



High School Academic Handbook 2021

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Introduction

The purpose of this Handbook is to set out the structures and procedures relating to study at St Edmund's College for high school students. Whilst this handbook concentrates on academic matters, it must be recognised that academic progress is closely linked to student application. The Studies Office works in partnership with the Pastoral Care team to reach outcomes that enhance both the academic and developmental needs of students.

St Edmund's College Canberra is an inclusive educational environment which is informed and guided by the ethos of Edmund Rice. The Edmund Rice ethos is invested with a tradition of inclusion and equity in educating students.

The delivery of study programs is set in the broader context of the Touchstones that have been identified in the Charter for Catholic Schools in the Edmund Tradition, namely:

Liberating Education

We open hearts and minds through quality teaching and learning experience, so that through critical reflection and engagement each person is hope filled and free to build a better world for all.

Inclusive Community

Our community is accepting and welcoming, fostering right relationships and committed to the common good.

Gospel Spirituality

We invite all people into the story of Jesus and strive to make his message of compassion, justice and peace a living reality within our community.

Justice and Solidarity

We are committed to justice and peace for all, grounded in a spirituality of action and reflection that calls us to stand in solidarity with those who are marginalised and the Earth itself.

School Wide Pedagogy

- **we challenge** ourselves to expand our ideas and own learning. We approach all challenges critically and analytically. We expect nothing less than our personal best in all that we do so that our individual and collective potential is realised.
- **we collaborate** with other professionals to provide a learning environment of excellence. We share ideas and cooperate within faculties and across faculties. Students collaborate with one another in groups and ensembles. Teamwork, discussion and debate are valued and encouraged. Students take an active part in directing their own learning. The knowledge, skills and experiences of parents and the community are sought and are integral to the students' learning. We respect the perspectives of others.
- **we create** a learning environment that encourages creative thinking and students are given opportunities to expand their understandings and to express their ideas in creative ways.
- **we contemplate** our place in the world and encourage students to approach all subject areas with a sense of wonder. We provide quiet times for prayer and for reflection. We teach students to be good listeners and to invite enquiry in search of meaning and truth.
- **we connect** with each other and with the world through relationships and emerging technologies. The teaching and learning in the classroom is applicable to real world situations and students are encouraged to take advantage of all resources available. We connect with local, national and international communities and we support those who are underprivileged. We look after others and are sensitive to those with different cultures or backgrounds. We are inclusive in the traditions of Edmund Rice.
- **we celebrate** our successes, our discoveries and our achievements.

Brother Field's Education and Resource Centre

The Brother E.C. Field's Education and Resource Centre is the College's senior library, and caters for students from Years 7 to 12.

The central role of the library is to support the spiritual, academic and pastoral programs of the College. Through their interaction with the staff in the library, the students are encouraged to become confident and competent in the use of a variety of resources, and to develop skills for lifelong learning.

Students have access to a large range of fiction and non-fiction resources and reference materials in both print and electronic formats as well as a large periodical collection covering a range of academic and general interests. An extensive range of online resources including indexes, online encyclopaedias, assignment pathfinders, internet hot lists and full-text databases can be accessed via the library web page. Pursuits such as chess, jigsaw, card games, trivia quizzes and recreational reading are also catered for and promoted.

The physical library facilities include three teaching areas with banks of networked computers, printers, a colour scanner and photocopier, comfortable reading areas, two seminar rooms and a well-equipped audio visual room.

Senior Library Opening Hours

Monday – Thursday:

8am – 5pm

Friday:

8am – 4pm

Closed every recess and the first half of lunch.

Contact Details:

Telephone: 6239 0619

Email: library@stedmunds.act.edu.au

Years 7 – 10: General Matters

The Curriculum

The Australian Curriculum (AC) has been implemented in all subjects that have been published on the ACARA website. All grades issued to students are based on the AC and are informed by the samples of work provided on the ACARA website. Grades A and B mean the student is working beyond his year level. Grade C means that the student is working at his year level. This is the standard a student should be at. Grades D and E mean that the student is yet to master skills needed at the year level.

Core Subjects

The six core subjects all students will study in Years 7 - 10 are:

- Religious Education
- English
- Mathematics
- Health and Physical Education (HPE)
- Science
- Social Science

YEAR 7

Students will have the opportunity to study all the Core Subjects according to the Australian Curriculum. They will also study subjects from the Arts, Technologies, and Languages.

Patterns of Study

In Year 7 students are introduced to all subjects. As they move into the next year group, they will have the opportunity to focus more on the subjects they enjoy.

YEAR 8

Elective Subjects

Students have two lines in their timetable for selecting elective units. Students must study one semester-long course from Languages, one from Technologies and one from the Arts. Languages can be studied for a semester or for a year. For students who elect to study a language for a full year, the second semester of study will be an integrated unit.

Patterns of Study

Students must rank their selections. The options and ranking procedure are explained on the selection form. The College contact list can also be used by parents for clarification about selections (see page 3).

Choosing Subjects

Students are encouraged to choose subjects that will both extend their interests and suit their abilities. They should not choose subjects based on what their friends are doing or the teachers they assume will be taking the classes.

Students will attend a year level meeting during school time where further information will be provided. Students are advised to select wisely and to seek further information from Heads of Department as the opportunity to change subjects once the timetable has been finalised is limited. Students should approach the relevant Head of Department to discuss their subject selections if they have any further questions.

Special Requirements

Some subjects in the performing arts have special assessment requirements that include performances. Students should consider this when making their subject selections.

Placement of Students into Elective Subjects

Student placement in elective subjects begins when they list their desired electives in order of preference. The timetabling software will try and place students in their first preference. If the class is full, then it will look to put the student into the second preference. If the student's first and second preferences are both available and do not occur at the same time, then the student will be put into both of their first and second preference classes. If the first and second choice classes occur at the same time, or one of the classes is full, then the software will try and put the student into his third preference.

For the reasons noted above, it is important that students give careful thought to elective course choices and orders of preference, and that they make their selections in a timely manner. Students are allowed to apply for subject changes in the first two weeks of a semester (see Appendix One). The Teaching and Learning Office will try to accommodate student preferences whenever it is feasible for the student and the classes in question.

Years 9 and 10

Students commencing study in Year 9 are entering a new phase in their education. They will study for their first public certificate, the '*ACT Year 10 Certificate*'.

The ACT Year 10 Certificate reports results for both Years 9 and 10. For all semester units studied during these years, an A to E grade will be recorded. The next two years are all the more important due to this certification. For some jobs and apprenticeships the successful completion of Year 10 is a necessary requirement.

The next two years are also important for a number of other reasons. Firm academic foundations need to be laid prior to the senior years. Skills and knowledge acquired in Years 9 and 10 will benefit students in their senior years. Sound study habits and a positive and independent attitude to learning in Years 9 and 10 will stand students in good stead in Years 11 and 12.

The process of Year 9 and 10 subject selection balances choice for each student with requirements the College has in ensuring the ACARA curriculum frameworks 'Essential Learning Areas' are taught.

Electives in Years 9 and 10

Students are able to choose two (2) elective subjects each semester. They may elect from two options:

Option 1: (Year-long stream)

Choose 2 year-long electives

Option 2: (Mixed stream)

Choose 1 year-long elective

Choose 2 semester electives

(Year 9 can study 4 semester electives as to provide breadth of learning)

It is important that students make selections carefully, for the following reasons:

- **Elective courses (Option 1) run for one full academic year.**
- **The opportunity to change from one subject to another mid-year for Option 1 is very limited.**

Students are encouraged to choose subjects that will both extend their interests and suit their abilities. They should not choose subjects based on what their friends are doing or by the teachers they assume will be taking the classes.

Students will attend a year level meeting during school time where further information will be provided. Students are advised to select wisely and seek further information from Heads of Department as opportunity to change subjects

once the timetable has been finalised is limited and subject to a process of validation (see Appendix One).

Implications for Years 11 and 12

Progress in Years 9 and 10 provides a strong indicator about appropriate senior study packages. Levels of achievement in Years 9 and 10 are used by the College to recommend valid senior subject selections. Students should speak with their teachers about their senior schooling goals during Years 9 and 10. Further information can be found in the Year 10 and Senior School Course guides. These are available from the Studies Office.

The Year 10 Certificate and High School Record

The ACT Year 10 Certificate is issued to students who have successfully completed an approved program of study to the end of Year 10. Successful completion includes academic performance, attendance and conduct. Ultimately, it is the College Principal who makes the decision on the awarding of the ACT Year 10 Certificate.

A High School Record is issued by the school and lists courses undertaken and grades achieved by a student in Years 9 and 10. A High School Record will be issued to students who are transferring to another school within the ACT or leaving the ACT system. Students who are not eligible to receive the Year 10 Certificate will be issued with a High School Record.

As the Year 10 Certificate and High School Record can be important documents for employment or educational reasons, an appeal process exists for those who are dissatisfied with their results. The student can request, in sequence, a review from:

1. Teacher or teachers involved.
2. Head of the Faculty or faculties involved.
3. College Principal or delegate.

If a student is dissatisfied with the result of the College review process, he may appeal to the Chief Executive of the ACT Department of Education and Training. An appeal may also be made against a principal's decision not to award an ACT Year 10 Certificate. Appeals to the Department should be made in writing as soon as possible after notification of the school's review decision.

Further information can be obtained from the Department's website at <http://www.det.act.gov.au>

Assessment in Years 7 to 10

Introduction

Assessment takes place formally and informally. It takes place in the classroom, at home and in the examination hall. Students and parents are stakeholders in this process. Staff continually develop assessments which provide students with a mixture of summative and formative tasks. The Australian Curriculum seeks to develop student 'Capabilities' across the curriculum. College assessment practice reflects these themes.

Examinations

Examinations are a compulsory part of the College's academic program. Students are required to attend all timetabled examinations. Failure to do so without written evidence of illness or misadventure will adversely affect academic grades. The College Calendar does not provide the provision for 'catch up' examination sessions.

For Year 10, examinations are held at the end of Terms Two and Four. The examination period is highlighted on the College calendar. Examinations are not held for every subject. A detailed outline of each subject, including the dates and types of assessment tasks, is distributed to each student and posted to Canvas.

Special facilities can be provided for students with specific needs for all types of assessment. Ms Lisa Millar, Head of Teaching and Learning Support, and Mr Tim Bibbens, Assistant Principal of Teaching and Learning make determinations about the most appropriate type of support that can be offered on a case by case basis. See the Examinations Procedures document for more information about Examinations and Tests.

SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Due dates are communicated on the unit outline at the beginning of the semester. If a date needs to be altered, the faculty head must endorse the decision and make sure it is communicated in writing to students.

Each assignment information sheet will contain a due date and specific task requirements. Teachers stipulate how an assessment is to be formatted and submitted. This is made clear on the assignment sheet.

The default position of the College is for all assignments to be submitted online through Canvas and our plagiarism checking software 'Turnitin'. Occasionally, an assignment may be handed in as hard copy and teachers will discuss this with students and indicate it in the assessment outline.

Issues with Assessment Items

Keeping on Track

Being aware of assessment due dates and test or examination times is no small task. If a student has on average four assessment tasks for each of eight subjects per semester, there will be 32 tasks to complete in a maximum of 20 weeks. Some of these tasks are clustered around reporting times which can add to stress and calls for careful planning.

Here are some ways to assist in planning:

- Utilise the College Dashboard regularly. It contains useful information about College events that may affect assessment tasks (for example House camps, other camps and carnivals) and call for time management
- Use *Canvas* regularly. It contains, amongst many useful things, all subject outlines which contain assessment due dates

Special Consideration for Assessment Items

The College Special Consideration policy is applicable to all students.

The Policy is framed around the idea that we, as a College, are interested in an assessment regime that provides fair and equitable assessments of students.

Students are considered to be 'employed' as a full-time student. Co-curricular commitments, casual or part-time work and Principal's personal leave are not considered to be grounds for special consideration.

Students should take all 'due care' in the preparation and submission of assessment items. Special consideration will not be granted in cases where it can be demonstrated that a student did not take due care to ensure that they met the due date or submission requirements. Examples of this include, but are not limited to, any sort of IT failure or not submitting an online copy of an assessment item.

Scheduled 'in class' assessments must be completed on the specified date. Students absent from the assessment will not be awarded a mark for the item unless negotiated special consideration has been agreed upon.

Approved special consideration is negotiated between all interested parties (usually the student, parent and Head of Department). It is the student's responsibility to obtain a special consideration form from the Studies Office (or online) and action the process. Determinations about received special consideration forms will be made in line with College policy.

The St Edmund's College Principal reserves the right to exercise discretionary intervention with respect to any College policy.

Special Consideration Policy

The relevant Head of Department is, in the first instance, responsible for the approval of special consideration requests made using the form available from the Teaching and Learning Office. If a student feels that the policy has not been applied in accordance with the general principles they may ask for the issue to be reviewed by the Assistant Principal Teaching and Learning or the Teaching and Learning Coordinator.

Special consideration must be applied for in advance of the due date of an assessment item whenever possible. The Head of Department reserves the right to deny special consideration applications where it can be demonstrated that the special consideration could have been, but, was not, applied for in advance. If it was not possible to apply for special consideration prior to the due date, a special consideration form must be submitted within 48 hours of a student's return to school.

Special consideration is granted on the basis of 'medical illness' or 'serious misadventure.' In Years 4 to 10, these may be documented by the student's parent or carer or by a relevant, qualified professional. Additionally, a student may attach any number of statements in support of the special consideration. These include, but are not limited to, statements by his Parents/Guardian, Tutor, Head of House or Class Teacher.

Attendance / Leave

A predicted or predictable absence from school is generally not a valid reason for seeking an extension. This includes cases in which the Principal has approved Leave of Absence. Section 102 of the Education Act (2004) requires the Principal to ensure that students regularly attend the College. Thus, it is the College's policy that students must apply to the Principal for leave before absenting themselves from school. When the Principal approves leave it is with the provision that the student is up to date with all assessments and of the understanding that no special consideration will be given on the basis of his approved leave.

A special consideration form MUST be filled out and attached to relevant assignments before any consideration can be actioned. Forms are available from the Teaching and Learning Office.

Late Submission of Work

If an assessment piece is submitted after its due date, parents will be notified within the seven day late submission window. It is the teacher's responsibility to notify parents of late assessment by text, email or telephone. Parents can also check student submission on Canvas.

All grading is based on Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards, therefore late penalties will not factor into academic grades for students in years 7 – 10. However, late submission of work will be a factor in students' application

grades and may result in reduced and/or delayed feedback. Note also that **no marks will be recorded for work that is more than seven days late.**

Students are encouraged to submit work on time as this is a valuable organisational skill. They are also expected to submit all work, even if it is late as there are educational benefits in doing so.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the copying, paraphrasing or summarising of work in any form, without acknowledgement of sources, and presenting this as the student's own work.

It is College policy that positive advice is offered to students on how to avoid plagiarism and that teachers institute practices that will assist in the verification of student work that is completed outside the classroom.

For Years 7 to 10, work done outside of class time will by default be submitted on Canvas and run through 'Turn It In', a program designed to check authenticity of work.

All instances of plagiarism must be reported to and recorded by the Assistant Principal of Teaching and Learning.

Plagiarism is treated as a serious academic offence. Minor cases and one off incidents will be dealt with by Faculty Heads, but repeated and/or serious breaches can lead to the voiding of a grade for a semester. Further information is available from the Teaching and Learning Office.

Word Limits in Assessment Items

- Assignments need to fall within a 10% buffer above or below the stated requirement.
- Submissions significantly below the buffer will be marked down by virtue of their incompleteness or may be regarded as a non-serious attempt and given no marks or a notional zero.
- Teachers will not mark or provide feedback on sections of assignments that exceed the plus 10% buffer.

Homework

Homework is meaningful work completed by a student in his own time, at his own pace and for his own academic benefit. It develops independent learning habits and presents students with the opportunity to refine and further develop skills and understandings taught in class. It also presents parents and carers with the opportunity to engage in the teaching and learning experiences of the St Edmund's classroom.

Teachers will assign homework at their discretion based on the learning needs of the student. Teachers will ensure that timeframes for the completion of homework are reasonable given the amount of work to be completed. Homework will not be given for the sake of it, but will have an essential role in the student's learning experience. For example, a student may need to read a section of a textbook or view a film clip in preparation for an upcoming lesson. Alternately, a student may need to provide a written response or complete a quiz so that a teacher can gather formative data.

Because teachers are committed to ensuring that all homework set is essential, it is the expectation of the college that all homework is complete without exception. St Edmund's College acknowledges the complexity of some students' lives, including out of hours commitments; however, we wish to promote student organisation and not set them up for failure. Students who struggle to understand homework instruction or who don't have the space or facilities to complete homework are encouraged to attend after school tutoring in the library. Students who fail to complete homework may be required to use lunch time and/or recess to get caught up. For students who regularly fail to complete homework, teachers may recommend after school tutoring to parents. In this case, the expectation would be that academic responsibilities take precedence over co-curricular activities.

Students should expect an increasing academic workload as they get older and they are encouraged to set up routines for completing work at home each night. The amount of time students might expect to work independently each night is below. Note these times would include work that has been set explicitly as homework, assignment completion, general academic organisation, exam/assessment revision, and independent reading and research.

Year 7 & 8	30 – 45 minutes
Year 9	45 – 60 minutes
Year 10	60 – 90 minutes
Years 11 & 12	90 – 120 minutes

Not all students work at the same pace. Students who are far exceeding the times above on a regular basis should speak with their teachers, their tutor or Head of House, and/or the Diverse Learning faculty.

Reporting to Parents

There are many ways in which the College reports to parents:

- **Application Rubrics** indicate the extent to which students are applying themselves to study. They are generated at the end of each term and communicated to parents via Progress and Semester Reports.
- The rubric is used to provide objective evidence based data about students' progress. This data is used for reporting and to identify students who are at risk of not achieving to their potential. The data is also used to identify and reward students who are performing well.
- Application Rubrics are also used by the Pastoral Team to identify students who are experiencing difficulties in meeting College academic and pastoral expectations. Poor results in Application Rubrics are used to activate the College's Promotions Program, the details of which are in the Pastoral Booklet.
- Term One and Term Three Reports: These give guidance about how the student is travelling. They contain comments from teachers that can inform learning in the following term.
- Semester One and Semester Two reports: These reports record the progress of students' grades over a whole semester. They contain a detailed Pastoral Report. The grades obtained in Year 9 and 10 will appear on the Year 10 Certificate.
- Parent Teacher Night: This is an opportunity for parents to discuss their son's progress with subject teachers. The student is strongly encouraged to attend those meetings. In 2021, Parent Teacher nights will be held in Terms two and three (see Calendar for details).
- Parent Tutor Night: These nights provide an opportunity for parents to discuss their son's overall academic and pastoral progress with the Tutor as well as to set goals. This will occur in Term One (see Calendar for details).

Students with Special Needs

The College is committed to providing an education for those students enrolled who have special needs. Students with special needs include those students with identified learning difficulties, a behaviour disorder or a physical disability.

The goals of the College are to:

- Provide appropriate educational programs for students with a disability, which may include, but is not limited to, adjusting curriculum and teaching strategies, resources and the environment to address the learning needs of individual students
- Maintain the College Special Needs Team and their relationship with the CEO for Canberra/Goulbourn Archdiocese to monitor the educational progress of students with additional needs, identify and coordinate the support mechanisms required to meet the educational, pastoral care, safety and health needs and coordinate their planning and review processes
- Involve parents/carers by providing information about programs and procedures to parents/carers and actively encourage their participation and work in partnership with parent/carers and the broader community
- Involve students with their parents/carers in the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) process as students with special needs move through their schooling
- Provide all students receiving special education services to have Term Special Education Program Review Meetings with their parents/carers.

St Edmund's College utilises the appraisal process and expertise of the CEO and refers to the ACT Disability Criteria in determining the level of resources required to assist the student.

The College also has to collect data on disability for the National Consistency Data Collection. More details can be found here:

www.education.gov.au/nationally-consistent-collection-data-school-students-disability

NAPLAN

In 2008, the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) commenced in Australian schools. Every year, all students in Years 3, 5, 7, and 9 are assessed on the same days using national tests in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions (Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation) and Numeracy.

NAPLAN results provide an important measure of how all Australian students are performing in Literacy and Numeracy. Individual student performance on each test is shown on national achievement scales from Year 3 to 9. Six bands are reported for each year level. The second bottom band at each year level will represent the national minimum standard for students at that year level. A result at the national minimum standard indicates that the student demonstrated only the basic literacy and numeracy skills needed to participate in that year level. The performance of individual students can be compared to the average performance of all students in Australia.

NAPLAN data can be used in the following ways:

- Students and parents may use individual results to discuss achievements and progress with teachers
- Teachers use results to help them better identify students who require greater challenges or additional support
- The College uses results to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching programs and to set goals in Literacy and Numeracy
- Data is directly linked to specific online teaching resources used to plan lessons.

Preparing For NAPLAN

The most appropriate way to prepare students for NAPLAN tests is to teach the curriculum effectively because the tests reflect many core elements of the curriculum.

Test practice involves students completing examples of previous tests or sample tests for the purpose of familiarising them with test instructions and common forms of questions. Teachers routinely prepare students for testing, including as appropriate, practice on sample tests. Adequate preparation ensures that students feel comfortable in the testing environment and are able to confidently demonstrate what they know and can do. Excessive coaching and test preparation is not condoned.

Further information about NAPLAN can be obtained from the following website. It answers many questions about sitting NAPLAN, exemptions from the tests and so on: <https://www.nap.edu.au/>