



ASPIRE CULTURAL

DRAMA, MUSIC & VISUAL ARTS PROGRAM HANDBOOK

History and Rationale

The ASPIRE Cultural Program began in 2016 and is continuing to develop as interest and numbers within the program increase. What began as a Music Excellence Program in 2015, catering only for successful Music students who attended extension lessons before or after school, is now a fully embedded curriculum program with extension opportunities across the Arts disciplines: Drama, Music and Visual Arts.

The Arts have the capacity to engage, inspire and enrich all students, exciting the imagination and encouraging them to reach their creative and expressive potential. Students learn as artists through the intellectual, emotional, and sensory experiences the Arts has to offer. They acquire knowledge, skills and understanding specific to the Arts subjects and develop critical understanding that informs decision making and aesthetic choices. Through the Arts, students learn to express their ideas, thoughts, and opinions as they discover and interpret the world in which they live.

Goals and Purpose

The purpose of the ASPIRE Cultural Program is to extend students who have a passion and specific interest in their chosen Arts disciplines: Drama, Music and Visual Arts. The ASPIRE Cultural Program aims to provide opportunities for students to engage in developing explicit skills in their chosen Arts discipline and cultivate their higher order thinking beyond the regular Creative Arts Curriculum and the classroom.

Key Personnel

Head of Department

Cameron Sarasola – AspireCultural@varsitycollege.eq.edu.au / casar0@eq.edu.au

Cameron is the Head of Department for Creative Arts and Instrumental music. Cameron is a Drama and Film Television New Media Teacher. Cameron manages the ASPIRE Cultural Programs and Languages department; also overseeing the Instrumental Music programs and extracurricular arts initiatives.

As Head of Department for the Creative and Performing Arts, Cameron is dedicated to the development of enriching Arts Programs that inspire students to reach their creative potential. Within his practice, Cameron seeks to provide young artists avenues to innovate within their chosen subjects through engaging curriculum development, and by creating industry links for students through co-curricular avenues. He encourages all students who have an interest in enhancing their established skills or are looking to explore passions with the Arts to apply.

ASPIRE Cultural Co-Ordinator

Zoe Koris – AspireCultural@varsitycollege.eq.edu.au

Zoe is the Aspire Cultural Coordinator and teaches a variety of arts subjects including Film, Television and New media, Arts in Practice and Visual Art. She has upheld professional relationships with external providers and community members as a means of creating opportunities for students to not only reach their full potential but surpass it. Over the last 9 years at Varsity College, Zoe established the College as a Gateway to Industry in Screen Media school, which provides unique industry level opportunities for our Film and AIP students. She also established the VC Film Festival, a standalone event for students in Film, AIP and Visual Art across years 7 – 12 to showcase their work. Zoe has also managed the costuming/makeup and digital set design for many of our College's musical and play productions. Zoe's role as Aspire Cultural Coordinator involves providing extra-curricular opportunities for our Aspire students such as workshops, excursions/incursions and competitions.

Program Overview

In 2024, the ASPIRE Cultural Program will provide successful applicants with the opportunity to enrich and enhance their skills in a chosen Creative Arts discipline. ASPIRE Cultural students will develop their skills and knowledge at a higher level than the mainstream students through differentiated learning experiences tailored to their skillset. Enrichment opportunities will be provided throughout the academic year.

Year 7 and 8 Creative Arts Electives

ASPIRE Music

- ASPIRE Music students will be timetabled into ASPIRE Music for One Semester of learning in year 7 and year 8, with Year 9 students being timetabled for Two Semesters of learning their academic year.

ASPIRE CULTURAL

- Students will develop skills for performing, analysing and composing works of art created using sound as the primary means of communication (Music).
- Students will develop musical ideas, such as mood, by improvising, combining and manipulating the elements of music through experiences encompassing a range of musical genres and styles.
- ASPIRE Music students develop theoretical and aural understanding of the construction of sound through theory and aural programs aligned to the AMEB Music Craft syllabus.
- Aspire Music students are expected to continue developing and refining their instrumental/vocal technique through regular lessons on their chosen instrument with specialist teachers.

ASPIRE Drama

- Students will be timetabled into ASPIRE Drama for One Semester of learning each academic year across year 7 and year 8, with Year 9 students being timetabled for Two Semesters of learning their academic year.
- Aspire Drama students will develop and refine expressive skills in voice and movement to communicate ideas and dramatic action in different performance styles and conventions.
- Aspire Drama students will analyse how the elements of drama have been combined in devised and scripted drama to convey different forms, performance styles and dramatic meaning.
- Aspire Drama students will develop their skills of Drama (acting, devising, directing and scriptwriting) and build their understanding of the dramatic languages required for further study in Drama.

ASPIRE Visual Arts

- ASPIRE Visual Arts students will be timetabled into ASPIRE Visual Arts for One Semester of learning in year 7 and year 8, with Year 9 students being timetabled for Two Semesters of learning their academic year.
- Aspire Visual Art students will develop skills for making and responding to works of art created using imagery and objects as the primary means of communication.
- Aspire Visual Arts students will develop skills across 2D, 3D and digital art mediums with a specific focus on using visual language to articulate ideas and meaning through artworks.

Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 - Mainstream Creative Arts Elective options

- Visual Arts
- Drama
- Media Arts (Years 7, 8 and 9 only)
- Music
- Film, TV and New Media (Year 10 only)
- Arts In Practice (Semester two year 10 only)

Instrumental and Choral Music Co-Curricular Program

Our Instrumental and Choral Music Program provides opportunities to develop performance skills across a range of instruments: Strings, Band, Percussion and Voice. This is a co-curricular program in which students develop skills in line with the Queensland Instrumental Music Curriculum. The Instrumental Music curriculum seeks to build musicianship through the development of musical literacy, technique and performance. The program extends students' musical experience through participation in large performance ensembles as well as small group lessons. *Please note, small group lessons are offered to students in the instrumental band and strings programs only.*

Aspire Music students are encouraged to develop their instrument technique and ensemble skills through enrolment in the Instrumental and Choral Music Co-Curricular Program. For all enquires please email: instrumentalmusic@varsitycollege.eq.edu.au

Creative Arts Extra-Curricular Opportunities

In addition to the extension offered throughout the Aspire Cultural Program, students will have the opportunity to participate in one or more of the following Creative Arts Co-Curricular and Extra-Curricular programs.

It is expected that successful Cultural Aspire applicants contribute to these Creative Arts Extra-Curricular offerings.

- Aspire Cultural Camp
- College Productions and Events
- Creative Generations
- Drama and Movement Society (DMS)
- Eisteddfods & Busking events
- Queensland Theatre's Scene Project
- Gold Coast Secondary School's Drama Festival (Dramafest)
- Mudgeeraba and Gold Coast Show Art Competitions
- Discipline Workshops/Excursions and Incursions

Please note: This list is not exhaustive and additional opportunities for student enrichment may arise throughout the academic year.

Partnerships and Industry Links

ASPIRE Cultural students will have the opportunity to participate in workshops with professional artists, theatre and/or gallery trips, exhibitions, eisteddfods and/or competitions.

We have cultivated links with industry professionals and educators in each of the Arts disciplines and continue a working relationship with local Gold Coast and Brisbane based artists, musicians and theatre companies.

Our students can access opportunities with our industry links at various stages of the academic year. Our ASPIRE Cultural staff will pass on opportunities as they arise to their class as they deem appropriate.

Student Selection Criteria

Students wishing to apply for the ASPIRE Cultural Program will be required to complete an application form and an audition. See below for selection criteria.

Successful applicants for the ASPIRE Cultural Program will need to demonstrate:

- A high level of ability in their chosen Arts discipline (Drama, Music, Visual Arts)
- Above average level of behavior and effort
- A clear desire to extend their skills within their chosen Arts discipline
- Commit to ongoing contribution to the broader Creative Arts community of the College through participation in Creative Arts Co-Curricular and Extra-Curricular Programs.

Please contact aspirecultural@varsitycollege.edu.au for an application form if you already attend Varsity College Secondary Campus (Year 7 or 8) and are wishing to apply.

For specific details on requirements for each Arts discipline, please see details below.

Drama

Applicants will be required to attend a 1 ½ hour Drama Workshop at Varsity College Senior Campus:

- The workshop is an interactive audition using text, image and music stimulus to devise performance work to present in small groups
- Students will be required to improvise and engage actively throughout the workshop using voice and movement
- After the workshop, students will complete a short scriptwriting task to communicate role within a given context.

Music

Applicants are required to attend a 1 ½ hour Music exam and audition session at Varsity College Senior Campus:

- 45 Minute Theory and Aural Exam to ascertain current levels of theoretical skill and knowledge
- Students are required to perform a piece of repertoire on their chosen instrument that best represents the student's ability (2 minute maximum).

Visual Arts

Applicants will be required to attend a 1 ½ hour Visual Art Workshop at Varsity College Senior Campus:

- The workshop will combine drawing, designing and photography activities.
- Students are required to present two of their own artworks during a one-on-one interview with the teacher. These artworks should be recent and demonstrate skills and subject interest. Artworks could include, but are not limited to: sketches, paintings, sculpture, pottery, photography, digital media, a short film or stop motion animation. Digital work or large artworks can be presented on a USB.

Important information for you to note in applying for Aspire Cultural:

Students can only select one discipline within the Creative Arts to apply for:

- Drama
- Music
- Visual Arts

If students cannot attend the workshop, families will be required to notify the college in advance of the audition and submit a clearly labelled USB to the Varsity College Senior Campus Enrolment Officer. USB submissions must contain suitable evidence to support the application. If support is required for USB audition submission, please contact the Aspire Cultural Coordinator via email: AspireCultural@varsitycollege.eq.edu.au

If you do not submit the ASPIRE Cultural Application Form and attend to audition requirements by the published due dates, your application will not be considered.

Upon completion of the audition process, staff and specialist teachers will decide on the suitability of each applicant. Successful applicants will be notified by the school and the school's decision will be final.

Expectations and Commitment to Program Requirements

The ASPIRE Program is committed to providing and maintaining a high performing and supportive learning environment for all program participants. Enrolment in the ASPIRE Cultural Program is a privilege. Students involved in the program must value and respect their placement through commitment to maintaining enrolment in the Cultural Aspire Program and all curriculum and enrichment activities offered for the full academic year.

ASPIRE Students will endeavour to perform at the highest level across the ASPIRE Performance Areas:

Academic (classroom and extra-curricular)

- Maintain high academic standards in all subjects (No 'D' or 'E' standards)
- Submit all assessment complete and by the due date.

Behavior and Effort

- Maintain a very high standard of behaviour and effort across all subject areas.
- Respect teachers and fellow students at all times.
- Be punctual and prepared for all lessons.
- Display high levels of behaviour at all times, not only during ASPIRE lessons, but with all Varsity College staff (teaching and non-teaching), contract and supply teachers.

Culture

- Students understand they bear responsibility as an ambassador of the ASPIRE Program to be seen as a positive role model to others within the local community
- Maintain a high level of school attendance in order to maintain learning standards.
- Active participation in competitions, events, activities and excursions related to the ASPIRE Program.
- Maintain high uniform standards in line with the Varsity College Appearance Policy.

- Be accepting and tolerant of all students.
- Show modesty and humility in interacting with students.

Maintenance of Position in Program

ASPIRE Programs operate a formal review process at the end of each term for students who consistently are not meeting Global ASPIRE Performance Areas as outlined in the Expectations and Commitment to Program. Grounds for review may include:

- Consistent lateness
- Truancy, repeated detentions, after school detentions, suspension
- Failure to submit assessment on a regular basis (monitoring and due dates).
- Failure to meet academic, behaviour and effort standards as outlined in the Expectations and Commitment to Program.
- Failure to meet the financial commitment of ASPIRE Program.

The ASPIRE Review Process for students consistently not meeting expectations is completed at the end of the term. The following procedures are then implemented:

- These students and their parents contacted by either the ASPIRE Coordinator or the Head of Department where expectations of the program will be discussed. Specific targets will be identified, and it is the student's responsibility to meet these.
- The student will be placed on probation for the following term. If students fail to meet their targets throughout this period, their enrolment in the program will be cancelled, and they will be placed in a mainstream class for the remainder of the year.

Application Process

The Varsity College ASPIRE Program applicants are required to:

- Complete the online ASPIRE Program Application which can be found on the Varsity College website. Upload all required documentation as required and submit by the closing date.

Please note that incomplete applications will not be accepted.

- All Applications must be received no later than **23rd of March 2024**
- You will receive further correspondence about testing dates and times once your application has been received and processed.

Upon completion of the application process, staff and specialist teachers will decide on the suitability of each applicant. Successful applicants will be notified by the school and the ***school's decision will be final.***

APPENDIX 1: Student Parent Agreement

Student Agreement

I understand the purpose of the ASPIRE Program is to select and retain the most highly motivated and knowledgeable students who will maintain the level of commitment, dedication and interest necessary to successfully achieve quality learning outcomes in their program of study.

The ASPIRE Program will create and maintain a learning environment of like-minded students that will support me in achieving my personal and academic goals in my program of study.

1. In all areas of college life, I understand that I bear responsibility as an ambassador of the ASPIRE Program to be seen as a positive role model to others within the local community.
2. I will endeavour to perform at the highest level across the Global ASPIRE Performance Areas.
3. I will demonstrate grit and determination as I strive towards my goals with the support of my parents.
4. If I do not adhere to the standards of the ASPIRE Program I understand that I may be removed from the program and forfeit my entrance fees.

I would like to accept my position to be a part of the Varsity College ASPIRE Program in 2025. I am aware that by accepting a place, I will agree to adhere to the ASPIRE Expectations and Commitment to Program Requirements and uphold the values and expectations therein.

Parent Agreement

I understand that the purpose of the ASPIRE Program is to provide my child with a learning environment that supports and facilitates quality learning outcomes in their program of study. I also understand an aim of the ASPIRE Program is to ensure that I, as a parent, am supportive of both my child in the program and of Varsity College.

I will, as much as possible, assist my child in maintaining a high level of commitment in order to successfully achieve quality learning outcomes in their program of study.

I will commit to the following:

- Assist my child in maintaining a high level of attendance in order to maintain learning standards.
- Actively encourage my child to maintain high standards in all subject areas.
- Provide support to my child and the college in adhering to Varsity College policies and procedures.
- Monitor the completion of homework set.
- Where possible and convenient attend Parent Teacher Interview Evenings.
- Maintain open lines of communication with the college to ensure success for my child.
- Meet all financial commitments as outlined during the application process (please note all ASPIRE fees are non-refundable)

Signed: _____
(Parent)

(Student)