

2026

CURRICULUM OPTIONS

HANDBOOK

GRADE 8



“That which is true is mine”



INTRODUCTION

The curriculum offered to students in Grade 8 at Riverside High School is aligned to the Australian Curriculum. All students study a common core of Mathematics, English, Science, Health and Physical Education, and the HASS subjects of History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship, and Business and Economics. They also select optional subjects from a wide variety of Learning Areas.

All compulsory (core) subjects and most optional courses run as full-year courses. Additional courses run for half a year to provide more variety and to allow for special interests and talents.

- **Full year option courses** are covered by two lessons (each of 75 minutes) per week for the whole year. Students will study two of these.
- **Half year courses** are covered by two lessons per week for half the year.

The Grade 8 program is designed to build on the foundations established in Year 7, supporting students as they further explore their interests, develop independence, and prepare for future learning pathways.

Program Goals:

- **Deepen understanding of routines, safety, and expectations:** Students continue to develop confidence and responsibility in diverse learning environments, including kitchens, workshops, and studios.
- **Expand subject knowledge and progression awareness:** Students gain insight into how elective subjects evolve, including future learning opportunities and career pathways, fostering long-term engagement.
- **Encourage exploration of interests and emerging passions:** Students are given opportunities to try new subjects, reflect on their experiences, and identify areas of personal interest through hands-on projects, creative tasks, and performances.
- **Strengthen engagement and connection to school:** Students build relationships with peers who share similar interests, participate in collaborative projects, and feel a sense of belonging through meaningful learning experiences.

When making choices, it is important to keep in mind that:

- The learning intentions and content of the subjects offered should be clearly understood. Please read carefully, then approach teachers for information, clarification, and advice.
- Choices at this stage are unlikely to limit future opportunities. The compulsory curriculum is broad in scope and will provide the necessary background for ongoing study in all but very specific areas. There will be further opportunities to choose or change options at the end of Grades 8 and 9 and beyond.
- You should make choices based on your own learning preferences, rather than those of your friends.

While every effort will be made to place students in their two favoured year-long and two preferred half-year courses, the choices made may not be available due to insufficient numbers opting for a subject or unexpected changes to our school's staffing or timetable arrangements. This is the reason you are asked to nominate additional reserve selections.

It is most important that preferences are ranked carefully in each full year and half year section.

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

CORE	Maths	Science	English	Health & PE	HASS
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OPTIONS	FULL YEAR	HALF YEAR
	2 full year options	{including Thursday PM sports} 2 half year options
	Line 1	Terms 1 & 4
	Line 2	Terms 2 & 3

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Specific information about individual subjects is available from:

Creative Writing	Mr B Gadsby
Design Tech: Foods	Mr T Pederson
Digital Tech: Computing	Mr L Curro
Design Tech: Wood	Mr L Bonney
Drama	Ms E McMahon
English	Mr B Gadsby
Health and Physical Education	Miss J Hall
HASS	Mr B Gadsby
Languages	Mrs C Coleman-Cox
Mathematics	Ms K Jago
Music	Mr S Rainbird
Science	Ms K Jago
STEM	Mr A Smith
Visual Arts	Mrs C Saunders

FULL YEAR OPTION COURSES	HALF YEAR OPTIONAL COURSES Thursday Block 3 & Block 4
Arts: Drama Arts: Music Arts: Visual Arts Design Tech: Applied Design Design Tech: Foods Digital Tech: Computing English: Creative Text Design HPE: Health, Wellbeing and Recreational Studies Languages: Japanese Maths: 8 Maths Extension Science: STEM	Arts: Music Arts: Visual Arts Design Tech: Café Style Foods Design Tech: Woodwork English: Text Talk HPE: Active Girls HPE: Games & Sport Maths: Maths Extension Science: STEM Winter Sport: Football (Boys) Football (Girls) Hockey Netball Soccer

FULL YEAR COURSES

Students will study two of these full year courses

ARTS: DRAMA

This course is designed for students of all ability levels who want to further develop their Drama skills and build on what they learned in Grade 7. Students will have opportunities to perform both individually and in groups, including at the Launceston Competitions and for a Primary School audience.

Through the study of Drama, students will:

- Use the tools of the actor: voice, body language, and facial expression to communicate character.
- Cooperate and work with others to produce dramatic work.
- Develop creative thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Build teamwork while creating and performing dramatic works.
- Reflect on their own work and critique the work of others.
- Increase confidence, self-esteem, and empathy for others.
- Learn about the elements of theatre performance.

This course provides a supportive environment for students to grow as performers and collaborators.

ARTS: MUSIC

This course is designed for students of all ability levels who want to increase their overall competence as musicians. Students will develop important musical skills, including reading and writing intermediate music notation, identifying musical genres, and becoming independent learners.

The course focuses on building notation and aural skills, as well as analysing musical forms and styles such as reggae, blues, classical, and contemporary music. Students are encouraged to participate in performances in a supportive environment.

Students will:

- Read and write intermediate music notation.
- Develop aural skills and analyse musical forms.
- Explore a variety of musical genres (reggae, blues, classical, contemporary).
- Enhance their abilities as performers (solo and ensemble), listeners, and composers.
- Participate in class and public performances.
- Build confidence and musical appreciation in a safe, encouraging setting.

ARTS: VISUAL ARTS

This course is designed to develop and extend students' practical skills, knowledge, and the language of visual expression. Students will explore a range of creative techniques and materials, including drawing, painting, printmaking, collage, clay, and sculpture.

They will also study the work of different artists, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and are encouraged to develop and present their own ideas in creative ways.

Students will:

- Experiment with a variety of materials and techniques.
- Create artworks using drawing, painting, printmaking, collage, clay, and sculpture.
- Study and respond to a range of artists, including First Nations Australians.
- Explore and evolve ideas from both the real and imagined world.
- Present their work in a variety of creative formats.

DESIGN TECH: APPLIED DESIGN

This course encourages students to develop practical skills and craftsmanship using a variety of materials, including wood, metal, and plastics. Students will adopt safe work practices, cooperate with peers, and challenge themselves as active learners.

They will have opportunities to develop their own solutions through a problem-solving process that includes graphics and models. The course aims to produce interesting and worthwhile projects while raising awareness of possible pathways to a future career in a trade-related field. Enterprise, design, and sustainability are key factors, as outlined in the National Curriculum.

Students will:

- Develop practical skills using wood, metal, and plastics.
- Adopt safe and cooperative workshop practices.
- Solve problems through design processes, including graphics and models.
- Create, adapt, and refine design ideas and solutions.
- Justify design decisions using developed criteria, including sustainability.
- Explore pathways to further studies and careers in trade-related fields.

Important:

All students must always wear safety glasses and an apron in the workshop.

DESIGN TECH: FOODS

Everything you eat and drink can have a major effect on your health and wellbeing. This practical course helps students gain the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about the food they consume.

Students will:

- Extend their skills in food preparation.
- Understand the impact of food on health and wellbeing.
- Develop awareness of sustainable food practices.
- Prepare food in a safe and hygienic manner.
- Read and interpret instructions to complete tasks.
- Understand food labels.
- Work cooperatively in a group setting.

This course is ideal for students who want to build confidence in the kitchen and make healthy, informed food choices.

DIGITAL TECH: COMPUTING

Grade 8 Digital Technologies is for students who want to further develop their skills in computer coding, data manipulation, and understanding computers and networks. The course builds on the Year 7 full-year Info Tech course, expanding students' knowledge and practical abilities.

Students will explore how computers process information, examine physical computer components, and solve problems using computational thinking. They will develop programming skills in both block coding and Python and learn how to enhance user experience through their projects.

Students will:

- Deepen their understanding of how computers read and process information.
- Explore the physical components of computers and networks.
- Develop programming skills using block coding and Python.
- Solve problems using computational thinking.
- Code devices such as BBC Micro:bits and TinkerGen GameGo.
- Create simple computer games and explore the Minecraft Education environment.
- Enhance user experience through thoughtful design.

This course is ideal for students interested in progressing their digital and coding skills in a creative, hands-on environment.

ENGLISH: CREATIVE TEXT DESIGN

This course is for students who enjoy writing and creating imaginative texts. It is designed for those wishing to explore the craft of writing and illustrating for personal, imaginative, and informational purposes.

In this course, students will:

- Recognise the importance of audience and purpose when creating texts.
- Create texts that demonstrate thoughtful language, visual, and structural choices.
- Develop skills in planning and editing their writing.
- Be introduced to modern, popular text types such as webcomics, anime, manga, and video games.
- Participate in character design tutorials.
- Plan, write, and illustrate (digitally or physically) a variety of different texts.

Students will have opportunities to work both individually and in groups to build a folio of different text types, developing skills in editing, word processing, and proofreading. They may also enter young writers' competitions such as the Red Room Poetry Competition and the Launceston Competitions and attend workshops with visiting creators when available.

You don't have to be the best artist or writer to participate, just bring your passion for creativity and a willingness to try something new!

HPE: HEALTH, WELLBEING AND RECREATIONAL STUDIES

This course extends students' understanding of wellbeing-related topics through a balance of theory and practical lessons. Students will investigate strategies to enhance health and wellbeing and apply movement concepts to achieve fitness outcomes.

Students will:

- Investigate strategies and practices that enhance their own and others' health and wellbeing.
- Apply movement concepts and strategies to achieve movement and fitness outcomes.
- Explore different sporting activities in both practical and theoretical settings.
- Participate in practical activities, roles, and experiences.
- Build awareness of the lifelong health benefits of regular fitness, recreational, and sporting activities.

This course aims to develop lifelong skills and knowledge for maintaining health and wellbeing.

LANGUAGES: JAPANESE

Study Japanese in 2026 and engage with a language that is growing in global popularity. Students will explore connections between their own culture and Japanese culture through a variety of tasks and experiences. There may be opportunities to connect with students studying English in Japan and make lifelong, international friendships.

Throughout the year, students will learn to read and write in hiragana, introduce themselves, talk about family and pets, design and describe Japanese houses, explore hobbies and routines, and try delicious Japanese food. Learning is supported by fun games, activities, and cultural experiences.

Students will:

- Read and write in hiragana.
- Introduce themselves and communicate about family, pets, and daily life.
- Design and describe Japanese houses.
- Explore hobbies, routines, and Japanese cuisine.
- Connect with Japanese students and build international friendships.
- Discover the benefits of learning an additional language across all learning areas.

This course is aligned to the Australian Curriculum standards and is perfect for students wanting to extend themselves and communicate in a foreign language.

MATHS: 8 MATHS EXTENSION

The Year 8 Maths Extension full year option is for students who want to challenge themselves mathematically and are performing well above the standard in Year 7 Maths. This course content will be very demanding for students.

Students will be learning to understand:

- Methods of proof
- Advanced counting techniques
- Geometry
- Number bases
- Sequences
- Modular arithmetic
- Other mathematical concepts

Students will be exposed to problem solving strategies and unfamiliar mathematical notation which will give them a firm foundation for further studies in mathematics. It is not recommended that student enrol in both the full year and half year Maths Extension option classes.

SCIENCE: STEM

This course is aimed at building students' skills in the engineering design process through creative, hands-on challenges. Activities are designed to strengthen problem-solving, communication, time management, and teamwork.

Students will develop skills in using CAD software, laser cutting, and 3D printing to solve diverse challenges. There are opportunities to pursue individual interests, from jewellery design to spinning tops. Students will also use the Lego Spike platform for design and coding and be introduced to basic electronic circuits.

Students will:

- Develop skills in CAD software, laser cutting, and 3D printing.
- Apply the engineering design process to solve a variety of challenges.
- Use Lego Spike to design, code, and meet design challenges.
- Explore basic electronic circuits.
- Work on projects ranging from water rockets to cantilevered bridges.
- Pursue individual interests using STEM technologies.
- Build 21st-century skills: communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity.
- Strengthen links between scientific concepts and practical design.
- Research, design, construct, and evaluate their concepts.
- Prepare for and participate in the F1 in Schools competition, including portfolio and car creation.

This course provides a strong foundation for future STEM learning and competitions, with a focus on innovation and teamwork.

HALF YEAR COURSES

Students will study two of these half year courses

Half Year Course 1: Terms 1 & 4

Half Year Course 2: Terms 2 & 3

ARTS: MUSIC

This course is designed for students to increase their overall competence as musicians, with an emphasis on individual development. Students will identify their own learning areas to focus on and improve their rehearsal and performance techniques with guidance from their teacher.

Each student will develop an individual learning plan, allowing them to concentrate on their specific needs as a musician—whether that's practical work, composition, theory, or music history. This course is a great opportunity for students to develop their creative skills and self-expression.

Students will:

- Identify personal learning goals and areas for musical growth.
- Develop rehearsal and performance techniques.
- Create an individual learning plan tailored to their interests (practical, composition, theory, or music history).
- Receive guidance and feedback from their teacher.
- Build creative skills and confidence as a musician.

This course supports students in becoming independent, expressive, and well-rounded musicians.

ARTS: VISUAL ARTS

This course is designed to develop and extend students' practical skills, knowledge, and the language of visual expression. Students will explore a range of creative techniques and materials, including drawing, painting, printmaking, collage, clay, and sculpture.

Students will:

- Experiment with a variety of materials and techniques.
- Create artworks using drawing, painting, printmaking, collage, clay, and sculpture.
- Explore and evolve ideas from both the real and imagined world.
- Present their work in a variety of creative ways.

This course encourages creative thinking and self-expression through visual art.

DESIGN TECH: CAFÉ STYLE FOODS

As part of our modern lifestyle, people are choosing to eat at cafes and restaurants more frequently. This course gives students the opportunity to explore a range of dishes, including fusion foods, meat-free options, trendy foods, and bakery-style creations. The subject is largely practical, allowing students to extend their food knowledge, preparation, and presentation skills.

A repertoire of garnishing, decorating, and plating skills will be developed.

Students will:

- Demonstrate skills in food preparation and presentation.
- Prepare food in a safe and hygienic manner.
- Read and interpret recipe instructions to complete tasks.
- Apply nutritional knowledge when choosing ingredients for a healthy lifestyle.
- Work cooperatively in a group setting.

This course is ideal for students who want to build confidence in the kitchen and learn skills relevant to today's food culture.

DESIGN TECH: WOODWORK

This course specialises in developing wood fabrication skills through hands-on projects. Students will learn basic joining techniques using both manual and portable power tools to create small, multi-part projects such as furniture pieces, games, and creative items.

The course is underpinned by the National Curriculum, with a strong emphasis on enterprise, design, and sustainability. Students are encouraged to personalise their designs by making projects with a specific need in mind and using a variety of materials. Quality finishes and safety are always prioritised.

Students will:

- Learn basic wood joining techniques.
- Use manual and power tools safely and effectively.
- Create functional and creative wood-based projects.
- Explore design principles including creativity, resourcefulness, and sustainability.
- Add personal touches to projects with a specific need in mind.
- Focus on quality finishes and safe workshop practices.

Important:

All students must always wear safety glasses and an apron in the workshop.

ENGLISH: TEXT TALK

In this course, you will explore a wide variety of texts, including short stories, poetry, films, and visual texts such as advertisements and artwork. You'll discover how language can be used in creative and powerful ways to communicate ideas and tell stories.

You will have the opportunity to create your own texts—whether it's writing a short story, composing a poem, or designing a visual piece. Alongside this, you'll participate in class discussions to share your thoughts, respond to others, and deepen your understanding.

Students will:

- Read and analyse a range of texts (stories, poems, films, visual texts).
- Discover how language communicates ideas and tells stories.
- Create original texts, including stories, poems, and visual pieces.
- Participate in class discussions to share and develop ideas.
- Develop skills in reading, writing, and speaking.
- Think critically and express ideas clearly.

Text Talk encourages you to engage with texts in a meaningful way, think creatively, and contribute your own unique voice.

HPE: ACTIVE GIRLS

This half-year course is designed to empower girls through active participation, personal development, and social connection. Students will engage in a variety of physical activities that promote self-awareness, confidence, and wellbeing in a supportive and inclusive environment.

Students will:

- Demonstrate skills to make informed decisions.
- Propose and implement actions that promote their own and others' health, safety, and wellbeing.
- Apply personal and social skills to establish and maintain respectful relationships.
- Promote fair play, inclusivity, and teamwork.
- Participate in activities that build strength, power, flexibility, coordination, and overall fitness.
- Learn strategies to reduce stress and anxiety through movement and mindfulness.

This course is ideal for students who want to build confidence, develop healthy habits, and enjoy being active in a fun and encouraging space.

HPE: GAMES AND SPORT

This course is designed for all students who enjoy being active or wish to become more active. Students will participate in a wide variety of activities, from traditional sports to non-traditional games, in a supportive and inclusive environment.

Students will:

- Investigate and apply movement concepts and strategies to achieve movement and fitness outcomes.
- Apply and refine movement concepts and strategies to suit different movement situations.
- Improve their skills, coordination, and overall fitness through participation in diverse activities.
- Build confidence, teamwork, and a positive attitude towards physical activity.

This course is ideal for students who want to develop their physical skills, try new activities, and enjoy being active with their peers.

MATHS: MATHS EXTENSION

This course is designed for students who are interested in extending and enriching their mathematical understanding. Through a variety of challenges and investigations, students will gain deeper insight into mathematical structures and techniques beyond the standard Year 7 syllabus.

Students will:

- Understand numeracy concepts and different number systems.
- Apply mathematical notation, language, and symbolic representation.
- Construct mathematical models to solve problems.
- Work mathematically to develop problem-solving skills.
- Generalise understanding using formulae and mathematical reasoning.

Topics include exploring number systems such as binary and hexadecimal, learning set theory and set notation, developing a deeper understanding of geometry, and investigating the mathematics of networks. This course is ideal for students who enjoy being challenged, want to explore mathematical ideas in depth, and are keen to develop advanced mathematical thinking.

SCIENCE: STEM

This half-year STEM course is designed for students interested in integrating modern technologies with traditional science challenges, using an engineering design process. Students will participate in a range of hands-on activities aimed at developing creative problem-solving skills, effective communication, time management, and teamwork.

Students will:

- Identify and apply basic engineering design principles.
- Develop skills in 3D printing, laser cutting, and CAD software such as Tinkercad.
- Participate in team challenges that encourage collaboration and creative thinking.
- Strengthen the link between scientific concepts and the design, construction, and evaluation of solutions.
- Research, design, construct, and evaluate their own concepts and projects.

This course is ideal for students who enjoy practical, hands-on learning and want to build skills in both science and technology through engaging, real-world challenges.

WINTER SPORTS TEAMS

Sports teams represent Riverside High School and players are selected based on ability and merit. Team selection is determined by coaches through selection training. Players are expected to participate in the team assigned to them.

Winter Sport will run across both Lessons 3 and 4 on Thursday afternoons during Terms 2 and 3.

Riverside High is proposing to enter the following teams in the Winter Thursday roster:

- **Football (Boys)**
- **Football (Girls)**
- **Hockey**
- **Netball**
- **Soccer**

Important:

If you intend to participate in a winter sport, please ensure you make your preferred sport your first choice of half-year courses.