Warracknabeal Secondary College
Literacy Policy

Rationale:
Effective Literacy skills underpin all learning. At WSC 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 and 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.

The college’s beliefs about the importance of teaching literacy skills explicitly are underpinned by DET policy and the WMR Blueprint, as well as the initiatives outlined in the school strategic plan and AIP. 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 specifically address needs; create literacy school environments and respond to diverse student needs.

At Warracknabeal Secondary College 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.

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 all students continue to develop skills to their potential.
- Literacy intervention is most effective when direct instruction strategies is embedded in the regular curriculum and supported in all learning areas rather than one off out of class experiences.
While student diversity is best accommodated by differentiating the instruction within the classroom, there are case specific exceptions where additional small group/individual/withdrawal interventions such as Quicksmart, will be required, to address additional 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.

**Aims:**
This policy is being developed to support improved literacy outcomes across the college. If we share a commitment to teaching the literacy skills which underpin all learning and implement this consistently across all classes, 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 and professional development amongst staff.

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 classes and all subject areas plan to address the specific literacy demands of their content area. Curriculum documentation will be audited by domain groups to ensure literacy interventions are included. Allocation of curriculum time for skill development is a key element in allowing students to build and consolidate skills. This will include monitoring student progress through 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 new 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 students**
Students from years 7 to 10 will be tested using a variety of methods to ensure that student literacy learning needs are identified and that progress is tracked to allow target teaching to address student learning needs. A range of general and individual learning plans will be developed for students at the lowest level to ensure their literacy needs are being explicitly addressed.

d) **Professional learning at whole school 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 individual staff plans and further refined through the College’s Literacy Plan in order to have a focussed 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 Domain and PLT groups**
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 a variety of meeting based on information collected through the diagnostic assessment schedule.
Roles and Responsibilities

The Literacy Leader (JP)
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
- Organising professional learning sessions for all staff to develop consistent literacy practices
- Mentoring English teachers from years 7-9 as well as any staff needing support implementing new strategies and techniques

Domain Leaders
Domain 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 leader to identify these expectations and implement effective classroom strategies.

Domain leaders, with the support of the Literacy Leader 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 domain.

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 their skills including literacy.
- Students are given frequent opportunities to practice 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 also work to improve their own literacy – modelling continual learning. Parents can enhance this partnership by maintaining liaison with their 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 encouraged to read for at least 30 minutes per night at home from a book/magazine of their choice.

**Specific Procedures**

**Identifying Student needs and tracking progress**
All students in years 7 to 10 will be tested using a variety of formal diagnostic literacy tools, including PAT reading and ACER online tests. 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 to relevant staff. Teachers will have an opportunity in domain and staff meeting PLT groups to consider students in their classes and plan for addressing their needs. This data will be analyzed by the Literacy Leader (JP) 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 Domains 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 the year that details 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. Domain 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. Individual teachers will be supported to develop and implement strategies that scaffold the learning of these students in Domain groups and by the Literacy Leader.

**Interventions**
Individual literacy learning plans and additional support will be provided for all students two or more years below or above the expected level.
In ordinary cases the development of students is best met within the mainstream classroom. However, students may also be withdrawn to attend Quicksmart in years 7 and 8. A systematic timetable will be developed which ensures no one subject is unfairly impacted.

**Evaluation:** This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

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Ratified by School Council  Date: 21/3/16.
Signed:  Principal:  School Council President: