GEELONG GRAMMAR SCHOOL®
EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION

CURRICULUM GUIDE 2025

YEAR 7 - 8

Last updated June 3, 2024

01 Welcome to Middle School

Years 7 and 8 Curriculum

The start of Year 7 marks the change from Primary School to the disciplined subject-based curriculum of the Middle and Senior Schools, where specialist staff teach students in all subject areas. The Year 7 timetable is carefully structured to ensure a core group of teachers are delivering two to three subjects to students to develop a rich picture of every student's learning successes, strengths and challenges. In Year 8, diversity of teachers and movement around the campus becomes essential to prepare students for their transition to Timbertop.

Core subjects

Students in Year 7 and 8 undertake the core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science, Health and Physical Education, Music Performance and the Navigate Programme.

One semester subjects

Students also complete semester-length study in Geography, History, Art, Technology, Drama and Religious Studies.

Language electives

In Year 7, students choose to study in two languages (Japanese, Chinese, French). Year 8 students continue to learn in one language (Japanese, Chinese, French).

The Year 7 and Year 8 curricular programmes ensure that students are well equipped to enter Timbertop with confidence, good study habits and an independent approach to learning.

02 Core subjects

English

Years 7 and 8

In responding analytically and creatively to a selection of texts, students learn how language features, images and vocabulary are used to represent different ideas, recognising and explaining differing viewpoints about the world, cultures, individual people and issues. Students also explain the effectiveness of language choices writers use to influence their audience. Students practise the process of planning, drafting, editing and refining their compositions, taking into account the purposes of their work and the needs and interests of audiences. In doing so, they demonstrate their understanding of grammar, select vocabulary for effect and use accurate spelling and punctuation.

Mathematics

Students are encouraged to have a positive mindset towards Mathematics. They become good mathematicians by observing, representing, and investigating patterns and relationships in social and physical phenomena. All students are required to learn, practise, and apply mathematical routines and techniques and use them to find solutions to standard problems, to solve problems creatively in unfamiliar situations, and to communicate mathematics and mathematical findings in an effective manner.

Mathematics classes are designed to cater for the different mathematical needs of students, by providing opportunities for enrichment and support.

Year 7

Key topics covered include fractions and decimals, percentages and ratios, index notation, algebra, linear equations, geometry, measurement including area, volume and capacity, statistics, and probability.

Year 8

Key topics covered include applications of percentages, rates and ratios, use of algebraic techniques to rearrange, expand and factorise linear expressions, Pythagoras' theorem, area of composite shapes and circles, volume of right prisms, shape, centre and spread of data distributions and probabilities of compound events.

Science

The Science course enhances the development of the three interrelated strands of scientific inquiry skills, science as a human endeavour, and science understanding. Students are encouraged to work scientifically by developing investigable questions, reasoned predictions and hypotheses to explore scientific models, collecting data accurately, manipulating and presenting data in appropriate ways, identify patterns and test relationships, drawing conclusions and relating them to the aim of the investigation being undertaken.

Year 7

Key topics areas include: Biological sciences unit (classification of the diversity of life and ecosystems), Chemical sciences unit (Particle model and the properties of substances), Physical science unit (forces, gravity and simple machines) and Earth and Space science unit (effects of Earth – Moon – Sun interactions).

Year 8

Key topics areas include: Biological sciences unit (cells and living systems), Chemical sciences unit (elements, compounds and mixtures; chemical reactions), Physical science unit (types and transformation of energy) and Earth and Space science unit (plate tectonics and rocks).

Health and Physical Education

Year 7

This course is aimed at providing knowledge and skills which develop self-confidence and enjoyment from participating in physical activity. Activities covered include aquatics, athletics, movement, ball-handling skills and game strategies. Health issues covered include nutrition, growth and development, decision making, self-esteem and the benefits of an active lifestyle, changes in relationships and sexuality.

Year 8

Physical Education is aimed at providing students with the knowledge and skills required to participate in a wide variety of physical activities. A high emphasis is placed on promoting self-efficacy and the enjoyment of participating in physical activity. Activities include lifesaving, traditional and non-traditional games, orienteering and athletics. Health issues covered include human behaviour and wellbeing, self-concept, self-esteem and developing relationships, effects of drug use, nutrition, sexuality and the relationship between lifestyle and wellbeing.

Music Performance

Year 7 and 8

Students study the elements of music through listening, composing, improvising, music technology and consolidating skills in music literacy. In Year 7, students are provided with small group tuition on a string, wind or brass instrument of their choosing. Ensemble classes offer students an opportunity to extend their skills on an instrument that they are already learning and also to build on group music making skills. In year 8, student explore the elements of music through digital technologies, including DJ decks, digital audio workstation software and film synchronisation.

Navigate Programme

Years 7 and 8

The Navigate programme aims to support students as they traverse the middle years; focusing on learning skills, personal wellbeing and what it means to belong to a community. In Year 7 Navigate, there is an emphasis on belonging – with ourselves, with each other and with the wider world. In Year 8 Navigate, there is an emphasis on developing the strengths and capabilities which will assist a successful transition to Timbertop.

Students are supported by a Learning Coach who facilitates self-directed learning experiences, as well as the identification and pursuit of goals for learning, wellbeing and growth. Each term, students will complete Student Action Plans to identify these goals and the pathways towards achieving them.

03 One semester subjects

Art

Year 7
Students are introduced to the formal art elements and ways to integrate the design process in the creating and making of art. Using a variety of media, students are exposed to a diverse range of techniques and develop a folio of 2D and 3D work in response to specific subject matter. An integrated appreciation programme enhances understanding of artistic styles and practices.

Year 8
Students continue to extend their understanding of the design process and ways to creatively generate and manipulate image to create specific effects. Observation skills are extended and students are encouraged to advance the visual communication of their ideas through the generation of personal concepts and the refinement of visual and technical skills using a range of media.

Drama

Year 7 and Year 8

This course aims is to move beyond game-playing and improvisation into the types of activities which require greater technique and invention.

Students experience: creative movement; ensemble performance and analysis; experimentation with stereotypes; characterisation and verbal/physical expression; more complex forms of improvisation; voice control and role play. The basis for much of their improvisation and role play is their interpretation of the function of individuals within groups. They learn to observe the physical/verbal dynamic in groups more closely and use dramatic elements to express ideas and creative responses.

Geography

Year 7

There are two units of study Water in the world and Place and liveability.
Water in the world develops students' understanding of the concept of environment, including the ideas that the environment is the product of a variety of processes, supporting and enriching human and other life. Place and liveability examines factors that influence liveability and develops students' ability to evaluate the liveability of their own place and investigate whether it can be improved through planning.

Year 8

There are two units of study, Landforms and landscapes and Changing nations.
Landforms and landscapes examines the processes that shape individual landforms; the values, meanings, hazards and management of these and explores the significance of landscapes to people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
Changing nations explores the process of urbanisation and draws on an Asian study to show how urbanisation changes the economies and societies of countries. The redistribution of population resulting from internal migration is examined through case studies of Australia and China, and is contrasted with the way international migration reinforces urban concentration in Australia.

History

Year 7

In Year 7, students develop their understanding of History through inquiry-based learning and unpack three lines of inquiry that frame their study for the semester: 'What death teaches us about life', 'Out of Africa – What is a civilisation really?' and applying their understanding of the concept of civilisation to a historical investigation into the impact and legacy of one further ancient civilisation.

Year 8

Students will investigate three thought-provoking civilisations from the end of the ancient period to the beginning of the modern period, c.650AD (CE) – 1750. Students will examine the nature of exploration in each civilisation as it leads to conflict and colonisation and go on to analyse and compare the results of encounters between the conquerors and the conquered. Students will learn to apply historical concepts and skills such as sequencing

chronology, using historical sources as evidence, identifying continuity and change and analysing cause and effect. They will also explicitly develop 21st century competencies such as: critical thinking; collaboration; in-depth research and inquiry skills; innovation; and presentation skills.

Philosophy & Religious Studies

Years 7 and 8

The Middle School Philosophy and Religious Studies curriculum is grounded in three foundational areas: Introduction to Philosophy, the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, Christianity and other World Religions. Students are introduced to the academic discipline of Philosophy (from Greek philosophia, 'love of wisdom') by positing some of life's big questions: what is real? what does it mean to live a good life? can I prove God's existence?

Drawing on the great philosophers, and grounding complex concepts in contemporary culture, students are given the tools to think about thinking and consider where they fit within various ethical frameworks. Our studies of the Jewish and Christian scriptures then provide a springboard into an exploration and understanding of the Abrahamic religious traditions: Judiasm, Christianity and Islam.

Design and Technology

Year 7

This course develops understanding about materials, use of technology in design and production. Students examine the social, environmental and aesthetic effects of products, generating design solutions combining traditional design skills with that of CAD (Computer Aided Design, using computers to draw and design) and CAM (Computer Aided Manufacturing using computers and machinery to build the products). Students will experience working with computers, wood, metal, plastic, textiles and computer driven machinery.

Year 8

Students create their own design proposals, organise and implement the production process to a range of structured projects. Students consider the social and environmental implications of their actions whilst working in range of resistant materials. Considerable emphasis is given to

the implementation of safe working practices whilst working with wood, metal, textiles, plastics, and the CNC (Computer Numerically Controlled: Machines run by computers such as the 3D printer, Laser cutter and Router).

04 Language Electives

Chinese

Note: this course is not suitable for Chinese background or first language speakers.

Year 7
This is a beginners' course for students with little to no prior learning of Chinese language in non-Chinese speaking regions. The course introduces beginners to the essential knowledge and skills in the Chinese language, using Pinyin and approximate 100 Hanzi characters on topics taught. By the end of this course, students will have covered daily greetings, classroom instructions, dates and time, relating personal and family information, and developing an understanding of Chinese speaking communities through culturally related activities.

Year 8
This course develops students' macro skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in the Chinese language (Mandarin). Pinyin application will continue, with a focus on the development of Hanzi writing skills. By the end of this course, students are expected to read and write simple sentences relating to family and friends, occupations and daily routine, transportation, clothing and basic personal description. Students will further their understanding of the language and culture through culturally related activities and games.

French

Year 7
This is a course for beginners which aims to enable students to communicate effectively in French by placing considerable focus on speaking and listening skills. Students develop an understanding of the language required to speak about themselves, ask questions, write short texts and describe other people.

Year 8
Students deepen their knowledge of linguistic structures and the course continues to develop students' skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Content areas covered include:

finding your way around town, eating and drinking, friendships, the media and pocket money. Students are expected to be able to write short passages in greater depth and expand their range of vocabulary.

Japanese

Year 7

This is a beginners' course that caters for students with minimal or no prior learning of Japanese. This course requires students to respond to and produce spoken Japanese, read and write Hiragana and some Kanji. Topics include greetings, classroom commands, personal information, family and nationalities. Assessment tasks and classwork are equally important in evaluating student performance. Students are required to extract information from a variety of listening sources and develop skills that require them to write short passages in Japanese.

Year 8

Students continue to consolidate the Hiragana script and are formally taught Katakana. Students continuing Japanese during Year 8 will be introduced to topics that extend beyond their personal world such as leisure and school activities, calendars, transport and places of interest, and they will learn a greater number of Kanji (characters derived from the Chinese writing system) and the two Japanese syllabaries, Hiragana and Katakana. It is essential that students learn to read and write using all three systems.