



Arthur Phillip High School

# Teaching & Learning Policy

2018

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## Preamble

At Arthur Phillip High School we are committed to promoting learning excellence in an inclusive, dynamic and flexible environment. Our collaborative, future focused learning approach maximises engagement and achievement by challenging and supporting students to pursue excellence and develop a passion for learning, through responsible, informed leadership and proactive global citizenry.

Our staff understands the crucial role they play in providing a diverse, multi skilled curriculum with an emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills, for our rapidly-changing community. With the advent of our new multi storey, future focused built school, they see collaboration and innovation as essential elements in curriculum delivery, in fact they are imperative for success. They also recognise the importance of developing the whole child through our focus on wellbeing, physical activity, creative and performing arts and student leadership.

At APHS we cultivate programs and initiatives that celebrate and embrace our multicultural community, recognising the key role our parents play, as well as providing seamless transition points for students entering Year 7 and leaving for tertiary studies, or the workplace, at the end of Year 12.

## Assessment

Both formative and summative assessments approaches are used by all KLAs. All assessment tasks have explicit success criteria and have clear links to student progress that is made available to parents through the school's reporting processes. The evolution of collaborative assessment is currently being explored in Stage 4 as an extension of our project-based learning. The Transitions Team is developing teacher's skill and expertise in designing and devising Reflection Tasks to support assessment processes, so that students can appreciate what they have achieved and have input into "where to next" with their learning. In the future the "where to next?" reflection will allow students to link their assessment experience with their own personal learning goals.

Differentiation is a key element of not only teaching and learning at APHS but also in the design and development of all assessment tasks. Staff are aware of the specific learning needs of identified students and working closely with the LaST team make the necessary adjustments to allow these individual students to access these tasks and demonstrate their understanding. Some of the adjustments to assessment tasks may include:

- assessment processes, e.g. scaffolds, additional, time, use of a reader and or writer, rest breaks
- assessment tasks, e.g. rephrasing questions, using simplified language
- the content being assessed, e.g. fewer or alternative syllabus outcomes
- the format of a task, e.g. written point form instead of reports or essays, oral or PowerPoint presentation instead of essay

## Creative and Performing Arts

At APHS we believe that the creative and performing arts provides students with the opportunity to engage the mind, the body and emotions into a collaborative expression of all that it means to be human. Through study and performance, students explore and present great themes and ideas. Students can discover their own voice, grow in confidence and develop empathy and ethical insight into the contradictions and paradoxes of the human condition. Creative and performing arts students grow in understanding of what it means to not only be human, but to be good, honourable, kind and compassionate.

By providing a rich creative and performing arts curriculum we believe there are enormous benefits to our students such as:

1. Critical Reflection – our students gain valuable life skills by learning the importance of feedback, both positive and constructive. The arts also provide a place of solitude, where students can immerse themselves without interference from their environment. This also provides a space for students to engage in self-reflection – a vital skill for life after school.

2. Collaboration – the creative and performing arts is a discipline that encourages teamwork, whether that is in writing, creating or during the act of performing. Students have the opportunity to engage in creative collaboration, a skill they have limited chance to develop outside of a rehearsal space or art room.

3. Creativity - through creative expression, students learn to understand the world in a unique way, preparing them to navigate the many challenges after school. There is also great cross-over between creative and performing arts and other disciplines – the creative thinking and study techniques learned can be transferred to all areas of study.

4. Communication skills can be accelerated through creative and performing arts, as students learn to use verbal and non-verbal techniques in new ways to deliver their message. Some students also find new levels of confidence through the creative and performing arts.

### **Curriculum Differentiation**

Measuring student performance against explicit success criteria allows teachers to effectively plan activities that cater to each student's learning needs.

The success criteria for all tasks is linked to the student learning goals that are negotiated at the beginning of the semester. Students with identified learning needs have Individual Learning Plans that all staff can access. Furthermore, a trained Transition Adviser has meant the school can utilize links with external agencies and TAFE, so that appropriate school to work pathways for our students are embedded within our Stage 5 & 6 curriculum offerings.

### **Data Driven Decision Making**

Teachers gather and consistently use data to make informed decisions about school policy and learning needs. The data analysis undertaken at a faculty level, stage level and indeed whole school level includes informal school-based data as well as national and statewide testing data such as NAPLAN and the HSC. This analysis is used to identify the areas for growth and in 2018 the school will begin to use the literacy and numeracy progressions to gauge focus areas for school improvement, as well as improve the school's ability to provide targeted support to students who do not meet national benchmarks.

### **Digital Platform**

Our digital platform, Connect 121 empowers greater efficiency and customization for the entire student and teacher experience from a single access point. Our platform is highly flexible and provides access to coursework for all students and their families 24 /7. The staff are committed to constantly updating and reviewing material and resources on Connect 121, so it is always current, relevant and engaging and focused on improving student learning outcomes.

## **EALD**

APHS aims to provide teaching and learning programs that enable students from all cultural backgrounds and communities to develop the knowledge and skills needed to be active learners.

Our EALD students include:

- Refugees
- International students
- Newly arrived EALD learners
- Students on temporary visas
- Gifted and talented EALD learners
- EALD learners with a disability
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

Students who are learning English as an additional language or dialect are supported to become competent users of Standard Australian English for interpersonal and academic purposes. APHS has developed an EALD program that aims to provide support to EALD students by creating discrete EALD classes across years 7 - 10. These classes are taught or supported with team teaching by an EALD specialist teacher. The EALD teacher works closely with the mainstream teacher to decide the most effective way of supporting the development of the students in their class. This is achieved through joint consultation and by implementing a range of approaches including one-to-one, small group work, whole class or withdrawal of students.

The progress of students in the program is closely monitored by an EALD teacher, they are exited from the program when their proficiency has reached a level that enables them to be independent learners needing minimal language support and scaffolding. At the end of each semester, EALD students receive an EALD report that shows the progress of their English language proficiency using the ESL Scales and EALD Learning Progressions.

## **Entrepreneurial Leadership**

We believe our students need to be creative, curious and resourceful in a fast-changing world. Our pedagogical platform will allow our students to engage in creative and entrepreneurial learning experiences that can in authentic ways benefit their local communities. This is achieved through our cultivation and development of prototype approaches, processes and meaningful links and connections with Google, Apple and UWS as well as our innovative curriculum and pathways for our Stage 5 students. Our pedagogical platform utilises a combination of project-based learning and faculty specific processes in order to target the engagement and attainment of each student.

## **Environmental Education**

At APHS we believe that Environmental Education is more than learning about the environment. It is about changing behaviour in such a way that people will act for the environment. The evolution of our Environment Committee has been to endeavour to implement parts of the Environmental Education Policy that are possible in the current confines of our school building project. Currently the focus is on our recycling project and the maintenance of our small garden project by our Support Unit students.

## **Extra-Curricular**

Extracurricular activities are those that fall outside the realm of the normal curriculum of school education, performed by students. At APHS extracurricular activities exist for all students, some

of these activities are voluntary, but they are also social, creative and sporting and often involve others of the same age. At APHS this is just a sample of the extra curricular activities on offer:

- SRC (Student Representative Council)
- Public Speaking and Debating
- Performing Arts Nights
- Celebrating the Arts
- Dance
- Visual Arts Exhibitions
- Swim School
- Representative Sport
- Elite Rugby League
- Homework Centre
- Environmental Committee
- Djembe Drumming

## **Gifted & Talented**

As a future focused, soon to be multi storey school, where learning spaces and teaching in a non traditional manner is the day to day reality, innovation, academia and self directed learning are the main drivers of our GAT strategy. Our “Summit Pentathlon” is an opportunity to celebrate innovation in teaching and leadership as well as forging strong community links. The pentathlon provides teachers the chance to engage community businesses and NGO’s to further broaden student’s learning experiences.

The school has developed a rigorous identification process to assist in determining our students that need to be extended and academically challenged. Our GAT identification process is targeted particularly for our students transitioning from primary to secondary school.

## **Learning Support and Life Skills**

APHS recognises that our students are individuals who learn at different rates and in different ways. These individual differences can influence how they respond to instruction and how they demonstrate what they know, understand and can do. Through the work of the Learning Support Team, the LST referral process, student ILPs and individual adjustments made to classwork and assessment tasks, the school ensures that all individual learning needs are met. Some of the individual learning differences our students have and we cater for include:

- cognitive abilities, including students’ current level of understanding and ability in relation to a particular topic or skill
- learning styles and preferences
- motivation and engagement with learning interests and talents.

Differentiation is a targeted process used by teachers that involves forward planning, programming and instruction. It focuses on the use of teaching, learning and assessment strategies that are fair and flexible, provide an appropriate level of challenge, and engage students in learning in meaningful ways. These adjustments that are made allows for a personalised approach to teaching and learning that delivers rigorous, meaningful and dignified learning programs. At APHS we work closely with our students, parents and carers to develop tailored, personalised programs to help students get the most out of their school life. Any adjustments that are made enable students with disability and additional learning and support needs to access syllabus outcomes and content on the same basis as their peers.

## **Literacy**

At APHS we have adopted a whole school approach to embedding literacy across all KLAs. Our specific focus is through firstly supporting our students who are below national benchmarks and or, who require additional literacy support. The school has developed literacy "I

**can**" statements. The statements are written in student-friendly language so that they can identify and track their own progress in meeting the learning targets and to reflect on their progress. These literacy "**I can**" statements allow our students to set their own learning goals and identify literacy areas that they need assistance in and guidance with.

In order to improve student writing APHS has focused on embedding ALARM and TEEL as models to assist in the development of our student's writing skills. ALARM is a cognitive scaffold, which provides a framework for student writing, learning and assists students in their deconstruction of questions and how they give feedback and reflect on the material being covered. ALARM is a powerful tool that helps improve literacy and assists students with written responses for assessment tasks and in exams. By using the ALARM system students are able to write more sophisticated written responses that help them progress from a Band 4 or 5 to a Band 6.

TEEL is a structure that provides an effective way of organising a paragraph. TEEL stands for Topic sentence, Explanation, Evidence, and Link. The **Topic sentence** is the first sentence in a body paragraph that tells the reader what the main idea or claim of the paragraph will be. **Explanation** is the writer explaining what they mean in greater detail. **Evidence** is where the writer provides evidence to support their idea or claim. To do this, they refer to their research. Finally **Link** is a summary of the main idea of the paragraph, and make clear how this paragraph supports the overall argument. All these elements together, as body paragraphs can then form the building blocks of the writer's argument.

The school is currently investigating the use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Progressions, to improve staff understanding of where student's literacy and numeracy skills lie in relation to their class and the year cohort and then use this information to differentiate specifically to build and improve individual student literacy skills.

## Middle Years Learning

At APHS we believe students in the middle years are undergoing dramatic personal, physical and social change: they are developing a sense of identity, exploring their values system, and are searching for independence. Schools play a crucial role in this development by ensuring students have the necessary literacy and numeracy skills to embrace their future plans. Through Project Based Learning, STEM initiatives, innovative assessment and goal setting, we are ensuring our students have a meaningful educational experience and a voice in their own education and future.

To support the literacy skill acquisition for our Stage 4 students the school is utilising Best Start. Best Start is a literacy assessment package for schools to be used in the first five weeks of Year 7. This package in collaboration with the National Literacy and Numeracy Progressions will assist the school by:

- providing teachers with consistent and up-to-date information about new students' skills and abilities in literacy
- identify students at risk of falling behind
- help inform targeted teaching and intervention strategies.

The National Literacy and Numeracy Progressions is a tool designed to assist in strengthening teacher knowledge and facilitating a shared professional understanding of literacy and numeracy development. These progressions can be used to identify the literacy and numeracy development of students and the development that should follow. This assists teachers, to differentiate teaching and learning experiences and to provide feedback to students about next steps in learning.

## Numeracy

At APHS we have adopted a whole school approach to embedding numeracy across all KLAs. Our specific focus is through firstly supporting our students who are below national benchmarks

and or, who require additional numeracy support. The school has developed numeracy "I can" statements. The statements are written in student-friendly language so that they can identify and track their own progress in meeting the learning targets and to reflect on their progress. These numeracy "I can" statements allow our students to set their own learning goals and identify numeracy areas that they need assistance in and guidance with.

To support the numeracy skill acquisition for our Stage 4 students the school is utilising Best Start. Best Start is a numeracy assessment package for schools to be used in the first five weeks of Year 7. This package in collaboration with the National Literacy and Numeracy Progressions will assist the school by:

- providing teachers with consistent and up-to-date information about new students' skills and abilities in numeracy
- identify students at risk of falling behind
- help inform targeted teaching and intervention strategies.

The National Literacy and Numeracy Progressions is a tool designed to assist in strengthening teacher knowledge and facilitating a shared professional understanding of literacy and numeracy development. These progressions can be used to identify the literacy and numeracy development of students and the development that should follow. This assists teachers, to differentiate teaching and learning experiences and to provide feedback to students about next steps in learning.

## Quality Teaching

The term 'quality' is something we hear a lot in education. Quality teachers, quality teaching, quality curriculum ... but, quality is subjective. We value different things in our classrooms based on who we are, where we come from and our experiences. Like the explicit quality criteria we provide students, teachers need a set of criteria to guide our shared understanding of quality teaching. There is a growing bank of evidence that staff at APHS use to help us identify effective practices. What Works Best: Evidence-based practice to help improve student performance (CESE 201) supports our efforts to improve the quality of teaching in our school. NESA Australian Professional Standards for Teachers is also used to assist us in determining the knowledge, practice and professional engagement needed for high quality effective teaching (NESA, 2014). These guide our preparation, support and development of all teachers who are at various stages in their careers.

The NSW Quality Teaching model helps us as a staff to focus on the quality of practice. The model ensures that we continue to implement innovative, critical and creative thinking strategies and that we ensure the integration of technology and that our students are working in flexible learning environments. The model drives teachers to continually evaluate the impact of programs offered and undertake this evaluation in a collaborative manner. Every single member of staff is committed to improving our school culture and the NSW QT model enables us to develop a deep understanding of what constitutes quality in teaching.

The dimensions of intellectual quality, quality learning environment and significance provide us with the framework to think about and discuss all elements of teaching, backed by a rigorous research base. We understand that we can meet the needs of all learners by raising the intellectual quality of the lessons we develop and facilitate. When we establish a quality learning environment, we ensure that all students are supported to take an engaged role in their own learning, developing as life-long learners. Furthermore, that we must join the dots and show students how their learning is significant so we can ensure that teaching and learning isn't viewed as a series of unrelated ideas, but is connected and meaningful to each of the students in our classrooms.

Teaching at APHS has a strong future focused direction where innovative teaching practices are utilised to cater for all our student interests and needs. We are a community of learners who share our expertise through whole school professional learning sessions, in team teaching and collaborative environments, where we are committed to improving ourselves as masters of our craft.

## **PB4L “STRIVE”**

STRIVE is APHS’ locally developed PBL program (Positive Behaviour for Learning) and provides a consistent policy and language for clear expectations of student behaviour. STRIVE underpins APHS high expectations in all classroom, playground and social interactions and is explicitly taught, widely promoted and publicised within APHS. The school endeavours to build everyone’s knowledge of STRIVE to ensure the maintenance of optimum conditions for learning.

STRIVE operates on the philosophy of high expectations of student and staff behaviour across all areas of the school. A range of tiered interventions, such as detentions and parent contact, exist to support individual students and their behaviour and learning support needs. Data analysis informs STRIVE lessons and these lessons are prepared in advance for all staff so a common message is delivered. School reports report on each student’s STRIVE attributes and how these have impacted each student’s learning.

## **School to Work / University Links**

There is a clear link between getting a ROSA (or equivalent qualification) and improved social and economic outcomes for young people. At APHS we recognise the importance of education and training, and encourage our young people to complete school, to increase their chances of successfully moving to further education, training or work. Research tells us that young people who complete school and get their ROSA (or equivalent vocational qualification) are more likely to complete further study or training, get a job, have significantly higher wages and be better placed to tackle future challenges.

Our School to Work Program and links with universities and other tertiary institutions helps us to provide a seamless transition for our students from school to further education, training and employment. At APHS our commitment to this seamless transition is achieved through:

- Work Education
- Workplace Learning Support
- Industry-specific career information
- Work Experience & VET Work Placement.

## **STEM**

STEM refers to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics and is an educational framework that enhances student learning experiences through the provision of an engaging curriculum that includes integration, inquiry and project-based learning. Within this framework, students apply knowledge, deepen their understanding and develop high-order thinking skills within an authentic context, so they can fulfil future career aspirations that require STEM skills.

At APHS we have developed a STEM program in conjunction with Parramatta PS, which is a key transition bridge for talented students in Year 5 & 6, to be thoroughly prepared for the rigours of the science, technology, engineering and mathematics curriculums of high school. To further enhance our STEM commitment at APHS, a Stage 5 elective called iSTEM has been designed for students interested in these subjects but also to assist them in their transition to these senior curriculum areas.

## **Teacher Quality**

Every piece of educational research available tells us that the teacher and the quality of that teacher in the classroom, makes all the difference to student learning outcomes. Research shows that a “good” teacher values students as individuals rather than simply as consumers of an academic subject. Students tell us that a good teacher does not just take an interest in you in the classroom, but outside, and about matters that are not necessarily related to the subject.

Students believe that a “good” teacher is one who can successfully manage the balance between keeping order and direction and making the classroom an interesting and productive place. They see quality teachers through the relationship between reward and effort, and the teacher who acknowledges them and their achievements, even minor achievements, as being special. Most students tell us they learn best in a classroom where the teacher ensures the maintenance of classroom “tone” that emphasises positivity and celebrates success.

Students often reference their favourite teacher through the lens of how that teacher manages their classroom. The research tells us that students prefer teachers who are friendly but who also can successfully manage a class. This underpins the belief that teachers need to be natural and fair in their relations with students, students lose respect for teachers when they attempted to unfairly assert their authority or power, or treat students as “lesser” people than themselves.

In our commitment to ensuring that once the classroom door closes, once the lesson begins, once the student steps towards the teacher asking for help, it is all up to the teacher, not the school to provide the quality learning environment. As peer colleagues we support each other sharing strategies and providing professional feedback to promote continual improvement. However, we recognise good schools help; great schools help more; but great teachers are a far more precious commodity and so we think about teacher quality in terms of:

Every teacher,  
Every moment,  
Every interaction,  
Every day has the potential to make a difference in the lives of students.

## Technology

APHS is a technology rich school integrating technology across a broad range of teaching and learning experiences. Through the facilitation of our **Connected 121** policy all students have the opportunity to purchase or borrow a personal device in the form of a Chromebook to ensure easy procurement of technological tools both in and out of the classroom. Through the online learning platform **Hapara**, students have 24 hour access to the curriculum, courses, topics and learning experiences on offer at APHS. Similarly, teachers use Hapara to give students both timely, and thorough, feedback vital to academic growth and success.

APHS’s Laptop (Bring Your Own Device) Program ensures equal opportunity for all students through the specifications of the Chromebook. Chromebooks are exceptional value for money and provide all students with an affordable device that quickly and easily connects to the APHS network. Chromebooks are designed to work with Google Drive and Google Apps, making collaboration, file back up and file sharing easy to manage. Similarly they are lightweight and easy to bring to school each day. It is anticipated that all students purchase a Chromebook through Student Services ensuring the school can provide prompt technical support when the need arises. The success of the Laptop (BYOD) Program at APHS affords all students the opportunity to enhance their learning experience whilst building essential technological skills for their future.

## Transition

Strategic direction number 3 in our school plan is Connected Communities for Authentic Partnerships. The aim of this strategic direction is to empower staff and students to lead the transformation of our diverse school community to a future focused learning environment and build a school where community is valued and celebrated, with diverse opportunities provided for community involvement and engagement. One of the key aspects of this authentic partnership is with our local primary schools. APHS has developed significant structures and processes to support the transition of students from our local primary schools into Year 7 at high school.

The Transition Team has developed a Transition Timeline that outlines the activities that the school undertakes to ensure that all our Year 7 students have a seamless transition to our school. Our Community Liaison Officer is a key member of this Transition Team who works closely with the Principal to organise our Year 5/6 Information Evenings and directly liaises with all primary schools. The advent of our inaugural “High School Survivor Day” and the introduction of our own individual assessments task for Year 6 students intending to enrol at APHS has become a key element of our Transition Program and one that we have promoted through our involvement in the Fair Education Project.

## VET

APHS offers a range of VET frameworks for our senior students. Vocational Education and Training courses (VET) teach industry specific skills that are relevant to future study and employment. They are competency based and allow students to gain both a HSC and an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) accreditation. The AQF qualifications are recognised by industry and employers throughout Australia and give students advanced standing in related study at TAFE NSW. A workplace component is a compulsory part of all VET Framework courses.

## EVALUATION

The Executive Team and Arthur Phillip High School staff will engage in a rigorous review of the effectiveness of the school's Teaching and Learning Policy on a cyclical basis in accordance with DoE and NESA guidelines, processes and procedures.