**PARK EXPLORERS**

The Park Explorers program supports Year 3/4 students to learn in and about Victoria’s protected places. Park Explorers is a curriculum-aligned program which fosters strong environmental values and a love of nature by encouraging students to learn outdoors and give back to their local environment.

The inquiry-based program is flexible and can fit in with a unit of work based on Geography, Health and Physical Activity, the Capabilities and the cross-curriculum priority, Aboriginal Histories and Culture. Resources such as maps, videos and Teaching and Learning packs are provided to support the implementation of the program.

The program and its accompanying resources are based on Parks Victoria’s Learning for Nature Education philosophy; Connect, Explore, Protect. This structure is designed to:

Reflect

Apply

**Learning for Nature**

Stewardship

* Develop stronger connections between students and nature
* Establish and build upon students’ knowledge of their unique local environment through inquiry learning and exploration of nature
* Empower students to protect and help safeguard Victoria’s protected places

Teachers can use the Park Explorers resources as a full unit of work but are encouraged to adapt and use the activity ideas to suit their students’ needs, inquiries and interests.

If you would like for your students to be Park Explorers please email education@parks.vic.gov.au to register your interest.

**Year 3/4 Park Explorers Wellbeing Unit Overview**

**Overarching Inquiry Question: Why does Victoria have protected places?**

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| Unit focus: How do people connect with Victoria’s protected places? |
| Connect & Explore* What is a Victorian protected place?
* How do you connect and care for nature?
* How do other people connect and care for nature?
* Why is Connection to Country so important to Traditional Owners?
* What barriers prevent people from connecting to nature?
* How does culture, ability and identity influence the way we use and care for protected places?

The Teaching and Learning Resources contain curriculum linked activities that help students unpack these questions. Visual thinking tools are used to enable students to explore, organise or reflect on their learning. Students are encouraged to develop their personal connection to nature through mindfulness activities such as sits pots, nature colour bingo and sound mapping. Connecting with local Traditional Owners and volunteer environmental groups will help students understand other people’s connection to nature. Parks Victoria ranger or expert may be available to support student outdoor inquiry. Contact education@parks.vic.gov.au for more information. ProtectPotential ideas depending on student interest:* Connect with your local Traditional Owners and build an ongoing relationship that supports student learning in Aboriginal history and culture.
* ParkConnect: join local park activities, Welcome Walks etc
* Promote the importance of your local park to your community. Use digital technology to create a campaign highlighting the health benefits of connecting with your natural spaces.
* Design and promote a volunteer activity in your local area, targeted at a local issue e.g.: weeding, clean up. Remember to register on ParkConnect if your activity will occur in the Parks Victoria estate.
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| Year 3/4 Victorian Curriculum links |
| **Earth Globe Asia-AustraliaGeography*** The many Countries/Places of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout Australia, and the custodial responsibility they have for Country/Place, and how this influences views about sustainability (VCGGK080)
* Similarities and differences in individuals’ and groups’ feelings and perceptions about places, and how they influence views about the protection of these places (VCGGK083)
* Similarities and differences between places in terms of their type of settlement, demographic characteristics and the lives of the people who live there (VCGGK084)

Heartbeat**Health and Physical Activity*** Describe factors that can positively influence relationships and personal wellbeing (VCHPEP092)
* Describe strategies to make the classroom and playground healthy, safe and active spaces (VCHPEP095)
* Participate in outdoor games and activities to examine how participation promotes a connection between the community, natural and built environments, and health and wellbeing (VCHPEP096)
* Adopt inclusive practices when participating in physical activities (VCHPEM102)

Handshake**Intracultural Capabilities** * Compare their own and others cultural practices, showing how these may influence the ways people relate to each other (VCICCB005)
* Describe what they have learnt about themselves and others from intercultural experiences including a critical perspective on and respect for their own and others cultures (VCICCB006)
* Identify how understandings between culturally diverse groups can be encouraged and achieved (VCICCD008)

**Users****Personal and Social Capabilities*** Examine the similarities and differences between individuals and groups based on factors such as sex, age, ability, language, culture and religion (VCPSCSO020)
* Identify the importance of including others in activities, groups and games (VCPSCSO022)

Chat**Ethical Capabilities*** Explore the contested meaning of concepts including fairness and harm and how they can seem to differ in different situations (VCECU004)
* Explore the extent to which particular acts might be regarded by different people as good or bad, right or wrong, better or worse, and explain why (VCECU005)
* Discuss the role of personal values and dispositions in ethical decision-making and actions (VCECD008)

**LightbulbCritical and Creative thinking** * Investigate different techniques to sort facts and extend known ideas to generate novel and imaginative ideas (VCCCTQ012)
* Identify and use ‘If, then…’ and ‘what if…’ reasoning (VCCCTR016)
* Explore distinctions when organising and sorting information and ideas from a range of sources (VCCCTR017)
* Consider concrete and pictorial models to facilitate thinking, including a range of visualisation strategies (VCCCTM018)
* Examine an increased range of learning strategies, including visualisation, note-taking, peer instruction and incubation, and reflect on how these can be applied to different tasks to reach a goal (VCCCTM019)
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