

# SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

## POLICY

### THE HOLISTIC EMERSON LEARNING PLAN (HELP)

Every student who enrolls at Emerson School presents with a complex profile of disability that requires a personalised learning program that responds to the student's learning needs. These students are in the bottom three percent of achievers across the spectrum of primary and secondary schools. In other words, the standard curriculum available in Primary and Secondary schools has not provided for these students.

In order to unlock the potential within each student, a coherent approach is needed that responds to a student's emotional and behavioural needs. The Holistic Emerson Learning Plan (HELP) needs to contain a clinical approach in responding to what a student needs at that moment in time. Therefore, the Emerson Curriculum needs to be rich in its capacity to respond with agility to what a student needs at the presenting moment. Indeed, curriculum is not a document that is presented in stages and sequences similar to a template.

Many students come to Emerson with minimal literacy skills in mathematics, reading, spelling and writing. This is in keeping with the intellectual and cognitive deficits that have formed the basis of their eligibility for enrolment at our school. Some students are referred at five years of age. Others are referred as late as 16 years of age. Our school needs to show clinical agility in responding to need, especially when the referral is at an older age.

Emerson School provides a broad range of learning subjects and programs that cover not only the broad components of the Victorian Curriculum but the provision of learning and counselling opportunities to provide for therapeutic needs.

In 2020, our curriculum contains an extensive breadth of programs that include:

1. Literacy
2. Numeracy
3. Pastoral Homeroom Classes (n = 35)
4. Education Support Staff to support classroom delivery (n=26)
5. Physical Education, Sport and Recreation
6. Music Education
7. Instrumental, Voice and Choir Programs
8. Performing Arts
9. Dance Education
10. Science
11. Visual Arts
12. Home Economics
13. Food and Hospitality

14. Building and Construction/Woodwork
15. Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and Vocational Pathways that include the study areas of:
  - a. Child and Aged Care
  - b. Essential Food Studies
  - c. Digital Studies
  - d. Industry and Enterprise
  - e. Automotive Studies
  - f. Building and Construction
  - g. Food and Hospitality
  - h. Horticultural Studies
  - i. Sports and Recreation
  - j. Performing Arts
  - k. Contemporary Living
  - l. Visual Arts
16. Library Studies
17. Meditation and Wellbeing
18. Information and Communication Technologies
19. Travel Education & Driver Education
20. School Based Apprenticeship Training (SBAT)
21. Vocational Education Technology in Schools (VETiS)
22. Speech, Language and Communication
23. English as an Additional Language (EAL)
24. Mentoring, Counselling and Personal Development

These programs are always growing in their scope and application. All staff work very hard to form positive and enduring relationships with every student so that the true potential of every child is unlocked and encouraged to blossom.

This approach to learning has been called the “Education Restaurant” approach. Every pastoral homeroom teacher develops a curricular menu that best suits the developmental readiness of each student.

**This is the defining essence of student success at Emerson.**

The Victorian Curriculum was introduced into our state’s curricular offerings in 2017.

The key components are:

**Learning areas**

**Capabilities**

- The Arts
- Dance
  - Drama
  - Media Arts
  - Music
  - Visual Arts
  - Visual Communication Design

Critical and Creative Thinking  
 Ethical  
 Intercultural  
 Personal and Social

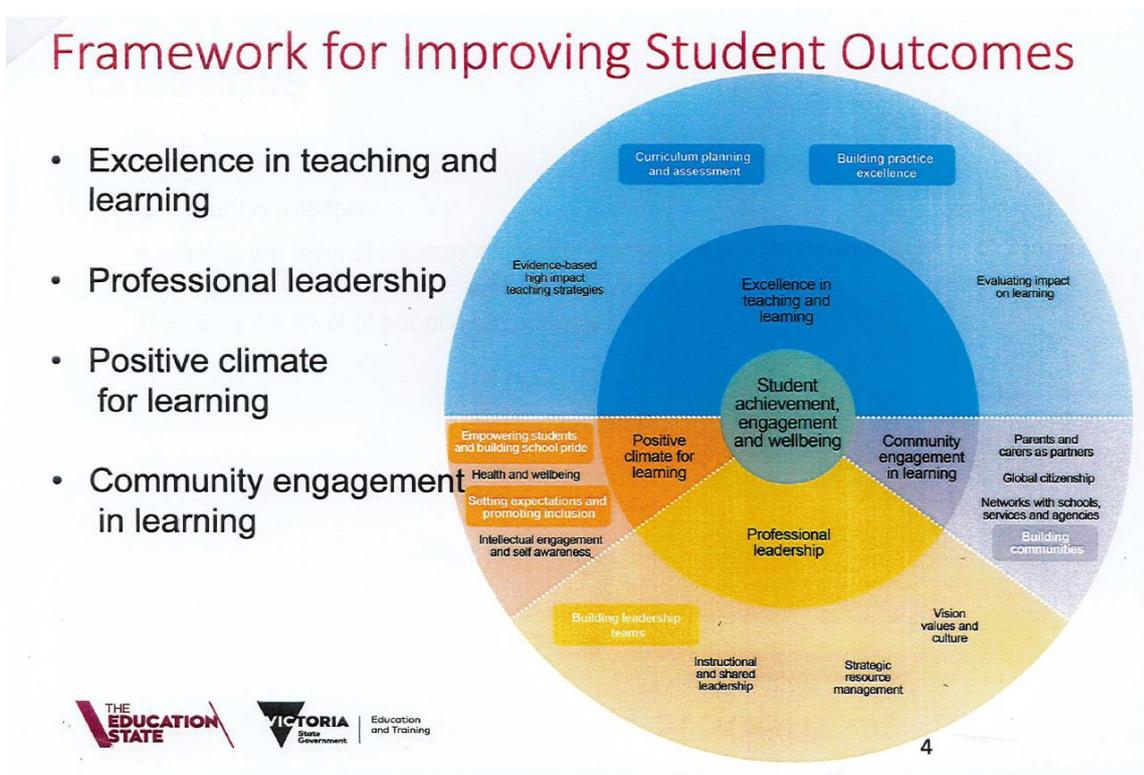
English  
 Health and Physical Education

- The Humanities
- Civics and Citizenship
  - Economics and Business
  - Geography
  - History

Languages  
 Mathematics

- Science  
 Technologies
- Design and Technologies
  - Digital Technologies

Another important initiative in 2016 was the introduction of a Framework for Improved Student Outcomes (FISO). The FISO model contains essential areas of personal learning experience that can be easily recognised in the Emerson curriculum, environment and ethos.



At the same time, the Guiding Principles and Mission Statement of Emerson School needs to be kept in full view.

## **School Ethos**

Four concepts underpin the spirit of Emerson School:

1. Students, staff, parents, families and friends work together to create a positive atmosphere where praise, feedback and encouragement are the backbone of our school's environment.
2. All community members have a sense of ownership of our school and are proud of our achievements, programs and facilities.
3. The school is dedicated to the development of student talents and wellbeing.
4. Emerson is a caring school that exists to provide a quality educational service to our community of students, parents, families and schools.

## **Mission Statement**

Emerson will promote the development of the talents of every student by providing a dynamic range of learning opportunities.

Our school will always provide an inclusive program that ensures that every student will be involved in an individual learning pathway of quality that leads to realising their full potential.

We will endeavour to reach out to every request for assistance from parents, schools and the general community.

We will develop a range of programs, resources and facilities that will always make EMERSON – a school of FIRST choice.

We strongly believe that parents should have the right to choose the most appropriate educational program for their son or daughter.

## **Guiding Principles**

1. Our school will be a place of welcome.
2. Our school will provide a stimulating continuum of programs from the beginning of Primary School until the end of Secondary School. These programs will provide for the individual pathways of every student.
3. A student will be considered for enrolment if it can be established that he or she is eligible and would benefit.
4. Programs will strive to meet the needs of individual students within the context of the class group in which each student participates.
5. Our school is strongly committed to exemplary procedures in the evaluation of student progress and program effectiveness as well as the establishment of goals for the future development of every student and school program.
6. A partnership between parents and staff is essential to the achievement of school goals.
7. Our school will make best use of the skills of all staff members.
8. Our school will provide a stimulating and rewarding environment for all staff and students.
9. Our school will develop vibrant networks, partnerships and advisory services amongst other schools, post school programs, community agencies, local employers and sponsoring benefactors.
10. The school will promote programs and an atmosphere in which the wellbeing of students, staff, families and the general community will be nourished.

The key goals in the area of Curriculum Development and Delivery over the next four years (2017-2020) are:

1. Continue the development of The Emerson Curriculum.
2. Develop staff knowledge of The Victorian Curriculum so that they are aware of how it interacts with the Emerson Curriculum.
3. Develop staff knowledge of the FISO framework which is easily recognised in the Emerson ethos.

The other key component of Curriculum Development in the 2017-2020 period will be the establishment of key measures of student growth and progress. All staff will be involved in the design and implementation of strategies and procedures to measure student growth, progress and achievement.

Much will be achieved over the next four years. Our School Council is dedicated to supporting the growth in all students by the four key tenets of our approach to school improvement.

1. Empower all STAFF.
2. Provide stimulating PROGRAMS.
3. Inject dynamic RESOURCES.
4. Build fit for purpose FACILITIES.

Together we will celebrate this exciting period of continued development.

JOHN MOONEY  
Principal

March, 2017 (updated June, 2020)

*This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle.*

This policy was last ratified in <b>July 2020</b>
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