Year 9 is the culmination of the students’ time in the Middle School. It provides an opportunity for numerous activity-based excursions which aim to challenge the students physically, socially and academically. Our program brings closure to the younger adolescent years, while also developing skills that are needed for the senior years.

Huntingtower recognises the need for Year 9 students to:

- Engage in real life experiences
- Engage in physical activity
- Experience life outside the classroom
- Work in groups
- Be independent of adults
- Take risks.

Huntingtower aims to provide a setting in which the students can develop in a safe environment.

Why a Year 9 Program?

There is a strong emphasis on physical activity and a great deal of hands on learning in the Year 9 program. This enables the students to:

- Have something to look forward to
- Concentrate better in class
- Set individual goals and experience success in achieving them
- Undertake fitness activities in a non-competitive environment
- Develop an ‘active for life’ philosophy

The physical activity varies throughout the year. It includes cycling, skiing, climbing, dancing, swimming and running. The school aims to create opportunities for the students to attempt activities that may not be part of their normal experience.
The Challenge Program

Students come together on a weekly basis to work together on solving problems, planning agendas, formulating arguments and giving presentations on various topics. It encourages young people to develop a deeper and broader understanding and knowledge of themselves and their world. Learning becomes more relevant through the use of projects or themes based on real life issues and problems requiring thoughtful solutions that are meaningful to the students.

The Year 9 Program;

- Enables students to access information using a variety of learning styles.
- Promotes synthesizing of knowledge.
- Creates multiple entry points for students to become engaged in the lesson/unit.
- Promotes divergent thinking.
- Fosters coordination and teamwork among a group of teachers and students

On top of this, a number of key excursions and activities are undertaken each term, as outlined below.

Term One: Mind over matter

This term focuses mainly on physical activities and developing mental strength to overcome challenges.

Key Dates:

Tuesday 28th Jan: All bikes must be brought to school. The bike shed will be open from 8.30 – 4.00pm

Wednesday 29th Jan: School begins

24th-28th Feb: Camp Week

Thurs 13th March: Southbank Ride

Thurs 20th March: Warburton (day trip)

Thurs 27th March: Triathlon

- Bikes to be taken home from school after the Triathlon.

November: Great Victorian Bike Ride (optional)
Bicycle requirements

1. Mountain or hybrid bike
   - Seat must be adjusted so that when sitting on the bike with the ball of the foot on the pedal at its lowest position, the knee should be just under lock position

2. At least one water bottle attachment

3. Correctly fitted helmet (forehead must be protected)

4. Spare tube and puncture repair kit
Camp Week: 25th to 28th Feb – Queenscliff camp

This camp will challenge the students both physically and mentally. The 4 day camp will depart school early Tuesday morning and return on Friday afternoon. The students will have a **day trip on the Monday and then stay at home on the Monday night.** A camp this early in the year allows for students to familiarise themselves with the Year 9 program, expectations and staff as well as further strengthening their relationships with their peers.

Term Two: Urban Adventures

During Urban adventures the students learn about the city through hands on activities. This program is divided into 2 components. The first involves an overnight stay in the city and this is followed a month or so later by 4 days of commuting into the city daily. The students are involved in research and presentations with a strong focus on independent learning.

What will the students achieve during this Urban Adventure?

- Develop an understanding of working in a team.
- Understand how to get around the city to locate various sites.
- Develop an understanding of the city and its diversity in terms of architecture, history, culture and people.
- Understand how to analyse urban surroundings by studying a streetscape.
- Understand the qualities that make Melbourne a sustainable city.
Key dates:

1. **Urban Adventures**

**Tues 13\(^{th}\) - Wed 14\(^{th}\) May (overnight stay)**

Students will catch the train into Melbourne and participate in various teacher – led activities to help familiarise themselves with the city and gain an understanding of its complexities. A small group of students, accompanied by a teacher, provides a safe environment in which to develop independence.

This experience is designed to prepare them for their City Cite experience where they will require more independence in finding their way around the city as they complete individual and group tasks.
2. City Cite

**Tues 10th – Friday 13th June**
(No overnight stays - Students will travel to and from the city daily.)

**Student presentations: Friday 13th June @ 6.30pm at City Cite, Flinders Street**

The City Cite experience seeks to engage the students with the world outside the classroom. It allows them to learn more about their city and the richness it provides. The students also gain life skills such as team work, problem solving, organisation and planning in an authentic setting.

Students will spend five days at the City Cite in Flinders Street, independently making their way to and from the city each day. This program involves working in teams to develop a presentation on an aspect or issue of life in the city. Parents will be invited to celebrate our students’ achievements at the City Cite on Friday 13th June @ 6.30 pm.

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Term Three: Stretch your limits.

1) **Alpine challenge at Falls Creek.**

**26th July – 1st August**

New and improved camp at the picturesque Falls Creek. Skiing is a new skill for many students on this trip. They spend their days learning how to ski and how to take care of their equipment. They receive lessons from trained experts and they work in ability groups and get taught accordingly. They will also develop an appreciation and understanding of an alpine area.
2) Dansation

Dance not only develops physical co-ordination skills, but also planning and problem-solving skills which promote original ideas. It helps students develop initiative, self-confidence, and creativity. This is another way of getting students out of their comfort zone and doing something that many of them are unlikely to experience again. Students work in groups towards ‘Dansation’, a dance competition where students plan their own choreography, music selection and costume design. The entire Year 9 group will work towards a year level dance with all members of the year level taking part.

3) Extended Research Assignment

This is the major individual academic challenge in the Year 9 program. Students are required to submit a research paper of 3000 words on a topic of their choice. This is an in depth study of current affairs and pertinent issues relating to the world we live in. Students must research the topic in great detail and form a meaningful opinion on how to improve the issue in question. They must use their initiative and demonstrated the ability to find reliable resources and opinion on which to base their paper. This is far more than simply recognising as issue that requires attention. They must interview experts and members of their community to gauge perception of the issue. They must then provide realistic and sustainable solutions to the problem and put steps in place to achieve these solutions.
**Term Four: Hungry Planet**

The Hungry Planet Unit develops an awareness of hunger as a global issue. Students explore case studies of different countries in three continents to develop an understanding of the effect of issues such as poverty, conflict, sustainable practices and social justice on world hunger. In a range of activities such as a hunger banquet, diamond ranking activity and water saving games, students experience their rights and responsibilities as global citizens. They also identify the principle causes and consequences of inequality in our world. Students develop strategies to achieve food security. The week culminates in all students presenting at a mock UN Youth Summit and after this is the presentation of each countries art project and documentary.

![Image](image.jpg)

**Other Activities**

1) **Personal Development**

At Huntingtower, we work on the premise that every child has the ability to be a leader. It is therefore important that a variety of avenues are made available for students to explore their leadership potential. Our aim is to provide educational experiences that develop a range of skills and attitudes outside the academic field and help students interact with the real world. We also aim to develop a sense of service that includes the school, the local, national and global community.

Leadership opportunities for Middle School students include:
• Homeroom/mentor periods where students lead the group in readings and other activities.
• Middle School Assemblies that are organised by the students.
• The organisation of Dansation.
• Assistant with the Year 4 Bike Education program
• Assistant on the Year 6 Orientation Day
• A range of activities within the Year 9 program where they explore leadership and goal setting, particularly during the Term 1 physical challenges.

2) Reach Foundation

Students will participate in workshops presented by The Reach Foundation, including ‘Birdcage’ and 'Locker Room' sessions. These are single-sex workshops designed to critically explore expectations and ideas about gender and the influences of celebrity and the media. 'Birdcage' seeks to provide girls with ideas and tools to improve body image and self-confidence, as well as making positive choices about the girls they want to be. 'Locker Room' explores the traditional notions of masculinity and the negative consequences and behaviours that can result. Boys are encouraged to honestly express themselves and challenge gender stereotypes, judgements and beliefs.

3) The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens

Students read and engage in activities based on Sean Covey’s book ‘Seven Habits for Highly Effective Teens’. The issues and lessons explored during mentor are then discussed in real life situations during Integrated Studies. It encourages students to examine good habits of mind that will ensure success and happiness both now and in years to come.

4) Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award

The Duke of Edinburgh has been offered to Year 9 students on an elective basis for the past 7 years. It is an internationally recognised program that targets young people in a non-competitive manner. It is designed to offer personal and individual challenge to all participants.

The Duke of Edinburgh program has operated alongside the Year 9 Challenge program at Huntingtower. However, with such a physical, challenging and exciting curriculum in Year 9, students should be recognised for the leadership and initiative that they undertake, and so this year all year 9 students will take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Program.
The program has four major components and these should all be completed during your child’s time in Year 9. Most of the commitments will be completed during school hours, under the supervision of the staff. However, there are some activities that need to be undertaken outside of the school curriculum and will need parent encouragement.

The 3 commitment sections are:

1. **Physical Recreation:**

   This will incorporate the students’ triathlon training, which consists of various bike rides, running and swimming sessions that are conducted during Term 1 Sport sessions. As the commitment for this section will be 12 weeks with a minimum of 1 hour per week, students will be required to undertake three self-organised rides after the completion of Term 1.

2. **Service:**

   The Service section of the Award will require students to demonstrate initiative, as they will be required to access their own personal contacts to find suitable opportunities to volunteer their time. This is a non-paid volunteering commitment where students will be required to complete their time requirements in external school hours. Past participants have easily accessed a variety of wonderful opportunities that develop their connection to the community and build valuable skills for the future. The time commitment is a minimum 1 hour per week for a 3 month time frame.
3. **Skill:**

Students will be able to access the variety of learning opportunities that are available at Huntingtower to fulfil this section of the award. Currently large portions of students use the music program to fulfil this section. Other options for students are their French, Indonesian, ESL, Art, Drama, Design and Technology units. The commitment for this unit is minimum 1 hour per week for a 3 month time frame.

4. **Expeditions**

Expeditions will be completed at allocated times throughout the year (all students are required to complete one weekend camp).

**Program Costs**

The charge for the Year 9 program next year will be **$190 per term (for 2015)**. It will be listed on your account as Year 9 Challenge Program.

**This includes:**

- Triathlon
- Queenscliff camp
- Urban Adventures - accommodation
- City Cite - activities and venue hire
- Hungry Planet
- Bronze Duke of Ed – Insurance and books
- Alpine Challenge

**Excludes**

- Some gear hire – Ski Camp
- Additional subject based excursions during the year
- Transport costs for City Cite
- Cost associated with any community service for Duke of Edinburgh