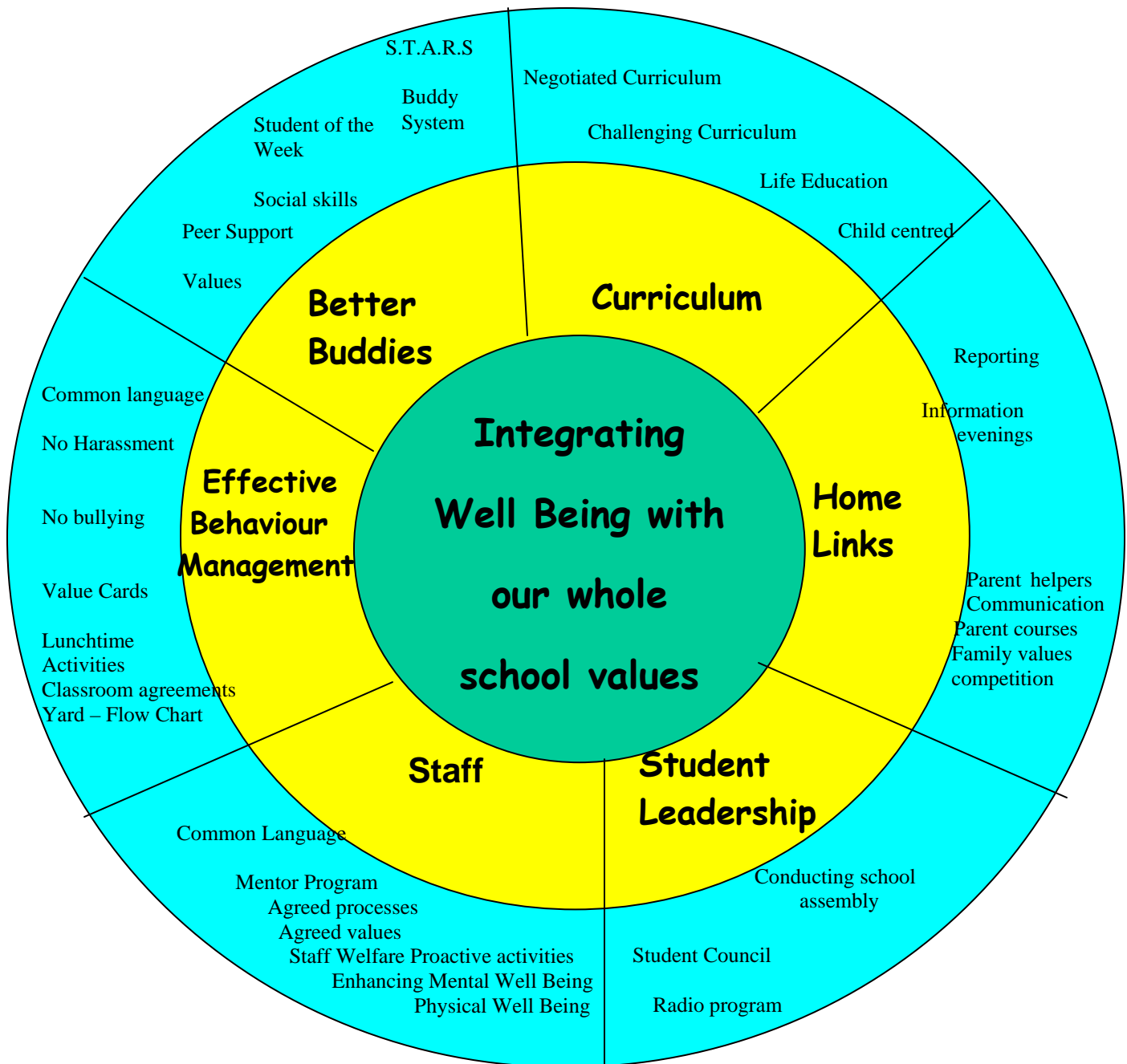


Integrating Well Being with our whole school values

As a new school a cornerstone of our planning has been to consider proactive strategies that support a caring, enjoyable learning environment for all children. Many of our children have moved from other schools and we have seen the need to create our own unique culture through a developmental process that integrates our established core values of Honesty, Motivation, Respect, Friendliness and Empathy into the daily fabric of our school. To do this we have developed a whole school integrated approach to Well Being utilizing a broad range of strategies.

These extent of these strategies are illustrated on the wheel below.



Elaboration of key strategies –

BETTER BUDDIES

We have developed a close relationship with the Alannah and Madeleine Foundation and have worked hand in hand to implement a range of strategies linked to the Better Buddies Program. As a new school we looked at a number of Well Being initiatives and were particularly drawn to the aims of the program, which are -

- To reinforce that violence isn't the solution to disputes
- To assist children in supporting their peers
- To listen to and work with children in a positive, supportive environment
- To develop children's social skills to enable them to get along with others
- To develop children's feelings of compassion and empathy with others
- To encourage children to relate to and empathise with characters outside their immediate environment
- To stimulate children's imagination and assist them in expressing their ideas and thoughts
- To encourage children to be aware of the existence of vulnerable children who have suffered through violent crime and sudden loss of family.

We have produced a number of multi media presentations to illustrate to a variety of audiences the impact of this program. It was featured last year in the Sunday Herald Sun and on channel 7 News.

Under this umbrella we have now established -

Values

As mentioned above we have five core values. The school celebrates a value of the month. During this time teachers and students unpack what that value means to them. S.T.A.R.S groups will meet during this time. A key emphasis is trying to get everybody to speak a common language, 'You are not showing me respect by interrupting me!' Yard certificates are distributed to children who are portraying the value during recess/lunch breaks.

Buddy System

Initially a buddy system was set up for the prep and grade 6 children with the assistance of the Alannah and Madeline Foundation. As an extension to this we are undertaking a whole school approach, where all students have a buddy. This promotes a very positive peer support program for all children at our school.

Special Friend

Every teacher is asked to choose two students from a selected group of children who are deemed at risk by all staff. The teacher / student match is not linked to the direct teaching responsibility of the teacher. Definition of 'at risk' encompasses children who may have social, emotional or learning problems. Children are not informed they are part of the program. Teachers make informal contact with these children as they see fit eg. On yard duty and support them. This concept is based on ideas from Andrew Fuller.

"Every student in a school needs at least one teacher they can speak to comfortably. However this teacher does not have to be a class teacher. Asking for a volunteer staff member who is prepared to connect with a marginalized student on a positive basis for a short notice (even 10 min per week) can be a timely way to boost resilience. The staff member should not be involved in a disciplinary action with that student."

Fuller, A.1998

S.T.A.R.S- Students Together Are Really Special

Coinciding with the buddy system and our values program all children participate in a range of cross age (prep-6) activities at least once a Term. All staff are involved in small group activities that reinforce the special things happening at our school eg. Our Values. This has become an evolving program since it's inception in 2002 and the older children really enjoy the opportunity to work with younger children in a warm caring environment.

Incursions

We provide regular incursions such as drama groups performing strong self resilience, anti – bullying messages. These are followed up in the classroom.

'Student of the Week' integrated in to weekly assembly

At assembly, a highlight is the announcement of the Students of the Week. We have special quality certificates printed and all teachers select a special student. The recipients have their photos published in our weekly newsletter.

EFFECTIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

Underpinning the above positive strategies is a focus on a non – punitive behaviour management program that is negotiated and 'owned' by the children. All teachers focus on developing a 'common language' when we talk about behaviour so there are no ambiguities. It is predicated by a focus on no harassment or bullying. It supported by teachers issuing 'special' reward cards that are given to students when they are observed supporting a value. We also provide lunchtime activities in the library and hall. Staff have developed an agreed Yard Flow Chart which clearly outlines responsibilities and what should happen if responsibilities are not met. All classes also develop their own Classroom agreements which are underpinned by positive responsibilities; eg. "In our class we do not run"

CURRICULUM

Our curriculum is clearly focused on meeting the needs of each child by being challenging and enjoyable; and academically relevant. Our teaching and learning strategies actively involve students in their learning, build upon students' experience and interests, foster communication and cooperation in learning and encourage risk taking and learning from errors.

We have integrated an annual visit from the Life Education van into our Integrated teaching activities and we cover a range of topics linked to personal well being.

HOME LINKS

We have determined that a key to ensuring we have an effective well being program is to ensure our parents are regularly communicated with, and where possible involved with us. For example, to determine our values we held an open community forum seeking input from our community. We run a Family Values competition asking families to discuss and share ideas about what our values mean to them. We have a weekly newsletter and assembly at which we share ideas and thoughts. We hold Information Evenings including parenting programs. We actively encourage Parent Helpers in our school and run training programs in literacy and numeracy to assist them.

We have produced a summary brochure outlining many of these strategies and it will be distributed to every family and prospective families looking at enrolment.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

We provide as many opportunities as possible to involve our older children in a range of leadership opportunities. We have a Student Council with representation from each grade and our Student Leaders host our assemblies. Our Grade 5 and 6 children share the hosting of a regular radio show on local community radio. Our Buddy Bears Program allows all our senior students to take on a caring, support role with younger children.

STAFF

We have worked hard through staff meetings and staff conferences to develop a range of agreed processes and values. As with our children, we have established a common language when dealing with our students. Staff have a wide range of proactive welfare activities in place including a Mentor Program