AT WILLIAMSTOWN HIGH SCHOOL WE VALUE:

- Excellence and creativity in our achievements and ambitions
- Integrity and honesty in our actions and relationships
- Diversity in our curriculum, in each other and in our community
- Strong and open communication between our school and our homes, and between our teachers, our students and our families
- A commitment to social justice and a passion to protect and improve our environment and our community

Rationale

Effective literacy skills underpin all learning. At WHS we are committed to ensuring that all students develop the skills necessary both to achieve academic success and to equip them for lifelong learning that will enable them to fully participate in society. The whole school community is involved in creating an environment where literacy is explicitly addressed and valued. Each discipline has its own specialised language and texts and so all teachers need to teach the reading, writing, viewing, speaking and listening demands of their content area. The English program has a particular, but not exclusive, role in developing literacy which is every teacher's responsibility.

Definition

Literacy is:

‘the ability to read and use written information, to write appropriately, in a wide range of contexts, for many different purposes, and to communicate with a variety of audiences. Literacy is integrally related to learning in all areas of the curriculum, and enables all individuals to develop knowledge and understanding. Reading and writing, when integrated with speaking, listening, viewing and critical thinking, constitute valued aspects of literacy in modern life.’

(DETYA, 1998 quoted in Literacy Teaching and Learning in Victorian Schools, Paper No. 9, 2006)

To be effective communicators, students need to be able to read the code of texts, understand the meaning of texts and themselves create meaningful texts, use texts functionally and be able to look at texts critically as outlined in the ‘4 Resources Model’ (Luke and Freebody, 1999).

The college’s beliefs about the importance of teaching literacy skills explicitly are under-pinned by DEECD policy and the WMR Blueprint as well as the initiatives outlined in the College Strategic Plan and AIPs. Literacy Teaching and Learning in Victorian Schools Paper No. 9 Part A (August 2006) states that to implement an effective literacy program, schools need to: build the capacity of teachers to address literacy needs; develop a school literacy plan to systematically address needs; create literacy school environments and to respond to diverse student needs.

At Williamstown High School we believe that:

**Every teacher is a teacher of literacy**

- All subjects have specific vocabulary and text conventions that need to be specifically taught by subject teachers. All teachers need to reinforce comprehension strategies.
Students need to have their learning differentiated and supported
- Classroom discussion and teacher modelling is needed to build vocabulary and to show students how to take the concepts studied in class and express them clearly in written form.
- The Gradual Release of Responsibility lesson structure supports students to progressively take on greater responsibility for their learning by first providing direct teacher instruction and modelling, then supported practice both in small groups and through conferring before providing opportunities for individual practice to consolidate skills.
- Time for independent reading will be provided within the curriculum in years 7 to 9 to supplement reading done at home.

Teacher knowledge is essential
- Professional learning needs to be provided to develop a common language and build teacher knowledge.

Student learning needs will be identified and acted upon
- Student progress in acquiring skills will be tracked and acted upon to ensure that all students continue to develop skills to their potential.
- Literacy intervention is most effective when direct instruction of strategies is embedded in the regular curriculum and supported in all learning areas rather than one-off out of classroom experiences.
- While student diversity is best accommodated by differentiating the instruction within the classroom, there are case-specific exceptions where additional interventions will be required, both inside and outside the program to address identified learning needs.

Effective instruction requires systematic monitoring and use of assessment data
- Formative assessment is the foundation for supporting literacy learning through matching teaching strategies to individual student needs during curriculum planning.
- Effective instruction requires systematic monitoring of student learning and use of this data to adjust learning and track progress.

Purpose
This policy is being developed to support improved literacy outcomes across both campuses of the college. If we share a commitment to teaching the literacy skills which underpin all learning and implement this consistently across all classrooms at both campuses, then student learning will improve. In order to do this, we need to have common understandings about literacy development, clear definitions of what the most effective literacy strategies are and agreed processes for identifying the skills that need developing as well as tracking the level of improvement.
**Implementation**

Literacy is a whole school priority and will be supported and resourced by providing adequate funding, professional development and given status within the leadership team.

**a) Curriculum provision and documentation reflects effective instruction as outlined in this policy**

Students will make the greatest progress where teaching is consistently delivered across classrooms and all subject areas plan to address the specific literacy demands of their content area. The College Course Accreditation process will ensure that Curriculum Area Teams (CATs) specifically address the literacy demands of their content areas.

Allocation of curriculum time for skill development is a key element in allowing students to build and consolidate skills. English classes will be allocated a minimum of 5 periods per week at Years 7 to 9. Of this time, at least the equivalent of one period per week will be allocated to an independent reading program where students are actively guided in their reading development by the class English teacher. This will include regularly monitoring student progress through conferences and diagnostic assessment according to the college assessment schedule.

**b) Development of a Literacy Plan**

A literacy plan will be developed from the goals in the School Strategic Plan. This document will focus on a strategic range of effective literacy strategies to meet the specified targets. Definitions of strategies will be documented to build understandings.

**c) Identifying and tracking student progress**

A Diagnostic Assessment Schedule will be developed to ensure that student literacy learning needs are identified and that progress is tracked to allow targeted teaching to address student learning needs. A range of general and individual learning plans will be developed to ensure that each student’s literacy needs are being explicitly addressed.

**d) Professional learning at whole school and campus level as well as through coaching of small groups and individuals**

Systematic professional learning will be delivered both at a whole school level and to teams and individuals through coaching sessions. Priorities for professional learning will be identified through the college’s whole school plan and further refined in the College Literacy Plan in order to have a focused approach which allows teachers the chance to consolidate and fully implement new learnings. The goal of all professional learning is to see changed practices evident in classrooms consistently across the college.

**e) Professional dialogue about practice through Professional learning Teams (PLTs), including Curriculum Area Teams (CATS)**

Opportunities need to occur for professional dialogue about the learning needs of specific students and strategies which can help to address these needs. This will occur through CAT meetings based on information collected through the diagnostic assessment schedule as well as through other PLTs formed for this purpose.

**f) Develop a reading culture**

Opportunities for independent reading will be created within class time. The English program at Years 7 to 9 will devote at least one period a week of class time for independent reading practice during which reading skills are explicitly taught. All subject areas have a responsibility to promote
wider reading around their subject area and to reinforce these comprehension strategies. The Campus Libraries play a particular role in promoting a reading culture across the college.

Roles and responsibilities

The Literacy Leader
The Literacy Leader is responsible for:
- Managing the Literacy Program across the college
- Developing a support program for students with additional literacy needs
- Managing the collection, use and distribution of literacy data and developing protocols for the use of this data
- Coordinating the analysis of literacy diagnostic assessment for the whole school, year, class and individual levels
- Establishing and resourcing classrooms that support literacy
- Supervising the Literacy Coaches program
- Organising Professional Learning sessions for all staff to develop consistent literacy practices

Literacy Coaches
Literacy coaches are responsible for supporting teachers to change their practice and implement effective literacy procedures by working with teachers and their students in classrooms. The role of the coaches is to support teachers to work more effectively to address the learning needs of their students, not to directly support individual students.

Coaches will work with teachers to review how they address the literacy demands in their curriculum units and use the coaching cycle to conduct substantive discussions with teachers to identify areas to work on, model lessons and observe teachers practising literacy strategies and then de-brief after the lesson to reflect on the learning.

Curriculum Area Team (CAT) Leaders
CAT leaders are responsible for identifying the literacy demands of their subject areas and helping class teachers to plan to address this through the curriculum. This involves working with the literacy support team to identify these expectations and implement effective classroom strategies.

CAT leaders, with the support of the Literacy Leader and coaches who will analyse the college literacy data to identify trends in student skill development, will coordinate the development of curriculum units for a whole year level and additions and modifications to curriculum units for groups of students that target the literacy gaps and misunderstandings of students in their CAT area.

Classroom teachers
Literacy and learning are inextricably linked. All teachers have a responsibility to teach literacy and support the literacy development of students. Continued literacy development occurs when:

- Teachers model and explicitly explain the tasks and the literacy components alongside the content they are teaching.
- Student learning is differentiated to achieve success and are provided with feedback to improve all their skills including literacy.
- Students are given frequent opportunities to practise and develop their literacy knowledge and skills.
- Formative assessment of both a formal and informal nature is used across all content areas to give students feedback on their growth in literacy skills as well as content knowledge.
Assessment rubrics for tasks that involve students expressing ideas should address relevant aspects of expression as well as other course specific learning objectives.

Library staff
The library plays a key role in supporting student literacy development by:

- Maintaining a vibrant reading area
- Supporting student learning
- Promoting reading across the school
- Supporting the teaching of research skills

Parents
Partnerships that link the home, the school and the community are important to improving literacy. Parents can support the literacy development of their children by taking an interest in their reading and discussing their current reading. Parents can enhance this partnership by maintaining liaison with the school and teachers to be aware of the progress being made and to raise concerns about the current learning rate of their child.

Students
Students learn most effectively when they play an active role in their own learning. Students should set goals to improve their skills based on feedback from diagnostic testing and class results. Regular reading significantly improves student performance across all their learning. Students will be provided opportunities to read widely at school and are expected to read for at least 30 minutes per night in line with the College Homework Policy.
Specific procedures

Identifying student needs and tracking progress
All students in Years 7 to 10 will be tested during the year using a variety of formal diagnostic literacy tools, including PAT reading and On Demand. These results will be triangulated with the NAPLAN data and with observed data from teacher reading conferences by the English teachers.

Data will be made available electronically for easy access. Teachers will have an opportunity in Curriculum Area Team (CAT) meetings and Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) to consider the students in their classes and plan for addressing their needs.

This data will be analysed by the Literacy Leader to identify students with significant learning needs. According to the results, student needs will be addressed through either a Year Level, Group or Individual Learning Plan.

Year level plans – All CATS will be provided with an analysis of the learning needs of the cohort based on earlier NAPLAN testing and current diagnostic assessments in the form of skills that need to be addressed. This will be used to identify general skills that should be addressed through the curriculum. Improvement will be tracked at a whole school level.

Group plans – A list of students who are between 1 and 2 years behind or more than one year ahead in their literacy development will be compiled at the start of each year that details the specific areas of comprehension that these students struggle with or at which they excel. This will be distributed to class teachers to ensure that their planning uses a range of approaches and texts of suitable levels that will accommodate the learning needs of these students. CAT leaders will be supported to lead discussions about the teaching approaches that will facilitate this.

Individual plans – Students who are greater than 2 years behind or above the expected achievement in literacy will have an individual learning plan developed in line with the AEN policy framework. Individual teachers will be supported to develop and implement strategies that scaffold the learning of these students.

Interventions
Individual literacy learning plans and additional support will be provided for all students two or more years below or above the expected AUS VELS level.
In ordinary cases, the development of students is best met within the mainstream classroom. Where a group of students is well below expected level, and where there is a compelling case that it is in the balance of their overall interests, a withdrawal program may be organised. This will be done in a way that does not reduce student access to future pathways by withdrawing them from subjects where they intend further study. A systematic program will be developed and documented.

Coaching support
The school will make provision for a team of literacy coaches to be employed each year. These coaches will work with both English teachers and across the curriculum to embed effective literacy practices.

The specific process for identifying needs and tracking progress is set out in the flowchart on the following page:
Tracking and monitoring student literacy and numeracy progress

Data collection

Student diagnostic literacy testing (PAT and On Demand) conducted at the start and end of the year according to assessment schedule, as well as relevant transitional data and input from teachers.

Results uploaded to central database

Analysis of results by Literacy Leader to identify individual needs and general trends.

Analysis of results

Supporting students with individual needs

Addressing general trends

Planning

Individual learning plans for students > 2 years below expected

Class teachers who are supported by Lit/ Num/ Diff/ICT Leading Teachers to differentiate the learning

Group learning plans for students between 1 and 2 years below or > 1 year ahead

Class Teachers who are supported by the CAT leaders who are in turn supported by Lit/ Num/ Diff/ICT leading teachers. Scaffolding and visual aids to support learning.

Year level plans

Address learning needs through course accreditation process

Other CAT leaders

Reinforcing skills and addressing subject specific demands

English/ Maths CAT Leaders

Plan curriculum for explicit teaching of skills and strategies

Ongoing tracking

Re-assessment to measure progress
Definitions and references

Literacy Teaching and Learning in Victorian Schools, Paper No. 9, 2006

The Four Resources Model – Luke and Freebody 1999

Effective literacy draws on a repertoire of practices that allow learners, as they engage in reading and writing activities, to:

- break the code of texts – (code breaker)
- participate in the meanings of text - (meaning maker)
- use texts functionally - (text user)
- critically analyse and transform texts – (text analyst).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Break the code of texts</th>
<th>Participate in the meanings of text</th>
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<td>This is about recognising and using the fundamental features and architecture of written texts including: alphabet, sounds in words, spelling, conventions and patterns of sentence structure and text.</td>
<td>Participating in the meaning of text involves understanding and composing meaningful written, visual and spoken texts from within the meaning systems of particular cultures, institutions, families, communities, nation-states and so forth.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Use texts functionally</th>
<th>Critically analyse and transform texts</th>
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<td>Using texts functionally is about traversing the social relations around texts; knowing about and acting on the different cultural and social functions that various texts perform both inside and outside school and knowing that these functions shape the way texts are structured, their tone, their degree of formality and their sequence of components.</td>
<td>Critically analysing and transforming texts involves understanding and acting on the knowledge that texts are not neutral, that they represent particular views and silence other points of view, influence people’s ideas; and that their designs and discourses can be critiqued and redesigned, in novel and hybrid ways.</td>
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(Luke and Freebody, 1999)

EVALUATION AND REVIEW:

As part of an ongoing evaluation process the Literacy Leader will review the effectiveness of the Literacy Policy at the conclusion of each year. Improvements to the processes and procedures will be adapted when required. Once ratified by School Council, this policy will be reviewed in line with the school’s strategic plan.

This policy will be reviewed in line with the new School Strategic Plan being developed in 2013.

CONSULTATIVE PROCESS

1. **Literacy Leader and Campus Principal review current policy**

2. **Campus Meeting and CAT meetings: Feedback and input from staff about draft Literacy policy**

3. **EDPOL notified of Literacy policy review**

4. **School Council: Literacy Policy presented to school council to be ratified.**

5. **College Meeting: Final Literacy Policy presented to staff**