



# High school ETHICS

## Ethics classes for high school students

***Primary Ethics has been delivering ethics programs in primary schools since 2011 and has now expanded to offer ethics classes for high school students in Stage 4 (Years 7 and 8). High school ethics offers a high-quality curriculum for interested families during the school's scripture timeslot and is inclusive and welcoming of all students.***

### What is an ethics class? And how is it different from other classes?

During ethics classes, trained volunteer teachers facilitate a group of students to form a community of inquiry to think together about and discuss everyday ethical dilemmas. That is, students sit in a circle with their volunteer teacher who provides them with hypothetical situations and questions to discuss. The teacher remains neutral and encourages students to consider the interests of others, ways of dealing with tricky issues and an understanding around the consequences of certain actions. However, the focus is on skill development rather than agreeing on any particular view. Students engage with questions such as 'Pets, pests and farm animals - Should we treat them differently from each other? And why?' and 'Are people's true characters revealed in the choices they make under pressure?'.

### Why choose ethics classes for your student?

As well as promoting critical thinking, moral reasoning, and respectful discussion, ethics classes also develop life skills that help students navigate the transition to high school and life beyond. These include:

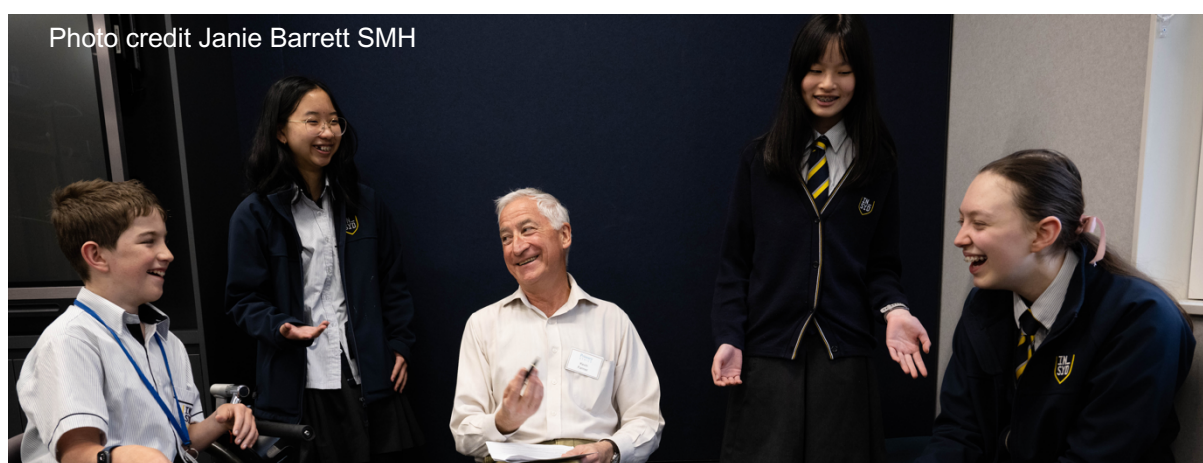
- **Interpersonal skills** - improved through the practicing of listening to others, following discussion guidelines and disagreeing respectfully.
- **Decision-making skills** - practised through focused listening and using evidence to form an opinion rather than by habit or peer pressure. Tricky issues are approached through the give and take of reasoned discussion.
- **Increased empathy** - encouraging students to consider other students' reasons and be open to changing their opinion.
- **Increased confidence** - disagree respectfully and provide counterarguments as well as practising how to form a well-reasoned opinion.

## What is the high school ethics curriculum?

Our curriculum is written by experts and is based on the traditions of philosophical inquiry combined with the findings of cognitive psychology and pedagogical research. We use a community of inquiry learning model supported by teacher-led questioning. This student-centred approach to learning supports students to be curious and discover concepts for themselves, by collaborating with their peers in a safe environment. Classes are facilitated by volunteer ethics teachers who are trained and supported by Primary Ethics.

The curriculum is reviewed by the NSW Department of Education for age appropriateness. The topics invite students to examine what we ought to do, how we ought to live, the kind of society we should have and what kind of person each of us should strive to be.

The ethical dilemmas presented in the lessons are designed to be challenging, providing students with the opportunity to practise and then apply their collaborative inquiry and critical thinking skills. The overall aim of ethics lessons is for students to develop both the capability and the willingness to discuss ethical issues with those around them in a well-reasoned and respectful way.



### How to enrol?

If your child is starting high school, you should be given an SRE/SEE enrolment form, or you will find that it is supplementary part of the online enrolment form. Otherwise, contact your school office to inform them that you want your child to attend ethics classes.

### What if my high school doesn't offer ethics?

If your high school doesn't offer ethics, we are happy to work with families and school staff to start a new ethics program. Contact us to find out how to start ethics classes at your school.

### Why not volunteer as an ethics teacher?

High school ethics classes are provided by Primary Ethics, an independent, not-for-profit organisation and the single approved provider of Special Education in Ethics (SEE) to NSW Department of Education schools. We recruit, train and support volunteers to deliver ethics lessons using a facilitated community of inquiry learning model. Our high school volunteers are parents, family and members of the broader school community. We are always interested in receiving applications from additional new volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please visit [primaryethics.com.au/volunteering](https://primaryethics.com.au/volunteering) for more information.

### Do you have questions?

Visit <https://primaryethics.com.au/about-ethics-classes/#ethics-for-highschools>

or contact us on 02 8068 7752 or [helpdesk@primaryethics.com.au](mailto:helpdesk@primaryethics.com.au) to find out more.