the teacher</li> <li>• Be quiet when others are learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrive to class on time</li> <li>• Bring required equipment</li> <li>• Work to our full potential</li> <li>• Participate in class activities</li> <li>• Complete homework</li> <li>• Submit our work on time</li> </ul>
<b>Toilets / Changerooms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wash our hands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the toilets for their intended purpose</li> <li>• Give others privacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep the toilets and changerooms clean</li> </ul>
<b>Yard / Lockers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use equipment appropriately</li> <li>• Keep the school a smoke free zone</li> <li>• Play sport in designated sporting areas</li> <li>• Report unsafe behaviour to a staff member</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk away from conflict</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep our locker secure</li> <li>• Eat food outside</li> <li>• Leave belongings in locker during breaks</li> <li>• Use our allocated locker</li> <li>• Go to our locker and then class when the first bell rings</li> </ul>
<b>Canteen</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form a queue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Order our own food</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the correct entry/ exit</li> <li>• Use our own money</li> </ul>
<b>Excursions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay with our group</li> <li>• Follow the rules of Public Transport Victoria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow excursion facilitators instructions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be organised for excursions</li> <li>• Arrive on time</li> </ul>
<b>Digital</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep our passwords private</li> <li>• Keep personal details to ourselves</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek permission before posting information or photos about others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use technology for intended purpose</li> <li>• Check compass daily</li> <li>• Have a charged laptop</li> <li>• Seek permission before using school name and logo</li> </ul>



## Uniform

College Blazer is compulsory for all students in Years 7 to 11. Students in Year 12 can choose to wear the College Blazer or the Year 12 College Jacket. The blazer and jacket must be worn every day to and from school including home group and periods 1 and 2.



Summer Dress



L/S Shirt - Stand Collar



S/S Hip Shirt



Pleated Front Trousers



Pleated Front Shorts



L/S Jacquard Blouse



S/S Jacquard Blouse



Box Pleat Skirt



Twill Blazer with Chest Pocket



Wool Blend Jumper



Sublimated Polo Shirt



Mesh Sport Shorts



Rugby Jumper



Microstretch Trackpants



Tie

UNIFORM	
SUMMER UNIFORM - To be worn Term 1 & 4 ONLY	WINTER UNIFORM – To be worn Term 2 & 3 ONLY
College Shorts or College Long Pants or College Summer Dress	College Long Pants or College Shorts or College Winter Skirt
College Short Sleeve Shirt or Blouse	College Long Sleeve Shirt or Blouse
College Jumper (Optional)	College Jumper (Optional)
College Tie (Optional)	College Tie
Plain Black Socks	Long Plain Black Socks or Black Tights
College Baseball Cap Only Permitted (To be worn in outdoor spaces only)	College Scarf only permitted
All Black Leather School Shoes or T-Bars that fully enclose the toes to be worn all year round. Slip on boots (that is, any shoe above the ankle) are not permitted to be worn.	All Black Leather School Shoes or T-Bars that fully enclose the toes to be worn all year round. Slip on boots (that is, any shoe above the ankle) are not permitted to be worn.

SPORTS UNIFORM	
COLLEGE SPORTS UNIFORM MUST BE WORN FOR ALL SPORT/PE CLASSES	
• College Track Pants	• College Micromesh Shorts
• College Polo Shirt	• Sport Footwear
• PE Jacket	

## Student Planner

All students are required to purchase and use the student planner. This planner is to be used exclusively for school related matters. It is not a personal planner. If this planner is not maintained in good condition, free of stickers, graffiti and personal annotations, the planner must be replaced. Failure to bring the planner to class results in disciplinary consequences.

This planner is a very important document and our students are expected to take this to each class. The planner outlines important information. It contains detailed information on uniform requirements, school policies, student goals, study plans, class timetables and other information relevant to our students.

The planner is used to record homework for each class a student attends. If there is no explicit homework assigned students are to write RCN (Review Cornell Notes) or NH (No homework). Students record each piece of homework twice, once on the date it is given and once on the due date for that piece of work. They monitor their homework by ticking tasks once they have been completed. Planners are a key part of how students develop the organisational skills to help them succeed at school and beyond. Students will be explicitly taught how to use their planner effectively. Further information on using the planner is included in the planner.

The planner can be used as a means of communication with teachers, if parents / guardians wish to write messages back to the Coordinator, the Home Group Teacher or the Class Teacher.

## Homework

Homework is an important part of education. It is designed to provide enrichment to class work, practice and revision. It may take a number of forms: finishing off class work, revising, completing set tasks, researching, redrafting, homework assignments or completing class assignments, practising an instrument and reading.

All students are expected to review their Cornell Notes taken during the day's classes every evening. This process may only take a few minutes for each class. Students will be taught the process of reviewing Cornell Notes over the course of their first semester at the College. All students are expected to do thirty minutes of reading each night, this might include reading with a parent / guardian, reading a school text or reading a book the student has chosen for fun. Students have regular library lessons to ensure they have an appropriate book to read.

Year 7–9 students are expected to complete at least 30–60 minutes of homework daily.

## Lockers

All students are issued with a lock and locker at the start of the year. The cost for these is included in the Curriculum Contributions charge which is paid at the start of each year.

Students are required to keep their bags and mobile phones in their lockers at all times. They are not permitted to carry their bags or mobile phones into class or at recess and lunchtime.

For security reasons, students are not permitted to go to their lockers during class time.

## Compass

The school uses a service to communicate with parents / guardians called Compass School Manager. Compass helps you communicate with the school and access information about your child and their learning. You can use Compass to:

- Check attendance and enter approved absences from school
- Update your contact details
- See what classes and events your child has this week
- See what assessment tasks and homework your child has
- View your child's assessment results two weeks after assessments are completed and see any teacher feedback
- Book parent-teacher conferences
- Access school reports
- Email Teachers

You can access Compass through the link on the school website at [www.vusc.vic.edu.au](http://www.vusc.vic.edu.au). Each family has a unique login and password which will be provided to you or can be reset at the front office of the school. Parents / Guardians have their own login which allows them to remove access other features which are not available to students. Compass can be accessed through a home computer or through an App downloaded to most mobile phones.

## Absences/Attendance

All students are expected to be punctual and regular in their attendance. Students are required to maintain a minimum 90% attendance rate at school. Parents / Guardians are required to notify the College if their child is absent. If your child is absent from school and we have not been notified, parents / guardians will receive an automatically generated text message reminding you to contact the school and explain the absence. A follow up note and/or medical certificate must be given to the General Office upon the student's return.

Dental or doctor appointments should not be made during school times unless absolutely unavoidable.

If your child is away for an extended period of time, please contact your child's Coordinator.

If families are planning an extended absence from the school during the term students must contact their coordinators at least four weeks prior to their absence to complete a leave of absence form. This allows planning so that students will have a full program of work to complete while away. It is highly recommended that absences during term time be avoided wherever possible.

## Sick Bay and First Aid at the College

First aid assistance is available to deal with minor injury or illness. It is College policy that if students require medication during the school day parents / guardians should notify the College and leave the medication at the General Office.

Students who feel ill must have their student planner signed to leave class and report to the General Office. The school will contact the parent or guardian before sending the student home. Students are not permitted to go home unless the school has contacted the parent or guardian. Students are not permitted to use mobile phones to contact parents / guardians if they are unwell, without permission from a staff member. Students will not be permitted to walk or catch public transport home but will only be allowed to leave school early in the company of a parent or guardian.

**It is important that when students are enrolled at the school, emergency phone numbers are provided as well as a contact number for the parent/guardian. It is also important that these phone numbers are kept up to date and changes are noted through the General Office.**

If contact is not possible it may be necessary to use a taxi or ambulance to obtain medical assistance; in this case the costs must be met by the parent/guardian. The costs can be significant; parent/guardians are urged to take out a subscription with the ambulance services.

## Permission to Leave the School

Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds during the school day without official permission. If it is necessary for a student to leave the school during school hours, they need a parent / guardian note to be signed off by either their Home Group Teacher or Coordinator prior to submitting the note to the General Office.

Students may not leave school before the end of the school day except in the company of a parent or guardian.

## Contacting the School

If you have any enquiries regarding your child's program or progress, please contact your child's Coordinator who will either answer your queries or direct you to the appropriate person.

## Teacher Contact

Parents / Guardians are invited to contact teachers via the General Office, however if you wish to see a teacher, parents / guardians must ring and make an appointment. Please be aware that teachers are not always available as they have classes, meetings and other commitments during the school day.

## School Detention

Official lunchtime detentions are run by Coordinators for lateness, uniform or missing laptops or planners.

## Excursions/Sporting Events

All activities that involve students leaving the school grounds require parent/guardian permission through Compass. It is essential that Compass details are correct and that parents/guardians are familiar with the Compass Parent Portal. A notification is sent through the Parent Portal when excursion permission opens; parents/guardians have until one week before the excursion to consent online. If this is not done, students may miss the opportunity to be involved in the activity/excursion.

## Textbooks

We are aware of the cost to our parents / guardians in educating their child. We take particular care not to have an extensive book list so that we can reduce the cost for our parents / guardians. It is important that all our students have the necessary textbooks for all their subject areas. E-books are available for several subjects and are cheaper than textbooks.

VUSC requires that each student have direct access to their own computer, that they take with them to all classes and then home to complete their work and to further their studies. VUSC recommends that parents / guardians purchase the prescribed computer through our nominated supplier as this represents the best value and support available. Full details will be outlined in a letter accompanying this handbook.

## Curriculum Contributions and Other Contributions

Your ongoing support of payment towards our curriculum contributions and other contributions supports Victoria University Secondary College's goal of ensuring that your child reaches their full potential. Your contribution continues to help us support, enhance and improve the delivery of our Year 7 – 12 learning, literacy & numeracy program and other signature programs such as; AVID, SEAL & STEM. Furthermore it supports the school in delivering our co-curricular programs such as our college production, interschool sport, Lunchtime activities which includes board games and competitions, homework club, debating and public speaking. All of these programs go towards providing your child with above standard curricular and co-curricular activities. Upon DET's recommendation all schools are encouraged to provide free instruction to students to fulfil the standard Victorian curriculum. We thank you for your continued support for 2024.

## Canteen

The College provides a complete canteen service to students and follows the Healthy Food program. Lunches can be pre-ordered in-person by students in the morning or purchased at the canteen at lunchtime. Drinks, fruit, rolls, sandwiches, salads, wraps, toasted sandwiches, hot food and daily specials are available at the canteen. There is no credit available for students who forget to bring their lunch or money. Students can see their Coordinator if they have forgotten their lunch.

**Students are not permitted to go home or leave the College grounds at recess or lunchtime, or have food delivered by a delivery service.**

## Mobile Phones

In accordance with the Department's Mobile Phones Policy issued by the Minister for Education, personal mobile phones must not be used at school during school hours and should be kept in lockers.

Please refer to the college's [Mobile Phone Policy](#) for further information.

## Punctuality

We expect all our students to be punctual to school and class. Students are expected to be at school by 8:35am so that they can collect their books from their lockers.

**Students who arrive late may face disciplinary procedures.**

School Bell Times	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Home Group	8:50am - 9:15am	-	-	-	8:50am - 9:05am
Change	9:15am - 9:18am				9:05am - 9:08am
Period 1	9:18am - 10:27am	9:05am - 10:14am	8:50am - 9:59am	9:05am - 10:14am	9:08am - 10:17am
Change	10:27am - 10:30am	10:14am - 10:17am	9:59am - 10:02am	10:14am - 10:17am	10:17am - 10:20am
Period 2	10:30am - 11:39am	10:17am - 11:26am	10:02am - 11:11am	10:17am - 11:26am	10:20am - 11:29am
Lunch	11:39am - 12:24pm (45 mins)	11:26am - 12:18pm (52 mins)	11:11am - 11:41am (30 mins)	11:26am - 12:18pm (52 mins)	11:29am - 12:19pm (50 mins)
Period 3	12:24pm - 1:33pm	12:18pm - 1:27pm	11:41am - 12:50pm	12:18pm - 1:27pm	12:19pm - 1:28pm
Recess	1:33pm - 1:53pm (20 mins)	1:27pm - 1:53pm (26 mins)	-	1:27pm - 1:53pm (26 mins)	1:28pm - 1:53pm (25 mins)
Period 4	1:53pm - 3:02pm	1:53pm - 3:02pm	12:53pm - 2:02pm	1:53pm - 3:02pm	1:53pm - 3:02pm
End of Day	3:02pm	3:02pm	2:02pm	3:02pm	3:02pm

## Student Services

Victoria University Secondary College has the services of the following:

- Student Wellbeing Manager
- Health Nurse
- Youth Worker
- Learning Support Program

The College has a Student Wellbeing Team that students may speak to during recess and lunch time.

## ICT

Students are expected to bring their own device to the school. Details about the school's prescribed device(s) as well as how to obtain one will be provided separately. Students are expected to read and adhere to the Student Computer and Mobile Phone Use Agreement that is detailed in their planner.

Students need to pay for their printing, which can be done at the General Office either before school or at recess or lunchtime.

## *Parent / Guardian Involvement*

At Victoria University Secondary College we strongly promote a partnership between parents / guardians and staff in order to provide the best education for each individual child. An important aspect of this partnership is to keep our parents / guardians informed about the progress of their child and the events that are occurring at school. We do this in a variety of ways:

### **Parent / Guardian Newsletter**

The newsletter is issued regularly through the Compass School Manager. The newsletter informs parents / guardians of the events taking place in the school. Please read this newsletter, as it will keep you up to date with all the important events and activities that are going on in the school.

The newsletter and important dates can also be found on the school website: [www.vusc.vic.edu.au](http://www.vusc.vic.edu.au).

### **Parent / Guardian Participation**

There are many ways parents / guardians can be more involved in the College programs. These include many of the committees that operate within the School. Please let the staff at the General Office know if you are interested in being a member of the School Council or its various Sub Committees.

## *Assessment and Reporting*

### **Reporting to Parents / Guardians**

Parents / Guardians are invited to contact their child's Home Group Teacher to discuss their progress at any time. Teachers may contact the parents / guardian via the planner, e-mail or by making a phone call to the parents / guardian.

Formal reporting of a child's progress occurs four times a year, at the end of each term.

At the end of Term 1 and Term 3, Interim or Progress Reports are issued and Parent Teacher Conferences are conducted.

At the end of Term 2 (Semester 1) & Term 4 (Semester 2) a detailed statement of results is provided via COMPASS.

## Specialist Programs

### SEAL Program

The Academy of Accredited SEAL Schools (TAASS) accredits schools who run the SEAL program. The SEAL program is designed to enrich and extend students through a curriculum that emphasises content of greater complexity and depth, more abstract and challenging learning tasks, higher order critical and creative thinking, problem-solving skills, independent research skills and leadership opportunities. This supportive environment encourages learning and collaboration with like-minded peers to develop students academically, socially and emotionally.

The SEAL Program:

- Provides high-functioning students with the opportunity to fulfil their academic and social potential
- Offers a highly challenging, engaging and motivating learning environment for students to move rapidly through the curriculum
- Offers greater flexibility in their choice of subjects for the remaining years of their secondary education
- Provides the opportunity to work independently and cooperatively with other students of similar abilities and interests.

In order to be considered for selection into the SEAL program students must register via the VUSC website and sit an entrance examination. (Further information and registration details can be found here: <https://www.vusc.vic.edu.au/learning/seal-program/>)

### Deep Learning Pathway at Years 9 & 10

At VUSC, Years 9 & 10 are focused on providing an adaptable curriculum to meet students' needs. During these years, some students are ready to specialise in their learning and develop their knowledge and skills in specific subjects in greater depth.

The Deep Learning Pathway allows students who are ready for increased complexity in specific subjects to access a greater level of challenge. Students can specialise in the areas of English and Humanities, taking an extension English class, Literature, and 12 months of their chosen Humanities, either History & Politics (Years 9 & 10) or Economics & Legal Studies (Year 10 only). Students can also specialise in the areas of Mathematics and Sciences, being part of an extension Mathematics class and having additional periods of Science where they undertake inquiry-based learning. Some students are able to specialise in all areas.

Students in Year 10 are able to take advanced placement in a Unit 1 & 2 VCE subject. These students may also take Introduction to Extended Investigation, which is an inquiry-based learning unit where students are able to pursue academic research in a field of their interest.

Students who wish to apply for the Deep Learning Pathway need to ask for an application form at the office and submit this form prior to Course Counselling Day.

### AVID

Advancement Via Individual Determination is a program run at the College to support students' academic success.

Students enrolling at the College to commence in Year 7 have the opportunity to apply for entrance into the AVID elective. In the AVID class, students undertake a rigorous and engaging curriculum that extends and develops their skills in the five key areas of WICOR (Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organisation and Reading). Developing these skills allows students to succeed in all their subjects and sets them up for success in both VCE and tertiary education.

AVID students are ambitious and aspirational. They spend time thinking about their futures and determining what they will need to do in order to reach their goals. From Year 8 onwards, students in the AVID elective participate in weekly tutorials. In a tutorial, students work collaboratively in small groups to address points of confusion in their coursework, building on their problem-solving skills and developing new strategies for learning.

Students also have the opportunity to attend excursions to universities, so that they are exposed to the learning and entry requirements of tertiary education. Students undertake regular binder, diary and Cornell note checks to ensure they are able to meet important deadlines in their school work.

The College runs an AVID elective class as well as using the strategies school-wide in every class.

## AVID School-wide

At the College, the WICOR (Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organisation and Reading) strategies are implemented school-wide. This includes the use of a binder, which students use to organise their Cornell notes and resources for every subject.

Cornell note-taking is a system every student uses in all subjects. Cornell notes are designed to support student learning by teaching them to identify new vocabulary, summarise their ideas, take detailed, well-organised notes, and develop questions about their notes in order to test themselves later. Students are expected to review their notes 10 minutes after writing them, 24 hours later, and then after 7 days in order to retain new information they have learnt in class.

All students at the College are encouraged to work collaboratively with their peers, in order to develop interactive and leadership skills. Students regularly participate in activities which develop these skills. For example, Philosophical Chairs enable students to discuss and debate ideas, and Socratic Seminars encourage students to develop key questions, and discuss texts they have read with strong perspective.

## Music and Performing Arts

Victoria University Secondary College has a long-standing reputation for excellence in Music and the Performing Arts. Through a multitude of performance ensembles and theatre productions incorporating music, drama and vocals, we encourage our students to develop their individuality and talents, and increase their self-confidence.

Our unique and innovative music curriculum provides students with numerous live performance opportunities, both at the College and in the wider community. Students may perform in:

- Junior Year- Level Concert Bands
- Senior Concert Band
- Rock Bands
- Choirs
- Big Band Ensembles
- Woodwind ensembles
- Solo Performances

The Music and Performing Arts Faculty performs a range of concerts throughout the year which all families are encouraged to attend. These include the Annual Music Concert, Junior Soiree, VCE Performance Evenings and annual Theatre Production.

### College Production

The production involves selected students from both the Junior and Senior Campuses. The standard of performance is very high and productions incorporate singing, dancing, musical performances, stage building and backstage work.

## Rugby League Academy

This is a specialised select entry program which provides opportunities to students in Years 10–12 to further develop their rugby skills and development. Students work closely with trained Victoria University Secondary College staff and elite coaches to develop their skills and expertise.

An elective in Year 9 is available for Junior Rugby, and our coaches also work with Year 7-8 students in rugby skill development.



## Student Scholarships and Awards

Victoria University Secondary College is committed to ensuring that students are recognised and rewarded for their achievements and contributions within the school community. Students are encouraged to maintain a portfolio of evidence that demonstrates achievements and successes in areas such as:

- Academic
- Leadership
- Community
- Sport
- Performing Arts
- Arts

At the end of each year a student may qualify to be a recipient for an award in any one of the following categories;

- Academic Excellence
- Artistic Excellence
- Outstanding Effort
- Contribution to the community
- Sporting Excellence
- Excellence in AVID



The students of Victoria University Secondary College are also fortunate to directly benefit from the many organisations and educational institutions that share partnerships with our College. The following are examples of scholarships offered as a result of such partnerships.

1. The Hall and Wilcox (Law Firm) Scholarship Award - this is awarded to a Year 12 student who has demonstrated dedication to their studies in the area of Legal Studies.
2. Defence Force Long Tan Awards – these awards are presented to Year 10 and 12 students for excellence in leadership and teamwork.
3. Kwong Lee Dow Young Scholars Program at the University of Melbourne (the Kwong Lee Dow Young Scholars Program is an academic enrichment program designed to support high-achieving Victorian school students in realising their full potential. The program provides access to events, activities and resources to give them a head start into university. It also creates a community of students to allow scholars to network and make new friends) – this is awarded to Year 10 students.
4. AMEB Award (AMEB is the Australian Music Examinations Board and it is an exam system for instrumental students to sit exams) – this is awarded to students that excel with high achieving results.
5. PSW Awards – PSW is our College’s uniform supplier and have kindly offered awards to students in Years 7 – 10 who have shown commitment to their studies.
6. Caltex All-Rounder Awards – this award is presented in recognition of student’s excellence in academic, leadership, sporting and community service activities.
7. Western Chances Scholarships – this scholarship supports motivated young people who have an obvious talent and who may not otherwise have an opportunity to pursue their education and their dreams.

## Student Activities

The College offers our students the opportunity to be involved in a number of activities throughout their time in the school. These include the following:

### Debating Team

Students at Victoria University Secondary College have the opportunity to develop their skills in speaking and listening, developing arguments, and researching topics by joining the College Debating Team. Throughout the year, students work with other members of the college to tackle challenging and interesting topics.

Throughout each term, members of the debating team participate in intraschool competitions, competing against other teams in the school.

As well as this, from Year 9 onward, students have the opportunity to participate in the Debating Association of Victoria's interschool debating competition. This event is held every few weeks on Wednesday evenings, where they compete against other schools.

Debating is an excellent way for students to develop their confidence, expand their knowledge by thinking critically about a range of topics, improve their ability to work collaboratively with different types of people, and improve their skills in English.



## Student Leadership

There are a range of leadership opportunities for students at the College. These students work with the student body to represent their views to the College Leadership Team. They advocate on behalf of their peers over questions regarding their learning and experience at the College.

Being part of the student leadership team enables students to develop their skills in organisation, public speaking, and collaboration by working with their peers.

Students who gain a position on the team are role models amongst the student body, exemplifying the school values by Aspiring to achieve, Strengthening the community and Respecting themselves and others. More than this, these students encourage and promote these amongst the student body.

## Inter-School Sports

The whole school participates in a number of sporting events and students are encouraged to be involved in any of the school's sport teams. Students interested in a particular sport should attend the information meeting and any practice sessions outside class hours as required by the coach of that team. Parents / Guardians are most welcome to attend any of the sporting events. Information concerning the times of training sessions is published via COMPASS.

## House Sports

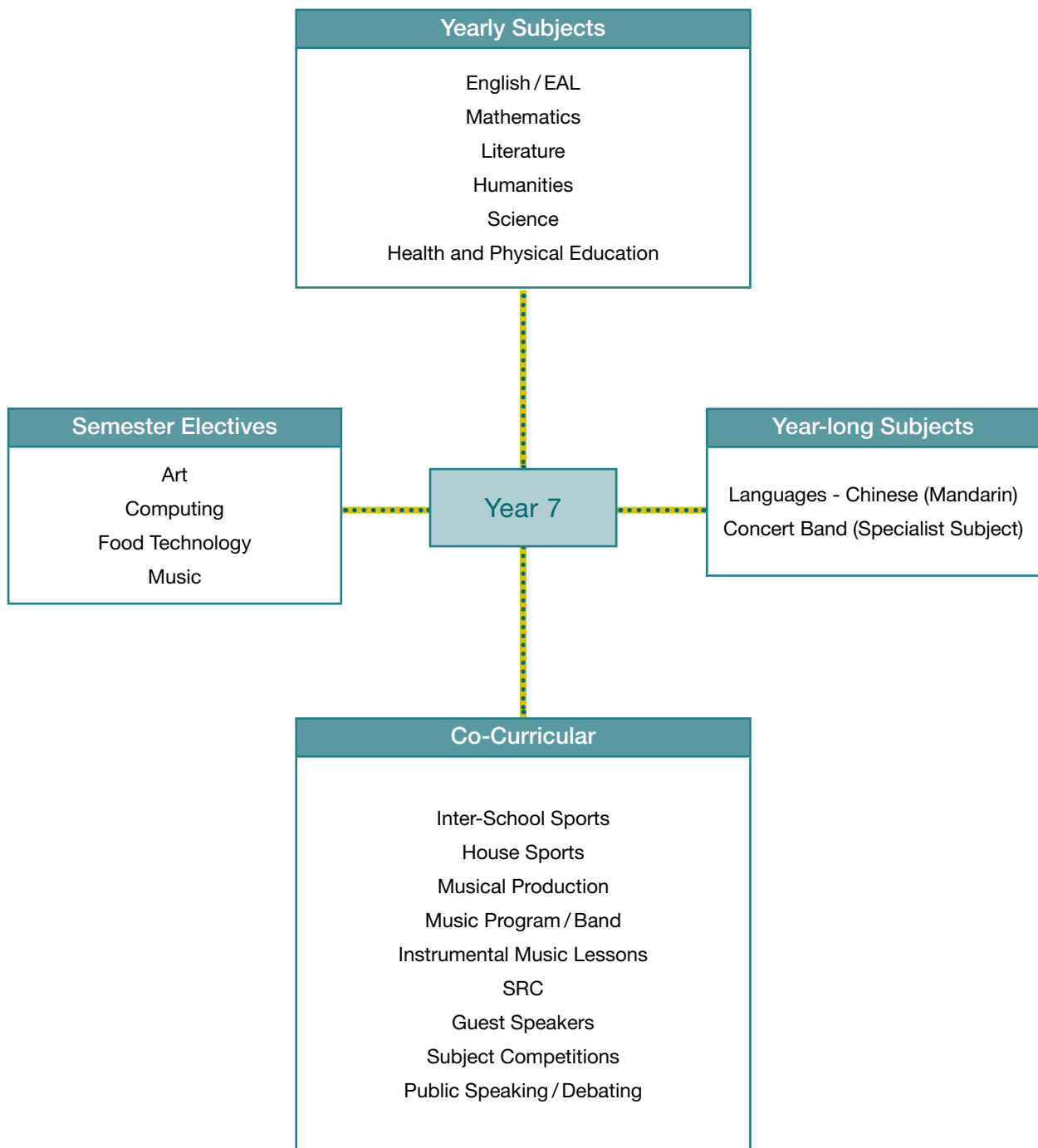
All students are allocated a House Team and participate in the annual Athletics Day.

## Career Planning

Students in Years 7 - 9 have the opportunity to participate in a range of activities to help them with career exploration and discovery such as:

- completing a yearly Career Action Plan
- Career Week Activities
- Industry Immersion Days
- My Career Insights (Morrisby Profile) in Year 9.

# The Year 7 Program



## Overview of Year 7 Curriculum

The structure of the Year 7 learning program is intended to provide students with a balanced, rigorous and engaging curriculum. All students will study Mathematics, English, Science, Humanities, Languages (Chinese) and Health and Physical Education for the entire year. They will also study two electives, which are semester based. All subjects have been developed to reflect the Victorian Curriculum.

The table below gives an overview of the Year 7 curriculum and indicates the number of periods per week allocated to each subject or Key Learning Area. Each period is of 72 minutes duration.

### Mainstream Program

Subjects	Periods per week
English / EAL / AVID English	4
Humanities	2
Maths	4
Science	2
Health and Physical Education	2
Languages – Chinese	2
Elective 1 (Food / Computing)	2
Elective 2 (Art / Music)	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>

### SEAL Program

Subjects	Periods per week
English	3
Literature	2
Humanities	2
Maths	3
Science	2
Health and Physical Education	2
Languages - Chinese	2
Elective 1 (Food or IT)	2
Elective 2 (Art or Music)	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>



## Year 7 Core Subjects

### English

The study of English combines the necessary literacy skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Students will be introduced to overarching thematic studies, building the skills to interpret and construct a variety of text types for different audiences and purposes. They will develop a deeper level of comprehension skills in analysing fiction, non-fiction and visual text types, including poetry, speeches, articles and short stories and begin understanding formal approaches in responding to these texts. Students will also study the fundamentals of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

### English as an Additional Language (EAL)

The EAL program is mostly aligned to mainstream Year 7 English with some variations. EAL is designed to meet the unique and varied needs of students for whom English is not the mother tongue. Speaking and Listening tasks are also included to allow students opportunities to practise speaking English. These are small, specialised classes, designed to meet individual student needs. The focus is on learning how English functions in the Australian context while practising the skills required for mainstream English in the later years. Students utilise the four language modes: speaking, listening, reading and writing to express and exchange knowledge, attitudes, feelings and opinions. They examine language patterns including spelling, grammar and punctuation at the word, sentence and extended text levels. Students learn to reflect upon their own speaking and writing, enabling them to continue to improve upon their use of English.

### Humanities

Year 7 Humanities includes History, Geography and Economics units. In the History component, students explore the ancient civilisations of Egypt and China. They interpret primary and secondary sources and present historical research. In Geography, students learn skills in representing and interpreting geographic data. They apply these skills to a range of spatial data including maps, photographs and graphs. Students learn about the concept of the 'global citizen' and investigate Australia's aid program with a particular focus on responses to natural disasters. In the Economics component, students learn about budgeting and explore the benefits and challenges of effective money management. Throughout Year 7 Humanities, there is a focus on developing students' academic vocabulary and their skills in the interpretation of data.

### Mathematics

In Year 7, a significant amount of time is devoted to fundamental number skills and the consolidation of understanding our number system and how it works. In semester 1, students will explore concepts involving fractions, decimals, and percentages. They will expand their knowledge of shapes to find perimeter, area, and volume of different objects. Students will construct visual models to deepen their understanding of the connection between mathematics and the real world.

In semester 2, students will investigate how linear relationships can be graphed and solved. They will explore the relationship between angles and describe how objects can be transformed mathematically. They will be introduced to the language of algebra to model and describe real life situations. In statistics, students will examine a variety of data sources to develop their understanding of how statistics can be used to communicate information. Through this topic, students will also study probability and how to assign numerical values to chance.

Students explore these concepts through problem-based lessons and differentiated learning centres, targeted at their level of readiness. They use a variety of models and manipulatives to develop a conceptual understanding of mathematical ideas.

### Science

In Year 7, students are introduced to working in a laboratory safely and learn how to identify and safely use a variety of laboratory equipment. Students will be introduced to the scientific method of creating and completing an experiment. They will explore the differences between pure substances and mixtures and learn how to utilise a variety of separation techniques. They will investigate various types of forces including the effect of earth's gravity and look at what is meant by renewable and non-renewable resources. The students will explore ecological issues and conduct experiments to explore relationships between mechanical components in working systems.

## Chinese (Mandarin)

This is a beginners' course that caters for students with minimal or no prior learning of Chinese language and script. The course is designed to introduce beginners to the essential knowledge and skills in the Chinese language, using Pinyin and 100 basic Hanzi characters. By the end of this course, students will have covered topics including daily greetings, classroom instructions, asking for and relaying personal information about themselves and their family, as well as developing a cultural knowledge of Chinese speaking countries through culturally related activities.

## Health and Physical Education

In our Health unit, Year 7 students explore their individuality and begin to develop an understanding of themselves and others. They explore what it means to have healthy relationships, understand safety in different environments, investigate their identity, and establish and challenge their values and influences on their sense of right and wrong. As students' individual understanding develops further, students explore the changes to the body and relationships during adolescence, physical changes for boys and girls, factors that influence development and make them unique, and learn ways to seek help and advice in regard to their health and development. In Physical Education students will explore fitness components and how to lead an active lifestyle. They will participate in a range of sports developing their skills in hockey, soccer, netball, basketball, badminton, rugby, volleyball and soft ball. Students will also develop skills in cooperation, leadership and teamwork.

## Literature (SEAL only)

Literature is designed to improve students' abilities to read and respond to increasingly complex texts. Students are selected for this course based on their reading comprehension skills, which we aim to extend. They closely read a range of literary texts, consider how authors use language and other literary techniques, and respond in numerous ways to enhance their own creative and academic writing.

## Literacy Intervention

Literacy Intervention is designed to support students' reading. The students participate in the Macquarie Literacy Program, an evidence-based intervention for reading where they work in small groups with close support. Students work on the basic skills needed to improve their reading for all subjects and to build confidence with reading generally. In this subject, students work towards demonstrating key capabilities in reading, rather than completing assessment tasks.

## Numeracy

At VUSC, the first ten minutes of Years 7, 8 and 9 Mathematics classes are dedicated to the development of students' number skills through the completion of Number talks or cyclical revision activities.

## AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination)

In Year 7 AVID, students develop skills in writing, inquiry, collaboration, organisation and reading. These skills are intended to support students' academic achievement across their subjects. In AVID, students apply these skills in units of work designed around the VUSC vision 'Create the Future' and value 'Aspire to Achieve'. Students have regular Cornell Note, Binder and Planner checks.



## Concert Band

The Concert Band program has been a well-respected program at the College for several years now, giving students opportunities to perform and collaborate with their peers.

Students select a concert band instrument of their choice. Instrument families consist of brass, woodwind, percussion and bass guitar. Concert band classes run twice per week as part of the elective program. Students work on concert band arrangements of modern pieces and perform for College assemblies and functions. The cost of the concert band covers the instrument hire, sheet music hire, as well as a thirty-five minute instrumental lesson with a professional instrumental teacher on the selected instrument.

An additional fee to cover the cost of materials, excursions, etc, may apply for students choosing the Concert Band program.



## Year 7 Elective Program

In Year 7, students will study two elective subjects, (one per semester) and study these subjects in depth. Students will complete all elective subjects over the course of years 7 and 8. Students involved in the AVID program or with the Band will only study one elective.

### Costs for some Elective Subjects

Parents / Guardians and students should be aware that some of the electives require payment of a materials cost.

### Art

Students explore and experience the creation and making of artworks. Students learn how design elements are used to draw people, animals, places or objects and how to combine these art elements to express and communicate ideas about their world. Students experience a variety of mediums such as pencil, charcoal, paint, pastel and clay, and practice techniques thereby improving and broadening skill levels in the use of these materials.

Students research artists and learn to recognise how artists from the past and how contemporary artists use the same art elements, which they themselves are studying to create artworks. Students will access the internet for their research, write and combine visual data to present assignments based on the chosen artists to be studied.

### Music Performance

During their studies students will experience music in a variety of different ways including, performing, active listening, analysing and creating. They will learn rhythm reading, writing, and performing through drumming and likewise the understanding of chords through the playing of Ukuleles. They will perform a selection of contemporary works on both instruments. They will discover the origins of rock and popular music and use this information to better evaluate genres of music both past and present.

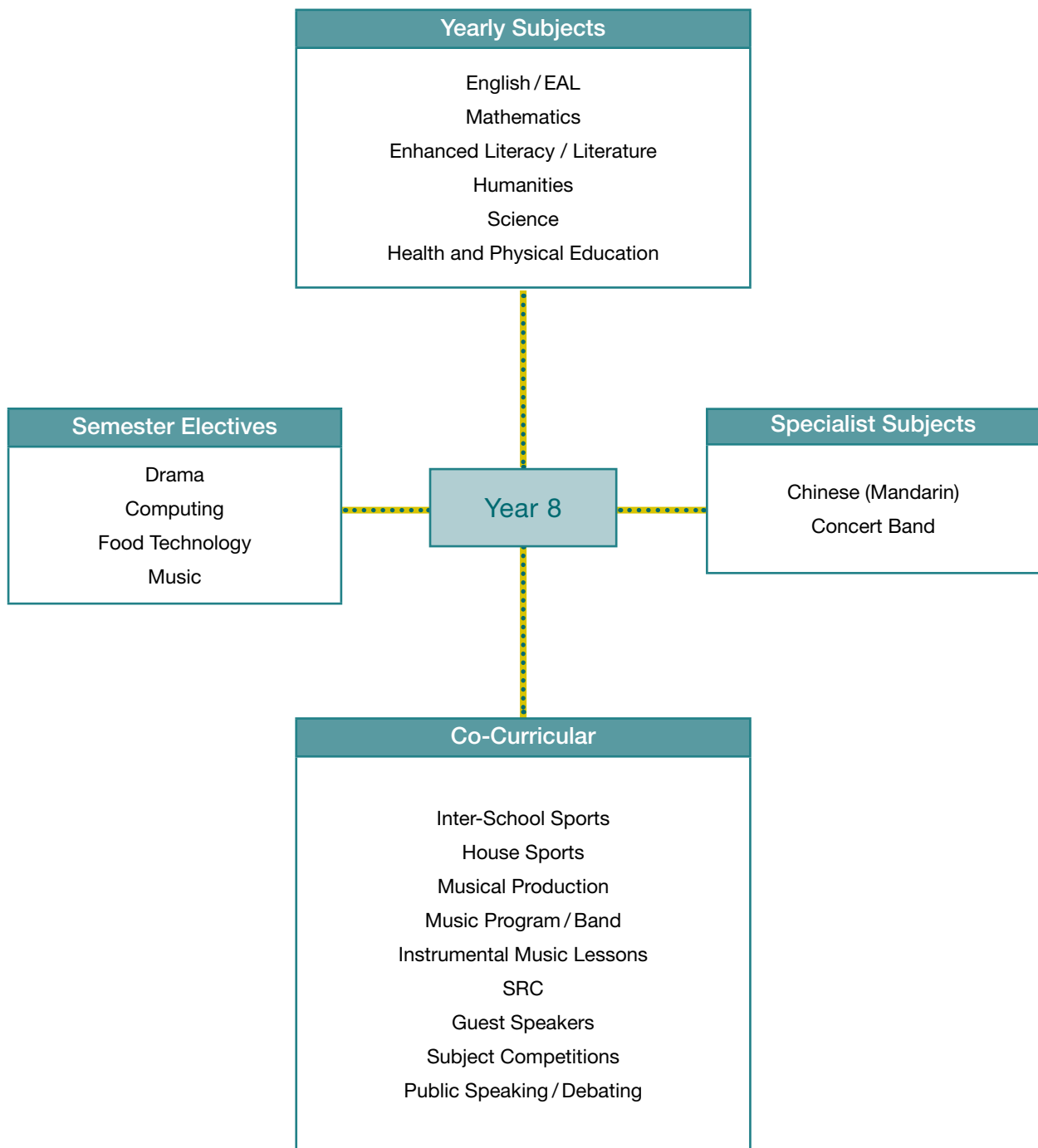
### Computing

Students engage with contemporary forms of digital information. They develop a range of ways to utilise information technologies, solve problems and explore and develop digital skills and techniques. Students are introduced to the problem solving methodology using digital technologies. This includes finding or improving a solution to a range of contemporary problems facing our society. Students experience this through Python coding, data representations as well as web development which will address the skills required in 21st century Australia.

### Food Technology

In Food Technology students engage in theory and practical cooking lessons to gain an understanding of food preparation in a safe and hygienic manner. Students learn the correct and safe use of utensils and appliances, understanding a recipe, common abbreviations and the relationship between the nutritional value of food and good health. Students are taught the design process involved in Technology as they learn to design, select, produce and evaluate products for design projects.

# The Year 8 Program



## Overview of Year 8 Curriculum

The Year 8 learning program builds on the balanced, rigorous and engaging curriculum from previous years. The structure of the Year 8 learning program is designed to provide students with a range of learning experiences and strengthen their fundamental skills. All students study Mathematics, English, or English as an Additional Language (EAL), Science, Humanities, and Health & Physical Education. Core subjects at Year 8 reflect the Victorian Curriculum and build upon the essential skills, knowledge and understandings that students have developed in Year 7. Year 8 students continue to study Enhanced Literacy to further develop the essential literacy skills of reading and writing.

The table below gives an overview of the Year 8 curriculum and indicates the number of periods per week allocated to each subject or Key Learning Area. Each period is 72 minutes in duration.

Subjects	Periods per week
English / EAL	4
Enhanced Literacy / AVID / Literature	2
Humanities	2
Maths	4
Science	2
Health and Physical Education	2
Elective 1 (Food, Music, Drama, Computing or Specialist Subject 1 (Chinese or Concert Band))	2
Elective 2 (Food, Music, Drama, Computing or Specialist Subject 2 (Chinese or Concert Band))	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>



## Year 8 Core Subjects

### English

Year 8 English continues the focus of reading, writing, speaking and listening in the College. Students are exposed to a wider range of more difficult texts, and complete detailed study into them. Students are increasingly asked to form and justify opinions about contemporary issues. They will continue to analyse fiction, non-fiction and visual text types, including poetry, speeches, articles and short stories. Students will also study the fundamentals of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

### English As An Additional Language (EAL)

The EAL program is mostly aligned to mainstream Year 8 English with some variations. Speaking and Listening Tasks are also included to allow students opportunity to practise speaking in English. These are small, specialised classes, that focus on learning how English functions in the Australian context while practising the skills required for mainstream English in the later years. Students utilise the four language modes: speaking, listening, reading and writing to express and exchange knowledge, attitudes, feelings and opinions. They examine language patterns including spelling, grammar and punctuation.

### Humanities

Humanities in Year 8 expands students' skills and understanding of topics in History, Geography and Economics. In History, students study aspects of Viking, Medieval and Polynesian history while conducting source analyses and research. In Geography, students learn skills in representing and interpreting geographic data. They apply these skills to a range of spatial data including maps, photographs and graphs. In Economics they consolidate their knowledge of budgeting and explore the benefits and challenges of effective money management.

### Mathematics

In Year 8 Mathematics, students will build on their understanding of the topics covered in Year 7. During semester 1, students will explore positive and negative rational numbers (fractions and integers), investigate how linear relationships can model and describe real-life situations, and further expand their understanding of measurement by investigating circles and prisms.

In Semester 2, students study applications of percentages in the context of financial mathematics, and further explore algebraic expressions and geometry. Students will gain a deeper understanding of the importance of statistics and probability in making decisions and predictions.

Students explore these concepts through problem-based lessons and differentiated learning centres, targeted at their level of readiness. They use a variety of models and manipulatives to develop a conceptual understanding of mathematical ideas.

### Science

In Year 8 Science, studies include engaging investigation of the topics: Chemistry, Physics and Biology. They investigate different forms of energy and explain how energy transfers and transformations cause change in simple systems. They use the particle model to predict, compare and explain the physical and chemical properties and behaviours of substances. Students investigate cells and their specialised structures and functions. They explore the inter-relationships between body systems. Students participate in an annual STEM Fair. They identify and construct questions and problems that they can investigate scientifically and make predictions based on scientific knowledge. They plan experiments, identifying variables to be changed, measured and controlled. They consider accuracy and ethics when planning investigations, including designing field or experimental methods. Students summarise data from different sources and construct representations of their data to reveal and analyse patterns and relationships, and use these when justifying their conclusions.

## Health and Physical Education

In Year 8, Health and Physical Education students continue to develop their fitness, skills and understanding of health. In Physical Education students will work on improving their fitness aligning with a theoretical component of understanding fitness components and the physical benefits to exercise. They will participate in a wide variety of sports including netball, soccer, basketball, hockey, volleyball, badminton, and softball. Students will have the opportunity to design their own games and develop teamwork, leadership and peer teaching skills. Students will undertake a cultural games unit where they can explore sports and traditional games from different countries giving them a greater understanding to explore their knowledge of sports around the world. In the theory components, students consolidate their understanding of health and wellbeing through units on respectful relationships, mental health, and nutrition.

## Enhanced Literacy - Reading

The Enhanced Literacy Reading program supports the development of critical reading skills which can be applied across all subject areas. With a focus on reading, students learn to read a variety of texts using essential comprehension strategies. They also learn how to establish and maintain a reader's and writer's notebook while using the library to engage in a wider reading program. Students are streamed into classes in this subject to allow them to work at a suitable level.

## Literature

Literature is designed to improve students' abilities to read and respond to increasingly complex texts. Students are selected for this course based on their reading comprehension skills, which we aim to extend. They closely read a range of literary texts, consider how authors use language and other literary techniques, and respond in numerous ways to enhance their creative and academic writing.

## Literacy Intervention

Literacy Intervention is designed to improve students' reading skills. The students participate in the Macquarie Literacy Program, an evidence-based intervention for reading where they work in small groups with close support to improve their reading fluency. In this subject, students work towards demonstrating critical reading and writing skills, as well as developing reading confidence and autonomy when accessing the broader curriculum.

## Numeracy

At VUSC, the first ten minutes of Years 7, 8 and 9 Mathematics classes are dedicated to the development of students' number skills through the completion of Number talks or cyclical revision activities.

At Year 8, a Mathematics support program has been established which involves students being withdrawn from classes where appropriate to receive intensive (small group) support or extension instruction.

## AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination)

In Year 8 AVID, students continue to develop their writing, inquiry, collaboration, organisation and reading skills. Students apply these skills in order to conduct an independent inquiry into a topic of their choice.

From Year 8, AVID students participate in weekly tutorials. The tutorials provide students with an opportunity to get support with questions (points of confusion) from any of their subjects. Education students from Victoria University are trained as tutors and facilitate the tutorial process.

## Year 8 Specialist Programs

In Year 8 some students will have the opportunity to participate in our specialist Chinese and Concert Band programs. These programs are select-entry and students will be nominated by their Chinese or music teacher.

### Chinese (Mandarin) - Select Entry Program

This course continues from the Year 7 course to develop students' macro skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in the Chinese language (Mandarin). Pinyin application will continue to be a focus and students are expected to extend their knowledge of the Hanzi characters to 200. By the end of this course it is expected that students are able to read and write simple sentences related to topics such as family and friends, dates and time, occupations and transportation. Students will further their understanding of the language and culture through culturally related activities and games.

**Students must be selected by their Year 7 Chinese teacher to gain entry into this course.**

### Concert Band

The Concert Band program has been a well-respected program at the College for several years now, giving students opportunities to perform and collaborate with their peers.

Students select a concert band instrument of their choice. Instrument families consist of brass, woodwind, percussion and bass guitar. Concert band classes run twice per week as part of the elective program. Students work on concert band arrangements of modern pieces and perform for College assemblies and functions. The cost of the concert band covers the instrument hire, sheet music hire, as well as a thirty-five minute instrumental lesson with a professional instrumental teacher on the selected instrument.

## Year 8 Elective Program

In Year 8, students will study two elective subjects (one per semester) and study these subjects in depth. Students will complete all elective subjects over the course of Years 7 and 8.

### Costs for some Elective Subjects

Parents / Guardians and students should be aware that some of the electives require payment of a materials cost.

### Drama

In Year 8 Drama, students create a range of devised and scripted performances in a range of styles. They respond to their own and other's performances. Students develop their expressive capacity in voice and movement as they explore and communicate ideas. This study provides students an opportunity to experience the Drama classroom, before making selections for year 9. Year 8 Drama focuses on building students self-confidence and self-esteem, in a fun and safe environment.

### Music Performance

Continuing on with their music studies students will experience music in a variety of different ways including, performing, active listening, analysing and creating. They will further develop rhythm reading, writing, and performing through drumming and likewise the understanding of chords through the playing of Ukuleles which now includes playing of melodies and with other instruments. They will perform a selection of contemporary works on both instruments. They will discover the origins of rock and popular music and use this information to better evaluate genres of music both past and present.

### Computing

Students engage with contemporary forms of digital information. They develop a range of ways to utilise information technologies, solve problems and explore and develop digital skills and techniques. Students are introduced to the problem solving methodology using digital technologies. This includes finding or improving a solution to a range of contemporary problems facing our society. Students experience this through Python coding, data representations as well as web development which will address the skills required in 21st century Australia

### Food Technology

In Food Technology students build on the theory and practical skills they have gained in year 7. They will consolidate their understanding of the design process as well as preparing, sharing and evaluating food in line with the concept of good health. Students will explore eating patterns, nutritional properties of food and gain the appropriate skills required to prepare food in a safe manner.

# The Year 9 Program

## Outline of Year 9 Curriculum

With student voice and agency at its core, The Year 9 Curriculum was developed by a dedicated team of teachers in consultation with a student focus group in 2019. In conducting this review our team focused on our school's vision for our students to be educated and enabled to Create the Future: their own future, their communities' future and the global future. Our ultimate aim was to build a curriculum that would provide students with opportunities to engage in deep learning – learning that 'situates the learner as someone who acts upon the world, thereby transforming her or himself and the world itself' (Fullan et al. 2018).

Our unique Inquiry Learning subject is designed to ensure that our Year 9 students engage in real world learning and research projects in their passion areas, anything from robot design to resolving climate change or the history of poetry to video game development! In addition to this, students will have another elective block filled with new and exciting electives from the Arts, Science and Physical Education learning areas. For our academically ready students we have designed a Deep Learning program which offers increased specialisation in their preferred area (see details on the Deep Learning page). Primarily, students now have more choice!

Specialist Programs
Chinese (Mandarin)
Concert Band
Year 9 Rugby Pathways

Students will build a close working relationship with their Inquiry Learning teacher and a specialised Physical Education and Health teacher. This team will support students as they build strong and positive relationships with others, enhance their health and wellbeing and begin to consider their career pathway options in our interconnected global world. Fundamentally, this unique Year 9 program is designed to ensure that our students at VUSC grow into lifelong learners and develop their capacity for critical and creative thinking and ethical, intercultural, and personal and social capabilities.

## Reading Program

### How do we improve students' reading at VUSC?

Year 7-9 students at VUSC take part in reading for 10 minutes at the beginning of every lesson in all subjects except Mathematics. All teachers ensure students are engaged in the reading of fiction or non-fiction texts during this time. Teachers will support students to discover the types of books, fiction and non-fiction, which interest them, and recommend appropriate reading material to students to expand their literacy and cater to their interests. All subjects, except Mathematics, will also demand students develop critical reading skills using common strategies which are carried through to senior school.

Students are also expected to read for at least half an hour each night, and they are able to choose the books they read as long as they have chosen a 'Just Right Book'; a book which is of interest and appropriately challenging to the student's reading level. Teachers will also provide critical reading tasks in all subjects, which will give students the opportunity to expand their vocabulary and improve their speaking, listening and writing skills.

### WHY do students need to read so much?

Students who read:

- 1 min/day read 8,000 words/year
- 5 mins/day read 282,000 words/year
- 20 mins/day read 1.8 million words/year

Students who read more than 20 minutes a day have a greater chance of accessing learning across all subject areas, and successfully developing as academic learners.

Reading is also fun! Students can have amazing experiences by entering the world of books.

### How do English teachers monitor students' reading skills?

All students in Years 7-10 (across junior and senior campus) bi-annually sit the ON DEMAND reading test. This is an adaptive test done on a computer at school, which provides teachers and students with information about whether a student is reading at their expected level in relation to their age group. This Computer Adaptive Test delivers sets of questions to students that vary according to student ability. Depending on the responses given in previous questions, the online test presents progressively easier or more difficult questions to the student.

Parents are able to get more information about this reading test here:

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/f-10assessment/ondemandtesting/Pages/benefits.aspx>

Students and parents can freely access reading test results from COMPASS using the ANALYTICS tab in the student's Compass profile. Students will be encouraged to set goals about their reading with their teachers. Teachers will not only use the ON DEMAND results to determine student reading levels; they will also look at the Victorian Curriculum levels in English, and other assessments students complete. We encourage all of our students to have a 'growth mindset' about their reading capacity. We would like everyone to improve their reading regardless of where they start the year. All English and Enhanced Literacy teachers will always use common success criteria for all assessments relating to their reading and writing progress.



## How do Enhanced Literacy classes support student reading and writing skills?

At VUSC, students in Years 8-9 have Enhanced Literacy classes where English teachers will continue to work with students on improving their reading skills. Years 8 and 9 students will be grouped in accordance to their skill levels to help them reach their goals.

Enhanced Literacy classes are focused on reading improvement; one reading lesson per fortnight is scheduled in the library where there is a continued focus on building students' reading comprehension skills, and growing their awareness of the range of books/genres available to them.

English and Enhanced Literacy teachers will explicitly teach the skills that are demanded in reading text; this may be a mini-lesson or a number of lessons depending on the area of learning. Critical reading strategies will also be explicitly taught with a variety of texts, so that students are well equipped to read and understand any type of text, in readiness for senior school.

## What are Reading Conferences?

Teachers will also conduct reading conferences with all of their students, either in a library lesson or in the 10 minutes at the start of the lesson. Each student will engage in a reading conference at least once per term, and teachers will keep records of skill development in that time. A conference schedule will be used to record what the student is reading, and to determine which comprehension and critical reading skills need further development.

This is also the time that students will set reading goals with their teachers, based on the outcomes of the conference. For example: **I need to practice making inferences while I read** or **I will practice annotating the text in my own words**. These goals will sometimes be drawn from the targeted lessons teachers have taught, and students will use a reading journal to write and reflect on the books they are reading.

## How Parents Can Help

Parents can help by ensuring their children have an independent reading book in their bags at all times. Parent involvement during home reading is an essential element in developing life-long readers. Encourage your child to read on a nightly basis, record their reading in the reading journal and work with your children to complete regular written responses.

It is fantastic to be able to listen to your child read, either for part of their nightly reading time or on a few occasions each week, however, when that isn't possible, a conversation about their reading is also effective.

## Where can students find great books to read?

If a student needs assistance with choosing a 'Just Right Book' they can be encouraged to speak to their English and Enhanced Literacy teachers, as well as the school librarians. Our librarians do a fantastic job recommending books to students as they have a vast knowledge of past and new books that are sure to spark student interest. Students can also join the local library and it is free! Brimbank library is on the corner of Station Rd and Neale Rd near the Brimbank shopping centre.

Students, teachers and parents may also like to browse through the books that have appeared on the Children's Book Council Awards:

<http://cbca.org.au>

Other websites which can help with book selections:

<http://www.goodreads.com>

<https://www.vic.gov.au/premiers-reading-challenge>

## Keys To School Success

Students of Victoria University Secondary College can assist their progress and achievement at school by focusing on development of the following 'Keys to School Success'.

### Growth Mindset

People with a growth mindset believe they can develop their skills, knowledge and understanding through effort, persistence, dedication and hard work. They take risks, are open to feedback and view mistakes as an opportunity to improve. At VUSC we believe all students can succeed with effort and persistence. We teach them to have a growth mindset – to challenge themselves, to learn from their mistakes, to persevere and to have a positive attitude.

### Organisation (Binder, textbooks, laptop, materials & equipment)

Organisation is revealed when young people keep track of their tasks / assignments, schedule their time effectively, set goals for how well they want to do in specific areas of their schoolwork and in other endeavours. Organisation also means having in hand all materials, textbooks and equipment needed to do schoolwork and having a system for storing previously learned material.

To assist with organisation our students use a binder to store their notes and handouts for all subjects. You are expected to take your binder home each night and review and revise the notes you have taken during the day. Reviewing the notes the day you have taken them means you are more likely to remember the information you have learnt. Checking your binder each night means you will also remember to complete your homework. (Refer to appendix A for more detail).

Organisation also means setting a goal to do your best in your schoolwork, planning your time so you're not rushed, having all your supplies ready, and keeping track of when your tasks / assignments are due. Examples of organised behaviours are making sure you understand the teacher's instructions before you begin work, having all your school supplies ready, recording your tasks / assignments and their due dates, and planning when you're going to do your homework and revise your Cornell notes so you have enough time. Students at VUSC are expected to have a study/homework timetable (Refer to Appendix B for a sample timetable).

### Cornell Notes

The Cornell Note System is a well-recognised way of taking notes. The system was created to assist students to remember what they have learnt. It allows you to review and reflect on the notes you have taken. Students are expected to review their notes 10 minutes after writing them, 24 hours later, and after 7 days in order to retain new information they have learnt in class.

You should re-read your notes at home and using a different coloured pen add information you may have forgotten to add during class time. You can also cross out any notes you have taken that don't seem essential and you can use a code to indicate information you are unsure about. Your teacher will give you instructions about the symbols and code you can use.

Your memory for the content contained in the notes is further extended when you formulate questions and write a summary based on these questions. Cornell Notes are extremely useful for study purposes. If you fold the notes so that only the question column is visible you can quiz yourself about what information is contained in the notes section.

Reviewing your notes the day you have taken them means you are more likely to remember the information you have learnt. (Refer to Appendix C).

### Student Planner

You should always take your Student Planner home along with your binder. Your homework should be written into your planner and any worksheets that go with the homework should be neatly located in your binder. Check your planner every night. This means you will never forget to do your homework. You should also be checking and organising your binder as well as completing and reviewing your note taking for the day.

## Homework

Homework reinforces the learning that happens within the classroom. The brain requires repetition and revision in order for it to store information in long-term memory. It helps you develop positive study skills and habits that will serve you well throughout life. It helps you to get ready for the next day's class. It allows you to extend your learning by applying skills to new situations. Homework helps your parents / guardians to learn more about what you are learning in school.

**In Years 7 & 8 you need to devote at least five hours a week at home for school related tasks and Year 9 & 10 students need to complete at least six to seven hours and Year 11 & 12 students 17-21 hours.** Also make sure to read every night for about 30 minutes.

## Checklist - Studying to Succeed

- Ensure you have the following materials and equipment; textbooks, laptop, 4 ring binder, fully stocked pencil case, calculator, dividers, plastic pockets, student planner and Cornell note paper.
- Use a planner to assist with organisation and meeting deadlines.
- Have a homework/study timetable and stick to it.
- Have goals (Motivation comes easier if you do).
- Set one day aside on the weekend to study.
- Set one day aside on the weekend to play sport / spend time with family and friends. It's all about balance but if you have to study for a test, exam or complete a major project, you are to study not socialise.
- Review what you have learned (Cornell notes):
  - 10 minutes after writing them
  - 24 hours later
  - Then after 7 days in order to retain new information they have learnt in class.
- Attend study groups to discuss what you learn in class. (This also helps to get information from your short term memory to your long term memory).
- At home study at the same time and at the same space every time. (Your body and brain love rhythm and predictability).
- How long to study for?
  - 50 minutes at a time. Then take a 15 minute break to relax. Improves recalling of information. Use a timer.
- Can I listen to Music while studying?
  - The answer is YES, but NOT with lyrics if having to remember words.
  - Classical music can enhance memory when doing Mathematics.
- Read for at least 30 minutes every night.
- Eat well, make time to exercise and always get a good night sleep: 8.5 – 9.5 hours of sleep per night.

## Appendix A

### What should a VUSC Binder look like?

Students at Victoria University Secondary College are expected to arrive for school each day organised and ready to learn in each of their classes with their school binder.

#### A binder includes:

- A good quality, sturdy 4 ring binder. (We recommend a 50mm binder). The binder should be clearly labelled with the students name and should be in good condition. By the end of the year many binders become a bit battered. If students don't take good care of them they may need to be replaced.
- The School Planner
- A dedicated binder section (with a divider & label) for each subject you are studying, which should include:
  - Any handouts for the course. Each handout should have its own plastic pocket (or at most two handouts to a pocket back to back) so that students can leaf through all their handouts.
  - Cornell notes for the course. Students should be taking Cornell Notes for every class, every day.
  - Some courses require additional materials in their binder sections. For example, junior English students will have a Readers Journal (an exercise book where they record their reading), students studying Chinese need a Write Chinese exercise book, Maths students need a Maths Resource book for most year levels.
- A pencil case including:
  - At least two working black or blue pens
  - At least one working red pen
  - At least one working highlighter
  - A calculator
  - A ruler
  - A pencil case which clips into the binder is ideal.
  - Drawing pencil, sharpener and eraser
  - Glue and scissors
- Blank Cornell Note Paper (This should be already ruled up before class – students can buy pre-printed notepaper at the front office on either campus. Notepaper must be replaced before it runs out)
- Plain loose leaf binder paper (We recommend the kind with reinforced holes. Again this paper must be replaced before it runs out)
- Spare plastic pockets (For new handouts. There should always be at least 10 of these and they must be replaced before they run out.)
- We will regularly check that students bring organised binders to class and a binder grade will be posted on Compass and included in the statement of results for each subject, each semester.



## Appendix B

### Example Study and Homework Timetable

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
3:30-4:30	Free time	Free time	Free time	Free time	Free time	Reading	Homework
4:30-5:00	Study Cornell notes	Study Cornell notes	Study Cornell notes	Study Cornell notes	Study Cornell notes	Free time	Free time
5:00-6:00	Homework	Homework	Homework	Homework	Homework	Free time	Free time
6:00-7:00	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner
7:30-8:00	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Free time	Reading
8:00-9:30	Relax Shower Bed time	Relax Shower Bed time	Relax Shower Bed time	Relax Shower Bed time	Relax Shower Bed time	Free time	Relax Shower Bed time
9:30- 10:00	Lights out	Lights out	Lights out	Lights out	Lights out	Relax Shower Bed time	Lights out

# Appendix C

These are important too!  
This is how you keep yourself organised.

10 24 7

Student: \_\_\_\_\_
Subject: \_\_\_\_\_
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Topic** \_\_\_\_\_ Fill this in now and it will be handy when you are looking for particular topics you are revising

Learning Intention	Pre /4	Post /4	Effort /4
<p>Just copy down the intention that the teacher has put on the board</p>		<p>Use these spaces to rate your understanding of the learning intention before and after the lesson and your level of effort.</p>	
<p><b>Vocabulary</b></p> <p>Define those new words!</p>		<p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>Do this last! Answer each of your questions using one sentence. Check to make sure your summary addresses the Learning Intention - add some more information if you need to.</p>	
<p><b>Questions</b></p> <p>Later the same day, write questions here that your notes answer as a way to summarise your notes.</p> <p>They are also a great way to revise - just fold over the paper and try to answer the questions.</p>		<p><b>Notes</b></p> <p>Take notes on whatever you are reading, seeing, hearing or doing. Don't wait for the teacher to write something - take notes as soon as you start learning!</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; width: 45%;"> <p>Your notes should be short and easy to read</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; width: 45%;"> <p>? Put a question mark near anything you don't understand yet</p> </div> </div>	
<p>Draw a line right across the page like this one to chunk your notes into smaller sections. Chunking makes you think about your notes!</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">So what's next?</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; width: 45%;"> <p>Review your notes with a partner, what can you add?</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; width: 45%;"> <p>Review your notes in - 10 Minutes - 24 hours - 7 days</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; width: 45%;"> <p>Circle or highlight key terms</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; width: 45%;"> <p>Star ideas you think are important ★</p> </div> </div> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"><b>Reflections</b></p> <p>Sometimes you can write a brief reflection on the lesson at the end of your notes. This helps you to think over what you just learnt before the more comprehensive review at home.</p>	





Create The Future

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