



GEELONG GRAMMAR SCHOOL®
EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION

Timbertop
Our Purpose

KINDNESS HONESTY EFFORT



TIMBERTOP

Welcome to **TIMBERTOP**

Timbertop can be an incredibly powerful and formative experience for all those lucky enough to 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.



Our PURPOSE

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 us 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”.

Ross Hopkins,
Head of Timbertop



Our **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**



○ LEARNING & TEACHING

○ CHALLENGE

○ HEALTH & FITNESS



○ RELATIONSHIPS

○ WILDERNESS

○ SIMPLICITY



○ COURAGE

○ COMMUNITY LIVING

○ SERVICE



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



IN A COMMUNITY WHERE...

students and staff alike, share all challenges together



OUR STUDENTS LEARN...

to embrace challenges - physical, mental and social



WHICH WE BRING ABOUT BY...

offering a “steep and rugged pathway” in a supportive environment



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.”

CHALLENGE

**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.



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



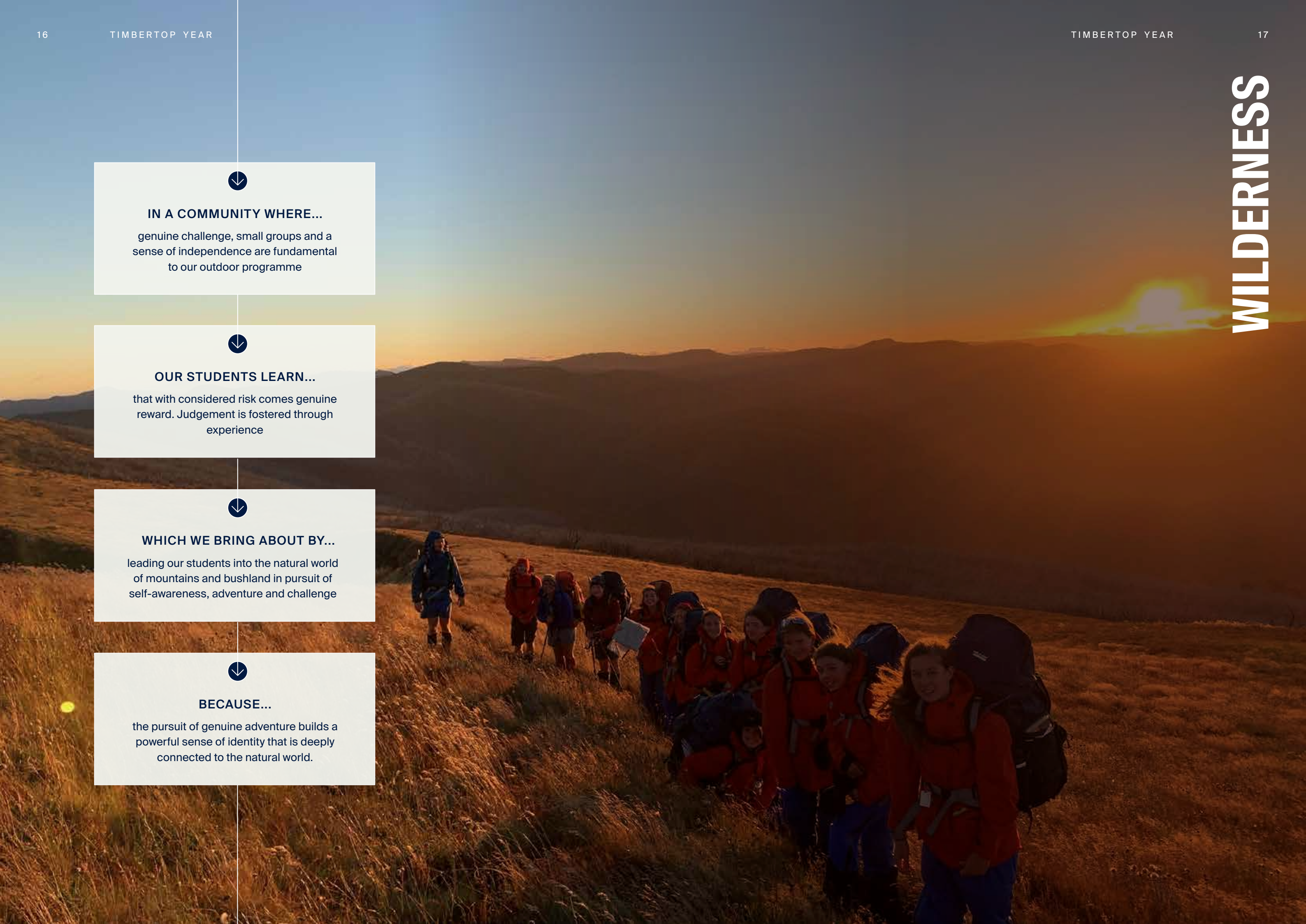
WHICH WE BRING ABOUT BY...

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.





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.



COURAGE



IN A COMMUNITY WHERE...

we admire courage, authenticity and care
for each other



OUR STUDENTS LEARN...

that mistakes are not only acceptable but
indeed essential for growth



WHICH WE BRING ABOUT BY...

allowing students to make their own decisions whilst
providing safety nets to protect students from any
lasting negative effects of their decision-making



BECAUSE...

we learn best through life by taking risks, making
errors and moving onto new growth.





COMMUNITY LIVING

SERVICE



IN A COMMUNITY WHERE...

service to others and the community is honoured



OUR STUDENTS LEARN...

to give of themselves without expecting anything in return



WHICH WE BRING ABOUT BY...

offering both formal and spontaneous opportunities to serve others



BECAUSE...

giving of oneself is the foundation of a flourishing life and welcoming community.





Our EDUCATIONAL PILLARS



ADVENTURE EDUCATION

Adventure Education is experiential learning through and with nature.



POSITIVE EDUCATION

Positive Education is at the heart of our learning community.



CREATIVE EDUCATION

Creative Education cultivates the skills of collaboration, critical thinking, problem solving and problem posing.



Our **FOCUS**



OUR FOCUS
Enabling wisdom



OUR PURPOSE
Intersecting the science
of learning and the art
of teaching to shape a
better world



OUR SPIRIT
Making a positive
difference

Our GUIDING PRINCIPLES

	○ IN A COMMUNITY WHERE	○ OUR STUDENTS LEARN	○ WHICH WE BRING ABOUT BY	○ BECAUSE	
LEARNING & TEACHING	staff give of themselves with passion and enthusiasm	to develop a love of learning and to explore the world with curiosity and confidence	providing experiential learning in all parts of the programme, aiming to inspire interest and passion	academic endeavour empowers our lives immeasurably and is the key to an engaged life, freedom of choice and community engagement.	LEARNING & TEACHING
CHALLENGE	students and staff alike, share all challenges together	to embrace challenges - physical, mental and social	offering a “steep and rugged pathway” in a supportive environment	“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.”	CHALLENGE
HEALTH & FITNESS	physical and mental health and wellbeing are managed proactively and with compassion	to develop their own physical health through the demands of running and hiking	seeking adventure in the outdoors and developing strength of mind, body and character	running, hiking and unit life build resilience. They are a metaphor for the challenges of life.	HEALTH & FITNESS
RELATIONSHIPS	strong relationships are the foundation for building trust, forgiveness and compassion	to build strong, positive, authentic relationships with all members of our community	providing opportunities on a daily basis for kindness, honesty and effort	healthy relationships are fundamental to the happiness of ourselves and others.	RELATIONSHIPS
WILDERNESS	genuine challenge, small groups and a sense of independence are fundamental to our outdoor programme	that with considered risk comes genuine reward. Judgement is fostered through experience	leading our students into the natural world of mountains and bushland in pursuit of self-awareness, adventure and challenge	the pursuit of genuine adventure builds a powerful sense of identity that is deeply connected to the natural world.	WILDERNESS
SIMPLICITY	staff and students live the ethos of the Timbertop journey through immersion, commitment and collegiality	that simplicity is powerful and that time spent away from technology is valuable and healthy	removing access to the complexities and distractions inherent in technology, social media, and the trappings of a luxurious life	happiness and well-being are ultimately founded on relationships with others, self-reliance and internal values rather than on external things.	SIMPLICITY
COURAGE	we admire courage, authenticity and care for each other	that mistakes are not only acceptable but indeed essential for growth	allowing students to make their own decisions whilst providing safety nets to protect students from any lasting negative effects of their decision-making	we learn best through life by taking risks, making errors and moving onto new growth.	COURAGE
COMMUNITY LIVING	we are proud of our campus and the surrounding environment	to create and care for each other, fostering both community mindedness and individual effort	sharing responsibilities in an egalitarian ethos and expecting a full commitment to every aspect of the daily life of the community	living as a group promotes generosity of heart, an ability to place others first, gratitude for the support of others and a loving spirit towards our fellow human beings.	COMMUNITY LIVING
SERVICE	service to others and the community is honoured	to give of themselves without expecting anything in return	offering both formal and spontaneous opportunities to serve others	giving of oneself is the foundation of a flourishing life and welcoming community.	SERVICE



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