

A dark blue background featuring a faint, textured portrait of Leonardo da Vinci. Overlaid on the portrait are large, stylized orange shapes: a '7' in the top left and a '5' in the bottom right.

Building
strong
foundations
& confidence

LEONARDO
DA VINCI

**Preston High
School**
Da Vinci Years
Handbook

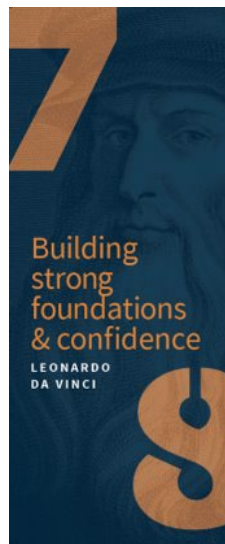


Leonardo Da Vinci was an artist, scientist, mathematician, engineer, inventor, anatomist, sculptor, architect, botanist, musician and writer. His curiosity about the world and broad exploration of skills stand as inspiration for our Year 7 and 8 students beginning their secondary school journey.

Preston High School 3-Part Curriculum Narrative

Our curriculum is structured across three distinct phases. This structure is based around a narrative that articulates the development of Preston High School students at each stage of their secondary education. Our curriculum narrative underpins a cohesive curriculum which considers the whole student and the interconnectedness of the domain areas.

1. Da Vinci Years (Year 7 & 8)
2. The Bandler Parks Program (Year 9)
3. Ada – The Senior Years (Year 10 – 12)



The Da Vinci Years – Enhancing Learner Confidence

Too often students arrive in Year 7 lacking confidence in their learning or ability in particular areas of study. Students should leave [The Da Vinci Years](#) feeling confident and empowered as learners across the domains of learning.

Year 7 and 8 are [The Da Vinci Years](#). The experience centres around students finding their voice in the world, exploring and experimenting with a wide range of disciplines and experiences. Students develop confidence as learners in each domain area and engage in extended investigations and inventive inquiries into real-life challenges.

Key Student Experiences in the Da Vinci Years

- Inspire Leadership Opportunities
- Enhancement Program
- The Innovation Expo
- Whole cohort excursions: NGV, Street Art, Theatrical Performances, Melbourne Zoo
- Alpine High Plains Ecology and Challenge Camp (Year 7)
- Coastal Ecology and Challenge Camp (Year 8)

Da Vinci Years Program Structure

Da Vinci Years students participate in 25 learning sessions per week, each of 57 minutes duration (teal and grey) as well as three enhanced curriculum learning sessions (orange) each of 45 minutes. Students then have two independent study off-campus sessions each of 45 minutes.

MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI
Art & Design	DaVinci	Math	English	Math
Art & Design	Science	French	Humanities	Science
MORNING BREAK				
Humanities	Math	Science	HPE	Art & Design
English	French	English	HPE	French
LUNCH BREAK				
Mentor				
HPE	Art & Design	Humanities	Math	DaVinci
Enhancement 1	Independent study off campus	Enhancement 2	Enhancement 3	Independent study off campus

In the example schedule here, the student is on the *Art & Design* rotation and has *French* as their language.

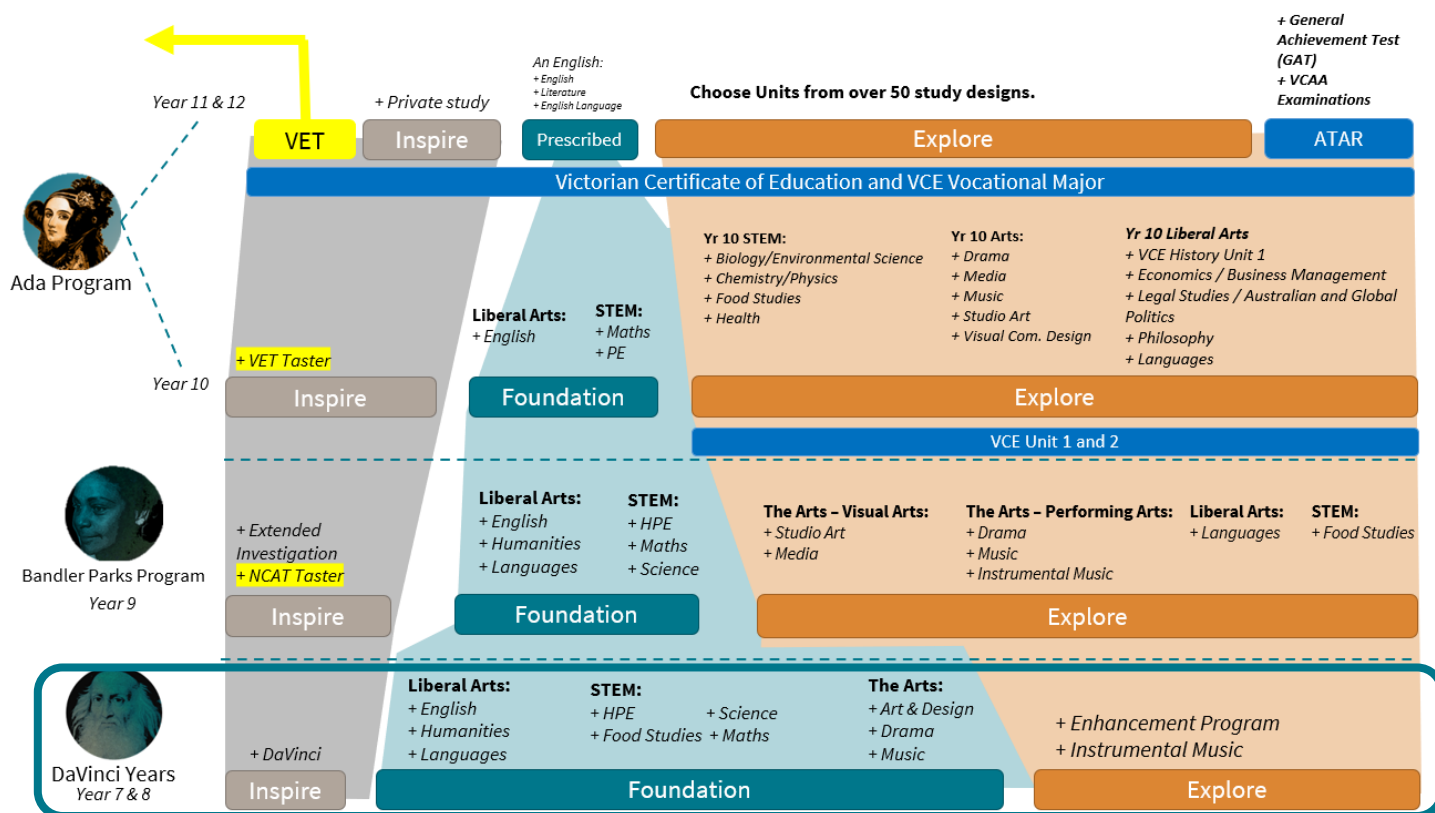
Every day before lunch, students connect with their mentor during the 10-minute *Mentor Session*.

Preston Practices

Students develop a foundation in [the Preston Practices](#); routines, frameworks and ways of thinking that will support their learner growth across secondary school:

- Growth Habits
- Developmental Rubrics
- Student Led Conferences
- Reciprocal Teaching
- Design Thinking
- Philosophical Inquiry
- The Preston High School Lesson Model
- Digital literacy: Microsoft Teams and OneNote

Curriculum Structure from Year 7 to 12 at Preston High School



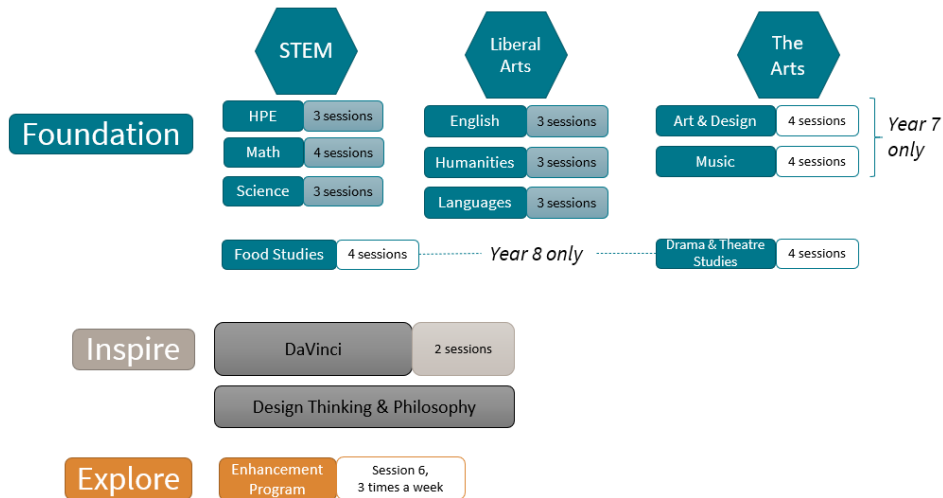
Graphic Key:

- **ATAR** – *Australian Tertiary Admission Rank*, is the primary criterion for entry into undergraduate courses in universities in Australia.
- **GAT** – *General Achievement Test*, is a test of general knowledge and skills in written communication, mathematics, science and technology, humanities, the arts and social sciences taken by all Victorian students prior to completing their VCE.
- **NCAT** – *Northern College of the Arts and Technology*, caters for Year 10, VCE, VCE-VM and post-secondary students seeking a specialised education in the arts, trades or technologies.
- **Prescribed** – To attain a Victorian Certificate of Education students must complete a Unit 3 and 4 sequence of an English course. English is the only compulsory subject to complete your VCE.
- **STEM** – *Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics* – an educational acronym used to describe a group of interrelated disciplines.
- **Unit** – VCE is a sequence of 4 Units. Unit 1 and 2 at Year 11 level and Unit 3 and 4 at Year 12 level.
- **VCAA** – *Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority*, is a statutory authority of the Government of Victoria responsible for the provision of curriculum and assessment programs for students in Victoria, Australia.
- **VCE Vocational Major** – The Vocational Major engages students with applied learning alongside their VCE studies and is for those whose pathway is in to TAFE, apprenticeships or full time employment post-year 12.

Da Vinci Years – 3 Types of Courses: Foundation Courses, Explore Courses and Inspire Courses

Courses at Preston High School are divided into three categories: **Foundation**, **Explore** and **Inspire**.

As students move through the three phases of the Preston High School curriculum narrative, the number of foundation courses reduces and the number of explore options increases (see diagram on the previous page).



The Domains at Preston High School

The Preston High School curriculum experience is organised around three domain areas.



STEM

Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) is an acronym used to describe a group of interrelated disciplines. Broadly, these are subjects with design thinking, maths and science at their core. Design thinking is a 5-stage framework that supports students develop innovative ideas. Foundational STEM Courses in the **Da Vinci Years** are *health and physical education, science, maths and food studies*.



Liberal Arts

The liberal arts are subjects concerned with understanding the human condition or human systems. The liberal arts focus on organisational and social structures across different societies, ways of communicating for specific audiences and purposes, different views and values and our history. The foundational liberal arts courses in the **Da Vinci Years** are *English, humanities and languages* (Chinese or French).



The Arts

The arts are subjects concerned with human expression across a range of art forms both visual and performance based. Students deconstruct and reconstruct art works, experimenting across a broad range of different media. They explore ways artists construct meaning for their audiences through specific elements and principles. Foundational arts courses in the **Da Vinci Years** are *art and design*, *music* and *drama*.

Foundation Courses in the Da Vinci Years

To develop students' confidence across a broad range of disciplines, all domains are foundational during **the Da Vinci Years**. All students engage with **year-long** foundational courses in health and physical Education (HPE), maths, science, English, humanities and languages.

Each semester, students rotate between different **semester-long** foundational courses in the arts and STEM which run for 4 sessions per week.

	Year 7	Year 8	
Semester One	Art & Design	Drama	In Year 7, students engage with a semester of <i>art and design</i> and a semester of <i>music</i> .
Semester Two	Music	Food Studies	In Year 8, students engage with a semester of <i>drama</i> and a semester of <i>food studies</i> .

Maths runs across 4 learning sessions each week. All other Foundation courses (English, science and humanities) are scheduled across 3 sessions each.

Exploration courses in the Da Vinci Years: The Preston High School Enhancement Program

Our school motto is: Lead, Explore, Inspire. This means we want students to begin to take the lead in their learning. The enhancement program is about promoting students' **passions and** enhancing **academic challenge**.

Passion-based enhancements reflect our value of Inclusion. This means we strive to provide opportunities for students to do things that might reflect their passion or interest outside of the standard curriculum.

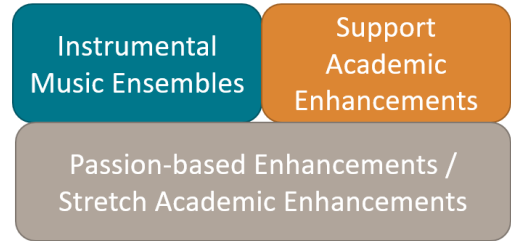
Academic enhancements:

- Ensure students who are **operating significantly ahead of the expected level** (who are challenged in their classes everyday by our inspiring learner growth approach and developmental rubrics) also have an opportunity to explore challenging curriculum that does not appear in the standard Victorian Curriculum.
- Ensure students who arrive in Year 7 behind the expected level get extra time and support to catch up.

In **the Da Vinci Years** each student is timetabled into three enhancement sessions across the week. These are where students mix with peers from other classes and cohorts to pursue particular areas of study. Students select enhancement subjects through a preferential selection process twice a year. Some students who participate in the instrumental music program utilise enhancement time to rehearse and perform in one of our ensembles.

Enhancement sessions should:

- Be student-needs driven and student led where appropriate;
- Enable experimentation, exploration of skills, ideas and concepts;
- Cater for diversity;
- Support students to build self-confidence;
- Strengthen relationships across the cohort.



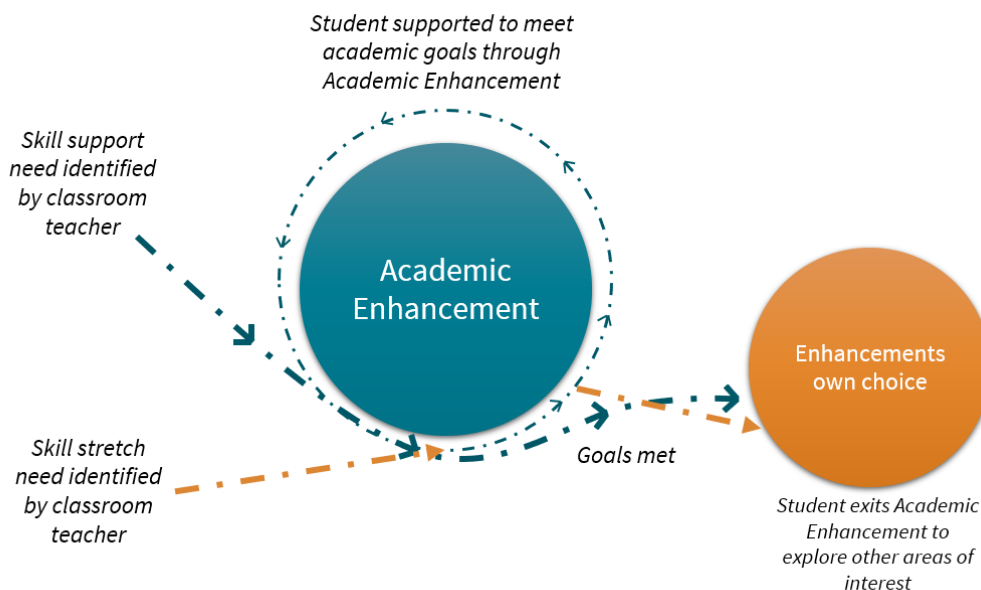
The enhancement program focusses on *learner growth*. Students are first allocated to their instrumental music ensembles and any academic enhancements relevant to their learner growth. From there, students can choose from a range of passion-based enhancements and academic enhancements.

Instrumental Music	Academic Enhancement	Passion-based Enhancements
Choir Concert Band Contemporary Ensemble Percussion Ensemble Strings Ensemble	Inspire Leadership Enhanced Mathematics or Literacy Stella Sparks Project Writer’s Workshop Debating Robotics Enhanced Chinese or French Enhanced Art Environmental Science Psychology / Neuroscience	Dance Drama Extended Investigation Game Makers Horticulture Media Sport Suggestions and programs built by students to respond to their interests

Academic Enhancements

The academic enhancement program is for students identified as requiring support or stretch in their studies. Students enter and exit the program based on validated evidence. The academic enhancement program provides support for students to get up to level with specific skills and stretch for students who require further growth opportunities.

Students are initially identified for academic enhancements based on PAT and formative assessment, other datasets and teacher referrals. Students can only transfer to an academic enhancement with approval of the Middle Years Literacy and Numeracy (MYLN) and Curriculum Leaders.



Inspire Courses in the Da Vinci Years – The Da Vinci Course

We seek to empower students with inquiry skills and for them to become engaged citizens. *Inspire* courses at Preston High School provide a space for the explicit teaching of skills that will empower students to solve real-world problems and contribute to their community.

The *Da Vinci* course in the Da Vinci Years engages students in design thinking and collaboration and culminates in a number of community events such as: The Innovation Expo, Student Led Conferences and PrestFest.

Mentor Program

The Mentor Program aims to strengthen the connections and positive relationships across our community. Every day for 10 minutes before lunch, students come together in mentor groups to reflect, collaborate and set goals. Mentor teachers are advocates for their students and the main point of contact for parents when connecting with the school including during our Student Led Conferences.

This time is an opportunity to connect, take stock and plan ahead. Students are supported to organise their time through review and scheduling within their calendars, planners and class notebooks. At several points in the week, mentor groups practice mindfulness to support students refocus and refresh.

