

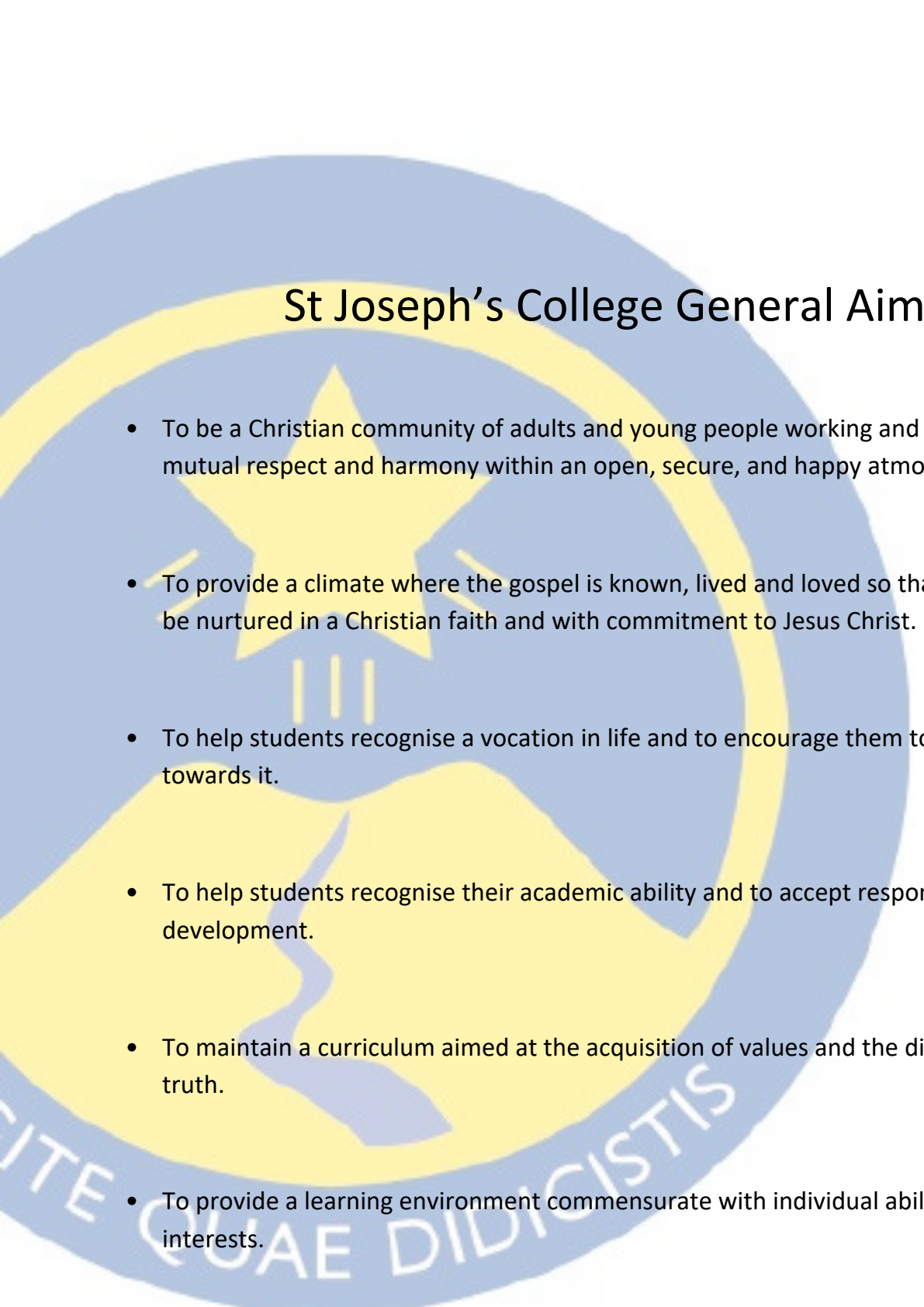


St Joseph's College

Year 9 Handbook

2027





St Joseph's College General Aims:

- To be a Christian community of adults and young people working and living in mutual respect and harmony within an open, secure, and happy atmosphere.
- To provide a climate where the gospel is known, lived and loved so that students may be nurtured in a Christian faith and with commitment to Jesus Christ.
- To help students recognise a vocation in life and to encourage them to work towards it.
- To help students recognise their academic ability and to accept responsibility for its development.
- To maintain a curriculum aimed at the acquisition of values and the discovery of truth.
- To provide a learning environment commensurate with individual abilities and interests.
- To help students acquire a sensitivity to the views, lifestyles and beliefs of others.

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COMMUNICATION

Valdocco Campus Phone Number	9756 3168
Valdocco Campus Fax	9758 8201
Brenock Park Campus Phone Number	9758 2000
Brenock Park Campus Fax	9758 5467

EMAIL ADDRESSES (2026)

Guido Piotti	Deputy Principal	gpiotti@stjosephs.com.au
Andrew Cooper	Deputy Principal (Learning)	acooper@stjosephs.com.au
Liam O'Keefe	Deputy Principal (Students)	lokeefe@stjosephs.com.au
Vivienne Egan	Director of RTO and Pathways	vegan@stjosephs.com.au
Brian Martin	Head of Valdocco	bmartin@stjosephs.com.au
Melissa Young	Head of Learning	myoung@stjosephs.com.au
Ben Bingley	Director of Learning Enhancement	bbingley@stjosephs.com.au
Paul Trubiani	Director of Sport and High Performance	ptrubiani@stjosephs.com.au
Jordan Tailby	Year 9 Leader	jtaily@stjosephs.com.au
Corey Hogan	Year 9 Learning Leader	chogan@stjosephs.com.au
James Whiting	Outdoor and Environment Leader	jwhiting@stjosephs.com.au
Debbie Fowkes	Valdocco Office/First Aid	dfowkes@stjosephs.com.au

YEAR 9 TEAM – (TERM 4, 2026)

Corey Hogan	9 Binh Dinh	jtaily@stjosephs.com.au
James Buck	9 O'Mara	jbuck@stjosephs.com.au
Umberto Bucalossi	9 O'Sullivan	ubucalossi@stjosephs.com.au
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Graeme Tucker	9 Chambers	gtucker@stjosephs.com.au
Max Hibbert	9 Prest	mhibbert@stjosephs.com.au

Note: The Year 9 2027 Team will be confirmed later this year.

SITES

College Website	www.stjosephs.com.au
SIMON	http://web2.sjcftg.catholic.edu.au/

WHO DO I CONTACT?

General Enquiries

- The Homeroom Teacher is the first point of call for most enquiries regarding student behaviour, performance, and wellbeing matters. Contact may be made through email, letter or direct by phone. Staff will return messages as soon as possible.
- Transport etc.: Debbie Fowkes at the Valdocco campus office will be able to answer most enquiries regarding uniform, transport issues, excursion details etc.
- Medical/Personal – Contact the Valdocco Leader.

Student Absence/Lateness

- Explained Day Absence – Parents are asked to contact Debbie Fowkes at the campus office directly on 9756 3168 to report student absence due to illness etc. Ideally, absences should be reported by 8.30am.
- Unexplained Day Absence – If parental/guardian contact hasn't been made prior to 10.00am, the campus office will make SMS or phone contact.
- Extended Absence – If an extended absence is planned due to travel etc., please contact your son's Homeroom teacher to outline the nature and period of absence so they may be able to arrange suitable work to be undertaken if needed. Extended absences should also be reported in writing by email or letter to the Valdocco Leader, outlining the dates and reasons for the absence.
- Lateness – If your son is likely to be late periodically due to factors beyond his control e.g., family illness, transport difficulties etc., please contact the Year Level Leader to request special provision.

Subject/Class Changes

- Subject Changes – Our objective at Valdocco is to encourage students to make informed and measured choices (including subject selection choices). If your son wishes to change his Challenge units of study, he will be directed to collect and fill out a change of Subject Request available form from the Valdocco reception. Every effort will be made to facilitate the change. Class sizes and a cut-off date, to ensure students can satisfactorily complete Challenge Units, will dictate whether changes can be made. The cut-off date for subject changes will be the end of Week 2 of each semester. Applications and enquiries for subject changes are to be made to the Valdocco Leader.
- Student Behaviour/Discipline – The Year Level Leader is responsible for organising after school detentions. Students on detention will be issued with a detention notice that must be signed prior to undertaking detentions. If, for any reason, a student cannot attend a scheduled detention, please contact the Year Level Leader.

First Aid Qualifications

A number of staff at Valdocco have completed their First Aid training and renew their qualification on a yearly basis. In addition, James Whiting is Level 3 trained.

Student Medications

Students are not permitted to self-medicate on campus. Student medications must be provided to Debbie Fowkes in the prescription box with an attached note regarding details of requirements.

Asthma/Diabetic/Allergies Plan

If your son has known allergies, is diabetic, epileptic or asthmatic, please provide Debbie Fowkes, the Valdocco Receptionist, with an updated response or action plan. It is a requirement that these plans be documented by the College. If you are in any doubt, please feel free to contact the Valdocco office for clarification.

General Enquiries

Parents of students who become ill or are injured at school, will be contacted at the earliest possible convenience. If the problem persists, arrangements to have your son collected from school may be requested or arranged in emergencies. If a pattern of illness or injury occurs, medical opinions may be requested also.





CAMPUS SPECIFIC POLICIES AND PROCESSES

PUNCTUALITY

Students are expected to arrive at school prior to the commencement of Homeroom. Any student arriving after this time must report to the Campus Office to receive a late pass. As all parents are contacted according to the roll and passes issued, failure to obtain a pass may lead to undue concern over a student's whereabouts.

Students are also expected to punctually attend classes following scheduled breaks such as recess or lunch. It is our policy that any time lost due to tardiness will be made up by the student.

UNIFORM

The College Summer/Winter uniform must be worn on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday as is the Valdocco custom. On Tuesday and Thursday, the College sports uniform is worn. On Discovery Days, overalls and appropriate footwear should be worn at school to protect the uniform. Summer and Winter uniform dates are notified. Any variation of uniform will be communicated to you in the College Diary or by correspondence.

In Term 1, to facilitate preparation for the Year 9 Expedition, students may wear-in their hiking boots with their summer uniform.

Note: It is the intent of the College that the uniform is a point of respect and pride. At Valdocco, we assert that the wearing of your uniform is not a question of oppression or restriction of freedom, but a sign of solidarity with our community. It is particularly important to our culture that parents support our uniform policy and the notion of students being accountable for uniform breaches. Should you have any questions about uniform requirements, please consult the College website and contact us if you have any difficulty with replacing an item of uniform which may have been misplaced or damaged.

EXCURSIONS

In keeping with the intended nature of the Valdocco Program, students will be required to leave the College premises for a variety of activities over the course of the year. These activities may include class excursions to Melbourne CBD and walks to local shops to investigate local demographics etc.

Written parental permission is required with regard to all activities that involve your son leaving the school premises. To alleviate the burden of creating, distributing, and collating numerous permission forms for walks and bike riding within the local area, a single permission form will be provided for signing. This form will cover those activities that do not require motorised vehicular transport. The intention of this permission form is not to keep you uninformed but to free up staff to respond to the dynamic nature of the Year 9 Curriculum. On occasions where vehicular transport (i.e., school minibus) is required, an email will be sent with a link to SIMON for you to provide permission electronically for his attendance at the activity. In the absence of parental permission, your son will remain at the College and continue with an alternative program.

CANTEEN

On normal school program days, students will require staff permission to leave the campus. The Brenock Park Campus Canteen is out of bounds to all students except at the start of lunchtime.

HOMEWORK

At Valdocco, students are expected to complete regular homework to build consistent routines and strong work habits aimed at preparing students for all learning assessments and the rigors of senior school. The homework program at Valdocco includes reviewing of subject notes, completion of classroom exercises, set homework tasks and reflection on learning through a range of activities.

Students are expected to complete an incrementally increased load of homework throughout the year. In Semester One the homework expectation is one hour, each night, and by Semester Two, time allocated to homework should have increased to an hour and a half spread across all subjects. Prescribed reading is always available as a homework option.

CAMPUS GROUNDS

All Valdocco students must remain within campus grounds once they have entered the College and they may not leave Valdocco campus without staff permission. The Main Campus and its canteen are out of bounds (except for the first 15 minutes of lunchtime to collect lunch purchases).

LOCKERS/LOCKER BAYS

Lockers are provided for student use on the understanding that they are to be treated with respect. Students are required to use College issued locks to secure their belongings. Locker bays are opened before Homeroom each morning to allow students to attend with appropriate materials.

Bags should not be brought to classrooms, in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy. Boys should only be at lockers during change-over periods.

Please note that under no circumstances should electronic equipment or money be stored in lockers. A safe is provided at the office for storage of student valuables.

MOBILE PHONES

The College policy on electronic devices is outlined on the College website. Phones should not be used or seen during school hours without permission from staff, and are to be kept in lockers at all times during school hours. Staff will confiscate any phone which is in breach of this policy. Parents will be contacted to collect their son's phone in the event it is confiscated a second time. The College has every sympathy for boys who lose phones but takes no responsibility for them where the policy has not been followed by the student.

Students are not permitted to take photos of staff or students without specific permission.

BULLYING

The College recognises that instances of bullying do occur in schools from time to time and has a comprehensive policy, 'Keeping the Peace', in place to combat this issue and outline processes consistent with the notion of Salesian pastoral care.

At Valdocco, we run a range of programs throughout the school year including the Outdoor Education Expedition, Making the Link and Respectful Relationships. These programs are aimed at dealing with aspects of bullying, student resilience and help seeking strategies.

A range of counseling options and resilience strategies are available where there are concerns for your son.

EARLY DEPARTURE FROM THE COLLEGE

All students are expected to remain on college grounds under the supervision of teaching staff until that time.

A student will not be released from the Campus without appropriate notification from parents or a known guardian.

WORKBOOKS

Student workbooks are expected to be well-maintained in a state that reflects a positive attitude to a student's effort and pride in his work. Slogans, graffiti, and offensive additions to covers and pages will be removed, and the student will be required to repeat the work on clean pages. Students should be responsible for attending class with correct materials, the condition of their property and storing books appropriately when not in use.

BIKES

Bicycles should be deposited in the bike shed at Valdocco. Bikes will then be locked up until the end of the day unless students have an early leave pass. No rider will be able to leave the Campus without shoes and a bicycle helmet of an approved design.

The Occhiena Centre aims to facilitate the best educational outcomes for individual students throughout the College – for students of all ability levels. At Valdocco, this is achieved through a number of programs:

- In-class support for students with a disability or learning difficulty – focused mainly on Foundations classes.
- Learning Support for indigenous students.
- Homework Club – an after-school supervised program that is held four days per week until 4 pm. (Monday – Thursday).
- Assisted Exam Program – assistance with end of Semester examinations in the form of clarifying, scribing, and prompting.
- Educational assessments and liaison with external agencies.
- Small Group Tutoring program – withdrawal-based learning program for students with learning difficulties.
- Supervised study periods.

Student learning is supported both in the classrooms and in the Valdocco Occhiena Centre, located in Room 906.

If you wish to discuss the services and programs provided by Valdocco Occhiena Centre staff, please contact Ben Bingley, Director of Learning Enhancement.

PREAMBLE

To alleviate costs to parents and to remain consistent with the teaching pedagogies employed in the Junior school and Year 10, all texts and iPad applications are provided to your son and are included as part of the school fees. The expectation is that any materials lost or damaged by students (i.e., texts) are replaced by the students. All of this keeps the Year 9 booklist quite small.

The items that need to be purchased by parents/ guardians, or retained from Year 8 include:

Year 9 Stationery List 2027

- | | |
|--|--|
| - 2 x 'Four Colour' Pens | - 2 Pens (blue) |
| - 2 x Pens (red) | - 2 Pencils (HB) Tradition |
| - 3-4 x Coloured Highlighters | - Eraser Plastic Pencil Large with Sleeve |
| - Glue Stick 36 gm | - Sharpener Pencil Plastic 2 Hole |
| - Scissors Yellow Handle 155mm/6' | - Ruler 300mm Plastic Clear |
| - 2 x Display Books A4 20 Pocket Black Refillable | - 10 x Binder Book (A4 8mm) 96 Page |
| - 2 x Binder Book (A4 8mm) 128 Page | - Clip folder A4 PVC Black |
| - Dividers A4 PVC (packet of 5 multicolored) | - iPad stylus |
| - Headphones – Stereo Deluxe | - Combination Lock - retain from prior year |
| - 2 x Loose Leaf Refills Reinforced A4 7mm Pkt 100 | - Scientific Calculator - retain from prior year |
| - 1 whiteboard marker | |

Students will require these items from Day 1, 2027. Students are asked to bring current 2026 stationery to HeadStart.

Overalls

Students will be measured for their Valdocco overalls during HeadStart Week in December 2026. Those who miss this day will have an opportunity to collect their overalls in 2027. Overalls are part of the school uniform at Valdocco and, as a consequence, must be maintained in good order. Students are not permitted to wear overalls to or from school and may keep them in their lockers.

The motivation and engagement of students should be the core objective of a successful teaching and learning model in order for students to have a depth of understanding that is beyond the knowledge about 'facts' and to allow them to apply their learning across disciplines.

(Understanding Year 9 Students, 2006, p12)

The Valdocco Program has been designed to address a number of perceived limitations in the traditional pedagogical approaches for the teaching of Year 9 boys resulting in low student engagement in their learning (see Ainley and Reeve, 2004, & Nelson 2000), poor skill development in higher order thinking skills (see Fredenberg et al 2005) and low literacy competencies (Rowe and Rowe, 2000).

The Valdocco Program maintains the traditional four 'Rs' of Catholic Education – Religious Education, Reading, Writing and Arithmetic as core elements of its educational program. An experiential pedagogical approach for these core subject areas and associated learning experiences is employed with all learning experiences embedded in an understanding and application of the other four Rs of the program – Reflection, Relationships, Responsibilities and Rehearsal.

A desired outcome of the Valdocco Program is to engage students as active participants in their development as life-long learners (see Prendergast, 2005). The program's structure facilitates a rigorous, responsive and adaptive curriculum catering for the many and varied levels of student IQ and EQ.

The Valdocco Program aims to set and maintain habits of behaviour that will serve to prepare the boys to function as active and productive members of communities, presently and in the future. These behaviours include their learning, physical, social, emotional and spiritual behaviours.

These habits of behaviour are achieved through nurturing the learner (Relationships), empowering the learner (Responsibilities), repetition and recognition of preferred behaviours (Rehearsal). These habits of behaviour are brought to life and take form through the learning structures, programs and processes, values/symbols/rituals rehearsed and re-emphasised within our learning community.

Traditionally, Year 9 has provided significant and distinctive management (pastoral) and teaching (curriculum) challenges. Integrated into the main campus structure, the peculiarities of the needs of and necessary responses to Year 9 behaviours were measured with and against those of the whole student body.

Anyone who has taught in the middle years is likely to be aware that the students' behaviour at Year 9 is not typical of behaviours across all year levels (generally speaking). Research into adolescent brain development suggests a link between a significant period of brain development and developmental changes in adolescent behaviour (see Nelson et al 2005, as cited in Understanding Year 9 Students, 2006).

Rather than an aberration in the development process, research suggests that changes in the adolescent brain and consequent behaviour are an adaptive response to stimuli in the adolescent's environment. Geidd (2005) suggests that an over-production of brain cells and connections in adolescents is followed by pruning and elimination. This pruning and elimination process is guided by the everyday experiences of the adolescent.

Referred to as the 'use it or lose it' principle, those cells and connections formed that are used are those that flourish and survive (see Geidd et al, 1999 as cited Understanding Year 9 Students, 2006 p7).

Consistent with this period of sudden increased brain activity in adolescents is an increased propensity for behaviours that could be considered reckless or risk taking. According to a report authorised by the Department of Education and Training Victoria (2006), such behaviour may have some benefits... (allowing) the adolescents to explore adult behaviour and privileges, to accomplish normal developmental tasks, and to express mastery of challenges associated with certain risky behaviours. Further, Spear (2000) alludes to a link between such kinds of behaviour and adolescent engagement (in learning) stating, individuals who engage in risk taking may do so to attain the positive feelings produced by the novelty, complexity, change or intensity of the experience.

Whilst neuroscience has arguably much to offer in explaining the mechanisms of student behaviour, intuitive teaching practices have long-revealed the link between successful learning in the middle-years and successful life-long learning.



Planning for an alternative approach to Year 9 boys' education at St Joseph's began in 1999, directed by the College Leadership Team. The 'brief' provided by the then College Principal, Vincent J Feeney, and the then Deputy Principal, Gerald Bain-King, was that the Year 9 Program must address the key concerns regarding the student levels of engagement, higher order thinking and literacy. The program, they argued, must also develop in its students an awareness of their role in the learning process. In the Principal's words, a program that successfully addresses these concerns "must be radical". This pronouncement provided opportunity for a creative and ambitious program to be developed.

The proposal for the development of a separate Year 9 Campus was an outcome of considerable research of educational approaches to middle years schooling. Much of the research favored an educational approach that was personal, provided a safe place in which boys can learn and facilitated a pedagogical approach that catered for the varied learning styles of the student cohort.

A separate campus where Year 9 students and dedicated staff work as a community, minimally distracted by the particular needs of the other Year Levels, and with facilities that maximise learning opportunities was seen as an ideal environment for the Year 9's.

The development of the Valdocco Campus on the outskirts of the expansive grounds at St Joseph's College was chosen as a preferred option to purchasing land at an alternative site, as a consequence of financial considerations combined with an expectation it would still provide the desired outcomes envisaged for the program.

After three years of the program, the geographical nature of the Year 9 Campus had proven to be less important to the program's success than that of the changes to the educational paradigm that is employed by staff and understood by the students. Indeed, the close proximity of the Valdocco Campus to the Main Campus has facilitated connections between the two learning hubs (assisting in learning pathways in and out of the campus) and has enabled students to maintain a St Joseph's identity as well as developing a Valdocco identity.

In 2004, learning consultant, Pam Burton, was employed by the College to facilitate the development of a foundation structure of the curriculum program for the Year 9 Campus. Learning teams were formed from interested staff across all year levels with teams encouraged to explore alternative curriculum approaches as well as being introduced to ideas and methodologies by Pam.

The development process of the Year 9 Program was adopted by the whole school with a great deal of energy and goodwill invested in its outcome. By late 2004 the building program for the Year 9 Campus was well underway. Classrooms and offices from McAuley College, Dooboobetic (near St Arnaud) were placed on the campus site and refurbished as required. The building program was completed by early 2005. Whilst the buildings were completed, the task of developing the grounds and recreational facilities was left to the students as an important element of their new Year 9 program. In February 2005, the new Campus was blessed by Fr Ian Murdoch sdb and named Valdocco, the site of Don Bosco's first teaching institution at Valdocco, Turin, in Italy.

OVERVIEW OF THE VALDOCCO PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The Valdocco Daily Timetable consists of a number of distinctive parts including: Foundations/Core Studies (English, Mathematics, Religious Education & Mind & Body); Friday Thematic Program; Discovery Program; semester-based Language study*, Challenge Elective units; Sport; and Community Meeting.

In most cases, the Valdocco Homeroom Team are responsible for the delivery of the first three of those parts (Foundations, Discovery, Thematic Program). Subject specialist staff from both campuses deliver the Challenge elective units (largely on site at Valdocco).

The methodology employed in each of these parts varies considerably. However, there are distinctive links between each. Whilst there is a marked shift towards applied and inquiry-based learning strategies in the program, 'directed instruction pedagogy' remains an important ingredient in the Valdocco Program.

Example of a Valdocco Program

Period	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Homeroom	8.37 AM – 8.45 AM	8.37 AM – 8.45 AM	10.17 AM – 10.25 AM	8.37 AM – 8.45 AM	8.37 AM – 8.45 AM
1	8.45 AM - 9.25 AM Mathematics	8.50 AM - 9.25 AM Mind & Body	10.25 AM – 11.05 AM English	8.45 AM - 9.25 AM Mind & Body	8.50 AM - 9.25 AM THEMATIC
2	9.25 AM – 10.05 AM English	9.25 AM – 10.05 AM Mathematics	11.05 AM – 11.45 AM English	9.25 AM – 10.05 AM (Alternate weeks) English Maths	9.25 AM – 10.05 AM THEMATIC
3	10.05 AM – 10.45 AM RE	10.05 AM – 10.45 AM English	11.45 AM – 12.05 PM RECESS	10.05 AM – 10.45 AM Languages/LANE/ CHALLENGE	10.05 AM – 10.45 AM THEMATIC
Recess	10.45 AM – 11.10 AM RECESS	10.45 AM – 11.10 AM RECESS	12.05 PM – 12.45 PM Discovery	10.45 AM – 11.10 AM RECESS	10.45 AM – 11.10 AM RECESS
4	11.10 AM – 11.50 AM Mathematics	11.10 AM – 11.50 AM English	12.45 PM – 1.25 PM Discovery	10.10 AM – 10.50 AM Languages/LANE/ CHALLENGE	11.10 AM – 11.50 AM THEMATIC
5	11.50 AM – 12.30 PM CHALLENGE ELECTIVE	11.50 AM – 12.30 PM Languages/LANE/ CHALLENGE	1.25 PM – 1.50 PM LUNCH	11.50 AM – 12.30 PM RE	11.50 AM – 12.30 PM THEMATIC
6	12.30 PM – 1.10 PM CHALLENGE ELECTIVE	12.30 PM – 1.10 PM Languages/LANE/ CHALLENGE	1.50 PM – 2.30 PM CHALLENGE ELECTIVE	12.30 PM – 1.10 PM Mass/ Oratory	12.30 PM – 1.10 PM THEMATIC
Lunch	1.10 PM – 1.50 PM LUNCH	1.10 AM – 1.50 PM LUNCH	2.30 PM – 3.10 PM CHALLENGE ELECTIVE	1.10 PM – 1.50 PM LUNCH	1.10 PM – 1.50 PM LUNCH
7	1.50 PM – 2.30 PM Discovery	1.50 PM – 2.30 PM SPORT		1.50 PM – 2.30 PM Mathematics	1.50 PM – 2.30 PM THEMATIC
8	2.30 PM - 3.10 PM Discovery	2.30 PM - 3.10 PM SPORT		2.30 PM - 3.10 PM Mathematics	2.30 PM - 3.10 PM THEMATIC

Note: All students at Year 9 undertake at least one semester of Language study (either Core Language or a Challenge Elective Language study). The students will be allocated a Core Language study (or LANE) based on their Year 8 Language/LANE study. Students who choose to do the Challenge Elective 'VET Cert. II Applied Language (Japanese or Italian)' are not required to complete the Core Language study.

A FOCUS ON RELATIONSHIPS

The importance of relationships, principally, positive student-teacher relationships in the sphere of boys' education, is presently a major focus particularly in addressing the needs of disengaged boys in middle years.

Keddie, A., 2006, p106

INTRODUCTION

A student's opinion of himself and of his place in his community are significant determinants in his learning. Adolescence is a period of considerable change in a child's life, a change that is easily detected but not so easily managed by the child. Frydenberg (1993) argues that assisting in the management of this change by providing an emotionally safe and affirming learning environment leads to improved learning outcomes, stating:

Adolescents who are already experiencing profound physiological and emotional changes have to rely on their problem-solving skills to deal with challenges such as establishing new peer networks and the development of abstract thinking. If adolescents are not effective in dealing with stress or using their problem-solving abilities, they may develop mental health problems such as depression or anxiety that will subsequently lead to negative outcomes such as academic underachievement or social skills deficit.

Understanding Year 9 Students, 2006, p12

The emphasis on relationship building at Valdocco is as much about removing the blockers of learning (i.e., self-doubt and fear) as it is about developing connectedness between the stakeholders. Consequently, relationship building includes relationships with self (and developing resilience) as well as relationships with others.

The notion of living and learning in community underpins the Valdocco Program. Students are provided with the opportunity to develop tolerance, empathy and appreciation of others. Development of an understanding of community commences from orientation (taking place in November the year prior to commencement) and continues throughout the year.

Consistent with and central to the notion of community at Valdocco is the importance and uniqueness of the individual. These two keystone principles are explored and grounded into the curriculum and pastoral care processes and procedures of the campus.

The programs/processes that support relationship building at Valdocco include for example:

- Community Programs and Personal Projects
- Fortnightly Community Meeting
- Outdoor Legacy Projects: Discovery/Integrated Curriculum Units
- Respectful Relationships
- 6-Day Expedition Program – Thomson River
- 'Making the Link' Program
- Job Readiness
- Digital Citizenship

FORTNIGHTLY CAMPUS COMMUNITY MEETING

Campus Community Meetings, prepared and directed by the students (with staff invited to address students as required), are timetabled for Thursday afternoons. The meetings are an invaluable opportunity to affirm student performance, celebrate achievement and deliver important campus and community messages, as well as addressing significant campus issues. Relationship building and working in a community are major themes of these meetings.

The meetings are also invaluable opportunities for boys to “articulate and perform” in front of an audience and gain considerable confidence in doing so.

GROUP PROJECTS: DISCOVERY

Students work in teams to plan, problem-solve and execute group projects that positively impact the physical environment of the campus. Small teams of students work collaboratively in these tasks, reporting and updating the campus periodically at ‘Campus Community Meetings’. Students are also required to communicate effectively with the broader community to promote these projects and involve College staff and students. Relationship building is a major function of the year-long Discovery program.

6 DAY EXPEDITION

The 6-day Expedition is conducted late in Term 1 of Year 9 (weather permitting). The program focuses on developing resilience as well as group interdependence. Groups of 12 students and two staff hike, paddle, peddle and climb their way over 40km of trails, camping in ‘bivvies’ and/or tents, overnight and carrying essential materials in packs.



When we impulsively protect our children from failure, we deprive them of learning the skills (of persistence)

Seligman, 1995

INTRODUCTION

Rather than being passive participants at Valdocco, students are encouraged to be actively involved in their community. A philosophy of providing opportunity for learning through responsible behaviour is adopted. Acting responsibly and taking responsibility for one's actions underpins the campus' approach to this tenet of learning.

Specific programs and processes that encourage the development of responsibility and responsible behaviour include:

- Campus Elective Programs: (Mind and Body, Challenge 'A' and 'B', Discovery, Integrated Curriculum Units – My Homeroom, My Town, My City, My Market)
- Valdocco Community Service
- Student Leadership Program
- Living in Community

CAMPUS CURRICULUM PROGRAMS

In order to build greater engagement with learning it has been suggested that teachers need to give students choices and control over their learning.

'Understanding Year 9 Students', 2006, p18

Students are provided with detailed counselling regarding the process and possible outcomes of their subject/course selection. The structure of the Valdocco program with its reduced compulsory subject component (i.e., no formal SOSE, History etc.) places even greater importance on informed decision-making. In addition to choosing Challenge 'A' and 'B' electives, students also nominate Mind and Body selections for Terms 2 to 4.

Within the class, students have the opportunity to direct their learning. In Discovery, for example, students have the option of developing and implementing their own project proposal.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Two student leaders from each Homeroom will be selected by students and staff after the Outdoor Education Expedition early in Term 1. These students have considerable responsibility in setting and maintaining a supportive learning culture within the year level. Student leaders are responsible for working with their Homeroom Teacher to attend to particular needs of the Homeroom (i.e., competitions, rewards, affirmation, letters of sympathy etc.). The students are also responsible for running the weekly campus meetings, developing a mission statement for the year level (and supporting their mission). They represent the Campus on formal and semi-formal occasions.

Student leaders are supported in their role by the Head of Valdocco and Year 9 Leader. A number of leadership exercises and activities and regular Leadership meetings help support the leadership formation of the students.

In addition to these formal leadership positions, it should be noted that student leadership is a responsibility and expectation of all students at Valdocco, and the program aims to support and nurture such roles throughout the course of the year

LIVING IN COMMUNITY

By its very nature, living in community provides and demands the application of responsible behaviour. Community living is a dynamic state that feeds from the actions of its members. At Valdocco, students are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning and the learning environment of their peers. This directed empowerment involves an educative process of dialogue and example. A formative approach (restorative justice) to discipline breaches is adopted. This approach has been most successful in reconciling conflicts (it has also provided a steady supply of yard cleaners!).

There is a clear connection between the implementation of 'restorative justice' resulting in improved student-teacher relationships, which in turn has seen improvement in academic performance.

Lane, D, 2004, p131

A FOCUS ON REHEARSAL

If Geidd (2005) is correct, and the use it or lose it principle is indeed true as suggested, the patterns of behaviours learnt and established in adolescence are life-shaping. The Valdocco Program aims to establish patterns of behaviour that support its students through the final years of their schooling and well beyond.

In many ways, Year 9 is seen as a rite of passage, a critical point marking the growth of the individual from childhood to adulthood. As addressed in Responsibilities above, Valdocco students are supported in acting as independent learners and functional members of community. The Valdocco Program and processes are structured to resemble programs and processes in Year 10 and beyond.

Symbols, rituals, and routines are employed to develop norms of behaviour. Rehearsal of these norms of behaviour provide a predictable and, in many ways, safe learning environment. Such norms include:

- Students are expected to wear full College uniform to meetings, stand during prayer and acknowledge contributions appropriately
- Students stand up when teachers enter a room
- Quiet reading is done quietly
- Hands-off policy exists on the campus
- Prayer is always concluded with the words "Don Bosco, Pray for us"

The curriculum program is also in many ways rehearsal for future pathways. Whilst recall of data is not the preferred form of assessment on the Campus, examinations and written tests are carefully prepared for and conducted. Equally important, however, are those broader skills that students require in their final years of secondary education and beyond including problem solving, reasoning, communicating and abstract thinking skills that are incorporated across the Valdocco Program.

The pastoral care and discipline policy of the program further exemplifies the application of rehearsal. These policies, where possible, mirror expectations of behaviour beyond the gates of the school.

Adolescence marks a point of metamorphosis from child into adult. Much behaviour, appreciation of expectations and an understanding of one's potential are not innately understood by all. Rehearsal plays a significant part in developing this understanding; both rehearsal of rituals and routines and rehearsal for Year 10, VCE and Pathways beyond for example.

Students in Year 9 undertake a seven-day Outdoor Education Expedition in Term 1 (weather permitting). This challenging and highly rewarding experience offers an excellent opportunity for students to gain confidence in goal setting and working in teams to achieve objectives. It also serves as an outstanding opportunity for students to further develop resilience and self-esteem.

The Year 9 Expedition for 2027 will take place from Sunday 28 February – Friday 5 March in the Thomson Dam region, Baw Baw. The expedition is directed by Halls Outdoor Adventures, a company which has been successfully associated with this Expedition for a number of years. Activities over the seven days include abseiling, mountain biking, hiking, river rafting, navigation skills and initiative activities.

Groups of approximately 14 students will be assisted and directed by a school staff member, a trained Outdoor Education Leader and (in some cases) an Outdoor Education student teacher.

A detailed outline of all aspects of the camp (including equipment lists/hire details; itinerary details etc.) will be presented at the Year 9 Expedition Information Night (*date to be confirmed*). Contact the Valdocco Leader if you have any special requests or queries in advance of this meeting.

Expedition Dates:

- Preparation half day – *date to be confirmed* (students dismissed at 12noon)
- Preparation day - *date to be confirmed* (student free day)
- Expedition departs – date to be confirmed (7:00am)
- Expedition returns to school – (at approximately 6:00pm) *date to be confirmed*



FOUNDATIONS OVERVIEW

Core studies including Mathematics, English and Religious Education are explored (to a large extent) during the first part of the school day where student attention and energy levels are arguably at their greatest. An elective-based physical education program ('Mind and Body') and a regular weekly Community Meeting are also integral elements of the Foundation Program.

A combination of direct instruction and experiential learning is employed in the Foundation Studies.

Since young adolescents have a physical and biological need for movement and activity, and learn best through engagement and interaction, learning strategies will be successful if they feature activities that provide hands-on experiences and actively involve these young people in learning. Although direct instruction still has its place (for small bursts of time), students will work longer and more productively in activities that have a physical component or in which they are particularly interested.

'Middle Years of Schooling' p1

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students are invited to reflect on their own experiences and develop their sense of moral responsibility to understand who they are and how they live in the world. Students explore The Holy Bible, unpacking its overarching message and purpose, before focusing on biblical and prophetic literature. A common focus is placed on how scripture can be applied in our lives today.

TEXT: *TO KNOW WORSHIP AND LOVE YEAR 9: JAMES GOOLD HOUSE PUBLICATIONS 2ND EDITION 2003*

UNITS BY TERM

One	Who Am I? The Holy Bible	• Reflection • Heroes and values • Biblical studies • Wisdom and Prophetic literature
Two	Modern Day Prophets	• Modern Day Prophets
Three	Social Justice Reconciliation & Forgiveness	• Asylum Seekers • Social Justice Issues • Restorative Justice
Four	Church and Community Mary	• Exploration of the church and its history • Value of community • Mary & Saints

ACTIVE PRAYER/MASS PROGRAM

MASS

Year 9 students attend Mass in the College Chapel on a fortnightly basis. Homeroom representatives will be responsible for assisting with the presentation of the Mass. Attendance at fortnightly Mass is an expectation of all members of the Valdocco community.

ACTIVE PRAYER

Active Prayer is an opportunity for students to explore their own spirituality in a variety of forms. For example, students may have the opportunity of presenting music/media that they identify with, sharing their interpretations with classmates. On other occasions, reflections may be presented and explored.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students engage in a variety of tasks which develop language skills across the whole study. They are presented with a range of texts including novels, films, poetry, drama, and media, and engage in a number of activities which allow for the best possible response.

Students are required to prepare a folio of writing, covering a variety of genres, with an emphasis on purpose and audience. Students participate in a range of speaking and listening activities, including delivery of formal presentations, debating, and responses to texts studied in class.

YEAR 9 TEXTS – 2026

- The Happiest Refugee - Anh Do
- The Road to Winter – Mark Smith

UNITS BY TERM

Yearlong foci throughout the Year 9 English Course		• Language Conventions • Analysing and Building Argument • Textual Analysis • Creating Text and Developing Voice
One	• Australian Voices and Landscape: • The Road to Winter • Extract Analysis	• Text Response: Analytical Essay Writing
Two	• Changing Australian Voices • Newspaper Articles • Speeches, Editorials, Social Media, etc. • Various News and Opinion Extracts	• Analysing Argument • Building Argument - Oral Presentation • Semester One Examination
Three	• Modern Australian Voices • The Happiest Refugee • Growing Up Asian in Australia • Various Extracts	• Textual Analysis • Responding to Text – Extended Response/Essay Writing • Creating Text
Four	• Writing about Country • <i>The Rabbits</i> • Growing Up Series (in Australia) • Various Australian Texts: Extracts	• Writing about Country - Personal Reflection • Semester Two Examination

COURSE DESCRIPTION

SEMESTER 1

Students in Mathematics sequentially build on their learning in measurement and geometry. Students learn to find the perimeter, area, and volume of complex shapes, including combined shapes, prisms, and sectors. Students begin to combine measurement skills with those learnt previously in Geometry. In Geometry students learn to use Pythagoras and Trigonometry to solve right-angled triangle problems. Students become familiar with patterns and modeling to assist them with their Mathematics and develop cross curricula problem-solving skills.

SEMESTER 2

Students in Mathematics sequentially build on their learning in algebra and linear equations. Students learn to expand equations of any order. Students develop skills in the substitution method to solve algebraic equations varying from single to multiple steps. Students learn to manipulate linear equations and graph these equations while developing an understanding of gradient, and the Cartesian axes. The problem-solving tasks cross the usual mathematical boundaries and begin to take the student into the interdisciplinary mathematics outside of the classroom.

AREAS OF ASSESSMENT

VICTORIAN CURRICULUM DOMAINS AND DIMENSIONS

Mathematics

- Number
- Space
- Measurement, Structure
- Working mathematically
- Statistics
- Chance and Data
- Algebra

MIND & BODY - HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

DESCRIPTION

Mind and Body (M & B) is a set of activities aimed at raising student activity levels to an appropriate level and preparing them for a day of active learning. Homeroom teachers offer activities (on a term basis) suited to their particular expertise and the needs of the students.

Activities include, for example, martial arts, resistance training, power walking, yoga, aerobic fitness (running etc.), indoor and outdoor sports, mountain bike riding etc. Students rotate a different Mind and Body activity each four weeks. All activities are undertaken in a 25-minute block, three times a week.

In Term 4 students participate in the “Valdocco Olympics”, representing their Homeroom in a variety of activities.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

DESCRIPTION

The Valdocco Community Meetings are undertaken fortnightly. The meetings showcase student skills and achievements as well as providing opportunities to present keynote speakers outline pathway related information and provide affirmation for community members.

The meetings provide an invaluable opportunity for Year 9 students to perform in front of their peers, whether it is a musical item, presenting a discovery proposal or introducing guest speakers etc. Homerooms are rostered to host community meetings at least once each semester.

DISCOVERY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Discovery is a dynamic and adaptive program of integrated curricula and applied learning tasks. Over the course of a term, project-based tasks run parallel with subject-based units that compliment and support Foundation Studies.

Through Discovery (classroom and project based) students develop an understanding and application of key competencies including:

- Planning and organising
- Data gathering and analysis
- Communicating information and ideas
- Problem-solving and abstract thinking
- Using technologies as tools
- Independent and reflective practice
- Working cooperatively in teams

DISCOVERY PROJECTS

Discovery Projects are undertaken in Homeroom groups. Students work in teams to plan and implement their Discovery projects. Guided by their Discovery teacher and supported by the Discovery Project Staff, students investigate, plan, communicate ideas and, finally, implement proposals.

In some instances, these projects are class projects (i.e., Vineyard Management; Community Garden Project). Students also have the opportunity to propose small group projects for which they have special interest (i.e., Campus Greenhouse; Aquaponics system, Animal enclosures; Art project; Pizza Oven; Sustainable Kitchen).

DISCOVERY UNITS

These units are designed to incorporate a range of curriculum areas as well as the unique Valdocco outdoor Discovery projects. Each unit comprises 10 x 80min lessons.

UNIT	FOCUS
Understanding Matter	• Year 9 Chemistry • Water and Waste management • Aquaponics and Irrigation • Global Systems
Energy Systems	• Year 9 Physics • Electricity Systems • Circuit Building

Building and Design	• Using Tools • The Design Process • Construction Technologies • 3D Drawing and Modeling • Building Maintenance
Landscapes and Gardens	• Landscaping and Garden Design • Gardening: including propagation of plants • Building Proposals and Innovation Ideas
Active Citizens	• Year 9 Civics and Citizenship • Basic Economic Theory • Governments and Democracy • Political Parties and Systems
Food for Life	• Year 9 Geography • Food Production • Food Security • Fair Trade and Global Action • Food Wastage
Making A Nation: The Real Australian History	• History • Social Studies and Civics • The Evolution and Impact of Technology • The Relationship between Global Conflict and Technology
Personal Project	• Developing a yearlong project based on personal interests • Self-Directed Learning • Project Planning & Budgeting • Developing a yearlong plan and working towards this plan • Presenting Finished product to Wider Audience
The Good Life	• Year 9 Health and Human Development • Social and Physical Health • Building Healthy Communities • Mental Health and Wellbeing

THEMATIC UNITS: INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

FRIDAY PROGRAM

In 2012, the Valdocco curriculum was enhanced by the inclusion of an integrated curriculum program which was developed to increase the active learning component of the Valdocco experience. A specific objective of the program was the creation of thematic units which highlighted the learning outcomes of the SOSE based disciplines – Geography, Commerce, History as well as English skills. Four units of work comprise the program including:

TERM 1 – MY HOMEROOM

Looks to build a homeroom focus and unity of purpose by asking boys to create a homeroom culture. It also aims to prepare students for the Year 9 Expedition involving camp cooking, hiking and a range of team-building activities. Students also participate in a bicycle education program, Science quests and Discovery induction.

TERM 2 – MY TOWN

Students, working in small groups, explore a local suburb, noting its demographics, history, geography and evolution to the present time. Project work then centers upon the student's assessment of the town infrastructure, amenity, and tourist potential. Students also compare data between suburbs, investigate current local issues and propose possible solutions. Finally, students are asked to interview members of the community and present their findings in a news report in their My Town group, to their peers.

TERM 3 – MY CITY

Building on their understandings from Term 2 work, students begin this unit being chaperoned to the City of Melbourne to engage in six weeks of teacher-led, student driven thematic tours and observation tasks in small groups. After Week 2, students are required to access the city independently, meeting their teachers only at assigned times during the day. In Weeks 7 and 8 of the program, students investigate and implement elements of a self- created tour on an area of interest and strength. Each student takes responsibility for producing supporting literature and media for their "tour blog" once all evidence is gathered.

Assessment is based on the presentation of their tour to the Homeroom group and through peer assessment. Students, parents, or teachers are invited to take their tour and comment on the creators' work in terms of the interest it generated; the quality and appropriateness of information it provided; the quality of blog and the timing and directions given.

TERM 4 – MY MARKET

To finish the program, the My Market unit seeks to draw on the learning of the students throughout the year in a very practical fashion. Homeroom groups are asked to contribute to a Year 9 Market Day by presenting class efforts in a saleable form (product or service to sell) and in promotional form (demonstration of skills/learning applicable to supporting a market atmosphere). This initiative asks students to take on the role of small business owners, creating a physical and online store for their products, developing worker rosters and schedules, balancing budgets, and managing supply and demand for each product.