



This handbook is designed for the Principal and key staff within a student's base school.

It provides a summary of the CHES vision, mission and values, CHES programs and delivery arrangements, and the expectations and requirements for students studying a subject through CHES.



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Welcome to CHES

CHES is a ground-breaking new centre of excellence that has been established to cultivate the potential of high-ability and high-achieving senior secondary school students and will commence programs for senior students in government schools from January 2023. It is a direct response to the Victorian Government's intention that all students, regardless of their starting point, are supported to realise their full potential.

At CHES we offer **Higher Education Studies** (first year university subjects) through our university partnerships and we specialise in two highly regarded VCE studies that are typically of great appeal to high-ability senior students: **VCE Algorithmics** and **VCE Extended Investigation**. Students will be enrolled in a CHES course for a fraction of their timetable (generally 20%), with the remainder of their enrolment and timetable reflecting the subjects being completed at their base school.

Our programs are available to high-achieving government school students across Victoria, including students in metropolitan, rural and regional areas and students with disadvantaged backgrounds. We're excited to be expanding access to Higher Education Studies and these select VCE studies to an even more diverse group of high-achieving students than ever before.

Through an innovative hybrid and flexible approach to teaching and learning, students will be able to remain enrolled at their chosen government secondary school and undertake a VCE study or HES at CHES, as part of their overall VCE program. To accommodate as many eligible students as possible, these programs will be available through our hy-flex approach, with opportunities to study online and on-site at CHES.

The partnership between CHES, base schools and university partners is crucial in fostering a safe and successful experience for students undertaking a program with CHES. We look forward to working with schools across Victoria to support the successful participation of students in CHES programs.

Together with base schools and partner universities we will work to promote, monitor and respond to the academic, wellbeing, attendance, participation and engagement needs of students, including the development of an Individualised Achievement Plan (IAP) for each student.

This handbook provides an overview of our subjects and programs, our hy-flex delivery model of on-site and online learning options, funding arrangements for schools, and the guidelines and expectations for base schools, including the responsibilities of nominated base school supervisors and arrangements for assessments and exams for students enrolled in a CHES subject.

At CHES, our foundation pillars are **Reach, Connection, Understanding**. Our aim is to **reach** as many high-ability students as possible and to engage them in the additional opportunities CHES provides. Likewise, we aim to build enduring **connections** with government secondary schools across Victoria. I encourage you to read the information in this handbook and on our website, and to contact us with any questions or queries. We are also here to provide advice via our school email:

centre.higher.education.studies@education.vic.gov.au

Stewart Milner
Foundation Principal
CHES

**We Reach; We Connect; We Understand.
We Think Ahead.**

www.ches.vic.edu.au



About CHES

The Victorian Government has established the Centre for Higher Education Studies (CHES) to provide senior secondary students from right across the state with opportunities for even greater stretch and challenge in their studies.

CHES aims to foster and inspire the development of senior secondary students—academically, intellectually, socially and emotionally—and aspires to be a catalyst for new ways of learning to bridge secondary school and tertiary education. At CHES we will celebrate the talents and strengths of our students and provide them with a safe and stimulating space to extend their learning.

To support students across the state to take part in CHES programs, we will offer a hy-flex learning model. CHES students can learn on-site, online or a blend of both through our high-tech and flexible specialist spaces.

Our approach to teaching and learning has been co-designed with universities and is based on empowering students within a mature, adult learning environment. We also offer enrichment programs for students, including mentoring and a range of masterclasses, presentations and interactions with academics, experts and leaders.

Our Vision

The Centre for Higher Education Studies (CHES) is a state-wide centre of excellence with an effective framework for developing partnerships with universities to encourage and nurture high-achieving and high-ability students across Victoria and will provide support to teachers across the state.

Our Mission

The mission of CHES is to excite and develop the full intellectual, social and emotional potential of high-achieving and high-ability senior students by delivering a suite of programs to stretch, challenge and enhance their learning, with access to leading expertise, practices and technology in our purpose-built facility.

At CHES, we aim to be a bridge between:

- school and university
- metropolitan, rural and regional schools
- students and teachers
- research and learning
- reaching and achieving.

Our Values

There are three underlying pillars of CHES: Reach, Connection and Understanding.

- **We Reach** – CHES is a place to extend learning. To challenge, push and transcend traditional ways of thinking. We aim to develop the full intellectual, social and emotional potential of students and with the right spaces, strategies and staff in place, this is where high-ability students can design their education and scale even greater heights.
- **We Connect** – CHES fosters connections through collaboration between staff and students, among students, and through a new education model that bridges secondary and tertiary study. At CHES, we will share skills, knowledge, and academic journeys. Through new connections, we aim to spark new ideas and give rise to new possibilities.
- **We Understand** – CHES is not only an educational institution focused on greater academic achievement but is also a place to find emotional understanding. With high-achieving peers and nurturing staff, CHES students are engaged and empowered, drawn together from varied backgrounds to create a scholarly community that is active, open and kind.

The underlying essence of these three values is that we are forward thinking. At CHES, we think ahead.



CHES subjects and programs

Higher Education Studies: In partnership with universities, CHES will become a hub for Higher Education Studies (HES). These first-year university subjects will be offered across a wide range of disciplines. HES can contribute ATAR points and potential university credits, while students complete VCE at school. This offers a valuable head start into university. The time requirement for a HES is equivalent to a VCE Unit 3&4 subject sequence and there may be pre-requisite (or co-requisite) VCE subjects related to the selected HES.

VCE Extended Investigation: This exciting subject enables students to carry out extensive research in an area of choice based on their interests. Students will be supported to develop and refine research skills, critical thinking, academic writing and presentation capabilities, offering excellent preparation for university.

VCE Algorithmics: Although technically a VCE subject, Algorithmics is a first-year university subject (Higher Education Scored Study) that involves solving real-world problems using computational methods. Algorithmics provides the foundation for studying computer science and software engineering at tertiary level and, on completion, some universities may offer students an accelerated tertiary pathway.

Student Enrichment Series: Students who undertake a HES study or a VCE subject through CHES will also have access to our Student Enrichment Series which includes workshops, masterclasses, special events and mentoring opportunities with a range of universities and industry leaders.

Hy-flex delivery

The CHES virtual learning environment will enable students to study a CHES program from home or from their base school. Students will also have the option to study on-site to access and use the specialist facilities that CHES has to offer.

At CHES, we use a 'hy-flex' approach to delivery so that all students, whether co-located on-site or engaging remotely, will actively participate in synchronous learning opportunities. We anticipate being able to offer students a degree of choice in the timing of some of their CHES studies for 'best-fit' with the rest of their VCE program. To foster flexibility, some lessons at CHES may be available outside the standard school hours.

The CHES approach to hy-flex learning is mediated through technology, leveraging contemporary high-tech facilities to create a unique learning environment that will expand and strengthen student participation.

CHES teachers and CHES program coordinators will liaise closely with base schools to support the wellbeing and engagement of all students, including those who are learning online.



Eligibility requirements

1. Enrolment at a Victorian government school

For students to be considered for a CHES program (HES or a VCE subject) current enrolment in a Victorian government school is required.

Further, where a student may already have a dual enrolment that reaches across the government, Catholic or independent school sectors, the student must be undertaking the majority of their studies at the government school. For example, if a student is currently enrolled in an independent school where the majority of their VCE studies are being completed but is also undertaking a subject through Virtual School Victoria or the Victorian School of Languages, this student would not be considered eligible for participation in a CHES program.

Students must maintain their enrolment in a Victorian government school (as their main school) for the duration of their course at CHES. Students who do not maintain their enrolment in a Victorian government school may be ineligible to continue their studies, or additional payment may be sought to fund their participation. The CHES principal will determine the most suitable approach in such a situation.

2. Principal's approval

For students to be considered for a CHES program, the express support of their base school principal (or delegate) must be provided at the time of application. Students will not be considered eligible for consideration without this confirmation. This confirmation is captured in the submission of the student's application on the part of the school.

3. Nominated School Supervisor

A member of staff at the student's base school must be nominated as their school supervisor. The nomination will be at the base school principal's discretion. The name and contact details of the school supervisor must be provided at the time of application. At the time of application, the student's base school must demonstrate a willingness to actively support and/or supervise students during times of virtual learning and undertaking independent work tasks (an expected minimum of 50 hours per unit to align with VCAA requirements for a VCE study). In paragraphs below you will find details for the role of the school supervisor and financial support available to base schools through the Student Resource Package (SRP) in recognition of the support provided to the student's CHES studies. This will provide clarity in expectations so that principals may make an informed

decision about who is best placed to be nominated as a student's school supervisor.

The Department of Education and Training's Student Enrolment Census Policy – time fraction assessment provides guidance on the calculation of the SRP when a student is enrolled at more than one school.

4. Maximum subject enrolments

Students will not be restricted from participating in more than one CHES course per year, however it will not be recommended.

Students interested in undertaking a VCE subject and a Higher Education Studies course through CHES must submit in writing a request to the CHES principal to outline their reasons for doing so. This should accompany their application.

To ensure equity of opportunities, students will not be permitted to undertake more than one Higher Education Studies unit per semester through CHES.

5. International students

At this point in time, international students are not eligible to enrol in a CHES program. This may change in the future.

Eligibility of Year 10 students and below

CHES courses are designed for senior secondary students (i.e., Year 11 or Year 12 students). Applications to undertake a CHES course from students in Year 10 or below will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, on a case-by-case basis.

To grant an exceptional admission for a student in Year 10 or below, the CHES principal will need to be of the opinion that the student's base school has taken all reasonable measures to provide the individual student with a pathway and learning opportunities within or through the school (including subject advancement, differentiation and enrichment opportunities through the Student Excellence Program or other relevant initiatives) prior to applying to undertake a course at CHES.

The student's base school principal must be supportive of the student's application and will need to acknowledge that they have considered and discussed with the student and their parent/carer the impact of participating in a CHES course on the student's academic and social needs as well as the student's program/timetable and pathway. The CHES principal may liaise with the base school principal to discuss potential issues with logistical arrangements and an application may be denied on this basis. For such cases, the student has the option to reapply in subsequent years.



Funding arrangements

Students undertaking a VCE study at CHES

Students undertaking a VCE subject at CHES should be counted by their base school as part-time students. Schools should use the table below to determine and claim the appropriate Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) time fraction for students undertaking combinations of Units studied at the base school and CHES.

VCE Units undertaken at CHES	1						2				
VCE Units undertaken at home school	6	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Time fraction FTE for home school	1	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.6	0.3	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.3

Source: Department of Education and Training 'Guidelines for Counting Students for School Census'

The Department of Education and Training provide 0.1 FTE to the student's time fraction at their base school, in recognition of the support provided to the student's CHES studies. For further information please see:

www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/management/CountingStudentsguidelines.pdf

Students undertaking a Higher Education Study (HES)

Students undertaking a HES through CHES should be counted by their base school as a full-time student with a time fraction 1.0FTE for the base school. This will see the base school retain all SRP funding for the student; the student will also appear on CHES records as a non-SRP funded student at CHES.

There are no enrolment costs for government school students studying a HES program at CHES.



CHES Guidelines and Expectations for Base Schools

Context

The partnership between the Centre for Higher Education Studies (CHES) and the base school is crucial in fostering a safe and successful experience for students undertaking a Higher Education Study (HES) with a partner university or a select VCE study through CHES. Together with base schools and partner universities, CHES will work to promote, monitor and respond to the academic, wellbeing, attendance, participation and engagement needs of students.

Students enrol with CHES in the following ways:

- Direct enrolment of students into a VCE subject (VCE Extended Investigation or VCE Algorithmics) delivered onsite and virtually
- Direct enrolment into a Higher Education Studies (HES) delivered onsite and virtually by partner universities

Students participating in CHES programs remain enrolled at their chosen secondary school (base school) and are supported to undertake a course at CHES as part of their VCE program. Working in close partnership with students' base schools, students will be enrolled in a CHES course for a fraction of their timetable (generally 20 per cent), with the remainder of their enrolment and timetable reflecting the subjects being completed at their base school.

CHES shares a joint responsibility with a student's base school to ensure social and emotional wellbeing is supported, and partners with universities and base schools to ensure academic needs are met. Upon enrolment and induction, individual student study arrangements are considered and agreed between the student, parent/carer, base school and CHES. To formalise individual student study arrangements CHES will collaboratively develop an Individualised Achievement Plan (IAP).

Nomination of a Base School Supervisor

It is expected that the base school will support their students undertaking study at CHES by assigning a member of staff to act as a base school supervisor. The Department of Education and Training provide 0.1 FTE to the student's time fraction at their base school, in recognition of the support provided to the student's VCE studies through CHES. Further, for students undertaking a Higher Education Studies (HES) course through CHES, the base school retains the entire FTE funding for that student. For further information, please see:

www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/management/CountingStudentsguidelines.pdf

It is a requirement for a member of staff at the student's base school to be nominated as their school supervisor. Further, should the base school supervisor change during the course of the academic year, the base school must inform CHES as soon as possible. The school supervisor has a range of important responsibilities outlined on the following page.



Responsibilities - Base School Supervisor

There are five key responsibilities of the base school supervisors.

1. Enabling access to the CHES network and distributing hard-copy materials

Base school supervisors must ensure students have access to the internet during designated times at school for live video-conferencing lessons, for accessing materials in the CHES Virtual Learning Environment, and for communication with their CHES teachers. In addition, any supplementary printed materials posted to the school must be promptly passed onto each student. Any completed assessments need to be promptly posted back to CHES. Supervisors should ensure that students can access the CHES Compass portal and ensure that parents/carers know how to access and download student reports from there.

2. Administering and supervising assessments

Given the significance of the VCE studies and Higher Education Studies students undertake at CHES, the base school supervisor must:

- administer and supervise assessment tasks in a fair and consistent manner in accordance with the assessment process set out by the CHES teacher (in line with VCAA assessment requirements) and university teacher (in line with university assessment requirements);
- keep an electronic copy of all completed assessments before returning by post;
- liaise with their school's VCE Exam Coordinator to confirm the time, location and any special conditions under which VCE exams are to be held;
- ensure students are aware of the details and requirements of their VCE exams, including the General Achievement Test (GAT) and the VCAA Critical Thinking Test for students studying VCE Extended Investigation.

3. Liaising with CHES staff and contributing to the Individual Achievement Plan (IAP)

a. Liaising with the CHES teacher:

Base school supervisors will contribute to the Individual Achievement Plan (IAP) for a student enrolled in a CHES program. CHES provides the base school supervisors with access to information on student progress and engagement in CHES programs. Likewise, base school supervisors need to liaise with the CHES teacher and keep them up to date regarding health and wellbeing issues and circumstances that might impact upon a student's ability to engage with their CHES studies. Supervisors must let the CHES teacher know if a student has been absent from their base school for an extended period of time or if their contact details (or that of the school) have changed. Base school supervisors need to regularly check their emails for communication from CHES teachers, including updates on the progress of students.

b. Liaising with the VCE coordinator:

Special provision arrangements for assessment tasks must be communicated via email addressed to the CHES VCE Coordinator at centre.higher.education.studies@education.vic.gov.au

c. Liaising with the HES program coordinator

CHES will regularly provide updates and feedback on student progress when enrolled in a Higher Education Study through CHES. Base school supervisors should respond to requests for information from the HES program coordinator as needed and keep abreast of student progress in their HES.

4. Encouragement and support

Undertaking a CHES program, including Higher Education Studies, requires considerable initiative and independence on the part of students. It is important that supervisors take an interest in the CHES studies and progress of students. Regular encouragement is key in supporting students to navigate the workload demands and submit their completed learning tasks and assessments to their CHES teacher, according to the submission calendar.

Independent study-time for CHES subjects must be integrated within the weekly timetable of students enrolled at CHES. Supervisors should support students to make regular personal contact with their CHES teacher during those scheduled independent study times.



5. Induction session

Base school supervisors are required to attend an annual induction session each year. Delivered using a hy-flex (onsite or online approach), base school supervisors will be provided a summary of key policies, expectations, and processes that they will need to be familiar with. The induction process will also outline the development of a student's Individual Achievement Plan. Multiple sessions will be scheduled, and school staff will be asked to attend the session most convenient to them.

Allocation of Responsibilities

CHES monitors and records the attendance of each CHES student in terms of **attendance** both online in a virtual environment and on-site programs at CHES. CHES notifies the student's base school when a student is absent from CHES or if there is disengagement from CHES programs or concerns about their academic progress.

Should issues related to **academic progress, engagement, participation, wellbeing, or attendance** arise, the assigned CHES teacher is expected to make timely contact with the student and the base school supervisor. Generally, issues must be communicated within 24-48 hours of the CHES teacher becoming aware. In instances where students may be at risk of harm, immediate action is taken. Likewise, base schools are responsible for communicating issues relating to academic progress, engagement, wellbeing or attendance to CHES within 24-48 hours of the base school becoming aware.

Where **wellbeing** related concerns arise, given the base school's familiarity with the student, responses are expected to be led by the base school, with the support of and in collaboration with CHES staff. This includes arranging access to Student Support Services (SSS) and other resources, with the support of and in collaboration with CHES.

The base school has a **duty of care** to share relevant information with CHES so that CHES has the same information about the student as the student's base school to support their wellbeing and learning. This may include access to students' **health information**, any **wellbeing concerns** or particular risk factors for a student and supports in place at the student's base school as well as their academic records. This information is captured in the **Individual Achievement Plan** which is developed in partnership between CHES and the base school supervisor, students and parents/carers. Likewise, CHES regularly seeks and shares

information about attendance, engagement, wellbeing, safety and progress in CHES programs with a student's base school.

Prior to students commencing CHES programs, CHES staff take all reasonable steps to obtain the details of any **adjustments, measures or other requirements which must be accommodated** in the teaching and assessment components of CHES programs in relation to enrolled students, in order to meet the requirements of the Disability Standards for Education Act (2005) and the base school's anaphylaxis and asthma management policies.

CHES staff will liaise with base school supervisors to discuss a student's **Health Support Plan**. CHES may invite parents and carers to attend a Student Support Group meeting to discuss the contents of a student's Health Support Plan, as required, and determine the assistance that the student may need while at the centre or during CHES activities.

The base school is responsible for the **care and supervision** of students while they are traveling to and from home or their base school and CHES. When students travel to and from CHES or the designated university campus unsupervised, CHES requires the base schools to inform parents, carers and students that it is an **'unsupervised excursion'** and to notify parents / carers and students of the base school's procedures to follow in case of emergency or safety concerns while commuting and traveling. Travel arrangements are discussed and determined during transition and are detailed in the Individual Achievement Plan.

In responding to the needs of students at-risk, CHES works closely with the base schools of students and particularly the designated student supervisor. This includes communication about the wellbeing and safety needs of each student. The use of an **Individual Achievement Plan (IAP)** reflects such information, including the school's approach to alternative arrangements and students supports, as well as details such as travel arrangements. This document is created in conjunction with students, their parents/carers and the base school.

CHES staff use differentiation and intervention to meet the needs of all students including at-risk students when learning on-site and remotely in a virtual environment. Teachers differentiate the curriculum content, including appropriate modifications based on the Individual Education Plans (IEPs) that are currently in place at base schools as well as the learning process, and the types of assessment, as needed. At CHES, our approach to teaching, learning and assessment is responsive and adaptive in nature.



Student supervision

Students have the option of attending their CHES classes onsite or virtually. Whilst students are engaging in CHES programs from their school, it is expected that standard principles of supervision apply. The CHES Duty of Care and Supervision and Yard Duty policies provide further information.

Students are responsible for organising their own transport (e.g. on public transport) when attending CHES onsite or when attending any other physical site (e.g. a university partner site) for the purposes of a CHES class.

Base schools are responsible for ensuring that appropriate consent has been given by a student's parent or carer to enable them to travel to and from CHES (or other required learning sites) as an 'unsupervised excursion' which is permitted for senior students, in some circumstances, under Department policy: Excursions: Supervision.

Responsibility summary:

- When a student is attending a CHES program onsite, CHES has supervision responsibilities as well as responsibilities for a safe physical learning environment. Base schools should ensure that the student and their parent/carers are aware that travel to and from CHES will be considered an unsupervised excursion.
- When a student is attending a CHES program virtually from their base school, CHES has responsibilities for a safe online classroom environment and the student's base school has responsibilities for a safe physical environment where the student is located.
- When a student is attending a CHES program virtually from home, CHES has responsibilities for a safe online classroom environment and parents have a responsibility for a safe physical environment at home where the student is located.
- When a student is attending a university partner location (e.g. on campus at a university), the university has responsibilities for providing a safe physical learning environment and CHES has responsibilities for taking appropriate steps to follow up on any concerns students (or their parents) have raised relating to their safety or welfare when attending the campus. Base schools should ensure that the student and their parent/carers are aware that this activity would be considered an unsupervised excursion.

Examination and assessment arrangements

For students undertaking a VCE study:

- The student's base school is responsible for all VCAA examination arrangements, including supervision of School Assessed Coursework (SACs) or School Assessed Tasks (SATs), including subjects taught by CHES.
- The VCAA end of year examinations are subject-specific exams for students studying Unit 3&4 subjects.
- All students studying a Unit 3&4 subject must sit the VCAA General Achievement Test (GAT).
- Students studying the VCE Extended Investigation Unit 3&4 subject will be required to sit the VCAA Extended Investigation Critical Thinking Test.
- Students studying any VCE subject that has an oral or performance component will be required to sit the VCAA Oral Presentation or Performance Examination, which must be completed in Victoria. Base schools are responsible for applying directly to the VCAA for any Special Provision requirements. Base school supervisors should inform CHES of any approved arrangements that are in place.

For students undertaking a HES, examination arrangements will be determined by the relevant university each year and communicated to the school via CHES. Students may be required to attend a university campus for the purposes of assessment.



VCE assessment information

It is the base school's responsibility to register students for VCE assessment.

Schools are responsible for ensuring that their VASS administrators accurately record those Units studied at CHES. The CHES assessing school number will be supplied to base school supervisors.

Non-scored VCE

Students can complete their VCE without receiving an ATAR. They are required to demonstrate an understanding of each outcome and unit for satisfactory completion, however no achievement score is reported. Students will receive a satisfactory (S) or a non-satisfactory (N) for a unit. The minimum requirements of the VCE still apply. Students who are enrolled in a non-scored VCE will need to have their school supervisor confirm this in writing to the CHES Coordinator. Students can choose this program for a range of reasons, but it is important to consider the implications this may have on pathway options.

We appreciate and thank you for your interest in CHES.

For further advice please visit the school website www.ches.vic.edu.au
or contact CHES via email: centre.higher.education.studies@education.vic.gov.au