

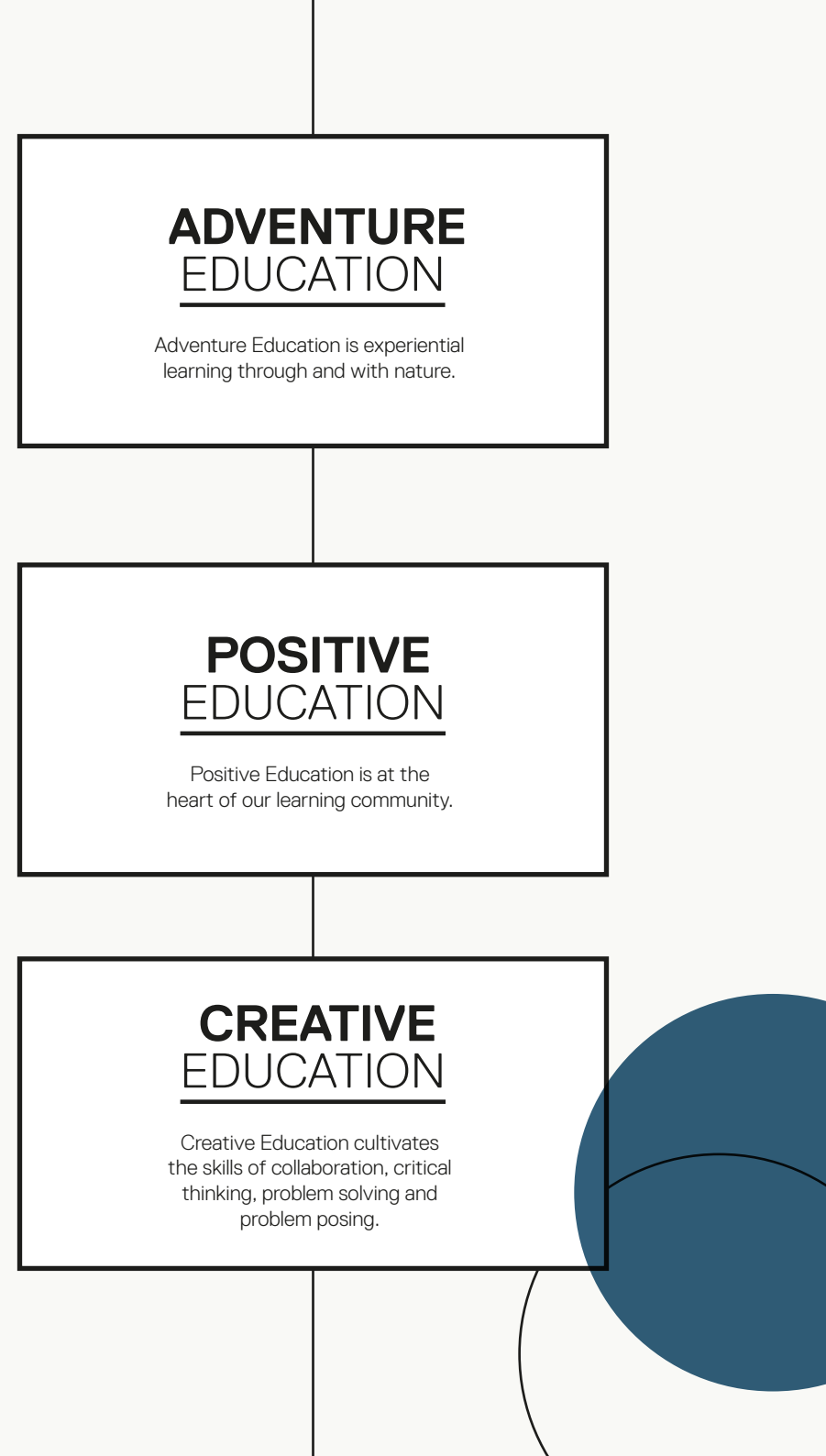


GEELONG GRAMMAR SCHOOL®
EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION

Timbertop

OUR PURPOSE





Timbertop

Our Purpose

Timbertop can be an incredibly powerful and formative experience for all those lucky enough spend time in this unique and isolated community. For over 60 years, both staff and students alike quickly come to see that the lessons learned here are profound and often life-changing.

This document is an attempt by the Timbertop staff and students to define what has loosely been referred to as the 'Timbertop Spirit'. There is, however, no typical Timbertop experience. The lived reality for staff and students is as wildly varied as the individuals who call this place home. Therefore the details contained herein are aspirational - part guide, part record. As a staff group, we strive to live out this creed and not only inspire our students to follow it, but to actively take the lead and navigate this path for us. We endeavour to live up to the ideals we have set out for our community in this document.

These guiding principles were not arrived at by chance. They were researched and coined by delving back into Timbertop history and investigating the traditions and ethos of the campus. We looked at the work and original intentions of the 'founding father' Sir James Darling and at the work of Kurt Hahn, on whose intellectual anvil the concept of Timbertop was forged. We looked at the driving forces of the Timbertop programme over the decades and the way it has responded to the challenges that society has presented. We pinned down our core beliefs about what this place stands for and what ideals we should stand by. We also considered how these ideals are relevant and worthy in a modern world; a world very different to that of 1953, the year of the campus's inception. Lastly, once we had these broad themes outlined, the Timbertop teaching staff worked collaboratively on the draft to ensure that the goals we outline herein are truly representative of what we stand for as a community and what we aspire to develop in ourselves and our students.

Over the years we have been guided by phrases such as 'Growth through experience' 'Respect, Responsibility and Relationships' and more recently, 'Kindness, Honesty and Effort.' These have been the catch cries of the Timbertop experience.

This document is designed to add another level of detail and specificity to these ideals that have served us so well. Therefore, the uses of this document are manifold. It is something that we can refer back to when we encounter a philosophical crossroads and a decision must be made. It is a reminder that we are custodians of an ideal and a philosophy that will long outlast those of us who pass through the programme. It is a document that also, in part, represents informed consent; prospective members of the Timbertop community need to know who we are and what we stand for. It is both deliberately broad enough to enable interpretation and specific enough to let us know the responsibility we have in taking on the challenge of Timbertop and aspiring to do both the programme and ourselves justice.

Kurt Hahn tells that

"There is more in us than we know; if we can perhaps be made to see it, then for the rest of our lives we will be unwilling to settle for anything less"

The Timbertop staff hope that this document is a set of guidelines for us to follow in good times and bad.

I hope you enjoy it, find the values it espouses congruent with your own and that you too will be "unwilling to settle for anything less".

Tom Hall,
Head of Timbertop



Learning & Teaching

In a community where staff give of themselves
with passion and enthusiasm

Our students learn to develop a love of
learning and to explore the world with curiosity
and confidence

Which we bring about by providing experiential
learning in all parts of the programme, aiming
to inspire interest and passion

Because academic endeavour empowers
our lives immeasurably and is the key to
an engaged life, freedom of choice and
community engagement



Challenge

Because “there is more in us than we know; perhaps if we can be made to see it, we will never again settle for anything less.”

In a community where students and staff alike, share all challenges together

Which we bring about by offering a “steep and rugged pathway” in a supportive environment

Our students learn to embrace challenges – physical, mental and social

Challenge





Health & Fitness

In a community where physical and mental health and wellbeing are managed proactively and with compassion

Our students learn to develop their own physical health through the demands of running and hiking

Which we bring about by seeking adventure in the outdoors and developing strength of mind, body and character

Because running, hiking and unit life build resilience. They are a metaphor for the challenges of life.

Relationships



In a community where strong relationships are the foundation for building trust, forgiveness and compassion



Our students learn to build strong, positive, authentic relationships with all members of our community



Which we bring about by providing opportunities on a daily basis for kindness, honesty and effort



Because healthy relationships are fundamental to the happiness of ourselves and others.



Wilderness

In a community where genuine challenge, small groups and a sense of independence are fundamental to our outdoor programme

Our students learn that with considered risk comes genuine reward. Judgement is fostered through experience

Which we bring about by leading our students into the natural world of mountains and bushland in pursuit of self-awareness, adventure and challenge

Because the pursuit of genuine adventure builds a powerful sense of identity that is deeply connected to the natural world

Wilderness



In a community where staff and students live the ethos of the Timbertop journey through immersion, commitment and collegiality

Our students learn that simplicity is powerful and that time spent away from technology is valuable and healthy

Which we bring about by removing access to the complexities and distractions inherent in technology, social media, and the trappings of a luxurious life

Because happiness and well-being are ultimately founded on relationships with others, self-reliance and internal values rather than on external things.

Simplicity

Courage

In a community where genuine challenge, small groups and a sense of independence are fundamental to our outdoor programme

Our students learn that with considered risk comes genuine reward. Judgement is fostered through experience

Which we bring about by leading our students into the natural world of mountains and bushland in pursuit of self-awareness, adventure and challenge

Because the pursuit of genuine adventure builds a powerful sense of identity that is deeply connected to the natural world

Courage

