

# INQUIRY

## CENTRE SPECIFIC POLICY

### Beliefs:

Engaging students in learning based on inquiry will develop independent thinkers and learners that will build a variety of transferrable skills such as research, questioning, higher order thinking, collaboration and problem solving that are essential life skills.

At Southern Rise Education Centre we believe that:

- Student engagement is promoted when learning is authentic and has a real purpose for the learner.

### Aims:

- To provide a program that enables students to respond to big issues, ideas and questions and gain knowledge that will be acquired and applied in an authentic way.
- For all aspects of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning as outlined in SREC Blueprint document to be incorporated via the inquiry process.

### Implementation:

- The inquiry focus follows a two year plan that is developed by teams to reflect VELS/National Curriculum/National Early Years Learning Framework key learning outcomes.
- As a learning community we are committed to a **whole centre inquiry approach**.
- There are many aspects to Inquiry Learning. Inquiry Learning is promoted when learning programs allow students to make choices in their learning, manage their learning and do their own thinking. The **teachers' role** is to facilitate this type of learning to happen rather than delivering facts to students.
- The inquiry approach follows a cycle of **tuning in, finding out, sorting out, going further and taking action**.
- At the primary school level **throughlines** have been developed to identify the curriculum content focus. The throughlines cover three key areas of focus: Self, Community and Natural and Man Made Environment. These areas are considered to be vital to focus on in terms of the 'big ideas' impacting on the lives and futures of our students. These areas incorporate the content of the VELS domains of Science, Technology Health and PE and Humanities. VELS English, Maths, The Arts and LOTE are also incorporated where relevant into the learning of the inquiry unit.
- **Integration of domains** – various aspects of the curriculum are covered throughout the inquiry as appropriate.
- **Forward planning** of the unit is completed by teachers. Generative questions, tuning in, finding out and the culminating task are planned in advance with a high level of student consultation prior to and during the inquiry. Topics chosen for the inquiry need to be relevant to students' current and future lives and cover 'big ideas' that are real life issues.
- **Focus of learning** is outlined via understandings, generative questions and throughlines. The "Going Further" aspect of the unit enables teachers to facilitate students to develop deeper inquiry and deeper understandings of aspects of the inquiry they would like to know more about.
- The inquiry approach will enable students to develop a **deeper understanding** of the area focused on in the inquiry. This is achieved by learning more about particular aspects of the knowledge rather than having superficial knowledge of a broad range of aspects of the focus. The focus of the inquiry is narrowed for this purpose.
- **Linking to the real world** via excursions, incursions, hands on activities are all vital to ensure students engagement in the inquiry and **authenticity of the learning**.

- The inquiry learning process acknowledges **individual learning styles**, preferences and intelligences within a learning community.
- The inquiry will challenge students with new learning and incorporate **higher order thinking** that will develop a deeper understanding.
- **Assessment** of the learning of the inquiry occurs via the culminating task. This task needs to be an authentic outcome that students are able to demonstrate what they have learnt. An assessment task that is something the students can do that will make an impact on their lives is essential. This learning needs to link back to the key understandings and generative questions that were identified at the commencement of the unit.

**Evaluation:**

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in...

November, 2012