



Introducing the **Victorian** Essential Learning Standards

Important information for parents about
the new approach to student learning and
standards in Victorian schools

VICTORIAN CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY



The Victorian Essential Learning Standards provide a new approach to curriculum from Prep to Year 10 for all Victorian schools. The Standards outline what is important for students to learn and develop during their time at school. They are designed to encourage a deep understanding of essential knowledge, skills and behaviours. The Standards will also be used to plan student learning, assess student progress and report to parents.

The Standards have been developed after national and international research by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). Discussions were held with Victorian teachers and consultations took place with education groups and the wider community. These included representative groups of parents in metropolitan and regional Victoria. The VCAA received over 1000 responses and submissions as part of this consultation.

The need for the new approach

Expectations for young people are changing. Victoria has good schools, good programs and good teachers, but it is important to continue to explore how students learn and what they need to be successful learners.

The Standards aim to meet the challenges of preparing young people for a world in which knowledge is highly valued and constantly changing, a world in which work, society, community and personal relationships are subject to increasingly complex pressures.

Young people need a broad range of knowledge and social, personal and thinking skills to be successful. The Standards will enable young

people to develop through their schooling and will prepare them for their final years of study in the:

- Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)
- Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL).

Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs can also be undertaken as part of either VCE or VCAL.

What remains the same? What is changing?

Students will continue to develop knowledge and understanding in the traditional subject areas, such as English, Science, Mathematics, Humanities, Languages and The Arts. However, the new approach links these traditional areas more closely to other key learning areas of physical, personal and social skills development and the ability to apply knowledge in the real world. As part of this new approach standards are also being set in such areas as building social relationships, developing thinking skills and communication.





The three strands of learning

The Victorian Essential Learning Standards are set in three main strands or areas. They are:

- knowledge and understanding from the key subjects of English, Science, Mathematics, Humanities, Languages and The Arts
- physical, personal and social skills such as being active and healthy, developing self confidence, managing personal learning and working with others
- other essential skills that apply across curriculum areas such as thinking, design, problem solving, communicating, and using information and communications technology.

These areas are all important to the development of a well-rounded and confident young person. They have often been part of the school experience of young people, but they have not always been linked closely with traditional subject areas. Bringing them together emphasises their value and relevance in student learning.

Standards built up over time

Victoria has had curriculum and assessment standards in schools for many years. There has been a strong view that what had to be taught in schools at times made the program too crowded. The new Standards give schools more time to concentrate on differing priorities depending on the age of the child and their stage of education.

The new Standards identify what is essential for students to know and be able to do as they move through the different stages of their

schooling. The Standards steadily become more challenging as they develop through to the end of Year 10.

Under the new Standards, in the Early Years (Prep to Year 4) there will continue to be a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. In addition, there will be a greater emphasis on health, physical education and interpersonal development.



As students move through primary school, additional areas from the three strands will be introduced into the student program, areas such as science, information and communications technology, and civics and citizenship. As new areas are introduced, the key areas of literacy and numeracy will continue to be emphasised and improved.

By the end of primary school the Victorian Essential Learning Standards will provide a clear bridge to secondary school. The Standards provide strong foundations for students to make the significant move from primary to secondary school. Teachers in primary and secondary



schools will also continue to have a common basis from which to talk to each other about the strengths and challenges for each child.

In secondary school, the Standards will continue to be drawn from the three strands and reflect the learning needs of students at this time of their schooling. By Years 9 and 10 the Standards recognise that students are developing greater independence of mind and interests and are seeking deeper connections between their learning and their future pathways.

When is this occurring?

- The Standards will be progressively introduced into all Victorian schools from January 2006 beginning with English and Mathematics. During 2005, all schools are reflecting on new ways of linking learning in their curriculum programs and starting to make changes to ensure that they are able to have programs in place to deliver the Standards.
- As schools progressively take up the new Standards they will investigate principles of learning and teaching and improve ways of assessment and reporting. The VCAA and the Department of Education and Training will continue to provide information to schools and parents during the implementation of the Standards.

How can you obtain more information?

- Visit the Standards website at <http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au>
- Call the VCAA on (03) 9651 4544 or 1800 134 197 (regional callers).
- For information on the Blueprint for Government Schools visit www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/blueprint/
- Contact your child's school.

How can you be involved?

- Ask your school council or your principal about the approach your school is adopting to support this important change.
- Ask your school what will remain the same and what will change as a result of the Standards.
- Attend information sessions on the Victorian Essential Learning Standards, ask questions and make a contribution.

This is a great opportunity for us all to focus on young people and how they learn.

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