

BENOWA

STATE HIGH SCHOOL



Excellence Program
Handbook

Introduction

Congratulations on your entry into the Benowa State High School's Programs of Excellence. We are proud to offer our extra-curricular programs to enrich your learning experience and provide *many pathways – no limits*.

Our Programs of Excellence include:

Academic Excellence	The Arts Excellence	Sports Excellence
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• French• French Immersion• STEM• Steiner• Benowa Scholar	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dance• Drama• Music• Visual Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sports Excellence

This handbook provides important information about your selected Program of Excellence and the expectations of you within each program. If you are unsure of any information contained in this handbook, please contact the Program Coordinator listed in this handbook.

Enrolment Capacity

To ensure Benowa State High School is able to meet its enrolment obligations within the Enrolment Management Plan (EMP), the Principal must restrict the enrolment of out-of-catchment students to ensure in-catchment students can enrol at their local state school.

Our Programs of Excellence are supported through a defined number of places. Places in the Programs of Excellence will only be available to out-of-catchment enrolments once the demand for in-catchment enrolment has been met and capacity for future growth has been reserved.

Conditions of acceptance

Upon agreement and payment of your child's enrolment into the Program of Excellence, you are committing to a three-year period (Year 7 to Year 9), unless the enrolment commences in the later years.

Students enrolled in Benowa State High School's Programs of Excellence must pay the associated fees as outlined in their acceptance letter.

In addition, the *Program of Excellence Acceptance Agreement* document must be signed, confirming that the student and their parent/carer, accept the expectations placed upon them for student's academic, behaviour and undertaking with the school.

French Excellence – Year 7

The French Excellence Program offers more than just language learning—it's a gateway to innovation, creativity, and a global future. Our unique French Innovative solutions for the future subject integrates VR technology and a cross-curricular approach, allowing students to not only master the language but also develop critical 21st-century skills like problem-solving, collaboration, and digital fluency. The French Excellence Program will explore connections between culture, sustainability, and global collaboration, preparing students for leadership in an increasingly interconnected world. Units studied include:

French	Innovative Solutions for the future
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Le français c'est facile comme bonjour• La mode et la gastronomie• Super, encore du français !• Les monuments autour du monde	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using Artificial Intelligence (AI)• Exploring the world through VR• Currumbin VR project (link to Science)• eWaste and Powerwells

French Immersion – Year 8 and 9

Students in the French Excellence Program will have the unique opportunity to continue into French Immersion - a hybrid bilingual program. French Immersion provides motivated students with an exciting challenge, enabling not only extension in academic excellence but accelerated learning in French. Learning the core subjects as an immersive experience creates a stimulating environment for students to complete their studies of math, science, and humanities in the French Language. This allows for full mastery of both Australian curriculum content and language.



Why study French Immersion?

French is not just a language; it's a pathway to endless opportunities. The opportunity to study advanced French in Years 10, 11 and French Extension in Year 12 offers bonus ATAR ranks first year credit for university language subjects. Spoken across five continents and central to international organisations like the United Nations and the European Union, French opens doors to careers in diplomacy, global business, science, and the arts. By joining this program, students gain access to a world of possibilities while developing the confidence to navigate a globalised future.

Program Entry

- Students wanting to enter French Excellence will be required to sit the academic entrance exam.
- Previous knowledge of French is not a pre-requisite for this program.
- Students should have a passion for learning languages

Program Specific Conditions

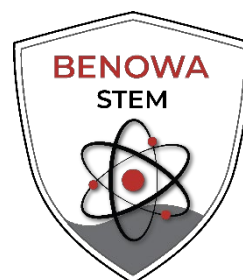
- Actively engage in class work, Education Perfect and the promotion of language learning and exchange opportunities.
- Participate in a range of extra-curricular opportunities including camps, excursions, cultural experiences, and language competitions.
- Be sensitive to the differences of others and consistently demonstrate an ability to show genuine concern and empathy for fellow peers.
- Represent our program in a manner that promotes the school values of Compassion, Diligence, Integrity and Respect at all times.

Contact	Name	Email
Head of Department	Cathryn Cooper	ccoop89@eq.edu.au

STEM

Overview

Benowa SHS's STEM Excellence program is designed to inspire, challenge, and equip students with the knowledge and skills, necessary in the 21st century workforce, to excel in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. The program has a strong focus on fostering resilience, perseverance, curiosity, critical thinking, innovation through hands-on learning, collaborative projects, and real-world applications.



At Benowa SHS, STEM students will engage with cutting-edge resources/learning programs, expert guidance from our specialised teaching team, and a supportive learning environment that encourages exploration and creativity. Through engaging coursework, industry partnerships, and extracurricular opportunities, students will develop problem-solving abilities, teamwork skills, and a passion for discovery.

The STEM excellence program also recognises that our world is ever-evolving, and therefore places emphasis on key foundational skills to support students who may potentially find themselves creating new jobs within the workforce. Whether your child is aspiring towards careers in science, engineering, mathematics, or technology, our STEM program provides students with a strong foundation for future success in their career aspiration.

Program Entry

Year 4 and 5 students who have a keen interest in STEM and aspire to join our program are required to sit the ACER Academic test. Dates for this testing will be published on Benowa SHS's social media platforms. Students will also need to provide their most current report cards with particular focus around effort and behaviour to ensure suitability into this academically rigorous program.

Program Specific Conditions:

- Consistent participation and continuous development of practical, problem solving, analytical and critical thinking skills, demonstrated through maintaining high academic achievement standards across all subject areas.
- Consistently demonstrates their commitment to the STEM program by meaningful participation in STEM events such as
- Griffith University Gold Coast Science Competition
- First Lego League
- STEM ambassador primary program
- Be open to diverse perspectives of other fellow academics and peers and work collaboratively
- Represent our program in a manner that promotes the school values of Compassion, Diligence, Integrity and Respect at all times.

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Director of STEM	Melissa St Pierre	mstpil@eq.edu.au
Head of Department Mathematics	Ben Callum	bcall10@ea.edu.au
Head of Department Science	Schinead Johnston	sjohn800@eq.edu.au

Steiner

The Steiner Excellence Programme at Benowa State High School provides an academic, creative and purposeful way of learning that extends students in all core subject areas. The programme develops learning activities which are intellectually challenging, connected to the real world and are inclusive.



In the Steiner program, like-minded students are together as a class, with one teacher from Years 7 - 9, across the core subjects. This format allows the teacher to gain a holistic view of the students and their educational needs. Additionally, the program's design fosters strong partnerships between students, families and the teacher to create a constructive and caring community. Steiner is focussed on developing and strengthening students' ability to think critically, and creatively. It promotes the use of discussion, collaboration and democratic classroom practice, where students are given space to articulate, and problem solve to construct knowledge.

Steiner schools deliver each subject through a series of "big ideas" or themes. Students engage in these ideas through the Main Lesson subject, which is held three to four times a week, usually at the start of the school day. The Main Lesson subject provides unique enrichment opportunities, in which students have the autonomy to explore content and broaden their understanding from strong foundational to extension levels. Each year, students work through seven main lesson topics that cover the subject areas of English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities, Art and Drama. The focus on skill development, both cognitive and non-cognitive, in the Main Lesson subject enables students to find success in their studies across all subject areas. The program aims to support students to become self-directed, self-motivated, lifelong learners.

Some specific topic areas that Steiner students engage in throughout the three-year programme includes:

- Drama, Steiner night play
- Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans
- Plant Chemistry
- Fluid and Aero Mechanics
- History of Art
- Graphic Novel, The Watertower

Program Entry

Entry into the Steiner Academic Excellence Program requires students to take the school's Academic Entrance Exam. The outcome of this test, in combination with recent report cards demonstrating academic achievement, effort and behaviour, will be used to inform selection into the program. Specifically, entry into the Steiner program will be determined by the following skills as demonstrated in the Academic Entrance Exam:

- Aptitude in Reading and Writing
- Aptitude in Mathematics and Abstract Reasoning
- Overall Stanine score – a score determining ability of the 'whole learner'

Program Specific Conditions:

- Demonstrate the ability to take pride in the work that is produced in class. This includes a willingness to ensure all assessment items are presented to the excellent standard of the Steiner program.
- Steiner very much promotes discussion within the classroom. Participation in partner, group and class discussions is integral to the Steiner program. Therefore, respect of others is expected.
- Take initiative to show agency in learning and to 'take risks' to grow as a learner.
- Be sensitive to the differences of others and consistently demonstrate an ability to show genuine concern and empathy for fellow peers.
- Represent our program in a manner that promotes the school values of Compassion, Diligence, Integrity and Respect at all times.
- Students must manage time appropriately to achieve main lesson progress check points.

Contact	Name	Email
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Benowa Scholar



The Benowa Scholar values curiosity and a desire for their learning. They demonstrate traits that are inquisitive, optimistic, inclusive, aspirational and our scholars act with integrity. This academic excellence pathway provides opportunities for all students to engage and excel in their core subjects that are of specific interest to them whilst developing meaningful relationships with like-minded peers.

Students are able to choose a core subject area in order to enrich learning. The subjects on offer are English, Mathematics, Science and Humanities. Students are able to choose a Benowa Scholar subject in conjunction with any other excellence program with the exception of the Steiner Academic Excellence program. Scholar offerings are subject to timetabling availability.

Benefits of completing subjects in an enriched environment include:

- Heightening students' engagement with schooling
- Promoting the development of higher order thinking skills, such as evaluation, logical reasoning and problem solving
- Immersing students in a supportive high-performance learning culture
- Differentiating the curriculum for increased capacity and learning needs
- Accommodating for students' giftedness and/or talentedness
- Providing students with intellectual stimulation, encouraging them to learn more and expand on their knowledge
- Establishing the foundation of lifelong learning dispositions

Program Entry

Entry in Year 7 will require students sit the Academic Entrance Exam. The outcome of this test, in combination with recent report cards demonstrating academic achievement, effort and behaviour, will be used to inform selection into the programme.

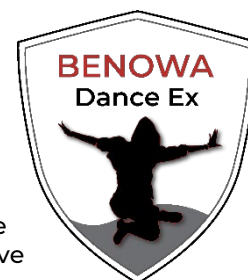
For students who would like to enter the program in Years 8 or 9, a minimum level of achievement grade of B is required and is to be complimented with a high grade in efforts and behaviour. Further consultation with classroom teachers will also inform selection at Years 8 and 9.

Program Specific Conditions

- Student capability and performance will be reviewed annually for each Scholar subject undertaken. Consideration of academic performance, effort and behaviour are to determine suitability of completing the Scholar program for the next year.
- Students need to maintain a B grade for each Scholar program to remain in the program for the subsequent year.
- Students also need to maintain a high level of effort and behaviour in order to complete the Scholar program the following year.

Contact	Name	Email
Head of Department English & Enrichment	Adrian Hays	ahays8@eq.edu.au

Dance Excellence



Overview

Dance Excellence is designed to develop the technical and expressive skills of the dancer and to foster a strong sense of confidence, self-assuredness and resilience. Students have opportunities to progress through high level dance training for performance, choreographic exploration, and dance analysis. The Dance Excellence program strives to develop not only individual flair and versatility but also collaborative skills and interpersonal awareness. Dance Excellence is studied in Year 7, 8 and 9. In Year 10 students enter the Certificate III course.

Students will focus on:

- Performance skills and technique
- Develop skill in the styles of Hip Hop, Jazz, Musical Theatre, Contemporary, Lyrical, Tap and Ballroom
- Developing choreography in varying styles
- Discussion and Analysis of Dance works and dance language

Program Entry

All Dance Excellence applicants are expected to complete an audition:

- Informal interview with the teacher
- Perform a prepared dance (2-3 mins) in any style

OR

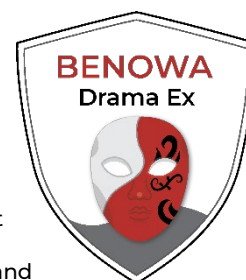
- 1 minute routine in one style and 1 min routine in a contrasting styles (Jazz, Ballet OR Contemporary, Hip Hop)
- Performances may be choreographed by studio of school teacher and presented (with their permission) at the audition. If no other dance piece is available, it may be student choreographed.

Program Specific Conditions:

- Participate in annual Dance night performance, perform on assembly, participate in community performances.
- Students must exhibit talent and ability along with a strong work ethic in both the practical and theoretical dimensions of the course work.
- Students must display high standards of behaviour and effort across all subjects whilst in this program.
- These high standards are essential for students to be able to undertake both the demands and opportunities this program offers.
- Be sensitive to the differences of others and consistently demonstrate an ability to show genuine concern and empathy for fellow peers.
- Represent our program in a manner that promotes the school values of Compassion, Diligence, Integrity and Respect at all times.

Contact	Name	Email
Director of Arts Excellence Head of Department – The Arts	Amanda de Byl Bettianne Stuart	adebyl@eq.edu.au bstua4@eq.edu.au

Drama Excellence



Overview

Drama Excellence encompasses deep understanding, complex thinking, creativity and collaborative practices. Students need to be self-directed and reflective learners who have a desire to express themselves and their thoughts about local and global issues through this art form. Students are given opportunities to perform individually, present in ensembles, create drama in a variety of contexts and interpret scripts. The Drama Excellence program looks to foster personal development, self-expression, confidence and effective communication skills.

Students will focus on:

- Scripted drama
- Role play
- Directing
- Set Design
- Scenarios
- Ensemble performances
- Script writing
- Monologues and Duologues

Program Entry

All Drama Excellence applicants are expected to attend an audition:

- Informal Interview with teacher
- Perform a prepared Dramatic Performance (2 minutes)

These could include:

- a short solo script
- a poem
- section from a play

Certificates awarded, drama prizes and letters of recommendation should be included in the application

Program Specific Conditions:

- Perform for public audience
- Attend live theatrical performances
- Participation in Junior Drama Festival (when offered)
- Participate in workshops with external artists
- Organisational skills to prepare for performance opportunities
- Commit to group goals and timelines
- Students must exhibit talent and ability along with a strong work ethic in all aspects of the course work
- Students must display high standards of behaviour and effort across all subjects
- These high standards are essential for students to be able to undertake both the demands and opportunities this program offers
- Be sensitive to the differences of others and consistently demonstrate an ability to show genuine concern and empathy for fellow students.
- Represent our program in a manner that promotes the school values of Compassion, Diligence, Integrity and Respect at all times.

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Head of Department – The Arts	Bettianne Stuart	bstua4@eq.edu.au

Music Excellence



Overview

The Music Excellence Program is designed to nurture and develop young musical talent. With a comprehensive curriculum, the program aims to inspire creativity and foster a deep appreciation for music. Students with musical aptitude will gain a solid foundation in music theory, composition, and artistry, while honing their musical skills. They will also benefit from performance opportunities that allow them to showcase their talents.

Whether students aspire to pursue a career in music or simply wish to enhance their passion, the Music Excellence Program empowers them to reach their full potential. The program ignites students' passion for music through a variety of experiences, including reading and composing music, performing in both large and small ensembles, and participating in solo performances. By learning and applying advanced musical concepts through instrumental and vocal presentations, as well as composition and analysis, students will elevate their skills to new heights.

Important focus areas are:

- Music theory and composition
- Diverse instrumental opportunities
- Individual growth and support
- Performance and technique development
- Community engagement and public performances

Program Entry

All applicants to the Music Excellence Program are required to attend an audition, during which they will:

- Perform two contrasting pieces that showcase your ability and technique (please choose pieces from your music tutor book, not band music).
- Play scales at your current level of proficiency (scale sheets will be provided upon application).
- Complete a short sight-reading exercise
- Demonstrate or discuss all instruments you can play (e.g., flute, guitar, etc.).
- Complete a short theory test to assess your musical knowledge.
- Participate in an informal interview with the teacher. Be sure to bring any relevant certificates, exam results, and other supporting documents

Program Specific Conditions:

All Music Excellence students are required to participate in at least one of the school's instrumental or choral ensembles throughout the program. To maintain their position, students must attend lessons, rehearsals, and performances regularly. Participation in an ensemble is contingent on meeting the following criteria:

- Year 7 band students completing Level 3 of the QLD Instrumental Music Curriculum*, while string students complete Level 4, or an equivalent level of proficiency. Percussion students complete Level 3 on percussion (mallets and drums).
- A suitable place must be available in the chosen ensemble, with limited availability for piano, percussion, electric guitar, and bass guitar. Placement will be determined in consultation with classroom music and instrumental music teachers. If no place is available in the chosen ensemble, alternative options, such as the possibility of creating specialised ensembles (e.g., a rock band), will be considered.

Student performance is closely monitored, with the school maintaining high expectations for work ethic, application, and behaviour. Students are expected to demonstrate appropriate behaviour and effort across all subjects while in the program.

* <https://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/Documents/instrumental-music-curriculum.pdf>

Contact	Name	Email
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Head of Department – The Arts	Bettianne Stuart	mbstua4@eq.edu.au

Visual Arts Excellence



Overview

The Visual Art Excellence program develops artistic skills in the individual and explores how artists work collaboratively. Students will have the opportunity to explore a range of mediums and exchange ideas techniques and perspectives that shape an artwork. The Visual Arts Excellence program allows students with flair and interest in Art to extend their thinking, understanding and use of perceptual and conceptual skills. They use and apply appropriate visual language and visual conventions with increasing complexity. Students will consider the qualities and sustainable properties of materials, techniques, technologies and processes and combine these to create and produce solutions to their artworks.

Students will focus on:

- Making techniques: clay – sculpture, etching – printmaking, drawing – mixed media and digital art
- The role of the artist

Program Entry

All Visual Arts Excellence applicants will be required to submit a folio of work. Applications may submit approximately 4-6 of the following:

- Photographs of art works including drawings, paintings, prints, sculpture, origami
- Certificates awarded, art prizes and letters of recommendation from artists and teachers should also be included in the application

Where possible it is best to show a range of artistic skills. Include 2 to 3 different media.

Program Specific Conditions:

- Create work for the annual art exhibition evening *FUSIONS*
- Attend Excursions to GOMA and QLD Galleries
- Attend Energies Art Exhibition
- Participate in workshops with professional artists
- Create installations in school locations
- Students must exhibit talent and ability along with a strong work ethic in all aspects of the course work.
- Students must display high standards of behaviour and effort across all subjects whilst in this program.
- These high standards are essential for students to be able to undertake both the demands and opportunities this program offers.
- Be sensitive to the differences of others and consistently demonstrate an ability to show genuine concern and empathy for fellow peers.
- Represent our program in a manner that promotes the school values of Compassion, Diligence, Integrity and Respect at all times.

Contact	Name	Email
Program Coordinator	Amanda Kellow	akell34@eq.edu.au
Head of Department – The Arts	Bettianne Stuart	bstua4@eq.edu.au

Sports Excellence

Sports Excellence is a High-Performance Sports Program, which aims to nurture and develop the physical, mental, social and emotional potential of high performing student athletes.

The program will recognise and identify emerging athletes and assist each individual in achieving excellence and success in both their chosen sport/s and academics. The driving aim is to provide a program centred around the creation of *good humans* using sport and physical activity as a conduit to teach essential life skills, to think powerfully and with purpose, with passion and with perseverance towards every aspect of excellence in sport.



The program will focus on athlete development and will expose students to a variety of training, sports and coaches so students have multiple opportunities to build their capacity to excel in their chosen sporting areas now and in the future. Each student will have exposure and opportunity to engage with and in the development of:

- Nutrition
- Sports Psychology
- Data and Performance
- Strength and Conditioning
- Wellbeing and Mindfulness
- Game sense and tactical awareness
- Feedback and Communication
- Recovery and Mobility
- Body Awareness
- Sport Exposure

Program Entry

Students wanting to gain entry into the Sport Excellence program are required to submit an application and attend performance-based demonstration of merit prior to selection. This provides a measure of suitability to the program, maintains high expectations of excellence and demonstrates:

- Sporting prowess and achievements, including levels of sporting representation
- Coachability and contributions to teams, clubs and sporting organisations
- Physical fitness, functional movement, coordination and skill
- Games sense and tactical awareness

Program Specific Conditions:

- Demonstrate maintenance and progression of strength and conditioning specific age specific benchmarks and personal sporting and fitness goals.
- Meaningful participation in all three (3) Homestead Carnivals (Athletics, Cross Country and Swimming).
- Participate in at least one (1) form of organised sport with a structured program of training and competition. This may be school, club or representative sport.
- Be sensitive to the differences of others and consistently demonstrate an ability to show genuine concern and empathy for fellow athletes and peers.
- Represent our program in a manner that promotes the school values of Diligence, Compassion, Respect and Integrity at all times.

Contact	Name	Email
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Supporting Student Excellence

The academic, creative and sporting success, as well as the health, safety and wellbeing of all students is of paramount importance to Benowa State High School. Where necessary, the school will offer support to excellence students to ensure they are managing their added commitment to their program and schooling.

Benowa State High School offers a range of programs and services to support the wellbeing, engagement and learning of all students. We encourage parents/carers and students to speak with their teacher, Program Coordinator, Head of Year/s or Deputy Principal. Seeking support and open communication allows the opportunity for guidance and practical solutions to challenges, promoting mental health and academic success. Additionally, they may make an appointment to meet with the Guidance Officer if they would like individual advice about accessing further support and services.

Learning and wellbeing are inextricably linked - students learn best when their wellbeing is optimised and they develop a strong sense of wellbeing when they experience success.

Students can approach any trusted school staff member to seek assistance or advice. If they are unable to assist, they will provide guidance and help ensure the student is connected to the appropriate representative of the Student Support Network.

The following staff are available to provide support to students:

- Program of Excellence Coordinator
- Heads of Year/s
- Heads of Departments
- Guidance Officer
- Deputy Principal
- School Chaplain
- School Based Health Nurse
- Student Administration

Further details regarding the support available to all students can be found in our Student Code of Conduct: Student Wellbeing, Engagement and Learning.

Should students require additional support specific to the Program of Excellence, please contact the Program Coordinator.

At-Risk Improvement Plan

In the event that a student's attendance, engagement, conduct or academic performance is not to the standard as set by the *Program Acceptance Agreement* and specific conditions of the Program of Excellence, the school will undertake the following steps:

Identify at-risk students

The Excellence Program teacher, Head of Year and Year Level Deputy will monitor the attendance, engagement, conduct and academic performance of students within excellence programs other related subjects. Students will be identified if they are not performing to the agreed upon standard.

Verbal Warning

This is a verbal warning from the Program Coordinator to the student and/or their parent/guardian.

Formal Meeting and At-risk Student Improvement Plan development

The Program Coordinator meets with the student at an At Risk Interview to discuss the concerns for the student's performance. At the meeting, an At-risk Student Improvement Plan is developed outlining agreed actions to support the student to improve for a set period of time. A copy of the Plan is provided to the student and parents/carers.

Checkpoint meetings

Meetings will be arranged between all parties to review and support the student for the duration of the At-Risk Improvement plan. An record of progress will be completed at this time.

Student returns to Program of Excellence

Should academic performance and behaviour improve by the due date identified in the student's At-Risk Student Improvement Plan, the student would retain their position in their Program of Excellence.

Removal of student from the Program of Excellence

Should academic performance and behaviour NOT improve by the due date identified in the student's At-risk Student Improvement Plan, a meeting will be arranged between all parties to notify the student and parent/guardian of the student's removal from the Program of Excellence. The student may receive a new timetable to commence at an appropriate time. Other consequences may apply in line with the Student Code of Conduct.

Removal from program

In the event of continued minor or major breaches to the *Program Acceptance Agreement* and specific conditions of the Program of Excellence, the student will be removed from the Program of Excellence.