



The Scots College
Sydney Australia

**PREPARATORY SCHOOL
HONOURS PROGRAM**



Personalising Education for our Boys

The Scots College is a distinctive Australian school that defends the honourable traditions, adventures and learning of boys. We are an innovative school that values the best of the traditions of the past. Our aim is to provide an education that inspires boys to learn, lead and serve, striving for excellence together.

Using leading educational resources drawn from a raft of current global practices, we prepare our students for an exciting and challenging future – a world that cannot yet be fully imagined. Through the Honours Program, our students are developing the ability to work in teams, across disciplinary boundaries, solve multifaceted and complex problems and create new ideas, products and services. We believe that this will best serve our boys in the future.

The Honours Program is committed to developing a culture of high expectations that nourish creative, confident young men. We acknowledge the importance of student engagement, of challenge, and the provision of active learning opportunities. These experiences are designed as a response to stages of development rather than chronological age or year level. Our boys are encouraged to develop a 'growth mindset' – an understanding of the diverse and dynamic nature of intelligence and an appreciation of the ongoing nature of the learning journey. We seek to nurture a sense of security and belief in one's own ability. Enacting successful learning dispositions, boys have the opportunity to grow resilience to challenge and develop a commitment to learning.

We encourage our graduates to become confident, well grounded young men who are motivated and equipped to pursue learning as an integral part of a rich and rewarding life. We grow principled, young men of compassion and integrity, who are engaged citizens of their school, their community and their world. We strive to develop, in boys, a worldview that encompasses knowledge of the past, perceptive insight into the present and innovative thinking about our global future.

The Program is designed to provide challenge for highly able students in ways that enhance their emotional, social and cognitive development. Students are introduced to complex concepts, delivered at a pace commensurate with their ability. Students are encouraged to find advanced connections and apply these to new learning experiences with increasing independence.

Within the Program, students are provided with opportunities to develop, test and defend their ideas and we encourage reflection as a tool for improvement. This may be an increase in self-awareness on an individual level or a sense of responsibility on a wider social level.

The Honours Program was introduced in 2010 to accommodate the learning needs of our most able students. The Program is based on significantly differentiated course work in the core subject areas of English and Mathematics and thinking dispositions. English and Mathematics are the focus in Years K to 6.

Philosophical Intent

Our College is all about our boys.

The Honours Program is an integral component of the College’s provision of personalised enhancement for learning opportunities, intended to support the discovery, nurturing and engagement of the unique talents, interest and abilities of each boy. The Honours Program is one of a suite of teaching and learning strategies aimed to empower all boys to learn, lead and serve in order to enhance the world in which they live. It is inspired by the notion of the Renaissance man who is visionary, innovative, knowledgeable and determined to expand the accepted ideas of his time.

Experiences match the developmental needs of learners with demonstrated capacity beyond the scope of our core curriculum. Teaching programs focus on conceptual understanding, allowing time for engagement in deeper learning and analysis, developing creativity, offering new solutions and stretching existing paradigms. Cross-curricular links are capitalised upon, assisting students to develop the ability to perceive the world through a variety of disciplinary lenses.

Our mission is to help identify and support the students in our community with exceptional academic potential.

In the Early Years, we explore the interests and innate aptitudes of young boys to nurture curiosity and passion that prepare them for more formal academic pursuits. Extension programs for students with advanced literacy, numeracy and thinking skills commence. These take the form of working with teachers in Lions and Cubs to create differentiated experiences for students who are thinking in advanced ways and providing resources that might nurture and stimulate their thinking further.

In Kindergarten and Year 1, small groups of students are withdrawn for specific instruction in Mathematics and English. There is an additional group withdrawn twice a week for students who demonstrate an ability to comprehend sophisticated concepts but are still mastering early numeracy and literacy skills. This allows students in this group time to consolidate the necessary literacy and numeracy skills required for future success in these subject areas.

In Years 2 to 4, Honours courses occur in English and Mathematics for five lessons each week to provide significant access to core and extension concepts delivered with advanced pitch, pace and complexity. The work is related to the topics covered in their regular classroom but may be explored from a different angle and to a greater degree of complexity.

In Years 5 and 6, students who can sustain outstanding achievement in the areas of English and Mathematics participate in the Honours course for all lessons in each subject. Rigorous experiences of each discipline ensure a depth of theoretical knowledge and practical application to real world contexts. The additional expectations of effective collaboration and a personal commitment to learning encapsulate the essence of The Scots College graduate.

Our goal is for students to be challenged to know the joy of achieving worthy and ambitious goals through his own meaningful work and through the efforts of the teams of which he is a valued member.

How is the Program organised?

Year Level	English	Mathematics	Thinking Skills
ELC Cubs and Lions	In class grouping for advanced reading and writing.	In class grouping for advanced numeracy and problem solving.	An Honours class for students who demonstrate advanced thinking and reasoning skills. One lesson per week from Term 2.
ELC (K-Year 1)	An Honours class for advanced literacy, four and five lessons per week respectively.	An Honours class for advanced numeracy, four and five lessons per week respectively.	An Honours class for students who demonstrate advanced thinking and reasoning skills. Two lessons per week from Term 2.
Junior Prep (Years 2-4)	An Honours class per year level for advanced literacy, five lessons per week.	An Honours class per year level for entire subject content, six lessons per week.	
Senior Prep (Years 5-6)	An Honours class per year level for entire subject content.	An Honours class per year level for entire subject content, six lessons per week.	

How are boys selected to participate?

The Program is designed to be developmental in nature, evidence of high achievement, individual creativity, leadership, collaboration and self-management skills is considered to ensure each boy's readiness for one or more subjects within the Honours Program.

In the Early Years, selection is based on careful teacher observations using a multitude of indicators of advanced achievement from the Reggio Emilia 100 Languages philosophy, along with recognition of the informal expression of early aptitude for more formal learning experiences. In Years 2 to 6, comprehensive out of level testing has been used to supplement normal class based evidence.

Selection Process

Within our aim to nurture the talent of our most academically able students we employ a multifaceted selection process.

Identification

Students emerge as eligible for selection by:

1. Parent nomination – with or without a psychometric assessment
2. Teacher nomination – according to a broad checklist of indicators for giftedness
3. Top 85 percentile achievement on standardised tests in one or more KLA's
4. Top 85 percentile achievement on general ability or psychometric testing

Selection Criteria

Once selected as eligible the students sit off-level assessments in English and/or Mathematics. The use of off-level testing enables us to identify those students who are performing significantly beyond year level expectations and to quantify the degree of advancement within the range of high achieving students. Students will be selected on a case-by-case manner according to one or more of the following:

1. Advanced academic achievement typically two to four years above age norms
2. Consistently high academic achievement on age appropriate measures
3. Individual full scale IQ score of 140+
(NB Students with asynchronous subtest scores may be considered after consideration of their individual profile and aptitude for the pitch, pace and complexity of the Program.)
Whilst this is a high IQ score, our general student population function at a higher level than national and state averages.

Consultative Decision Making

After the results have been tabulated and off-level scores ranked, a short list is determined. At this stage, consultation occurs between the year level teachers to review possible candidates. They moderate examples of discipline based thinking and contribution to class discussions, application of skills and knowledge to course work and attitudes needed for successful learning. A student with high potential and a specific learning, attention or behavioural challenge may be considered should it be deemed to be in the best interests of realising that child's academic potential.

How is the learning different from the core curriculum?

The curriculum design complements each boy's interests and capacities to develop future focused cross-disciplinary skills within the context of strong discipline based understandings.

Honours teachers specialise in their subject and design rigorous, differentiated programs. They have a passion for working with highly capable boys and deliver complex units of work that promote deep conceptual understanding. The Honours team consists of a coordinator and a team of campus based teachers who specialise in gifted education. Collaborative planning within year group teams will ensure alignment with the Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards NSW learning outcomes and allow for fluidity in groupings.

Each unit of work explores essential understandings and their application to the real world.

Students in the Honours Program will be encouraged to develop broad intellectual interests and expertise. Students will have the opportunity to participate in a range of extracurricular options such as the da Vinci Decathlon, Olympiad, Debating, Chess, Public Speaking competitions and more.





Learning About Learning

At Scots we believe that empowered engaged learners are more likely to realise their academic potential and develop self-confidence.

Embedded within the Honours Program are opportunities for each boy to develop effective learning behaviours. Researchers have identified an essential skill set for the future that moves the demands of lifelong learning well beyond knowledge and understanding. Today's learners will require the capacity to collaborate, analyse, evaluate, hypothesise, reflect, create and innovate. Beyond this, the brain's executive functions are the best predictors of success and through opportunities for choice, challenge, collaboration and creativity presented as part of each unit, boys develop the skills of cooperation, resilience to challenge, delayed gratification, motor planning, time and resource management in an appropriate manner.

Choice

Choice is provided through common content, shared understanding and differentiated learning processes. Optional tasks and self-paced experiences enhance the relevance of the process for each boy. Choice is introduced incrementally to encourage boys to make responsible decisions about the path their learning journey through a particular topic might take. From this grows self-awareness about their own learning styles and preferences. Later, reflection tasks build a more thorough appreciation of relative strengths and weaknesses to form the basis of individual goal setting. Learners are empowered when appropriate levels of control are handed back to individuals.

Challenge

Challenge is presented through the content of our Program. Conceptual understandings, interpretation and critical appreciation of literary techniques drive each unit. Perseverance and resilience to challenge are lifelong skills that build confidence and a firm sense of self. Appropriate levels of challenge, stretch boys in the Honours Program to think in new ways, independently, analytically, and originally to solve open-ended tasks that reflect their knowledge and understanding of a subject.

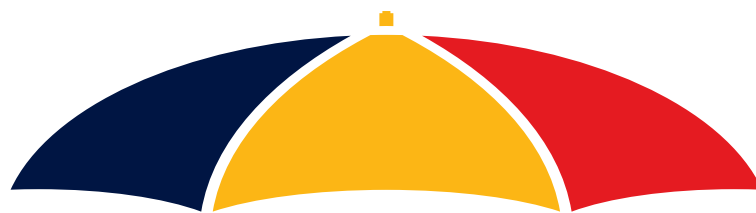
Collaboration

Opportunities for authentic collaboration occur when challenges are presented that require solutions beyond the capacity of an individual learner. Initially discussion, brainstorming and reporting back form the basis of guided collaboration. Later active listening, delegation, communication and negotiation skills are learned through explicit teaching and then opportunities to apply theory to practice. Collaboration is the foundation to leadership and service learning which form essential aims of the Honours Program in the Senior School.

Creativity

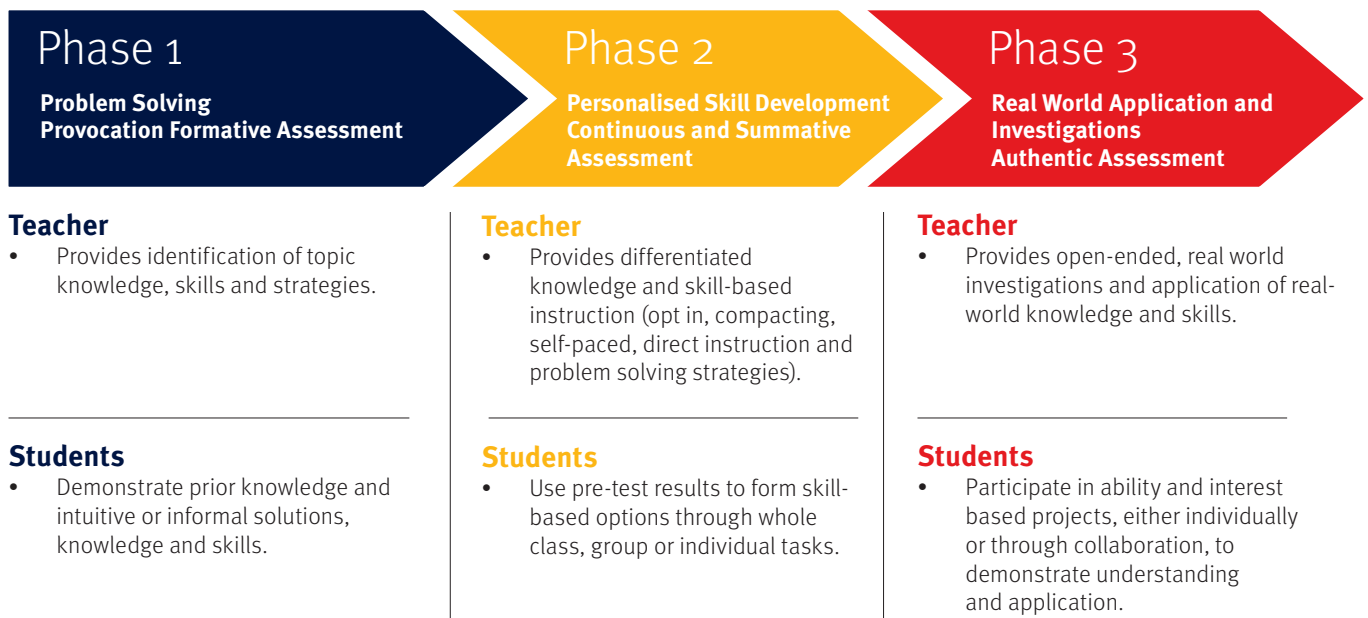
Creativity is encouraged when familiar pathways to solutions are blocked and alternatives are required. Initially freedom promotes fluency and flexibility of thought and idea generation. Later, expectations of the critical evaluation of potential solutions promote effective prediction and consideration of the possible consequences of action. Approaches to creativity in the wider world are considered and studied explicitly to model the real world relevance of creativity to solve the increasingly complex problems facing us and our planet in the future.

Honours Mathematics Learning Model

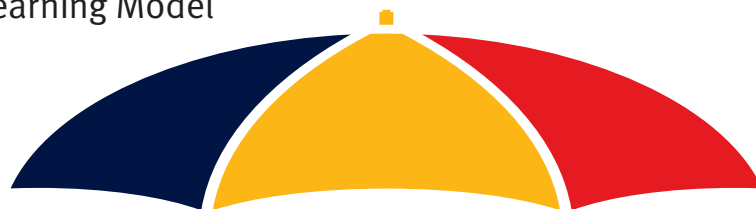


Big Idea

Overarching Concept and Questions Contextualise Topic(s)

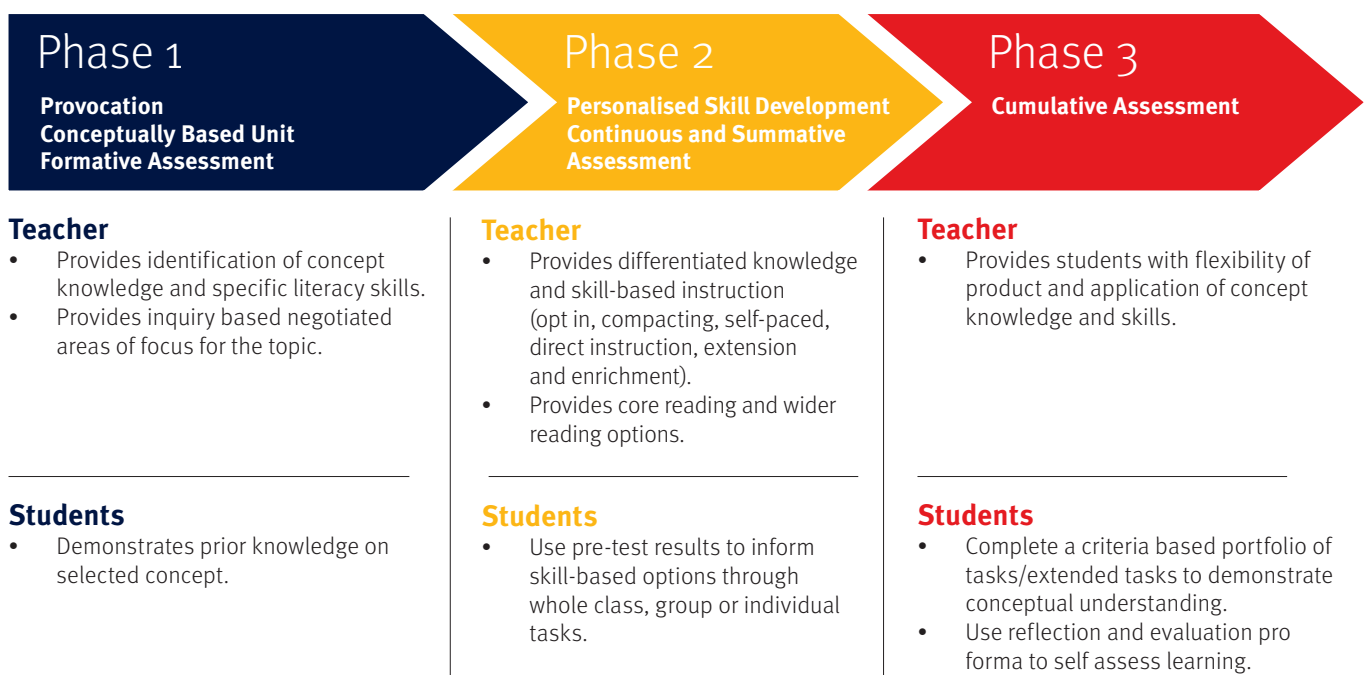


Honours English Learning Model



Big Idea

Overarching Concept and Questions Contextualise Topic(s)





How will each boy's achievement be communicated to parents?

As courses commence, boys and parents will be introduced to the teachers of each subject. If parents have any questions or concerns about any aspect of the Program, you are encouraged to contact the individual teachers for matters relating to the specific subject or Mrs Natalie Lawand in the Preparatory School (Transition to Year 6) or Ms Monique Fewkes in the Senior School.

All teachers of the Honours Program will be available for Parent Teacher Interviews and reports will be completed by the teachers responsible for each subject.

“If I have seen further it is by standing
on the shoulders of giants.”

Sir Isaac Newton

Can boys move in and out of the Program courses?

The close alignment of the Honours courses to the scope and sequence of the core curriculum facilitates a flexible structure that can enable additional candidates to join the Program or allow any students who may wish to rejoin the core groups the opportunity to do so.

Students have been carefully selected and will be closely monitored to ensure their success, however, in rare cases a student may decide, in consultation with parents and teachers, that the regular curriculum is more appropriate for them at certain times.

The Honours Program continues in the Senior School. Known as the Honours Quest, students in the top academic classes are challenged to achieve Honours in either the Applied Sciences, Creative Arts, Humanities or Social Sciences.



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