



## **What is the T Centre?**

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The T Centre is a combined academic and wellbeing program in a small group setting for Stage 4 learners. Its purpose is to improve the capacity for students to not only engage in their own learning, but also lead it. During the program, we help our students develop the skills, behaviours and strategies for success in all areas of their school life.

Students attend the program for one semester and are assisted to return to their mainstream classes towards the end of the semester. This is achieved via a staggered re-introduction into their regular classes alongside in-class support from us to engage with lesson material and some adjusted assessment tasks.

Students attend in regular school hours, wear their full school uniform and follow the normal school routines and expectations. In Semester 1, the T Centre will operate at the Balmain campus with Balmain students. In Semester 2, the T Centre will operate at the Leichhardt campus with Leichhardt students.

## **When was the T Centre established?**

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The T Centre is a new program of Sydney Secondary College and was first established in 2021. The program has been co-designed by the executive and teachers from across the College and community representatives. In 2021, the program saw through two cohorts and the third cohort is currently underway at Balmain campus.

## **Who is the T Centre program for?**

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While the program's design is respectful and inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, history, teaching methods and programs, the T Centre is open to all students irrespective of their culture, language, social or economic background.

Students are nominated for the program based on a variety of factors, with a particular focus on those that may be affecting their overall engagement at school.

To maximise success in the T Centre, students are expected to engage in all facets of the program to the best of their ability with family support.

## What do students do at the T Centre?

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While on the T Centre program, students will be involved in a range of opportunities including:

### 1. Stronger Brains

Your child's brain is going through a huge change right now - 13 to 24 years is a really important time for cognitive development. We will use an evidence-based tool by [Stronger Brains](#) to help students build their cognitive strength required for greater processing speed, focus and attention, working memory, social cognition, impulse control, distractor suppression and other executive functions for good decision making, problem solving, and overall educational success. This is a game-based tool that allows students to work at their own pace, learn more about their brain and their capabilities, and to track their progress as they run through each module. An essential part of this process is the pre-testing and post-testing that takes place at the start and end of the program respectively. This allows us to gather data and measure student progress in each of the cognitive areas. The goal for each student is to complete 30 hours of 'brain training' to optimally build connections in the brain and maximise their progress in each area of cognitive development.

### 2. Literacy and numeracy

As part of the T Centre program, students receive personalised support to strengthen their numeracy and literacy skills in a variety of contexts. As part of Leichhardt Campus, students will continue to access the *Accelerated Reader* program with the support of our librarian teacher. In addition, students will engage in literacy-focused lessons aligned to the [National Literacy Learning Progressions](#) and participate in a variety of learning activities designed to develop their skills in speaking and listening, reading and viewing, and writing.

Similarly, students will engage in numeracy-focused lessons aligned to the [National Numeracy Learning Progressions](#) with some lessons engaging students in developing foundational numeracy strategies and other lessons engaging students in numeracy skills in other key learning areas such as Science, Business/Commerce, and PDHPE.

### 3. Student wellbeing

Another important component of the T Centre is our focus on student wellbeing and education around mental health including strategies to enhance their health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity. As part of the Leichhardt Campus school community, we will continue to implement the Year 8 wellbeing lessons every Wednesday during Moomba. Throughout the program, students will also participate in a range of reflective and developmental wellbeing activities to help examine and evaluate strategies to manage current and future challenges. This is aligned to outcomes from the Stage 4 NSW PDHPE curriculum and will include explicit teaching of self-management skills to effectively manage complex situations, as well as valuable interpersonal skills to assist themselves and others to interact respectfully and promote inclusion in a variety of groups or contexts. Students will also continue to participate in their regular Tuesday sport.

#### **4. Project-based learning through Social Enterprises**

At the T Centre, students will take the lead in becoming social entrepreneurs - they choose a social cause to support and work both independently and collaboratively to establish and operate their own social enterprise. Linked through the [Social Enterprise Schools](#) program, students are encouraged to develop their skills in creative thinking, problem solving, flexibility and adaptability. Your child will join over 4,000 other students across Australia who have established over 1,000 social enterprises raising over \$100,000 for social causes around Australia and the world.

#### **How will my child be assessed?**

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While in the T Centre program, your child will not be required to complete or submit any assessment tasks from their mainstream classes in Term 3. For this reason, your child will not receive the standard school report from each of their mainstream classes for Semester 2. Instead, they will receive a report written by T Centre staff that discusses their engagement in the T Centre program including their progress across the various areas of learning as discussed above and their overall development. This report will include observations and discussion of their transition back to mainstream classes and may include assessment and/or other learning outcomes from some of their mainstream classes.

Additionally, we will provide a second report from Stronger Brains which will outline the data from your child's pre-assessment and post-assessment to better understand the progress they have made in each of the five brain functional areas including executive control, focus and attention, processing speed, working memory and social cognition.

#### **How will the connection to my child's regular classes be managed?**

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The T Centre is fundamentally a support program. Students nominated to attend the T Centre are not performing to their ability in the mainstream classroom setting with 30 students.

For the duration of the program, students will not be completing their normal classwork and instead, will be involved in a combined academic and wellbeing program that will include key elements of the learning outcomes required to successfully move back into their mainstream classroom. Other supportive staff including mainstream teachers, Year Advisors, teacher mentors, the Student Support Officer, HT Wellbeing and Deputy Principal are regularly involved.

Every effort is made to maintain connections with their peers outside of the program including participation in their regular Tuesday sport, in Moomba lessons and other whole school events and activities such as whole-school carnivals and year group meetings. Strengthening, managing and maintaining a strong sense of belonging to the school community will help the student while on the program and on returning to their mainstream class.

Your child's mainstream teachers are welcome to visit classes.

## **Are there program partners for the T Centre?**

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The T Centre has been collaboratively developed by those within schools and community representatives. This has included community leaders and Aboriginal representation. Assistance in the teaching and learning program is being provided by Social Enterprise Australia for the Social Enterprise Schools program and Stronger Brains, a practical and grounded wellbeing program.

## **How can I support my child?**

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Having families involved in their child's education offers many benefits. Encouraging attendance and contacting the T Centre immediately if there are any issues is one practical way.

It is expected that as participants in the program, each student commits to and supports all aspects of the program. Students are also expected to comply with and demonstrate whole school values, practices and policies. Families are asked to support their child with these requirements, and this is formalised in a Family Agreement document that will be sent to families upon acceptance of an offered place in the program.

For those keen to be more involved, the T Centre will create a range of connections with families. These include inviting families to contribute as:

- Cultural advisors
- Mentors
- Subject experts
- Motivational speeches to program participants
- Visitors into the classroom and to practical sessions
- Participants attending family days, showcase events
- Advocates for students.

## **What will the transition process back to mainstream look like after the program?**

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Transition back to mainstream classes will take place during Term 4. Our priority during this period is to ensure a smooth and supported movement back to mainstream classes for our students and their teachers.

The transition back to mainstream classes will be staggered and a connection to the T Centre classroom and teachers maintained to provide a strong support system for students as they navigate through the changes to routine. Students will also be supported to continue engagement with the 'brain training' until they have achieved the 30 hours in preparation for the post-assessment.

As the return to classes is gradual, students will not be expected to complete all of their assessment tasks in Term 4, but will be supported to complete an achievable selection with adjustments where necessary.

We will be working closely with our colleagues to ensure that your children not only feel welcomed back but are prepared for and supported to complete the classwork that will be taking place, with adjustments or accommodations as needed. Our goal is that they return to their classes with a renewed approach to learning and improved engagement with school overall.

### **How will I know whether my child has been offered a place in the program?**

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Midway through Term 2, nominated students will be invited to participate in a one-hour individual session as well as a two-hour group workshop.

During the individual session, your child will be supported to complete a range of tasks that will help us identify their strengths and areas for growth across a range of domains including literacy, numeracy as well as overall wellbeing, learning attitudes and aptitudes.

The group workshop will provide an opportunity for nominated students to work with one another to complete tasks. The T Centre must be a safe and inclusive environment for all students - collaboration skills are highly valued, as is the ability to build and maintain positive relationships with peers and staff.

Selected students will be finalised by a panel of executive staff towards the end of Term 2. If your child is selected, you will receive a Letter Of Offer along with a Family Agreement to be signed by you as parent/carer to indicate your acceptance.

All participating families and students will be invited to a Meet and Greet before the program commences at Leichhardt Campus. During the program, you may also be invited to see your child in class or at an event. If you can come and visit and be involved a little or a lot, please do!

If you have any further questions about the T Centre, please contact the Head Teacher, Ms Rachael Alonso via email at [rachael.alonso2@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:rachael.alonso2@det.nsw.edu.au)