



## Primary Years Programme

The Junior School Curriculum at Mercedes College is resourced by the Primary Years Programme (PYP) of the International Baccalaureate. The PYP encompasses everything covered in the school day including all extra curricular and co curricular activities. The academic curriculum is essentially divided into two main areas, the Programme of Inquiry and the Stand Alone curriculum; though for much of the time the two areas do overlap. The following summary outlines the various subject disciplines which are incorporated in either the Programme of Inquiry or the Stand Alone Curriculum.

### Religious Education

The programme recognizes and appreciates that faith development is a life long journey and the family is the first educator of the child. The developmental programme seeks to build upon students' knowledge of the Gospels and the Church's teachings and tradition. Through learning, prayer and liturgy children are provided with the opportunity to develop a personal relationship with God and to grow in appreciation of His message. Students are invited to participate in the practices, expression and perspectives of the Catholic Faith.

### English

The approach taken is based on the three main interrelated uses of language, namely to interact with others, to create and interpret text and to develop understandings about the world and themselves. The aim of the curriculum is to encourage positive attitudes towards learning English, to develop students' ability in using language effectively and to enable critical reflection on how language works through explicit teaching and inquiry.

### Mathematics

The curriculum is based on the principles that Mathematics is relevant to students personally; is applicable in a variety of contexts and situations; is an alternative means of communicating information and promotes the development of logical, sequential thinking. The aim of the curriculum is to strive for enjoyment and excellence in mathematical applications and to provide students with the skills to communicate their mathematical thinking confidently and effectively. Students are given the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required to apply mathematics in the world and learn to recognise links between mathematics and other subject areas.

### Science and Technology

The curriculum invites students to engage in disciplined observation and thoughtful analysis, the basis upon which clear scientific understandings are built. More importantly it provides opportunities for students to indulge their natural curiosity and experience the exhilaration, frustration and ultimate realisation of scientific and technological discovery. Students are required to understand and adopt scientific ways of questioning, thinking and problem solving.



## French

Through the study of French learners gain knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable them to communicate and make comparisons across language and culture. The aim of the curriculum is to develop in students an appreciation of the language, communicate in French, cultivate an understanding of cultures and enjoy their language learning.

## Social Studies

The aim of the curriculum is to develop in students the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will enable them to participate in a range of ways, as ethical, active and informed citizens in a democratic society. The concepts and processes employed enable learners to think clearly about current issues confronting them and their world. There is an emphasis on viewing issues from a variety of perspectives and on students' personal responsibility as active citizens in a global society.

## Information Technology

Information skills in a global society are essential in educating students for this century and ensuring they become life-long learners. The Information Technology Curriculum provides students with the skills, attitudes and knowledge to confidently use computers; equips them with new ways of thinking, gathering, learning and retrieving information and data and engages them in using computers across all curriculum areas. Students are taught to evaluate the quality of information available on the internet and to use it responsibly.

## Music

Music and singing are a means of bringing satisfaction to self and others through enjoyment and relaxation. Music knows no boundaries; it crosses all cultures and languages and can be appreciated by everyone in its many forms. Through the Music Curriculum students develop an appreciation of music and the ability to communicate the understanding of music as an international language. Students also learn to express themselves creatively through performance and composition. The Instrumental Programme provides for Year 2 students to play the Recorder, Year 3 students Strings and Year 5 students a choice of Brass or Woodwind. Private tuition is also offered.

## Physical Education

The Physical Education Curriculum is an integral part of each student's learning experience and aims to assist them to develop physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually, according to their capabilities. Physical Education (PE) focuses on the provision of opportunities for structuring learning situations involving motor experiences which favourably influence the growth and development of the child.

## Visual Art

Through the Visual Arts students are challenged to express themselves using the language of art - line, pattern, shape, form, texture and colour. The Primary Years Programme of Inquiry links the disciplines of visual arts, music and drama. The creative process integral to visual arts is essential for learning through inquiry therefore positively influencing self esteem and creative expression. Visual arts give students opportunities to wonder, imagine, create, reflect and consolidate personal perspectives, understandings and skills.



## Library

Information Literacy skills are explicitly taught to assist students in becoming independent lifelong learners. This technique complements all areas of the curriculum, including the PYP Inquiry approach, which builds on students' natural curiosity to ask questions and find answers through investigation. Students are given many opportunities to develop strategies to foster a love of reading and an appreciation of good literature. Through the promotion of best quality literature and authors they are exposed to a variety of themes and cultures which challenge their ideas and enrich their understanding. The Teacher Librarian works collaboratively with Classroom Teachers to plan and implement units of inquiry and literature based reading programs.

## Gifted and Talented Programme

A Gifted and Talented Consultant is employed by the school to assist in identifying gifted students, modifying programmes, accelerating and tracking students, reporting to parents and providing teachers with the necessary resources to cater for all students within the classroom. Students are withdrawn or supported in situ to undertake special programmes. Mercedes College is involved in various intra and inter-school activities designed for Gifted and Talented students.

## Special Needs Programme

The programme aims to provide experiences and support for the students who have been identified as having specific needs and requiring individual attention. Students at risk are provided with support in various curriculum areas either by working with them in class or withdrawing individuals or small groups. Teachers are supported by Educational Support Officers and the Learning Assistance Programme in their endeavours.

## Thinking Skills

The Thinking Skills programme provides the opportunity for students to develop a thinking culture and community of inquiry that will empower them with the language, tools and strategies to engage in a variety and range of critical, analytical, metacognitive and creative thinking tasks employing the following (inter alia): Thinking Hats, Logic Games, Lateral Thinking Activities, Thinking Stories, Problem Solving and Philosophy for Children.

## Extra and Co Curricular Offerings

Students of all ages are offered many sporting opportunities including basketball, soccer, cricket, tennis, softball, hockey, cross country, athletics, swimming, netball, football and Aus Kick. From Year 3 there is provision for students to participate in competitive sport within the Independent Schools Sports Association and district competitions. It is an expectation that students give preference to the school over outside associations and clubs. Many non-sporting activities are also offered such as Speech and Drama, Italian, music ensembles, debating, public speaking and chess.