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Why Middle School?

The transition from the traditional Year Six in Primary School to Year Seven in High School can provide many challenges for the developing adolescent. During this stage of growth, students can easily become overwhelmed by the changes that are imposed upon them in any normal school situation.

In the traditional setting, students go directly from a Primary model that involves spending the majority of the day with the same teacher in Year Six, to encountering a range of teachers throughout the day in Year Seven.

Students also go from having one main classroom in Year Six to a range of rooms or buildings in Year Seven. Other changes during this phase include changes in peer groups, routines, expectations and responsibilities. In the transition from Year Six to Year Seven, the needs of young adolescents can easily be neglected.

Upon encountering the traditional larger Secondary School setting, young adolescents can easily get lost in the system and lose a sense of belonging or recognition. Students entering this system can often become unmotivated or lose interest in taking responsibility for their learning. These young adolescents can display little interest in school and become dispassionate about their goals.

Middle School students generally pass through a distinct phase in their development. These years are characterised by changes in a number of areas:

- Academic development - from dependence on concrete operational experience to increasing ability to learn via an abstract, theoretical approach.
- Physical development - through puberty and early adolescence with a range of pressures.
- Social development
  - an increasing need to assert independence
  - increase in strength of peer group relationships
  - increased awareness of how they are perceived by others
- Moral and spiritual development - from dependence upon their parents’ values to ownership of their own beliefs.

Students within these year levels form a distinct group whose needs must be met by a curriculum approach which allows for a variety of teaching methods while achieving educational outcomes consistent with the aims and ethos of the College.

Our goals are to develop the whole learner in a nurturing, caring environment that stimulates learning in creative ways.

This is a major distinctive that sets us apart from other Schools in the area. This innovative approach assists us in meeting the diverse needs of young adolescents.
Middle School
Vision Statement

At Middle School, our desire is to foster a community where Christ-like character is modelled and cherished in a supportive and caring environment. Students are encouraged to enhance their God given gifts and talents and apply these to their learning. Our programs focus on developing sound character which enables our students to serve God and positively impact our community.
Middle School:
What it Looks Like

Our approach to meeting the needs of emerging adolescents includes the following:

- Providing a Home Room teacher for each class who is a significant adult for adolescents
- Providing a caring, supportive environment with a strong emphasis on building relationships
- Increasing academic rigour through a variety of subjects
- Providing learners with the opportunities to discover and follow their gifts
- Seeking to establish an environment that instils positive study habits, time management skills and self-discipline
- Developing ‘Life Long Learners’

In developing distinctive curriculum offerings for St Andrews, the College has taken into consideration a wide range of curriculum models. We align our curriculum with the Australian Curriculum as set out in Government guidelines and documentation. We present this from a Biblical perspective where students are encouraged to consider how they respond to God as citizens placed in His creation.

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**KEY LEARNING AREAS INCLUDE:**

**Arts:** Art, Music, Drama  
**English:** Written & Oral Language, Grammar, Spelling, Reading, Poetry & Literature  
**Mathematics**  
**Science:** Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Astronomy and Geology  
**Humanities:** Cultural Studies, History, Geography and Economics  
**Information & Communication Technology/Design, Creativity and Technology:** Wood, Plastics, Metals, Food and Textiles  
**Health and Physical Education:** Health, Sport, Daily Fitness, Physical Education  
**Languages Other Than English (LOTE):** French
Leadership Development

Student leadership development is a priority at St Andrews with many valuable leadership opportunities available for students in Middle School. We aim to develop the next generation into well-skilled leaders who understand life on the basis of biblical truth; leaders who walk with God and serve Him with their lives and leaders who will bring a powerful and positive Christian influence in the community.

The many opportunities that are provided at St Andrews Middle School include:

National Young Leaders Day: Conducted by the Halogen Foundation, the National Young Leaders Day is an event run at the Melbourne Convention Centre where students hear from a range of Leaders who share their stories. Students are also encouraged to take on a leadership challenge at the School. This is a valuable day for selected students who come away with valuable leadership tips.

GRIP Student Leadership Conference: This event is unique in that it concentrates specifically on training student leaders for their role as school leaders. The style, topics, and content of this conference all focus on what the students can do right now. Our goal is that student leaders would leave the conference with a clear vision, a solid understanding and dozens of ideas for their time as a leader.

Student Leadership Development Day: Selected students from Middle School are given the opportunity to develop their leadership skills through participation in the Leadership Development Day.

Students undertake a range of challenges and activities aimed at building a deeper understanding of themselves as leaders. Opportunities to reflect on their skills and talents and how these can impact their leadership styles are also a part of this day.

Students selected for this event are expected to implement a project in the College that will benefit one aspect of school life.

Public Speaking Training & Development: Selected Middle School students are given the opportunity to lead assemblies, sharpening their public speaking skills in large group settings. Each student leader is given one-on-one coaching with the Student Leadership Coordinator.

Prep Buddies Program: In Year 6, all students are paired with a Prep ‘buddy’ and are responsible for helping the younger students to assimilate into the life of the college. There is a strong focus on character development in this program (the Year 6 students set a positive example for their buddies).

In collaboration with homeroom teachers, Year 6 student leaders plan and deliver engaging activities for the Prep Students for the times they meet throughout the year e.g. Teddy bear picnic, Fun Sports Day, Card Writing etc.
Character Development

Character development plays an important part of the vision of St Andrews. Understanding, living and growing in Christian values are important for us as a community at St Andrews as we aspire to educate generations of students who are of godly character, strong in faith and a powerful influence, impacting the world for Christ.

The important years of Middle School play a valuable role in developing the character qualities of Love, Wisdom, Justice, Excellence and Integrity. The underlying value for every year level at St Andrews is love. In 1 Corinthians 12:31, we are reminded that Love is the most excellent way.

The following values are included in the Middle School program:

- Year 5 Wisdom
- Year 6 Excellence
- Year 7 Justice
- Year 8 Integrity

**Wisdom** involves us moving beyond knowledge. According to James, “The wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere” (James 3:17). As we grow in our understanding of Christ we become more like Him.

**Excellence** as a value involves us doing our best. Whatever we do or say will be our best.

We are encouraged to “think of the excellent things” (Phil 4:8) and to live the excellent way which is outlined in 1 Corinthians 13 as love.
Justice “He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8) This is our reminder from the Bible that we are encouraged to act justly in all things. There is a difference between justice and equity which may result in things not appearing fair all the time. At St Andrews, the values education program aims to ensure that our students come to understand justice from a biblical understanding and how this can impact our interactions with one another.

Integrity is best reflected through acting with honesty. Jesus encourages us to be the “salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13). Acting with integrity means that we will be who we say we are. Our actions will match our words which will build trust. William Barclay says: “One of the characteristics of the world in which we live is the lowering of standards. Standards of honesty, standards of diligence in work, standards of conscientiousness, moral standards, all tend to be lowered.” Barclay went on to say, “The Christian must be the person who holds aloft the standard of absolute purity in speech, in conduct, and even in thought.” Above all, Christians are called to be honest and to uphold truth.
R.E.A.C.H. Program
Year 7 & 8

Significant importance can often be placed upon academic achievement. At St Andrews, however, we recognise that education is for the ‘whole’ child. We value all areas of education including academic, social, emotional, physical, and creative aspects and seek to celebrate the successful achievements of our students.

Recognising Extra Curricula Activities at the College and Home (REACH) is a way of providing recognition to the achievements of our students who complete activities across a range of categories throughout Year 7 and 8. The REACH program provides a system of keeping records of these achievements along with celebrating the milestones reached along the way.

God has placed us in community so that we can best utilise our gifts and abilities in order to bring about His plan among this world. We are encouraged to uncover our potential in Christ and to exercise our talents in order to positively contribute to our community. The term REACH, encourages us to ‘reach’ our full potential.

The REACH program involves students using their record book to keep a track of the activities that they undertake either at School or in their communities. There is also some encouragement to extend these activities into other categories which they may not have previously considered. Students will complete a set of core activities which are combined with a range of supporting tasks. This program results in students gaining useful skills that will prove valuable to potential employers, along with providing positive additions to any resume.

Students will keep track of the activities undertaken by recording these in their record book which is issued at the beginning of Year 7. They should be able to complete 60% to 70% of the activities listed in the record book as a part of the curriculum and other activities provided by the College. Points are issued for each activity completed and recognition is provided as certain levels are achieved. In order to complete the first level, 200 points is the minimum required. Students will be issued with medals as each level is achieved.
Gifted and Talented

Catering for and extending all students is a priority of St Andrews Middle School. Whilst we are not a select entry school, we offer extension opportunities and programs for all students to ensure that they are being enriched and extended. Our results reflect that these opportunities play a valuable role in enhancing students’ overall understanding.

Extension
Students at Middle School are extended in each subject according to their needs. In particular, students have the opportunity to complete their Maths at least one year ahead. Maths classes are streamed so that students can move classes as required.

Programs
Students at Middle School have the opportunity to be involved in programs run by external providers. These include: Future Problem Solving, Science Talent Quest, Chess, Premiers Reading Challenge and other subject competitions.

Curriculum
Teachers provide differentiation in daily lessons to cater for the individual needs of students, however, additional programs are included in the curriculum to cater for the gifted and talented. These include: Debating, Public Speaking Competition, Accelerated Reading Program, and developing thinking skills.

How can Parents help?
If you believe your child is gifted, as parents, there are a range of support processes and strategies that you can put in place to assist your child to grow and to meet their needs.

○ Talk to teachers both past and present
○ Get a professional assessment completed
○ Seek support from local support networks, e.g. VAGTC
○ Use the internet to provide answers and to seek out ideas
○ Enhance your child’s creativity and communication skills
○ Make sure that they are provided with time to interact socially with their peers.
Opportunities

The Camping Program at Middle School provides opportunities for students to gain practical, physical, social and intellectual skills in learning situations beyond the classroom. These opportunities will complement and enhance classroom learning, and extend students in unfamiliar settings. Camping encourages the progressive development of self-confidence, a wholesome independence and communal interdependence. It provides challenges at various levels, giving all students, no matter what their background, an equal opportunity of achieving excellence.

Parents Please Note: As Camps are an important part of the school curriculum, it is expected that all students will attend their respective camps. Medical Certificates will need to be supplied for children not attending camp.

The cost of camps are included in the School fees.

Current Camps:
- Year 5 - Sovereign Hill
- Year 6 - Kangaroobie
- Year 7 – Log Cabin
- Year 8 – Canberra

Excursions/Incursions
These opportunities enrich the educational programs provided by Middle School. They are an important and integral part of the school curriculum and it is expected that all students will attend all organised excursions. Excursions are chosen for their educational value or to stimulate learning opportunities that may not be obtained from normal classroom activities.

From time to time, various external providers may visit the school to conduct seminars or incursions. The cost of excursions are included in school fees. For all external excursions, students are expected to wear full school uniform unless otherwise stated.
Swimming
This is a requirement for all Primary aged school children and continues in Years 5 & 6. All swimming costs are included in the school fees. The Swimming Program covers 4 to 5 weeks of the school term. Sport will usually not run whilst the Swimming Program is running. Details of the times of the Swimming Program will be provided by class teachers.

Band
In Year 5 each student will be allocated a brass, woodwind or percussion instrument for the year and they will receive weekly instrumental lessons from a tutor. Students will rehearse together as a training band during their scheduled music classes and they will have a performance at the end of every term. Students will return their instrument at the end of the year. If a student wishes to continue on with their instrument we will have some chosen suppliers that will be able to provide instruments for purchase at discounted rates.

Students wishing to learn an instrument outside of Year 5 can undertake private lessons at School and participate in one of the numerous bands or choirs available at the school. For a list of available instruments or for further details of this program, please contact Reception.

Singing
St Andrews provides opportunities for students to be involved in the Choir. Practise is held during one lunchtime per week. The Choir performs during some Middle School Assemblies or at other public performances. Students wishing to take private singing lessons at School are encouraged to contact Reception for further details.
Production
Drama as a subject is introduced at Middle School where students are encouraged to develop their performance skills and build confidence in their formal and creative expression. A school musical is held alternating years, and gives Middle and Senior School students an opportunity to audition, and if successful, perform at Burrinja Theatre in Upwey. This year is a production year, and we are very excited to be presenting Disney’s Beauty and the Beast in July.

Assemblies
Middle School Assemblies are held every fortnight. These assembly times provide opportunities to explore whole school topics and to extend the Values Program. Students have the opportunity to input into Assembly through song, performances, prayer and oral presentations.

Lunchtime Activities
Middle School teachers offer an activity that is held during one lunchtime a week. These activities vary in style and format and may change according to student demand and interests. Students are encouraged to undertake activities to extend their skills and talents and to help them enhance their collaboration and problem solving skills.
Routines and Programs

Devotion
As a Christian College, we value spending time in God’s Word and building our relationship with Him. Our school day begins at 8:45am with a 15 minute devotion lesson. These lessons can include a range of activities that include: Bible reading, prayer, study of a book of the Bible, singing or other related activity.

Chaplaincy
A Chaplain is employed by the College to assist with student welfare and support. Referral is usually through the Middle School Core Teacher or Head of Middle School. General counselling is offered but for more sensitive issues, referral to an external professional will be encouraged.

Diaries
Diaries are an important channel of communication between school and home. Please ensure that your child uses his or her diary regularly and that you are checking it every day. Your child’s class teacher will specify how often the diary should be signed. Homework requirements along with completed tasks and the time taken need to be recorded and signed. The diary is also used to record test results and project scores as work is returned.

Homework
St Andrews Homework Policy outlines the requirements for Middle School students. Homework benefits students by complementing classroom learning, fostering good study habits and providing an opportunity for students to take responsibility for their own learning.

The following provides a general guideline as to the amount of time students should be spending on homework each night:

- Year 5: 30 to 35 mins
- Year 6: 35 to 40 mins
- Years 7 & 8: 1 to 1½ hrs
Routines and Programs

Nurture and Discipline
The College has clear policies that outline the responsibilities of the School and students.
These student welfare policies include: Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination and Cyber Safety. You can view these policies on the College website: www.standrews.vic.edu.au.

These policies should be considered in conjunction with the following points:
- Students will be encouraged verbally as often as possible.
- Community House Points can be given as incentives & rewards.
- Certificates of “Excellence” and “Best Effort” are awarded regularly to students.
- Home room teachers may establish a system of class rewards in which students can accumulate points that contribute towards a reward.
- Initially students will be warned verbally about any misbehaviour and be spoken with about ways of improving that behaviour. Further strategies might include rearranging seating plans or being kept after class to discuss matters further.
- In all situations, students are expected to be obedient to their teacher’s instructions and to respond respectfully.
- Students who continue to misbehave or disobey will be given a lunchtime detention. Students who receive three detentions in a term will be given an after-school detention.
- Teachers will seek to keep parents informed of behaviour concerns and will initiate parent meetings as required.

Mobile Phone Use
- As a general rule, mobile phone use by students should only be in the cases of emergency or genuine need. Please note that students wishing to make an emergency phone call should contact Reception.
- Courtesy, consideration of and respect for others are paramount at all times. In no way must a mobile phone be used to harass, abuse, or distract another student.
- Mobile phones are not to be switched on during lessons, or used in any manner that is disruptive to the normal routine of the School or to other people. If used during school hours, the phone will be confiscated. Parents will then be required to pick up the phone from Reception.
- Students who need to bring a mobile phone to school should ensure that the phone is clearly labelled and switched off during school hours.
- The School cannot accept any responsibility for theft, loss, damage or health effects (potential or actual) resulting from mobile phone use.
Curriculum

Biblical Studies
The application of a Christian worldview in contemporary society is the result of being able to think from a Christian perspective. Therefore, the natural integration of Scripture into all subject areas is an essential part of St Andrews curriculum. In addition, the school emphasises the importance of developing the habit of reading and studying God’s Word because it is the truth and the basis for all of life.

Reading, studying and memorising Scripture; prayer; obedience to God’s Word, and living a lifestyle that is consistent with the Bible are best learned in the home environment. The school does not assume the responsibility of the parent, but is a support system that assists in furthering the student’s knowledge of God.

Mathematics
In Middle School the general aims of Mathematics are to promote study as an enjoyable and intellectual activity based on numerical order which reflects the order of God’s creation.

Students will use a variety of practical and concrete experiences to develop their understanding of number and space and their interrelationship. Students will also develop an appreciation for Mathematics and how it can be used as a tool for solving everyday problems. In addition, Mathematics will assist in understanding quantitative and spatial concepts covered in other subjects. Overall, the course provides a balance of applications, concepts and skills which encourages problem solving and critical thinking applicable to real life situations.

Humanities
Studies in the Humanities key learning area assist students to develop knowledge, skills and values that enable them to participate as active and informed citizens in a democratic society and the global community. While emphasising an understanding of Australian culture, Humanities gives students the flexibility to select topics that encourage them to develop an international perspective and a commitment to lifelong learning. Students will undertake studies of History and Geography and will learn skills pertinent to each discipline. The course encourages students to be independent learners with an inquiring mind, and to critically evaluate various sources of information based on evidence to support their findings. The activities provide opportunities that enable students to work individually, as well as collaboratively, to find solutions to problems.
English
Students focus on enhancing their communication skills as they develop an understanding of the correct use of language as an indispensable tool for communicating God’s truth and for understanding and appreciating the intricacy, frailty and splendour of the world and of its people. The course incorporates the following components:

**Written Language** - Students are expected to write in a variety of forms for a defined purpose and audience.

**Oral Language** - Oral communication provides the students with skills to develop and organise ideas, to speak and listen effectively. Students are also expected to make oral presentations to the class (poetry recitation, dramatisation, speech etc.) incorporating effective delivery style and appropriate body language.

**Reading & Literature** - Students are engaged in an intensive study of selected class novels and film texts. They are exposed to various genres of literature and encouraged to develop their ability to critically analyse texts and discuss the issues involved, in relation to society and their personal experiences. The wider reading program consists of Accelerated Reading (AR) for Years 5 and 6, and the Victorian Premier’s Reading Challenge for Years 7 and 8. Students are encouraged to read for at least 20 minutes each day at home in order to nurture a positive reading habit.

**Grammar & Spelling** - Correct grammar, spelling and punctuation will be taught in order to enhance students’ ability to communicate effectively.

**Poetry** - Students are encouraged to appreciate how poetry enables the human mind to express public emotions and thoughts through the medium of verse.
Science
All sciences at St Andrews are taught with a Christian world view. We remind the students that science is the study of God’s marvellous creation and it is all about learning how to understand, manage and care for all that He has placed under our stewardship. In Middle School Science we aim to develop students’ abilities to ask questions and to find answers concerning the laws which govern that creation which then have many applications to our daily lives. To assist students to more fully understand these laws, is to assist them to more fully appreciate the nature of God.

Throughout Middle School Sciences, students are given opportunity to explore the various disciplines of Science – Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Astronomy and Geology. Delivery of concepts is done in a wide range of ways including, practical tasks and investigations, research projects, video presentations, written work and excursions.

In Grades 5 and 6, the majority of teaching is done by the class teacher, but in Year 7 and 8, students come to the Science Laboratories and are taught by Science specialists.

In Year 7, the laboratory is introduced to them and with this, they learn the skills associated with scientific investigations such as development of testable hypotheses, planning fair, controlled experiments, analysing data and drawing valid conclusions. They also look at the substance of God’s creation in a unit on the “Properties of Substances” and a unit on “Mixtures”. The resources that God has provided for our survival are examined in “Earth Resources”, while the order within all life and the interactions between all living things and their environment are explored in the Biology based units, “Habitats and Interactions” and “Classification”. As well as this, students explore the physical laws that God has established through two units entitled “Forces” and “Machines”. Laws that extend beyond our own planet are explored in the unit “Earth In Space”.

As students come into their final Middle School year and prepare for entry to Senior School, the concepts introduced in Year 7 are further extended in Year 8. In this year, their understanding of appropriate Scientific Methodology is enhanced to look further into the ways in which Scientific Data can be obtained and analysed. Students study the nature of life itself and see evidence of God’s signature through all living things in studies of “Cells”, “Living Systems” and “Growth and Reproduction”. They extend their understanding of the substance of God’s creation, Matter, by studying “Physical and Chemical Change” and “Elements, Compounds and Mixtures”. They also explore the Earth upon which we have been placed through a unit entitled “Rocks”.

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Physical Education
At St Andrews we take a holistic approach to Physical Education. The course should assist students to develop physically, spiritually, emotionally, socially, and cognitively. Physical Education is directed towards meeting the needs of each student by providing them with satisfying developmental experiences that will motivate and equip them with the knowledge to lead well balanced, active and healthy lives, both now and in the future.

Physical Education contributes to personal development in many ways. It provides the opportunities to develop a healthy respect for, and understanding of our own bodies and those of others as unique gifts from God, to us. From this platform individual differences should be accepted without discrimination and healthy competition in which tolerance and encouragement of others are viewed as more important than "winning" will be developed. Striving to achieve personal best performance and excellence is still encouraged but viewed in the context of community. Physical Education classes are designed to extend already developed skills and co-ordination.

The aim is to refine the fundamental motor skills and introduce/develop new sports and activities that students may continue in later life.

Design, Creativity and Technology (From Year 7)
Our creator, God, has gifted us with creative ideas and skills and these can be expressed through working with the materials around us as well as in our intellectual and cultural pursuits. The capacity to be skilful with our hands is important for independent living and all students need at least basic practice and knowledge in design, creativity and technology. Students are given the opportunity to undertake Food and Wood Technology.
Art
Middle School Art is centred on the understanding that God, the Great Creator, has made us in His image. He has made us creative beings who, by observing and appreciating the majesty, beauty and intricacy of His work, might glorify Him in the expression of our own creative works.

In order to facilitate this, the course of tasks, projects, exercises and studies emphasises development of visual awareness: learning to see the world through eyes opened by a developing understanding of how and why Art is made. Students begin and build on skills and knowledge as they progress through the middle school years with opportunities to discover their unique gifts and aptitudes in a variety of mediums and genres.

Drama
God has given everyone talents and abilities, and through the study of drama we celebrate and learn to use these gifts. The aim of the drama program is to build skills, increase confidence and allow opportunities for creative expression. Middle school students study a variety of performance mediums, including puppetry, mime, improvisation, monologue and script work. They learn to identify how the elements of drama are used to create meaning. Performance opportunities are available weekly in class, and regularly at other school events.
Music
Singing praise to the Lord is also something that is spoken and written about in the Bible. The music program offers a way for students to connect with God through the joy that worshiping Him together in song brings. The Music course aims to provide students with the opportunity to experience, perform and create music within a variety of styles, contexts and performance mediums. Students will develop their ensemble skills through participation in the Year 5 band program. They will also have the opportunity to participate in the wider band and instrumental program throughout Middle School. Through these opportunities, student will develop specific skills and an appreciation for the living, and constantly evolving art of music.

LOTE
Through study of the French language, students learn to accept that God has created people in other cultures to talk, live and even think differently than they do. During the primary years and continuing until Year 6, students are introduced to the French language and culture through different activities. In Year 7 French, the study of formal grammar is introduced, and students are encouraged to start using the language to communicate. In Year 8, French students gain awareness that the French language and culture is accepted widely and even as close to home as New Caledonia. The importance of a sound knowledge of vocabulary and verbs is stressed in their study of grammar, as are improved pronunciation and oral skills. Translation and analysis of Bible verses supply students with some very basic tools to convey their love for God to others by medium of the French language.

ICT
Middle School students at St Andrews Christian College are encouraged to make use of Digital Technology as a tool for learning and productivity, as well as to reflect and question the role of IT in society. Year 7 students undertake a full unit on cyber-safety and then focus on the effective use of office tools such as Microsoft PowerPoint. Year 8 students explore programming skills in a graphical environment and the use of formulas in spreadsheet.