

## **Inquiry Teaching & Learning Policy**

Drysdale Primary School is committed to planning and implementing a curriculum (outside the core subjects of English and Mathematics) that uses an Inquiry approach incorporating the E5 and Kath Murdoch models.

### **Related Policies and Appendices**

Other Policies which are connected with this Policy are:

- Drysdale Primary Teaching and Learning Policy

### **Rationale**

Students learn best when they are engaged and connected to their learning. At Drysdale we believe that an E5/Kath Murdoch Approach to Inquiry Learning develops learners who think critically and creatively, who seek to find out more about the world and who take action and apply their learning. Whilst the student is central in this learning process and the driver of thinking, explicit teaching is still fundamental to ensure skills and understandings are achieved. Teachers at Drysdale use this approach to cover all subjects within the Victorian Curriculum except for English, Mathematics and Specialist subjects.

### **Guiding Principles behind Inquiry Learning**

- Students are **more motivated** to learn when they are engaged and curious about the idea they are investigating or problem they are solving. Inquiry learning triggers this **curiosity** and passion for learning
- Inquiry learning develops the **whole child**, developing transferable skills of critical thinking, planning, self-management, organization, communication and collaboration
- Inquiry learning supports the development of **student agency**, where the learner takes increasing responsibility for their learning through actively gathering and analysing information
- Inquiry teaching and learning prepares students for learning beyond school, with **real life** contexts and essential skills being developed.

Reference: Murdoch, K. (2015). *The Power of Inquiry*. Melbourne, Victoria: Seastar Education.

### **Core Expectations for Inquiry Teaching & Learning at DPS**

- One inquiry unit is taught per term for each year level
- Parents will be notified of the Inquiry Big Idea prior to the start of the unit so that there are opportunities for parents to engage and offer expertise to support the Inquiry Learning
- Where possible, Specialist teachers will find opportunities to link Inquiry units to their subject areas
- The inquiry units alternate with the Primary Connections resources which are designed to support the STEM areas of the curriculum, however additional resources and links to Victorian Curriculum will still need to be created by DPS staff
- Each unit will have a 'Big Idea' which summarises the key understanding or concept that students are expected to have understood by the end of the unit
- The Big Idea is written as a statement, not as a question
- Inquiry units are not given titles and as such titles of units should not be displayed in hallways or classrooms, but rather the Big Idea.
- Teachers will have an inquiry display in their room (or in another shared space with year level colleagues) which displays the Big Idea, a 'Wonder Wall,' student work and shows a progression through the inquiry process.
- We aim to provide a minimum of one key learning incursion/excursion for each Unit of Inquiry

- Inquiry learning should be taught for a minimum of 150 minutes each week
- Teachers will plan for units of inquiry using the DPS Inquiry Planner template
- Teachers will use a 'Backwards by Design' approach when planning inquiry units. This means that they will start 'with the end in mind,' considering firstly the Big Idea and the summative assessment task
- A hybrid approach to Inquiry using the Kath Murdoch and E5 models is used in all classrooms, (see below)

### Learning Process

Kath Murdoch's Inquiry Cycle	E5 Inquiry Model	Explanation
Tuning In	Engage	Students are hooked into the unit during tuning in provocations, they uncover the Big Idea, develop individual wonderings and then group similar questions together.
Finding Out	Explore	Via explicit teaching and student exploration, students will begin to learn about the Big Idea through each of the Essential Understandings.
Sorting Out	Explain	Students will assess which wonderings they have answered by sorting out their knowledge and discoveries at this point.
Going Further	Elaborate	Students will consider which wonderings remain unanswered after sorting out and how they could take their learning further.
Making Conclusions	Evaluate	Students make decisions about what they have learnt in the unit, demonstrating their understanding of the Big Idea through a summative assessment task.
Taking Action & reflecting	N/A	Students take action, applying their learning to the real world. Students reflect on the unit and look back on their learning journey.

### Terminology

Inquiry terminology	Meaning
Big Idea	A statement written in student-friendly language which summaries the central idea, information or concept that students will understand in this unit. Ideally one sentence.
'Backwards by Design'	An approach to planning whereby teachers identify the end goal in mind initially and then work backwards from this point, thinking of how they will support learners to reach this final goal.
Essential Understandings	These sit within the Big Idea. They are a series of statements that breakdown the Big Idea into sequential learning statements.
Wonderings	A question developed by the student during the 'Tuning In/Engage' stage after the Big Idea has been discovered. Teachers should actively teach students how to think of rigorous and relevant questions.

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