

Wheatbelt Regional Education Office

Wheatbelt Education Region

(Primary Extension and Challenge) PEAC

A handbook for Parents and Students

*Wheatbelt Regional Education PEAC Office
Northam*

OVERVIEW

To PEAC students and parents - Congratulations on being a part of the Wheatbelt Regional Education PEAC program. This year the program is full of new opportunities.

A special welcome to our new Year 5 PEAC students and parents, and those who have transferred to the Wheatbelt Education Region. We are looking forward to working together with you this year. This guide is intended to inform you about what PEAC is all about and the programs on offer this year.

ENTRY TO PEAC

Most students enter PEAC (Primary Extension and Challenge) at the beginning of Year 5. Students are invited to be a part of the PEAC program based on their testing performance on a test administered in Year 4. This test is not repeated in future years, as once children have been identified for PEAC they retain access - assuming their performance is satisfactory in each course they attend.

The results of the PEAC tests are available from your school Principal. If you would like to discuss your child's results, please make an appointment to do so.

Students who are PEAC identified and choose not to nominate to be a part of district-based programs in Term 1 are still invited to nominate in subsequent terms.

PEAC EXPECTATIONS

The aim of PEAC for children in Years 5-6 of primary school is to provide learning experiences that are highly motivating and enriching to enable students to engage in productive, mindful thinking behaviour. The courses look at 21st century learning skills such as critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration and communication.

Regionally based programs are offered to *complement and supplement* school-based provision and are usually conducted on a part-time withdrawal basis. Due to the geographical nature of our Region the aim is to forge close links with schools so that teachers and school-based TAGs (Talented and Gifted students) coordinators are supported in providing a learning environment that is intellectually stimulating and rigorous, building on the natural abilities in which your child has been identified.

These programs operate in a supportive environment where children can interact with like-minded peers. The extension of learning that occurs within these programs, challenges students to analyse, synthesise and evaluate the different aspects of the course. At PEAC, courses offered are planned to develop the students' higher levels of thinking and students are encouraged to take risks and 'have a go'. For some students this might create anxiety but it is vital to their emotional development that they learn to manage this and continue their learning. Students are also encouraged to be self-reflective in their learning and thinking and to persevere when faced with challenges. During the courses, resiliency will be developed and tested.

While attending PEAC, students should demonstrate exemplary behaviour inside and outside the classroom, conforming to the host school's rules for playground use and show consideration to the host school's classes if moving in and around the school.

Students involved in excursions organised by the teachers of the PEAC program may use a variety of public and community facilities, and venues. Students attending these venues must display a mature and responsible attitude.

Classes are ideally small (approx. 8-18) and students are expected to accept the responsibility for their own learning. **This includes bringing the required materials to classes** (pens, 2B pencil, ruler, eraser, sharpener etc.) for every lesson, **completing homework tasks, research and participating in class activities** to the best of their ability.

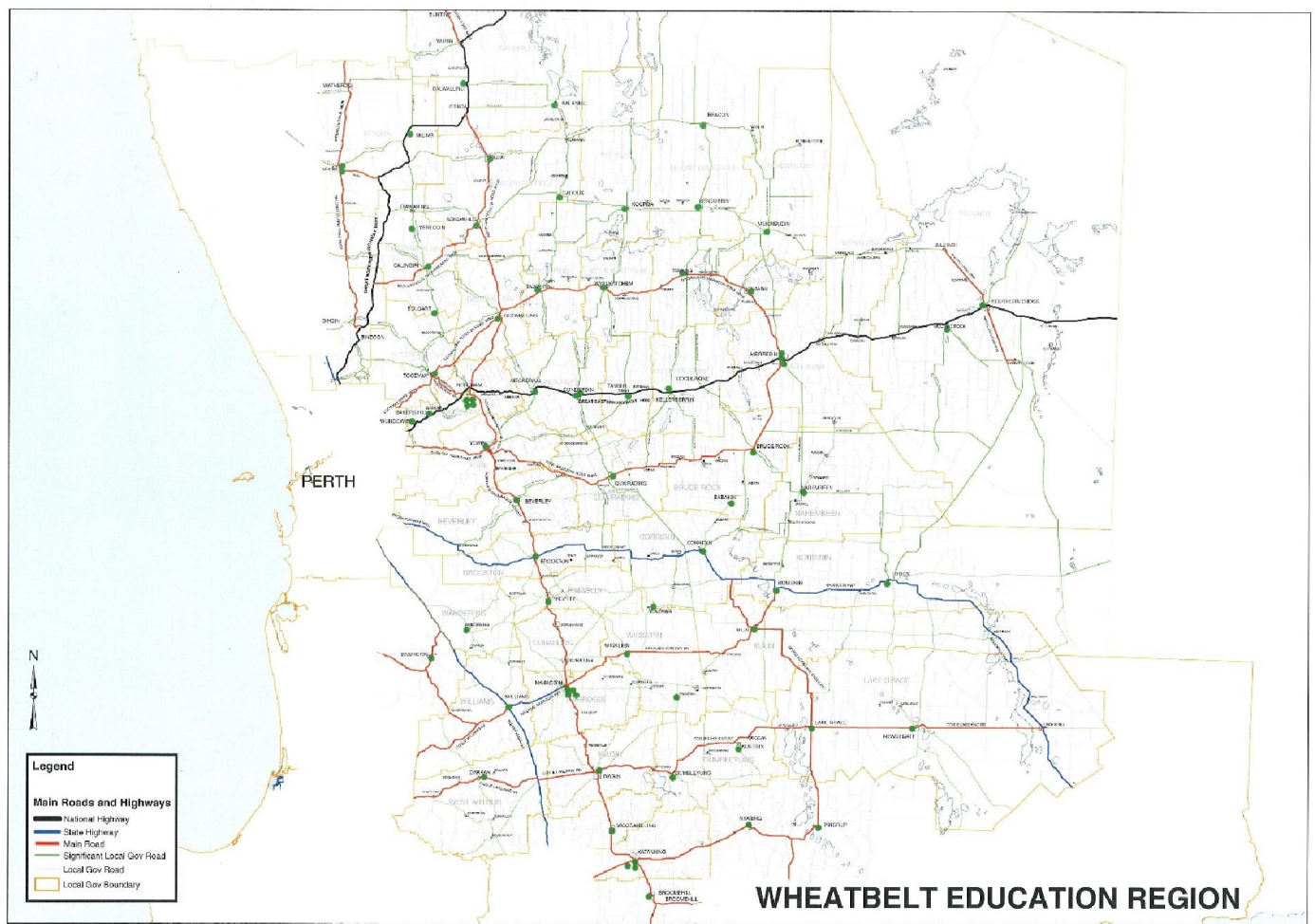
Students withdrawing from their normal school program to attend a district-based course should not be expected to *make up* work missed in class. While some catch up may be necessary, students should not be made to complete all work tasks from the school classroom for homework given that PEAC has its own rigour, expectations and demands so that to fulfill the expectations of an extension program. Please contact your child's classroom teacher to discuss this issue should it arise.

DISTRICT OVERVIEW

The Wheatbelt Education Region stretches from Dalwallinu and Beacon in the north, east to Southern Cross and Newdegate, south to Katanning and Broomehill and west to Wundowie, Moora and Boddington. Within this area the Region encompasses 42 primary schools, 19 district high schools, 4 senior high schools, 2 agricultural colleges and a K-12 College at Merredin.

The PEAC students in the region are split into major PEAC centres where students from various sub-regions would access their PEAC program. The PEAC centres are located within host schools. The teachers for each of these centres would be confirmed before the start of the program. We also have an online program for students who can't access

a PEAC centre due to distance or other challenges. All our teachers are very experienced in the field of education and bring a wide range of knowledge, skills and experiences.



These teachers are responsible for notifying parents and schools of the programs they are presenting. This year we are sending out one permission form which will cover all the PEAC courses presented at that venue. Parents will need to sign a parent's consent form and notify the PEAC teacher of any changes throughout the year. A Course flyer will be sent at the beginning of each course with relevant objectives and dates. The PEAC program usually starts in Week 4 of the new school year. More information would be sent to schools and parents prior to the start.

A medical and parent contact form needs to be completed at the beginning of the year for the teachers to take with them on all courses and excursions they plan.

COURSE STRUCTURE

PEAC Courses will operate in a variety of formats, including:

- **Short Courses** - These will be offered in each of the PEAC centres and may be offered with an integrated or specific learning area focus. Course details including venue and time will be sent to students for nomination when details are known. These courses are usually run for the duration of a term. Classes are usually run fortnightly.
- **Excursions** - Throughout the year there will be opportunities for students to nominate to participate in a variety of excursions. In the past we have used Scitech, Harry Perkins Institute and Universities for specialised excursions, literature activity sessions at the Scribblers Festival in Subiaco, The Hills Discovery Centre, Orienteering and Challenges at King's Park, Theatre Sports institute of Australia, Art Galleries, Museums WA, Canning River Eco Education Centre and the Fremantle Jail.

Many of the courses will be based on the principles of enrichment, extension, thinking skills and independent in-depth study, with a focus on the progression from teacher-directed to learning autonomy.

ASSESSMENT

Student assessment is ongoing and a report will be provided to students, parents and their schools at the end of **each semester**. Evaluation consists of self, peer and teacher observations, checklists or rubrics, success at completing set tasks and projects. If there is an extremely unsatisfactory performance, the PEAC teacher will notify students and their parents during the course to arrange a meeting.

Students will be expected to maintain a working portfolio of their course work and this will be an important part of their overall course assessment.

The PEAC teachers will model this reflective practice, as self-reflection is a skill explicitly taught to facilitate students' growth as independent, self-directed learners. Journals and other forms of reflection will be completed in each PEAC session. This is a skill many PEAC students need to be encouraged to self-monitor, by both teachers and parents.

PEAC teachers want everyone to succeed and providing that they see you are doing your personal best, handing in all your tasks on time and being an active member of the PEAC community, you will be successful. It's up to you!

ATTENDANCE

It is recognised that there will be circumstances requiring a student to withdraw from or miss some course time, however, please note that it is the responsibility of parents to inform **BOTH** the child's school **AND** the PEAC teacher at the course venue when a child is absent for any reason (including school excursions and illness).

No students should arrive at a PEAC course without having returned the medical/consent forms to the PEAC teachers prior to the course.

Courses will be designed to run fortnightly. It is therefore important when enrolling for a course to commit to the entire program. It is unfair to expect your child to succeed if they miss many of the sessions. Reports will only be written if they attend 50% of the sessions. If a child is absent, it is important for the parent to notify the home school and the PEAC teacher.

Students must check in and out of their PEAC school front office each time they attend PEAC classes. *Parents will be kept informed of excursions and other class time changes via notes home and emails - please check with your child that they have passed on all relevant information. If due to unforeseen circumstances that classes are disrupted because of events such as COVID 19, classes may continue online. We will use an app called Seesaw or Moodle and other relevant platforms such as WebEx to communicate and progress the lessons.*

Your child's PEAC teacher will be particularly aware of issues related to gifted and talented students such as underachievement; perfectionism and socio-emotional developments. Please alert your child's PEAC teacher immediately if any of these issues arise in relation to their course attendance. Raising these issues within the safe environment of a PEAC program can be particularly effective and supportive.

STUDENT WITHDRAWAL

Continued participation in PEAC is based on three factors: commitment, interest and academic ability. Any PEAC teacher concerns in these areas will be discussed with parents and the school Principal.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Only one thing is expected: your personal best - attitude, behaviour and application. You are not on your own - your teacher will help you as much as possible BUT in the end it is up to you to make the most of the opportunity given to you.

To help you, listed below are some criteria that you can work towards to become a successful PEAC student.

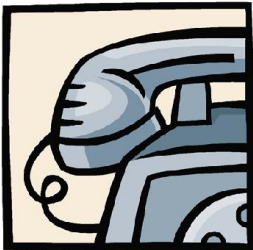
- Strive for excellence.
- Maintain commitment to given topics and tasks
- Work independently
- Be willing to work cooperatively and collaboratively with other students
- Develop and maintain good organisational skills
- Appreciate the importance and development of good research skills
- Refer to and use the thinking skills strategies taught to solve problems
- Ask questions and seek answers
- Follow the guidelines and directions to complete given tasks. Use the evaluation rubrics provided to improve your work.
- Seek help from the teacher if you are experiencing any difficulties in understanding or completing a task.
- Date and put your name on all handouts and work.
- Throughout the day, keep all PEAC materials in order.
- Persevere, persevere, persevere.

At PEAC you can:

- Meet and make new friends from other schools
- Investigate new and different ideas
- Expand your mind and imagination
- Explore YOUR passionate learning interests
- Learn skills and strategies for lifelong learning
- Accept the challenge to move beyond your comfort zone
- Grow to become an autonomous learner

We will ask you to:

- ☐ Persist with a task, even when it is difficult. Keep going and see just how far you can stretch yourself and then enjoy the satisfaction of having completed a job well done.
- ☐ Complete tasks you begin even when you find them less exciting than when you started. This is task commitment and it is an important part of growing up.
- ☐ Accept responsibility for your own learning and personal organization.
- ☐ Enjoy the experiences and rise to the challenges.
- ☐ Bring all your stationery requirements to each course.
- ☐ Share with others the skills you have learned at PEAC and put them into practice back at school.



CONTACT DETAILS

Parents are welcome to contact the district-based staff. These are the contact details of our current teachers: **Email preferred unless urgent.**

Mrs Christina Nicoll - Merredin College

Email: christina.nicholl@education.wa.edu.au

Dr Velu Ramasamy - PEAC Coordinator

Email: velayutham.ramasamy@education.wa.edu.au

Mr Alan Slater - Northam Class 2 and Online

alan.slater@education.wa.edu.au

Phone Contact: Wheatbelt Education Regional Office 96220200



TRANSPORT

Student transport is the responsibility of parents. It is important that all students are punctual. Parents are expected to drop students off **no earlier than 15 minutes before class start time** (and check that their child reaches the designated venue safely) and collect their child immediately after a session finishes.

Please ensure you regularly update emergency contact details in the event they are needed. PEAC teachers and home school principals must be informed at all times of the whereabouts of the students under their care, including being advised of any changes to regular transport arrangements.

COURSE COSTS

Generally, we endeavour to keep our courses free. However, some courses and excursions might incur minimal charges based on the cost of materials, guest speakers or admission fees. These charges will be included in the course details.

Students are expected to supply their own writing materials, and although all care will be taken, personal items (including those of considerable cost like expensive pens, electronic tools such as iPad etc.) are the responsibility of your child. Replacements for missing or broken items will not be provided. Parents should contact the district based PEAC Coordinator if there are any cost concerns.

ASET - Gifted and Talented Secondary Selective Entrance

The Department of Education is committed to ensuring that all students in government schools are provided with the opportunity to access educational programs consistent with their needs and talents. Government schools conduct a range of supplementary programs, which provide opportunities for our region's most gifted and talented students to interact with their peers in specific learning areas. Such programs are available in selected high schools around the state. This includes a fully select academically gifted and talented program at Perth Modern SHS. Information for such selection is provided by the primary schools and PEAC teachers to parents at the end of year 5. Students sit for ASET testing in Year 6. Parents are able to nominate programs and register for this test via online. These registrations are usually due at the start of February.

All current Year 5 PEAC students and their parents should have received the registration brochure from The Department of Education in Central Office via the student's school. Parents must register their children for this test, for enrolment in Year 7 to selected high schools. **The test will take place around mid March, Term 1. Please check with the Department's website or contact your child's school and/or PEAC Teacher.**

This initiative provides academically talented students *ENTERING* year 7, in government schools, access to a range of programs that meet their specific talents. Students in country areas are encouraged to apply for programs and participate in the selection procedures.

Students in rural and isolated areas who are selected and thus are eligible for placement in the Academic Talent Program may be able to access some of the programs through alternate delivery systems, such as ATP Online, in their local District High School or Senior High School. Please check with these schools for more information.