2025 Early Stage 1 – Kindergarten
Academic Programs Curriculum Handbook

Hills Grammar

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Our students **'Strive for Excellence'** in all they do.
In so doing, they achieve more than they believed possible.

Vision

Extraordinary Education: Growing Minds, Discovering Passions, Nurturing Character

Purpose

To foster each student's potential for greatness through outstanding teaching in a unique learning environment

Our Values

Respect	Integrity	Service	Excellence

Graduate Aim

Extraordinary Individuals: In partnership with our families and community and in an environment where wellbeing, connectedness, and high expectations matter, we enable our students to:

- Embody the humanitarian values of Respect, Integrity, Service and Excellence
- Develop a deep knowledge, understanding and skills across a range of academic disciplines
- Be open to growth and opportunity as they strive to reach their potential and beyond
- Become adaptive, creative, and critical thinkers who face challenges with optimism and resilience
- Value their local community and act and think like global citizens and environmental stewards
- Embrace innovative technologies and develop an entrepreneurial mindset
- Lead with conviction, courage, and compassion to make an impact in the world

Hills Grammar Original

A Hills Grammar Original is a student whose unique abilities are celebrated, who is inspired to discover their interests, talents, and passions, and who strives for excellence in everything they do.

In the words of the School Song, our Hills Originals reflect a "myriad of dreams and aspirations"

Contents

Introduction

As Kindergarten students commence their first year of formal schooling at Hills Grammar, they begin a new stage in their educational journey. This thirteen-year journey begins with the transition from home to the Junior School. It is an exciting time for students as they experience the many learning experiences offered at Hills Grammar.

Hills Grammar aims to provide a broad education of the highest possible standard to develop each student's academic, cultural, social and physical potential.

Learning for children in Kindergarten revolves around family, school, and themselves. Students will meet new friends and classmates. They will learn the conventions of school and to follow simple instructions and adjust to new routines. They will understand and experience their place in 'their' world. They will mix, talk, explore, investigate, wonder, recognise, identify, play, listen, manipulate and respond. They will acquire knowledge through the many learning opportunities available to them at Hills Grammar.

School pedagogy is based on a constructivist approach, which acknowledges that learners have beliefs about how the world works based on their experiences and prior learning in the younger years. Those beliefs, models or constructs are revisited and revised in the light of new experiences and further learning. Students are provided with opportunities to build meaning and refine their understanding, principally through structured inquiry, with different hands-on resources and multimedia technologies. Inquiries take many forms, with students working sometimes on their own, with partners, or in larger groups.

Student learning is differentiated and student centred, with a focus on guided inquiry and assessment for learning. In the early years, teachers guide students towards appropriate learning experiences; teaching is thus both explicit in nature with core skills taught, and open-ended to respond to the innate curiosity and intelligent questioning of young children.

Our statement on Learning and Teaching: Deeper Water, Deeper Learning (2021) introduces the key themes of our learning journey Pre-K to 12 at Hills Grammar.

Dr Geoff Gates

Director of Learning and Teaching, Pre-K to 12

Stages of Learning - Academic Excellence

While each stage of learning and teaching has its unique qualities, Hills Grammar teachers work together on one Pre-K to 12 campus to share ideas and experiences, to achieve a longer-term view of academic excellence. In tandem with the Student Wellbeing and Co-curricular programs, the Academic Program is driven by the School Vision: Extraordinary Education: Extraordinary Individuals.

Hills Grammar offers a broad and rich academic curriculum, with our ECEC, Junior School and Senior School programs going beyond National and State requirements through the adoption of a rich guided inquiry pedagogy, built around 'Big Ideas' for students to explore and engage with. Our Senior School (Years 7 to 12) operates within the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) curriculum requirements, leading to an excellent range of Higher School Certificate (HSC) courses in Years 11 and 12. The curriculum at Hills Grammar draws on the best of academic traditions, including the discipline of learning, while also looking for ways to be innovative and forward- thinking as we prepare our students for the future.

Hills Grammar prides itself on its excellent Professional Development of our teachers, with a focus in recent years on our Whole School Pedagogy (our core principles of teaching and learning). The School aims to be a culture of thinking, and our work with the Harvard Zero Project Zero consultant, Mark Church, has greatly enhanced school-based programs to this end. Harvard researcher Ron Ritchhart writes -- "culture is the hidden tool in transforming our schools and offering our students the best learning possible ... culture is foundational. It will determine how any curriculum comes to life".

The Academic Program is therefore best understood as comprising of not only the curriculum (what is taught) but the approach to learning and teaching of that curriculum (how it is taught). Innovation in the classroom means drawing out the best of academic traditions and looking for deep connections across traditional subjects, supported by such programs as the Term 4 Interdisciplinary Enrichment Program for Years 7 - 10. The following pages summarise the Early Stage 1 Curriculum and subject offerings. The day-to-day experience in the classroom is where the curriculum comes to life, however, and where we believe our uniqueness lies, fostering each student's potential for greatness.

Academic Program – Kindergarten

Curriculum Statement

Purpose:

It is recognised that students learn at different rates in accordance with recognisable stages of development.

In Kindergarten we provide a balanced sequential program catering for individual needs and differences through the eight Key Learning Areas.

The Key Learning Areas are:

- English
- Science and Technology
- History
- Personal Development, Health and Physical Education
- Mathematics
- Geography
- Creative Arts
- Additional Languages.

The teaching and learning within the Key Learning Area contain knowledge, skills, understandings, values and attitudes that are relevant and appropriate for each developmental stage of learning.

The management of your child's learning needs is primarily the responsibility of the classroom teacher and specialist staff. However, within the Junior School there are also several people who provide leadership and support to the teachers including:

- The Head of Junior School
- The Assistant Head of Junior School
- The Learning Enrichment Co-ordinator
- The Academic Engagement Co-ordinator
- The Student Engagement Co-ordinator and,
- The School Psychologists (referral needed)

English

The aim of English in Years K–10 is to enable students to understand and use language effectively. Students learn to appreciate, reflect on, and enjoy language, and make meaning in ways that are imaginative, creative, interpretive, critical and powerful.

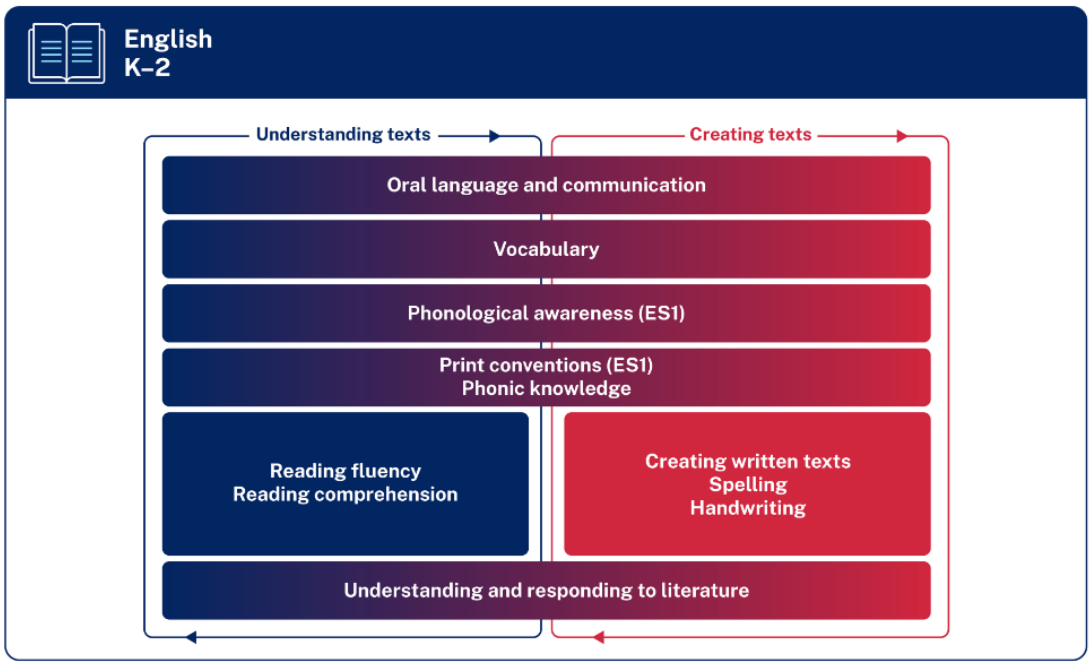
K-2 Focus Area

The focus areas for each stage support students' growing knowledge and understanding in the areas of:

- Oral language and communication
- Vocabulary
- Phonological awareness
- Print conventions
- Phonic knowledge
- Reading fluency
- Reading comprehension
- Creating written texts
- Spelling
- Handwriting
- Understanding and responding to literature

In English K–6, the importance of strong foundations in the early years across oral language, reading and writing is highlighted. The organisation of the syllabus supports the development of early literacy knowledge and skills, while continuing to acknowledge the importance of learning about and enjoying literature.

Evidence highlights the importance of oral language, reading and writing. Oral language can include spoken, nonverbal, symbolic and gestural forms. This includes Auslan, which fulfils the same function as oral language in meeting the communication and language development needs of students who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing.



Mathematics

The aim of Mathematics K–10 is to enable students to become confident users of mathematics, learning and applying the language of mathematics to communicate efficiently and effectively. They develop an increasingly sophisticated understanding of mathematical concepts and a fluency with mathematical processes that helps them to interpret and solve problems. Students make connections within mathematics and connect mathematical concepts with the world around them. They learn to understand and appreciate how mathematics is a relevant part of their lives.

Organisation of Mathematics K-10

The syllabus structure illustrates the important role Working mathematically plays across all areas of mathematics and reflects the strengthened connections between concepts. Working mathematically has been embedded in the outcomes, content and examples of the syllabus.

Mathematics K-10 outcomes and their related content are organised:

- Number and algebra
- Measurement and spaces
- Statistics and probability

Working Mathematically

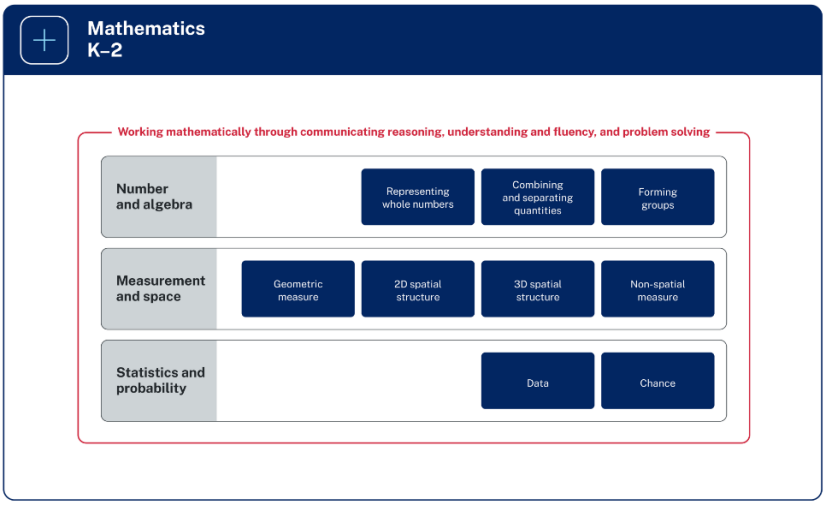
The Working mathematically processes present in the Mathematics K-10 syllabus are:

- Communicating
- Understanding and fluency
- Reasoning
- Problem solving

Students learn to work mathematically by using these processes in an interconnected way. The coordinated development of these processes results in students becoming mathematically proficient.

When students are Working mathematically it is important to help them to reflect on how they have used their thinking to solve problems. This assists students to develop '*mathematical habits of mind*' (Cuoco et al. 2010).

Students need many experiences that require them to relate their knowledge to the vocabulary and conceptual frameworks of mathematics.



An overview of the syllabus structure for Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 in Mathematics across the 3 areas of Number and algebra, Measurement and space, and Statistics and probability. Number and algebra reads horizontally across Representing whole numbers, Combining and separating quantities, and Forming groups. Measurement and space reads horizontally across Geometric measure, 2D spatial structure, 3D spatial structure, and Non-spatial measure. Statistics and probability reads horizontally across Data and Chance.

Science and Technology

The study of Science and Technology in K-6 enables students to explore scientific and technological concepts and develop knowledge and understanding of the world; enabling them to inquire, plan, investigate and develop solutions to problems. Through the application of Working Scientifically, and Design and Production skills, students develop an interest in and an enthusiasm for understanding nature, phenomena and the built environment.

Objectives

Skills

Students develop and apply skills in:

- scientific inquiry through the process of working scientifically
- design and production processes in the development of solutions
- design and production of digital solutions.

Knowledge and Understanding

Students develop knowledge and understanding of:

- the natural world including living things, materials, forces, energy, and Earth and space
- the built environment including engineering principles and systems, food and fibre production and material technologies
- digital technologies including digital systems and how digital technologies represent data.

Values and Attitudes

Students:

- value the importance and contribution of science and technology in developing solutions for current and future personal, social and global issues and in shaping a sustainable future
- appreciate the importance of using evidence and reason to engage with and respond to scientific and technological ideas as informed, reflective citizens
- value developing solutions to problems and meeting challenges through the application of Working Scientifically, and Design and Production skills.

Early Stage 1

By the end of Early Stage 1, students engage in the processes of Working Scientifically, and Design and Production to make sense of the world around them. They explore their immediate surroundings and ask questions about their observations and experiences. They collect data and communicate their ideas and observations in a variety of ways. Students investigate possibilities and solutions, individually and in collaboration with others, and use the design process to develop solutions. They effectively use a range of classroom equipment and learn to work safely when using resources and materials.

Students recognise that living things have different features and basic needs which can be met. They recognise that plants and animals can be used for food, clothing and shelter. Students identify that objects are made from materials that have observable properties, and that these properties influence their design and use. They describe how objects move and observe the effects of push and pull forces. Students identify daily and seasonal changes in the environment. Students also identify familiar digital systems and follow a simple set of instructions.

Geography

Geography is the study of places and the relationships between people and their environments. It is a rich and complex discipline that integrates knowledge from natural sciences, social sciences and humanities to build a holistic understanding of the world. Students learn to question why the world is the way it is, reflect on their relationships with and responsibilities for the world and propose actions designed to shape a socially just and sustainable future.

Geography emphasises the role, function and importance of the environment in supporting human life from local to global scales. It also emphasises the important interrelationships between people and environments and the different understandings of these relationships. The wellbeing of societies and environments depends on the quality of interactions between people and the natural world.

Geographical inquiry involves students acquiring, processing and communicating geographical information. Through an inquiry approach students explain patterns, evaluate consequences and contribute to the management of places and environments in an increasingly complex world. This process enables them to apply inquiry skills including: asking distinctively geographical questions; planning an inquiry and evaluating information; processing, analysing and interpreting that information; reaching conclusions based on evidence and logical reasoning; evaluating and communicating their findings; and reflecting on their inquiry and responding, through action, to what they have learned. Engagement in fieldwork and the use of other tools including mapping and spatial technologies are fundamental to geographical inquiry.

The study of Geography enables students to become active, responsible and informed citizens able to evaluate the opinions of others and express their own ideas and arguments. This forms a basis for active participation in community life, a commitment to sustainability, the creation of a just society, and the promotion of intercultural understanding and lifelong learning. The skills and capabilities developed through geographical study can be applied to further education, work and everyday life.

Aim

The aim of Geography in Years K–10 is to stimulate students' interest in and engagement with the world. Through geographical inquiry they develop an understanding of the interactions between people, places and environments across a range of scales in order to become informed, responsible and active citizens.

Early Stage 1 Statement

By the end of Early Stage 1, students identify familiar places and recognise why some places are special or important to people and how they care for them. They recognise that places can be represented on maps.

Students acquire information by observing, talking to others and viewing, reading and/or listening to texts. They use geographical tools and communicate geographical information in a range of forms. Students reflect on their learning from the findings of their inquiry.

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History

The aim of the History syllabus is to stimulate students' interest in and enjoyment of exploring the past, to develop a critical understanding of the past and its impact on the present, to develop the critical skills of historical inquiry and to enable students to participate as active, informed and responsible citizens.

History is a disciplined process of inquiry into the past that helps to explain how people, events and forces from the past have shaped our world. It allows students to locate and understand themselves and others in the continuum of human experience up to the present. History provides opportunities for students to explore human actions and achievements in a range of historical contexts. Students become aware that history is all around us and that historical information may be drawn from the physical remains of the past as well as written, visual and oral sources of evidence.

The study of History from Kindergarten to Year 10 investigates the actions, motives and lifestyles of people over time, from individuals and family members, to local communities, expanding to national and world history contexts. It introduces the idea that History contains many stories and that there is never only one uncontested version. There are many differing perspectives within a nation's history, and historians may interpret events differently depending on their point of view and the sources they have used. The study of History strengthens an appreciation for and an understanding of civics and citizenship. It also provides broader insights into the historical experiences of different cultural groups within our society and how various groups have struggled for civil rights, for example Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, migrants and women. History encourages students to develop an understanding of significant historical concepts such as cause and effect, change and continuity, significance, empathy and contestability.

History as a discipline has its own methods and procedures. It is much more than the simple presentation of facts and dates from the past. History provides the skills for students to answer the question 'How do we know?' An investigation of an historical issue through a range of sources can stimulate curiosity and develop problem-solving, research and critical thinking skills. It develops language specific to the discipline of History and provides opportunities to further develop literacy skills. Students learn to critically analyse and interpret sources of evidence in order to construct reasoned explanations and a rational and informed argument based on evidence, drawn from the remains of the past. Students engage in research involving traditional methods and ICT, including evaluating web-based sources and using a range of technologies for historical research and communication.

Early Stage 1 Statement

By the end of Early Stage 1, students communicate stories of their own family heritage and the heritage of others. They identify similarities and differences between families and recognise how important family events are commemorated.

Students sequence familiar events in order and pose questions about their own and their family's past. They identify and compare the features of objects from the past and the present. Students acquire information by direct observation, talking to others and by viewing, reading and/or listening to texts. Students relate a story about their past using a range of texts and language associated with time and change.

Guided Inquiry – A Whole School Approach

Hills Grammar uses a Guided Inquiry approach to learning and teaching. Important Science and Technology, History and Geography skills and concepts are explicitly taught and then applied to the exploration of 'Big Ideas' in each grade. Our inquiry units are intentionally transdisciplinary, allowing students to ask questions, pose hypotheses, experiment, justify, delve deeper and find solutions. Aspects of English Mathematics and other Key Learning Areas are linked to the inquiries where applicable.

Content is taught through the important concepts of each big idea. In Kindergarten these concepts include belonging, beliefs, culture, family, change, connection, interdependency, systems and forces.

The Hills Grammar School: SCOPE AND SEQUENCE - INQUIRY UNITS K-6

YEAR LEVEL	TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3	TERM 4
K	**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY** Material Matters Materials and their properties affect their use.		**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY** Ch-Ch-Changes Processes of Change.	**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY** Use The Force Forces create movement.
	GEOGRAPHY We Belong A sense of belonging arises from a connection with people and places		**History** My Story, Your Story Processes of Change.	
1	**HISTORY** Be the Change Throughout history, some things change, and some remain the same.	**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY** Invent Tomorrow 'Invent Tomorrow' People apply their understanding of energy to invent and create.	**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY** Nature Never Breaks Her own Laws People's understanding of the natural environment influences the way they value it.	**GEOGRAPHY** Location, Location, Location The features of places influence weather and human settlement.
2	**HISTORY** History Sleuths We can learn about our past by examining and preserving a range of sources.	**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY** Daring Designers The properties of materials are considered when designing items for different purposes.	**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY** Sustainability Superstars People can make choices to support the sustainability of the Earth's resources.	**GEOGRAPHY** Regional Rangers Natural and manmade places need to be preserved and cared for
3	**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY** Earth Shock! Humans need an understanding of the Earth to make proactive decisions.	**Geography** Life as we Know It People's perceptions of places are influenced by the way they engage with them	**HISTORY** Marking The Day Cultures are represented and influenced by celebrations, rituals and commemorations.	**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY** The Circle of Life Agricultural practices used to make food and fibre are dependent on environmental conditions.
4	**GEOGRAPHY** Earth's Environment If sustained, the environment supports all living things	**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY** Material Criteria Materials can undergo changes through a variety of processes.	**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY** Energy Frenzy Energy and forces impact on the environment.	**HISTORY** To Boldly Go Exploration leads to discoveries that affect the people of the world.
5	**HISTORY** Choice and Consequences Past events shape the present and the future.	**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY** Place in Space The Earth is part of a system and its surface changes because of natural and human activity.	**GEOGRAPHY** Settle Down! There are benefits and risks in choosing places to live.	**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY** May The Force Be With You Energy is transformed and used in products and systems.
6	**GEOGRAPHY** This is the World We Live In Connections shape perceptions in a diverse world	**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY** Living In a Material World Understanding the properties of materials can help us solve problems.	**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY** Everything Changes Change can affect our environment and its inhabitants in many ways.	**HISTORY** Justice for All – My Migration Government systems and decisions can promote or deny equal opportunities and social justice

Creative Arts

Visual Arts • Music • Drama • Dance

Students make pictures and other artworks using the media and materials given, representing both real and imagined situations. They appreciate that artists make artworks and they begin to describe some aspects of artworks. Students sing, play and move to a range of music. They experiment with sounds and begin to organise them into basic structures. Students listen and respond to a variety of music. Students engage in roles through imaginative play and dramatic situations. They use movement, spaces and objects to dramatise personal experiences. They respond to different forms of dramatic experiences. Students perform dances with some control over body movement and expression. They respond to a range of stimuli, drawing from experience and imagination, exploring the notion that dance is about moving the body to express ideas.

Students watch dance performances and begin to recognise some basic components of dance.

Personal Development, Health and Physical Education

Fundamental Movement and Physical Activity • Healthy Choices • Self and Relationships

By the end of Early Stage 1, students identify personal characteristics and strengths, recognise how they are growing and changing and identify different parts of the body. They describe the different emotions people experience. Students practise interpersonal skills to interact positively with others. They identify people who can assist and recognise actions that help them to be resilient, healthy, safe and active. Students explore contextual factors that influence an individual's health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity. They identify skills and strategies to stay safe and be supported. With developing self-control, students explore emotional responses and co-operate positively with others in a variety of play and group situations.

Students explore how their body responds to movement. They practise body movement and control, demonstrating different ways the body can move in relation to space, time, objects, effort and people. Students compose and sequence simple movements. They show awareness and consideration of others during play situations. Students perform fundamental movement skills and explore possible solutions to movement challenges through participation in a range of activities.

Additional Language Learning

The aim of learning a second (or in some cases a third) language is to enable students to develop communication skills, focus on languages as systems and gain insights into the relationship between language and culture, leading to lifelong personal, educational and vocational benefits.

There are three main objectives to learning an additional language;

Using Language

Students will develop their knowledge and understanding through listening, reading, speaking and writing.

Making Linguistic Connections

Students will explore the nature of languages as systems by making comparisons between a second language and English, leading to an appreciation of linguistic structures and vocabulary.

Moving Between Cultures

Students will develop knowledge of the culture of beyond their own, and form an understanding of the interdependence of language and culture, thereby encouraging reflection on their own cultural heritage.

Each objective describes the active commitment students will make to the acquisition of skills in communicating in an additional language

Literacy Learning

Handwriting

The NSW Foundation style of handwriting is taught at Hills Grammar.

The Foundation Movements

The following three Foundation Movements form the basis of legible, fluent handwriting. They are the basis of the Foundation Style. Practising these movements separately and in combination develops a memory for them. This memory can be developed whether the movements are large or small. Each of these movements can be produced by the fingers contracting and releasing. They can also be produced by using the whole arm to make large movements.

1. The sloped anticlockwise ellipse movement

2. The sloped clockwise ellipse movement

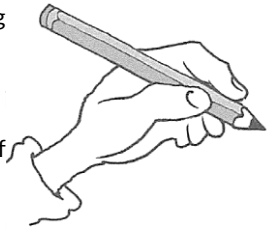
3. The sloped downstroke movement

Physical Aspects of Handwriting

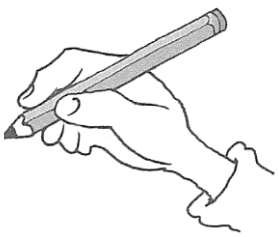
Children may initially use their whole hand to grip the pencil/crayon and then progress to all the fingers and then to three fingers.

The method to be encouraged, for both left-handers and rig ndex and middle fingers in one of the following ways:

- having the thumb and index finger pinch while the writing
- having the thumb and middle finger pinch with the index f ıb, index and middle finger share the task equally
- the angle of the writing implement to the page, and to the consistent slope and space.



Pencil grip - left hand



Pencil grip - right hand

Assessment

Assessment and Reporting K-6

Assessment and reporting are an essential part of the education process. The selection of curriculum, the choice of a range of pedagogical practices, and the design of assessment measures are the three central aspects of the educational process. They must be as closely aligned as possible for effective learning to occur. Hills Grammar reports reflect the requirements of both the NSW Education Standards Authority. The outcomes specified and mandated by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) syllabus documents are reflected in both assessment tasks and the reports issued to parents.

A variety of assessment tasks are provided, extending beyond traditional tests to a multitude of ways in which a student may demonstrate their understanding, both in individually and collaboratively, in a number of language modes.

Assessment is central to the inquiry process and teachers work towards guiding students thoughtfully and effectively through the five essential elements of learning: the acquisition of knowledge; the understanding of concepts; the mastering of skills; the development of attitudes; and the decision to take action. The prime objective of assessment through inquiry is to provide feedback and feedforward on the learning process. This objective aligns with a key principle of School pedagogy 'Assessment for Learning' (also an important aspect of NSW syllabus documents).

Each semester, there will be a range of learning activities where teachers collect samples of student work to determine their progress in the knowledge and skills for each subject. From 2022, students in Year 3-6 will also complete two assessments per semester in English, Mathematics and Inquiry (Science and Technology, and HSIE), as well as one assessment per semester in the specialist areas. For these tasks, parents/carers will be able to read individual student feedback on HG Engage. The A-E grade on the half yearly and yearly reports will be based on both class activities and assessments.

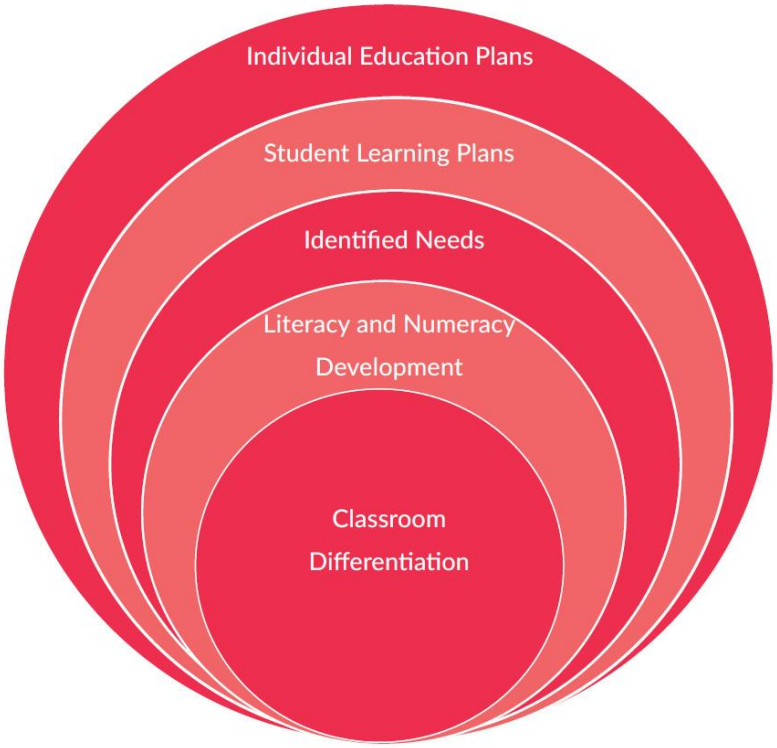
Learning Enrichment

Hills Grammar recognises that students learn in a variety of ways and at different rates. Further the School acknowledges the ethical, professional and legislative responsibility to provide and create an inclusive learning environment in which students who can benefit from the programs offered by Hills Grammar can access the academic curriculum and other learning programs, including both the wellbeing and co-curricular activities provided within the School.

The Learning Enrichment Model endeavours to capture and describe the various ways the School caters and accommodates student learning needs.

The Model identifies five approaches to accommodating student needs:

- Differentiation – the foundation upon which all learning experiences are built
- Literacy and Numeracy Development – the basics of learning
- Recommended Learning Plans – acknowledging individual learning style
- Student Learning Plans – responding to identified learning requirements
- Individual Education Plans – responding to specific learning requirements.



Kenthurst Road, Kenthurst, NSW 2156
Private Bag No.1, Round Corner, NSW 2158
p +61 2 9654 2111 f +61 2 9654 2205

CRICOS Provider Code: 02260G

hillsgrammar.nsw.edu.au