**PARK EXPLORERS**

The Park Explorers program supports Year 5/6 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 5/6 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 people make connections with nature in Victoria?
* What activities can people do in nature that help them connect to their surroundings?
* 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 5/6 Victorian Curriculum links |
| **Earth Globe Asia-AustraliaGeography** * Describe and explain interconnections within places and between places, and the effects of these interconnections (VCGGC087)
* Environmental and human influences on the location and characteristics of places and the management of spaces within them (VCGGK096)

Heartbeat**Health and Physical Education** * Explore how identities are influenced by people and places (VCHPEP105)
* Explore how participation in outdoor activities supports personal and community health and wellbeing and creates connections to the natural and built environment (VCHPEP113)
* Plan and practise strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing (VCHPEP108)
* Examine the influence of emotional responses on behaviour, relationships and health and wellbeing (VCHPEP110)
* Participate in physical activities designed to enhance fitness, and discuss the impact of regular participation on health and wellbeing (VCHPEM118)

**Lightbulb****Critical and Creative Thinking** * Examine how different kinds of questions can be used to identify and clarify information, ideas and possibilities (VCCCTQ021)
* Investigate thinking processes using visual models and language strategies (VCCCTM029)

**Users****Personal and Social Capabilities** * Explore the links between their emotions and their behaviour (VCPSCSE025)
* Describe what it means to be confident, adaptable and persistent and why these attributes are important in dealing with new or challenging situations (VCPSCSE027)
* Explore and discuss behaviours that demonstrate sensitivity to individual, social and cultural differences (VCPSCSO029)
* Define and recognise examples of stereotypes, discrimination and prejudice and discuss how they impact on the individual (VCPSCSO030)

Handshake**Intercultural Capability** * Examine the influence of emotional responses on behaviour, relationships and health and wellbeing (VCHPEP110)
* Identify barriers to and means of reaching understandings within and between culturally diverse groups (VCICCD011)
* Examine and discuss the variety of ways in which people understand and appreciate differing cultural values and perspectives, and things which promote or inhibit effective engagement with diverse cultural groups (VCICCD012)

Chat**Ethical Capability** * Examine how problems may contain more than one ethical issue (VCECU011)
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