



Junior Years Course Handbook

2026

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook is a resource for students and parents/guardians, which outlines the Junior Years curriculum in line with the Victorian Curriculum 2.0 Standards, offered at Springside West Secondary College across Years 7 and 8.

This handbook is designed to assist students and parents in understanding the structure of the Junior Years program and the variety of core subjects undertaken.

Part of this handbook also includes the expectations of Junior Years students here at Springside West Secondary College regarding homework and attendance.

This handbook has two sections:

- Overview of the Year 7 and 8 programs
- Homework and attendance requirements

JUNIOR YEARS COURSE OVERVIEW

The Junior Years program at Springside West Secondary College, provides students with a broad overview of the various subjects and pathways on offer, whilst also meeting the requirements of the Victorian Curriculum 2.0. All students undertake a core program for two years. Students' loads are split between year-long courses, along with semester-based subjects in the Arts, Design and Technology faculties.

The following table gives a broad overview of the course structure for students in the junior years:

TIMETABLE STRUCTURE			
YEAR 7		YEAR 8	
Subject Area	# of periods per fortnightly cycle	Subject Area	# of periods per fortnightly cycle
English	6	English	6
Mathematics	7	Mathematics	7
Science	7	Science	7
Humanities	7	Humanities	7
Health & Physical Education	6	Health & Physical Education	6
Italian/Hindi	5	Italian/Hindi	5
Arts Elective Block <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Drama ● Visual Arts 	5	Arts Elective Block <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Music ● Visual Communication Design (VCD) 	5
Technology Elective Block <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Digital Technology ● Coding 	5	Technology Elective Block <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Food Studies ● Textiles 	5
All You Can Be	1	All You Can Be	1
TOTAL	49	TOTAL	49

The following sections outline the opportunities students will have in each of the subjects as highlighted in the table above.

YEAR SEVEN PROGRAM

The Year 7 program is designed to develop a strong foundation for each student in each of the essential learning areas as outlined in the Victorian Curriculum 2.0. The bulk of the Teaching and Learning program is based around core subject areas. Students are however, provided with an opportunity to begin exploring a variety of courses in the Arts, Design and Technology faculties. These rotate throughout the year with students undertaking each subject for one semester only. Languages is a compulsory course which all students undertake throughout both Year 7 and 8 with Italian and Hindi offered. Please note that aside from Languages, there are no student-choice electives offered in Year 7.

ENGLISH

Throughout the first unit of English, students study the novel *Boy* by Roald Dahl looking at the themes and social issues explored by the author. They begin by engaging in creative autobiographical writing, consolidating their ability to draw on the themes and writing style of the author. In this unit, students develop a greater awareness of characterisation, the use of descriptive language and imagery in writing, as well as the process of writing. Students also engage in a media analysis unit, considering how the media is used to present facts and opinions. They look at letters to the editor, creating their own opinion piece to express a point of view on a current issue. As part of their regular homework, students explore a range of grammatical components in the English Language, including nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, and tenses. In the second semester, students develop their analytical writing skills, completing a TEEL paragraph on the text *The Rabbits* by John Marsden. Within this unit, students focus on their ability to structure an analytical response to a text, as well as introducing explicit references to how the author constructs meaning. Students also work on a unit centred around the novel *Once* by Morris Gleitzman to strengthen their ability to incorporate historical, social and cultural contexts into their analysis.

MATHEMATICS

The Year 7 Mathematics program at Springside West Secondary College is aligned to the Victorian Curriculum version 2.0. Students extend their understanding of *Number* through their study of the integer and rational number systems; strengthen their fluency with mental calculations, written algorithms and digital tools; and use all 4 operations in calculations involving positive fractions and decimals. Students build their understanding of *Algebra* by using algebraic expressions to represent situations, describing the relationships between variables and substituting values into formulas to determine unknown values. They recognise, develop and use algebraic expressions and formulas using conventions, notations, symbols and pronumerals; and interpret algebraic expressions and formulas, use substitution to evaluate and determine unknown terms where other values are given, and solve simple equations using a variety of methods. Throughout *Measurement*, students extend their knowledge of angles to establish further relationships and apply these when solving measurement and spatial problems. Complementing this, in *Space*, students use algorithms to classify shapes in the plane and use tools to construct shapes, including two-dimensional representations of prisms and other objects. In their study of *Statistics*, students will apply the statistical investigation process to obtain numerical data relating to questions of interest, choose displays for the distributions of data and interpret summary statistics for determining the centre and spread of the data in context. As part of their study of *Probability*, students will conduct probability simulations and experiments involving chance events, and construct corresponding sample spaces and observe related frequencies, comparing expected, simulated and experimental results.

SCIENCE

As part of the *Introduction to Year 7 Science* topic, students familiarise themselves with the laboratory through a range of activities relating to safety. Students also develop skills in utilising the Bunsen burner. In *Biology*, students investigate how living things are classified, including the design and use of classification keys. Trophic groups are explored in *Ecosystems*, including how to illustrate ecological relationships using a food web. In the *Physics* unit on Forces and simple machines, students explore the range of forces acting on objects and the effects that they have. Within this unit, students begin to apply their understanding and skills of scientific report writing. In the *Chemistry* unit on mixtures and separation, students investigate different types of separation techniques. States of matter and the particle model theory are also introduced. In the *Earth's Resources* unit, students investigate the different types of resources including natural and manmade, classifying them into renewable and non-renewable categories. Students also identify the advantages and disadvantages of using each type of resource. Predictable phenomena observed on the Earth, such as seasons, tides and eclipses are explained using the relationships between the Earth, Moon and Sun in the unit on *Earth and Space Science*.

HUMANITIES

In semester one, students will complete two Geography and one Business & Economics unit. In the 'Place and Liveability' (Geography) unit, students will explore the factors that influence the liveability of places, including our local area of Fraser Rise. They will develop their mapping and graphing skills and learn to identify and explain data using simple map and graph types. As part of the 'Water in the World' (Geography) unit, students will explain the variety of uses and value of water for people. They will also assess the impact of water scarcity, and the effectiveness of water management strategies used in Australia and Africa. In 'Producers and Consumers' (Business and Economics), students will examine the ways in which consumers and producers respond to and influence each other in the market. They will explain the price mechanism and justify their economic choices as consumers. In the second semester, students will begin by exploring and understanding the key principles of democracy (Civics & Citizenship). In this unit students will explore the features of Australia's democracy, methods of civic participation, Australian values and identity, as well as secularism and multiculturalism in Australia. They will finish the year by developing their skills in chronology, source analysis and significance through three History units. In the 'Ancient Australia' unit, they will start to consult primary and secondary sources to develop theories and explanations about Ancient Australia and the practices of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. During the 'Ancient Egypt' (History) unit, students will explore the beliefs, values and practices of ancient Egypt and the impact that these had on daily life and customs. As part of the 'Ancient China' (History) unit, students will use evidence to develop historical arguments and assess the significance of key individuals and events.

HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The Year 7 Health and Physical Education subject focuses on students enhancing their own and others' health, safety, wellbeing and physical activity participation in varied and changing contexts. In the first semester, students focus on the aspects of *Respectful Relationships* and the complications for individuals suffering from the side effects of smoking cigarettes and consuming excessive amounts of alcohol. Students develop skills and tactics in various Invasion, Net/Wall and Striking & Fielding sports along with Rhythmic Movement and Fitness based activities in a range of environments. Throughout the second semester, students continue focusing on enhancing their own and others' health, safety, wellbeing and physical activity participation in varied and changing contexts. They also study aspects such as their own nutrition, the health status of Australians and puberty. Students continue to develop practical skills and decision making by participating in various physical activities.

ITALIAN

Throughout the first semester of Italian, students are introduced to Italian language and culture. They begin by studying greetings and introductions, school life in Italy, and being able to express likes and dislikes. Students learn a range of verbs to be able to ask how someone is, give dates and talk about likes and dislikes. They also explore cultural and intercultural awareness by exploring soccer and school life in Italy. As part of their regular course work, students participate in various listening, speaking, reading and writing tasks. They participate in role-plays, listening tasks, and unit tests. Throughout the second semester of Italian, students continue being exposed to the Italian language and its culture. They study topics such as family and animals where they learn how to describe people, use colours and tell the time. Students continue to work on verb conjugation, adjectives, possessive adjectives and the indefinite article. They also explore cultural and intercultural awareness by discovering family celebrations in Italy and learn about the history of Ancient Rome. Students continue to take part in role-plays, write a blog in Italian, participate in listening tasks, and unit tests.

HINDI

Students will undertake this course to build basic written, spoken and reading comprehension competence in the Hindi language. The Year 7 Hindi program will encompass an introduction to the learning of the language of Hindi. The early focus of the course will be about identifying levels of existing competence in the language and seeking ways to differentiate for students. The year seven Hindi program will also have a focus on learning cultural elements of the language of Hindi. This will draw on the origins of the language and its links to the broader culture of Indian society and traditions.

DRAMA [Semester-long subject]

Students undertake units that introduce Elements of Drama and Role Play performance. Students are introduced to the foundations of how Drama is created and how dramatic meaning can be communicated to audiences. Students experiment with expressive and performance skills to communicate a narrative story structure. They will learn how to use a variety of verbal and non-verbal communication methods to convey dramatic meaning in their stories. Students will also learn how to interpret and present scripted drama to audiences. Throughout the unit, students will develop skills in numerous acting techniques through devising, rehearsing and refining drama performances.

VISUAL ARTS [Semester-long subject]

Students explore a variety of artforms in both realistic and abstract styles to gain an understanding of different visual languages. They develop skills using a variety of different materials and techniques, whilst maintaining a visual diary to record ideas and develop artworks based on a theme. Students will create and present a variety of resolved artworks and also study the Art of the First Nations People, analysing a variety of artworks in writing. In the second term, students investigate and learn ceramic techniques and skills as they create a piece of art in response to an artist.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY [Semester-long subject]

Within Digital Technology students have the opportunity to learn about different software and understand the basic workings of their laptop. Students will use Microsoft programs such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Adobe Illustrator. They will build their confidence and skills to select appropriate software for the task that is required to be completed. This course will increase in complexity as students complete the 4 units. Adobe Illustrator will also have a component of designing a spinning top that will be laser cut. The software used will only work on a Windows or Macintosh laptop.

CODING [Semester-long subject]

Students learn the text-based computer programming language of python and its fundamental features, such as, printing statements, accepting user input, creating decisions and looping. Using this information they will create a simple python text adventure game. Following this, students will expand their python coding skills using a Micro: bit computer and learning how Bluetooth connection works and how to flash a device. In this intermediate level course students will use their computer (input) to control the Micro: Bit device (output). The skills learnt include: displaying text on the LEDs, using micro: bit buttons, listen() and say() functions, telling ambient temperature, bearings and acceleration of the device, difference between strings and integer variables, 'if, elif, else' statements, the 'in' and 'or' operators, while loops, comparison operators and conditional statements. These new skills will be used to solve real world problems from a given case study.

YEAR EIGHT PROGRAM

The Year 8 program continues building upon the essential learning undertaken by students in Year 7. Once again, students study a core program, which includes two new semester-long courses in the Arts, as well as in the Design and Technology faculties. Languages continue to be a compulsory subject for students in Year 8.

ENGLISH

Throughout the first unit of English in Year 8, students engage in a Media Analysis unit, where they investigate current issues in the media. They develop their interpretation of a point-of-view and their ability to identify arguments within an opinion piece. Students review the persuasive language used when presenting an argument and utilise this when creating an opinion piece of their own. They complete the unit with an oral presentation designed to present their point-of-view on a chosen issue. Students then continue to refine their analytical writing skills and the TEEL essay structure, completing a text response on the novel *Parvana*, by Deborah Ellis. Students are introduced to the historical context of the war in Afghanistan and analyse the themes in relation to the social and economic issues that occur as a result. Throughout the second semester, students participate in the comprehensive study of the novel *The Giver*, by Lois Lowry. Students continue to refine the TEEL essay structure and their ability to embed quotes and examples from the text in order to support their interpretations and analysis. Students then apply their knowledge and understanding of the plot and characters within *The Giver* and a collection of graphic novels to create a graphic novel. They also produce a reflective commentary on their creative choices. Students then begin to contemplate the audience and purpose of their writing so they can utilise appropriate language and content to meet their target group and aims.

MATHEMATICS

The Year 8 Mathematics program at Springside West Secondary College is aligned to the Victorian Curriculum Version 2.0. Students develop their computation skills with combinations of the 4 operations with integers and positive rational numbers in *Number*. In addition to this, students recognise the relationship between fractions and their terminating or recurring decimal representations, as well as convert between fraction and decimal forms of rational numbers and locate them on the real number line. Students continue to develop their algebraic skill set in *Algebra*, by manipulating and solving linear equations, as well as recognising and modelling situations using linear relations. Throughout *Measurement*, students apply knowledge of the relationships between and the features of circles to solve problems involving circumference and area. Further to this, in *Space*, students establish sets of congruency and similarity conditions for common shapes in the plane, and construct and locate objects with reference to three-dimensional coordinates using digital tools. In their study of *Statistics*, students examine experimental and observational data and identify populations and samples with respect to context; investigate variation in summary statistics across samples of varying size; and discuss their findings. As part of their study of *Probability*, students will consider a variety of situations involving complementary and mutually exclusive events, and combinations of 2 events; and represent these using tables and diagrams.

SCIENCE

In Year 8, students study a range of units across the various fields of science. In the *Chemistry* unit, students are introduced to the Periodic table. They explore the structure of atoms and learn about elements, compounds and molecules. Students study the differences between physical and chemical change. Students will also conduct various experiments to investigate factors that affect the rates of chemical reactions. Furthermore, students will learn how to write worded chemical equations. In the *Physics* topic, students learn about the concept of energy through light, sound and heat. Students will be studying electric circuits and identifying various components in terms of voltage and current. In the *Biology* unit, students investigate the structure and roles of cellular systems, cells and organelles. Students study the body systems including the circulatory, digestive, respiratory and reproductive systems. In the *Earth Science* unit, students investigate the different types of rocks: metamorphic, igneous and sedimentary. Chemical weathering and erosion of rocks is also covered. Lastly, the theory of plate tectonics will be used to explain global patterns of geological activity and continental movement in the topic on Earthquakes and Volcanoes, using a range of sources to promote discussion.

HUMANITIES

In semester one, students will complete two Geography and one Civics & Citizenship unit. In the 'Landforms and Landscapes' (Geography) Unit, students will explore the processes that shape coastal landscapes and explain management strategies used to address various impacts. They will develop skills in collecting and analysing primary data through participation in fieldwork at the Bayside Coastline. As part of the 'Changing Nations' Unit, students will explore the causes and consequences of urbanisation and compare these issues between Australia and the United States of America. They will also explain the challenges associated with the planning of Australia's urban features. In 'Democracy & Law-Makers' (Civics & Citizenship), students investigate the roles of courts and parliament and how political actors exercise their power.

In the second semester, students will begin by exploring the concept of entrepreneurship and the behaviours that lead to successful businesses as part of their Business & Economics unit. In each of the History units, students will develop their skills in chronology, source analysis, and historical significance. In the 'Medieval Europe' Unit, they will examine various changes that took place in society, as well as the role of different social groups. Students will also explain the causes and effects of the Black Death. As part of the 'Shogunate Japan' Unit, students will explore the Feudal System and analyse the impacts of civil conflicts that occurred. They will use evidence to develop historical arguments to assess the significance of key individuals and events.

HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Year 8 Health and Physical Education focuses on developing respectful relationships, mental health, wellbeing and drug education. These topics allow students to develop their own knowledge, as well as identify the impact they have on the wider community. Students develop their teamwork, practical skills and leadership by participating in sports such as athletics, ultimate frisbee, basketball, AFL and soccer. Students also participate in general health and fitness-based activities in various environments. Throughout the second semester, students learn about how puberty affects individuals differently and what to expect during this time, with a focus on the concepts of conception and contraception. Students will also learn about coping strategies and sources of where to seek help. In addition to this, students develop an in-depth knowledge about the benefits of physical activity and the potential consequences of inactivity. Students will get to further refine and develop their sport specific and interpersonal skills through a Sport Education Physical Education Program (SEPEP).

ITALIAN

Throughout this year of Italian, students continue being exposed to the Italian language and its culture. They study topics such as hobbies, the weather, and talking about where they live. Students continue to work on verb conjugation of regular and irregular verbs and learn to use prepositions. They also explore cultural and intercultural awareness by learning about cultural aspects of Sicily and Emilia-Romagna, and finding out about what Italians do in their spare time. As part of their regular course work, students participate in various listening, speaking, reading and writing tasks. Throughout the second half of the year, students study topics such as modes of transport and types of food. Students study idiomatic expressions around going places and which method of transport they are using. They also learn to talk about food preferences and asking how much something costs on a menu. Students continue to work on verb conjugations of regular and irregular verbs with an introduction to *-ire* verbs. They also explore cultural and intercultural awareness by learning about the modes of transport that are unique to Italy, such as *gondole*, *api* and *vespe*. Students also learn about Italian cuisine and discover the different types of *gelato* and *pasta*. As part of their regular course work, students participate in various listening, speaking, reading and writing tasks. They participate in writing and presenting role-plays, complete listening tasks and unit tests.

HINDI

Year 8 Hindi focuses on expanding students' vocabulary, grammar, and communication skills. They develop their ability to form sentences, use different tenses, and understand active/passive voice. Students engage with a variety of texts, recognising idiomatic expressions and textual conventions. They use Hindi for classroom interactions and structured tasks, while English supports discussion and reflection. The course encourages cultural awareness and engagement with Hindi-speaking communities.

MUSIC [Semester-long subject]

Throughout this semester students develop performance skills and study the fundamentals of music language. Students learn to identify the six elements of music: pitch, articulation, timbre, structure, texture and dynamics. Students use music technology (BandLab) to create their own music. They explore a range of popular music styles and analyse songs. In the *Performance* unit, students develop vocal, guitar, keyboard, bass guitar and drumming skills in order to perform a range of songs in student-led bands. In the *Song Writing* unit, students investigate and develop songwriting skills. They create and perform music, applying songwriting and expressive performance skills.

VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN (VCD) [Semester-long subject]

In VCD, students explore their creativity and imagination through the creation of 2D designs using a range of tools, materials and techniques. Over the course of the semester, students develop visual language and concepts by exploring different visual communication methods. Students maintain a visual diary to record ideas and develop works based on a theme. Further tasks see students learning how to identify, analyse and evaluate how designers from different times and cultures use processes and visual conventions to express ideas and meanings, they will present their findings in a digital design project with Adobe Creative Suite.

FOOD STUDIES [Semester-long subject]

In Year 8 students learn about the importance of eating a balanced diet, food allergies, food intolerances, nutritional value of foods and nutritional loss. Students also learn how to implement the design process to create a product for a specific customers' needs and how to use it in both commercial and domestic kitchens. During the practical classes, students develop basic cooking knowledge and skills, which they will take with them long after they finish school.

TEXTILES [Semester-long subject]

In Year 8 Textiles the students learn a variety of skills for both hand-sewing and machine-sewing. Students trial a variety of hand-sewing techniques, how a sewing machine functions, and design processes in the context of Textiles. They design and create two finished products using various materials. The students research issues relating to the materials and fibres used in class with a focus on sustainability, as well as how fabrics are made. Throughout the lessons, they acquire a range of new terms and language referring to the skills and processes approached.

ALL YOU CAN BE

The *All You Can Be* program is a core subject that assists students in assimilating to life in secondary school, as well as increasing their organisation and preparedness to learn. In Year 7 and Year 8, the students consider our school values, reflecting on desirable behaviours and their impact on themselves and the school community. Throughout the junior years, students also look at issues around bullying, cyber-safety, stress, and career aspirations.

HOMEWORK REQUIREMENTS

Each subject has 2 or 3 assessment tasks per semester. Students are provided with the assessment task in class and given ample class time to complete the task. If a task also has components which can be completed at home, students are able to do so, provided they meet the due date and any authenticity requirements. Other assessments will be completed in class under exam style conditions. During an assessment task period, other homework requirements will be reduced for that subject. All assessment tasks, including the conditions for the task and required materials, are available for parents and students to view on the "Learning Tasks" tab on Compass.

Students will receive regular, consistent homework tasks for English & Mathematics. In other subjects, common homework tasks are set in accordance with the unit being studied. Generally, 2-3 homework tasks per unit will be set. These tasks are used to inform teachers on students' understanding and to prepare them with the relevant knowledge and skills required for their assessment tasks. These will be provided and explained in class.

Students may also be required to complete minor activities for homework if they have not finished their classwork or are required to review a topic to develop further understanding. Students should be regularly revising and reviewing content taught in class so that they are prepared for assessment tasks and tests.

Please note that the Homework Policy is under review in 2025. Adjustments may be made to the above information. If adjustments occur, updated documentation will be provided.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to attend school every day. If a student is absent from school, parents should approve the absence using the Compass online portal, or by contacting the school reception. If a student is away for medical reasons, the school requests that a medical certificate be provided, substantiating the absence. Please note that only absences with a medical certificate are considered as "approved absences" by the school.

WORK REDEMPTION

If a student does not submit a homework task the classroom teacher will set a time for the student to complete or redeem this task. If the student does not attend the session, or complete the work, this will be followed by a referral to Homework Club after school. Parents will be notified of the overdue work and Homework Club requirement via Compass email. This email will outline the date and the work that the student is to complete.

GRADING SCALE

Grade	Percentage
A+	100 - 90%
A	89 - 80%
B+	79 - 75%
B	74 - 70%
C+	69 – 65%
C	64 – 60%
D+	59 – 55%
D	54 – 50%
E+	49 – 45%
E	44 – 40%
NYC	An assessment task that hasn't been completed and submitted.
UG	Below 40% on original assessment task but re-submitted to a satisfactory standard.
NS	Below 40% on original assessment task, have not shown satisfactory understanding in resit or alternative task