



ST PETERS  
GIRLS

# Junior School Initiatives

St Peter's Girls' School  
has implemented an  
array of new learning  
initiatives for our  
Junior School students.

# Junior School Initiatives at St Peter's Girls

The Junior School at St Peter's Girls is a vibrant, welcoming and contemporary environment for young and inquiring minds across Reception to Year 6.

Outstanding schools such as ours constantly evaluate their programs, practices and resources, always seeking to take teaching and learning to the next level.

Over the past few years, our Junior School has introduced a host of groundbreaking initiatives for the learners of today and tomorrow.

## Year Level Coordinators

Three Year Level Coordinators have been appointed across the Junior School. These teachers assist in developing the direction of our curriculum and wellbeing programs, liaise with teachers, help with organisational aspects of the Junior School and serve as an additional person who will know each student well.

## Technology Upgrade

We have increased the number of school-supplied iPads so that students in Reception to Year 5 now have 1:1 use of an iPad all year. While we previously used a shared model, it is problematic when trying to enable seamless saving, uploading, printing and sharing of work. As a result of this initiative, all students from Reception to Year 7 now have sole use of an iPad.

Further to this, we have expanded our design and digital technology resources to include Lego We Do, Edison robots, Makey Makey invention kits and Lego Simple Machines sets. All students from Reception to Year 6 are involved in digital coding and problem-solving throughout the year. In another drive to further expose girls to technology, St Peter's Girls has launched an annual Girls in Tech Expo for Years 6 and 7 students, including girls from other local schools.

Students are also taught lessons in digital citizenship, digital safety and digital skill development.

## Focus on Wellbeing

2019 marks the roll out of a dedicated and tailor-made wellbeing curriculum for Junior School students.

#EMPOWHER was launched in the Middle and Senior Schools in 2018; in just a short space of time, the program is already having a profound impact on our girls.

Specific Junior School content has been developed to help students build confidence and resilience in their crucial formative years.

## Spaces and Places

Many Junior School classrooms have recently been refurbished and refurnished, along with the Junior School Library. A new covered sandpit and swing area has been created next to the oval, our main playground has been upgraded and a sprawling balcony has been added to our top floor classrooms. Junior School students will soon also enjoy first-class Art facilities within our new Science Centre.

## Mathematics

Additional teachers have been appointed in Years 4, 5 and 6 to teach Mathematics. This is an exciting change, enabling students to work in smaller groups for three Mathematics lessons per week.

These groups are based on the students' initial understanding of the upcoming units of work, forming two 'core' groups and a 'core plus' group. The groups are fluid throughout the year. This structure enhances how well we target students' needs in Mathematics, whether it be that they are struggling with some areas, working capably at year level, or have advanced skills and understandings.

For the other Mathematics lessons, in addition to these three lessons each week, girls work with their class groups and class teacher.

Our School has embarked on a significant professional learning project in partnership with an internationally-acclaimed curriculum leader, which aims to improve students' fluency, skills, understanding and attitude in Mathematics.

## Mind Lab

Mind Lab has been introduced across Reception to Year 6. The Mind Lab methodology uses hands-on strategy board games to develop cognitive, social, emotional and ethical thinking skills that span all learning areas. It also encourages risk-taking and flexibility of thinking.

Mind Lab teaches students how to think strategically, work interdependently, apply a wide range of problem-solving strategies and reflect upon their effectiveness. The skills learned in game playing situations are then related to real-life situations, and students are encouraged to transfer and extrapolate the learning from the Mind Lab sessions to situations they encounter in the classroom and their daily lives.

Teachers have been involved in significant training in Mind Lab methodology and are enjoying teaching their students problem-solving and socialisation transference skills through stimulating game playing sessions.

## Intensive Languages Program

In 2016, the School introduced a new Intensive Languages Program for our Junior School students which has already established Saints Girls as a leader in language education in South Australia.

Reception to Year 3 students take part in two language lessons a week in either French or Chinese. The intensity of language learning increases as girls in Years 4, 5 and 6 participate in four lessons per week. As students progress to Year 7, they can elect to study Chinese, French or Japanese for the three years of Middle School.

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