

# SMART girls



CANBERRA GIRLS  
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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At Canberra Girls Grammar School, we know the immense power of the Arts and how they transform learning to expand horizons and to positively impact on the wellbeing of individuals and communities. Our unique smART Girls program is the Year 4 component of our suite of signature wellbeing, strengths-based programs designed specifically for girls.

**“The Arts are not the possession of the few who are recognized writers, painters, musicians; they are the authentic expression of any and all individuality.”**

**JOHN DEWEY**

smART Girls is built on the large and ever-growing body of evidence that indicates regularly engaging in creative activity and artistic pursuits can lead to a more positive state of mind, can improve wellbeing, benefits self-regulated emotional functioning, builds confidence and strengthens community (Tamlin, Conner, DeYoung & Paul, 2016).

Creativity is linked to flow states, which have been shown to have positive lasting effects on subsequent flourishing and happiness (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013). As a year-long program smART Girls intentionally encourages our girls to confidently ‘take the stage’ and to seize the opportunities and challenges of embracing creative expression. Present in all humans, smART Girls harnesses the essence of creativity to support wellbeing and positive emotions, building our Year 4 students’ capacity to understand and apply character strengths as they work towards meaningful goals (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

The role of joy and total absorption that consumes individuals engaged in a meaningful creative process or ‘in flow’ is underestimated (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). Creative individuals are constantly curious, highly motivated, are willing to take risks; they possess the ability to think outside the square to combine unusual ideas with more conventional ways of thinking and to see these ideas come to fruition (Csikszentmihalyi, 1998).

**“Creativity takes courage.”**

**HENRI MATISSE**



smART Girls draws on the expertise of creative and artistic professionals, including our talented author in residence and actor in residence, in addition to accomplished and nationally recognised singers, dancers and choreographers, sculptures, visual and media artists, poets and performers.

Through the Arts, smART Girls builds our students resilience, their commitment, teamwork and confidence, promoting divergent, imaginative and critical thinking skills that support the generation of innovative and original ideas.

### Further reading

**Connor, T., Deyoung, C., & Silvia, P. (2018).** Everyday creative activity as a path to flourishing. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 13(2), 181-189.

**Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990).** *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: Harper & Row.

**Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2013).** *Creativity: The psychology of discovery and invention*. New York: Harper & Row.

**Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2001).** On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 141-166.

**Seligman, M.E.P. (2005).** *Flourish*. London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing

### What our students say

“smART Girls is all about communicating who you are and being happy and confident to be yourself.”

DARCY

“There’s nothing we don’t have a go at, I feel happy being part of a team and when I’m creating through drama, art, music, dance or even technology.”

TESS

“Being outside of the box and being outside your comfort zone is easy in smART Girls, everyone is included, no one doesn’t take part, it’s OK to be different and it is fun to be part of something exciting.”

FELICITY