

ENGLISH POLICY

Preamble

Literacy is central to all areas of the school curriculum. The Australian Curriculum (AusVELS), the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) requirements for the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (ACARA) outline the levels of English to be achieved across a student's schooling. The Early Years model, Middle Years Literacy model, ACARA and the requirements outlined by the VCAA for VCE/VCAL at Year 11 and 12 are the basis for planning, resourcing and implementing a strategic and comprehensive approach to English across the College. The English program is based on the recognition that, when given sufficient time and support, all students can succeed in literacy.

Rationale

The ability to speak, listen, read, view, respond and write with confidence, purpose and enjoyment in a wide range of contexts prepares our students to become active, global citizens, who contribute effectively to political, social and cultural life in their community.

Through language, students convey and discover information, work through ideas and express feelings. They learn how language works and how to use it effectively. Learning about texts and language will equip our students to develop the confidence and competence to meet the demands of school, employment and further education.

Guiding Principles

At Mount Ridley P–12 College we aim to develop in students:

- the ability to speak, listen, read, view, respond and write effectively with confidence, purpose and enjoyment
- a critical understanding of the ways in which writers and speakers control language features and structures to influence their listeners, readers and viewers using appropriate grammar, syntax, spelling and punctuation
- proficiency in the use of language structures and features, particularly spelling, grammar and punctuation
- the ability to comprehend, critically discuss and analyse texts and language
- an understanding of the ways in which language varies according to context, purpose and audience
- use of oral language to explore new ideas, clarify thoughts and expand vocabulary with the accurate and appropriate use of words that are heard and read
- an awareness that interpretation and understanding of texts can be influenced by cultural, social and personal differences
- the ability to process contemporary texts available through the Internet and think about them critically. They will learn to utilise these contemporary forms of communication in an appropriate, socially, ethically and morally responsible manner
- a broad knowledge of a range of texts and a capacity to relate this to aspects of contemporary society and personal experience

Implementation

At Mount Ridley P–12 College, we employ theories and teaching strategies from various literacy resources: the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS), the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (ACARA), Early Years and Middle Years Literacy programs, First Steps, the High Reliability Teaching Practices (HRTPs) and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA).

- The English program recognises the developmental nature of literacy skill development. It takes into consideration students' prior knowledge, needs, interests and experiences.
- The Mount Ridley College English Overview outlines the teaching practice required at each level of the College.
- The High Reliability Teaching Practices overview outlines a variety of effective literacy teaching strategies
- Teaching approaches are taken from the Early Years (Junior School) and Middle Years (Middle School), ACARA and VCE/VCAL documentation and ensure the use of a broad range of tools and hands on materials.
- The Mount Ridley Spelling Continuum is used to direct spelling activities in the Junior School.
- Read 2 Succeed is a reading program that develops students reading stamina and tunes into student needs of reading, through individual conferences, goal setting. Read 2 Succeed incorporates the FACE strategies of fluency, accuracy, comprehension and expanding vocabulary.
- The College Literacy Scope and Sequence is used when planning the English program each term. This ensures consistency in implementation across the College.
- Weekly planning reflects the various teaching model being used and clearly sets out the teaching approaches to be used for each lesson, the purpose/focus for each lesson, differentiated tasks and the relevant activities.at all year levels across the College
- In Years 5 - 8, English, History and Geography are combined into a one subject known as "Communication and the Environment".
- In Year 5-8, History and Geography are combined into one subject known as "Communication and Environment." Four timetables literacy sessions are timetabled per week where students are placed into ability groups (multi age). Communication & Environment is run as a year level subject. Teachers will generally teach both C&E and literacy and teachers plan for these subjects together therefore elements of English are also taught in the C&E program to consolidate the students' literacy skills.
- In Years 9 -12 English runs as a stand-alone subject, comprised of 2 distinct semester long units.
- English is a compulsory subject for all students until the end of their schooling.
- Students will utilise 1:1 technology which will allow access to a range of texts and the ability to responsibly utilise various forms of digital communication as effective and tools for communication. These will be used in line with the College's Internet Usage policy and any other DEECD policy that is appropriate and relevant.
- Text selection in the Middle/Senior school will be overseen by the Director of Teaching and Learning, in consultation with the relevant Neighbourhood Leader. Set texts will run for a cycle of no more than three years, or as determined by the VCAA requirements at Years 11 and 12.
- The English program provides additional support for students designated as 'at risk' in acquiring literacy skills through the Interventions in Reading Program, Spelling Mastery and various withdrawal and in class programs, as determined by the relevant Director of Teaching and Learning.
- Data from a variety of sources will be used to effectively asses the learning progress of each student.
- Learning Technologies are used to assist and enrich the program.
- Timetabling endeavours to provide and protect regular uninterrupted two hour literacy blocks in Prep – 4.

- Resources and materials are shared and stored in a way that makes them accessible to staff and students and are appropriate in content. A database of purchased resources will be maintained through the College Learning Resource Centre.
- Home Reading is an important component of the English program in the Junior School.
- Student progress is monitored through ongoing assessment and evaluation according to the AusVELS, ACARA standards and VCAA requirements at the various levels of schooling. The tools listed on the College Assessment Schedule assist teaching staff to complete this.
- The information from the assessment and evaluation process is used to guide future teaching and learning programs, e.g. assessment as learning, assessment for learning and assessment of learning.
- Moderation within and across teaching teams forms a significant part of the assessment process and time is allocated within the College Professional Learning and Meeting Schedules to allow this to occur.
- Assessment data is stored on the Student Management Tool to ensure easy tracking of individual student, class and cohort achievement in English.
- Staff are provided with ongoing professional learning opportunities necessary for program implementation, maintenance and development.
- Parents are informed of current trends in literacy teaching and learning through information sessions and newsletter articles.
- A Neighbourhood Helpers Program is offered in Terms 1 and 4 for the Junior School to provide parents with the knowledge they require to assist in the Literacy classroom.
- A common vocabulary and approach to teaching fundamental literacy skills will be specified in the English Overview to ensure consistent teaching practices and the ongoing development of each student as they progress through each sub-school at the college.

A staff member is designated as the Director of Teaching and Learning in each of the sub-schools and is responsible for:

- promoting excellence in the delivery of literacy programs across the sub-school.
- providing information to assist teachers in their professional development goals.
- facilitating the induction of new staff through support and professional development programs.
- organising and facilitating the resourcing of literacy programs across the sub-school, in conjunction with relevant area leaders.

Evaluation

As part of the College review cycle this policy will be reviewed in 2013 to ensure accurate implementation of the Australian Curriculum and to acknowledge the results of the CAFÉ trial.

Date policy ratified: 23/06/2009
Date of next review: 2012

Date policy ratified: 08/05/12
Date of next review: 2013

Date policy ratified: March 2014
Date of next review: 2017