



PEACEFUL SCHOOLS PROGRAM PILOT SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Banyan Fields Primary

AN INTEGRATED COMMUNITY BASED APPROACH

This school has a sound understanding of mental health and disadvantage (informed by Ruby Payne's work on poverty) and has located itself as the centre of a community hub in which local churches, Ardoch, Frankston Council, maternal health, preschool and playgroups, speech therapy, occupational therapy and medical students are collaborating to provide much needed services and a real sense of belonging for parents.

Banyan Fields has developed a unique INTEGRATED COMMUNITY BASED implementation of the CASSE Peaceful Schools Program (PSP) model in which its visionary leadership and dedicated staff are being actively embedded through comprehensive activities.

According to Assistant Principal Jennie Vormwald, who has had many years' of experience with the department, the premise behind the CASSE PSP is where they want to be -

"It reinforces our vision for our students to relate positively, effectively and with resilience. The biggest change we have seen over our journey is how the children are now able to have more effective conversations that promote their wellbeing; it has given them a voice."

Ms Vormald recommends the CASSE PSP the leadership of other schools.

"The CASSE approach is unique - a lot of programs are very structured, whereas this approach allows schools to develop the model in their OWN way. It doesn't own us - we own it. It assimilates itself into the ethos of the school; keeps our values in

the forefront. Teachers have really enjoyed stepping up and the more they have shared responsibility, the more staff has taken it up. The students enjoy it, feel privileged to be part of the 'CASSE Crew', and actively participate in what's going on. We've been very lucky with the parents who joined up at the beginning - they are still there and know they have an equal voice."

The school's CASSE Crew (Student Team) say,

"It's a great program, it really helps - there has been a BIG improvement. When new students start here we help them understand they will have more friends if they don't bully. If it was just the teachers, people might not listen but we have influenced other kids by motivating them to be friendly. You feel safer to play with your friends now. We now don't have much bullying anymore."

Banyan Fields Primary School promotes student voice by engaging the CASSE Student Team to make suggestions about teaching fellow students how to mentalise, identify peers who demonstrate CASSE values of empathy, kindness, inclusion and "upstanding". They have promoted this with regular awards of CASSE values certificates and a popular CASSE Poster Competition.

The leadership team undertakes regular forum groups with students in which issues are discussed supportively and openly and followed up over time. Students then feel that they are valued, held in mind and are listened to.

Staff teach students how to MENTALISE or reflect on their feelings and actions and to empathise with others by:

- Using the Principal's illustration of power dynamics on her whiteboard with students in conflict to help them to clearly see their participation in victim, victimizer, bystander/upstander roles and how roles can shift quickly and what may cause this to happen.
- Using CIRCLE TIME to discuss peer issues and CASSE values

- Gr 5 & 6 Teachers running separate sessions for male and female students in recognition of the differences in types of bullying

They promote EMPATHY & ALTRUISM through:

- A CASSE Parent Leader arranging for a motivational speaker to describe her inspiring journey of recovery from a stroke as a Primary Student when she had to re learn how to walk and talk thus reinforcing
- the CASSE values of individual potential, responsibility and resilience - “the power is in me”
- Donation to The Royal Childrens’ Hospital of receipts from CASSE material they produced and sold on concert nights.

Banyan Fields Primary is embedding CASSE across the community by inviting different staff members and their CASSE parent team to contribute as leaders and share the responsibility for this through:

- discussions and sharing on Edmodo
- Their own school’s Face Book monitored by their IT expert/ CASSE Team Leader
- The school Newsletter
- Ongoing enjoyable activities and regular meetings of the CASSE Crew (their Student Team) led by their CASSE Team Leader, Kayla Ross.

This resource and further information about Creating A Safe Supportive Environment is available to download at www.casse.org.au.