



ALPHA
PROGRAMME
2011
HANDBOOK

Dear Parents and Students

Welcome to Henderson High School's Alpha Programme. I am Heidi van Drongelen and I am the coordinator of the Programme. 2011 will be my third year at Henderson, teaching Japanese and ESOL. I have a keen interest in the education of gifted and talented children and critical thinking.

The Alpha programme is entering its second year in 2011. With a focus on enrichment learning, students will gain the skills necessary to become global citizens that have the know how and attitude to succeed in whatever field they choose. Students will work towards becoming technology savvy, effective communicators, problem solvers, information seekers and critical thinkers. The programme will provide students with the skills necessary to achieve at a high level in NCEA when they reach the senior school.

This handbook outlines the Alpha programme and expectations on students, parents/caregivers and the school. Please read through it with your son/daughter and decide if Alpha is right for your family.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me by email at hdrongelen@hhs.school.nz or phone 838 9085 ext 712.

I look forward to working with you and your child in 2011.

Kind regards

Heidi van Drongelen
Teacher in charge of Alpha

Programme Components

FORM CLASS

Students in the Alpha programme will remain in the same form class throughout their time at Henderson High School. This will ensure that students will continue to push each other to strive for excellence and will also provide a strong support network. Form time will be a time to meet with the programme coordinator and work on individual projects and portfolios

ALPHA STUDIES

Alpha students will spend one period each week doing Alpha Studies. Students will learn how to learn and how to think. They will be involved in setting achievable targets for themselves and reviewing their targets. As the students develop these skills they will incorporate them into their learning and project work.

TECHNOLOGY

Each student in the Alpha programme will receive a laptop to be used at home and school. At each teacher's discretion the laptops will be used for teaching and learning.

The Alpha programme teachers have their classrooms set up with wireless internet access, projectors and interactive whiteboards. This technology will be used frequently to enhance learning

Henderson High School is now on the Ultranet. This is an interactive intranet system whereby students can access subject materials, keep blogs, create wikis, sit tests, do revision and much more.

CAMBRIDGE CHECKPOINT EXAMINATIONS

At the end of the year Alpha students will sit the English, Maths and Science Cambridge Checkpoint Examinations. This is an innovative diagnostic testing method designed to help students learn. It gives standardised tests that provide feedback on a student's strengths and weaknesses in the key curriculum areas

CLASS WORK

The focus of the programme is on enhancing learning rather. Students in the programme will complete a regular year nine course with an added emphasis on inquiry and critical thinking.

Each subject will focus on:

- Ensuring the students know what they are learning and why
- Connecting learning to real life situations
- Having multiple opportunities to build on existing knowledge
- Examining and using new knowledge
- Incorporating technology into learning
- Reflection

Pre-testing in each subject will be done so that students can see their progress at the end of the topic and can then reflect as part of their portfolio. Feed-forward will be a major part of assessment

INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

Each student will be required to complete an individual project each term. These independent, personalised projects will allow the students to really focus on the skills developed in the Alpha Programme and apply them to an area they are passionate about.

PORTFOLIO

The portfolio represents the journey of the student. It is place where goals are recorded and where finished work is placed. Students will reflect on their finished work by answering the following questions

1. Did I try as hard as I could?
2. What did I do best at?
3. What were my weaknesses?
4. After considering the teacher's comments what can I do next time to improve?
5. Do I need extra help in a particular area?
6. Is there anything that really sparked my interest that I would like to investigate further in a term project?

At the end of the year each student's progress will be assessed and they will be awarded a Junior Diploma with distinction, excellence, merit or achievement.

ALPHA CAMP

In conjunction with year 12 PE students, the Alpha class will go on a school camp.

Expectations

Alpha Students

It is expected that students will

- participate fully in all classes and activities associated with the Alpha Programme
- Be role models for other students
- Take responsibility for their own learning
- Safely take care of their laptop
- Be prepared for all classes
- Meet teacher expectations
- Complete class work and homework to the best of their ability

Parents

It is expected that parents/caregivers will

- Encourage your child to perform to their best
- Discuss how their learning is going
- Provide an appropriate work space at home
- Liaise with the programme coordinator when necessary
- Review your child's term report and return it with comments
- Attend school interviews

School

It is expected that the school will

- Provide students with valuable learning experiences
- Choose teachers to teach the Alpha class based on their interest, capability and willingness to create an enriching inquiry based programme
- Ensure a technology rich programme
- Provide professional development for staff in the area of gifted and talented education to ensure up to date knowledge
- Report to parents if/when problems arise
- Communicate effectively with students.

The school expectations are the responsibility of the programme coordinator. The coordinator will have the following roles

1. Programme organiser

The coordinator is responsible for

- Testing and selection of students into the programme
- Management and recording of the Cambridge checkpoints – using this information to assist in the development of each student's weaknesses.
- Future testing
- Professional development
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the programme and making changes where necessary
- Liaising with teachers. Although academically gifted, students will not all be at the same level in each subject. The coordinator will ensure teachers have this information.
- Hold regular Alpha meetings with the Alpha teachers to discuss progress/problems etc.

2. Pastoral

The coordinator is responsible for

- Liaising with subject teachers when there are concerns
- Monitor student progress
- Meetings with each student to discuss progress, check portfolios, discuss any issues or support necessary. Goals will be assessed and new goals will be set where necessary. A progress report will be written for the student and their parents/caregivers
- Organise extra tutoring from staff/senior students to fill knowledge gaps

Reporting to parents

As well as regular school reports, parents will receive progress reports from the programme coordinator.

Once a term, each Alpha student will meet with the programme coordinator to discuss progress. The discussion will be based around their learning, how they feel they are progressing and what has been observed by the coordinator during Alpha studies. A report will be written and sent home to parents for comment. The following is a guide of what to expect

Alpha progress report

NAME:

DATE:

Key Competencies	What I'm working on	What I need to develop further?	Has it worked? (with evidence)
Thinking skills			
Using language symbols and text			
Managing self			
Relating to others			
Participating and contributing			

COMMENT:

Essential Skills	What I'm working on	What I need to develop further?	Has it worked? (with evidence)
Problem solving			
Social skills			
Technology use			
Research skills			
Reflection			
Achievement			
Confidence			

COMMENT

PERSONAL GROWTH GOALS

PROGRESS ON GOALS

Strengths

Areas for development

Student comment

Parent/caregiver response
