

Case studies of good practice

Belmont Public School

<p>Case study title</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title of your case study. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Sharing the spirit</i></p>
<p>Background information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe your school context. For example 'We are a small primary school of 90 students in a coastal farming community'. 	<p>We are a school of 360 students in a regional, coastal area. There has been a recent change in the demographics, with young families moving in to what was traditionally a retirement area.</p> <p>Programs have been implemented which strive to develop a strong sense of community spirit within the school. Research has found children who bully others typically feel little or no pride in their school and are not well integrated into their community (Morrison 2002).</p> <p>Senior students are given explicit leadership training and are positive role models for younger students.</p>
<p>Aims and rationale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details of the issue to be addressed. <p>For example, what was happening? ie increasing tension as some groups felt their beliefs weren't being respected.</p>	<p>The change in the local population resulted in isolation issues, with students exhibiting low self-esteem and a lack of confidence in their ability to manage problems. Students can feel alienated and incapable of being able to do anything about bullying.</p> <p>There was a culture that to report bullying was 'dobbing'.</p>
<p>Getting started...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did you decide to address the issue? For example, through improving relationships between cultural groups, developing a more inclusive curriculum. What research basis/other programs did you use as a basis for your initiative? 	<p>The first step was to actively involve students in decision making in the school. A Student Representative Council was established and bullying became a focus area. The following initiatives were implemented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students were surveyed and data was collected on bullying behaviours. A playground register was established and teachers recorded incidents of reported bullying in the playground. This allowed the staff to focus on specifics rather than perceptions. It also demonstrated to students that teachers took incidents of bullying seriously and that something would be done. <p>The rationale behind implementing a range of strategies is that no single approach provides best practice. We felt we needed to consider the strengths and limitations of a range of approaches.</p>

<p>How we went about it...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who has been involved? For example, in planning strategies and applying them. • What actions have been taken to address the issue? • How long has it taken? For example, timelines. 	<p>Staff have been designated responsibilities and have participated in professional development to develop and implement programs such as peer mediation and peer support.</p> <p>An anti-bullying policy and pamphlet has been developed and distributed to all parents.</p> <p>Links have been established with the local high school and students train our Stage 3 students in peer mediation.</p> <p>A whole school anti-bullying program has been developed and taught across all grades.</p> <p>A peer support program was implemented which specifically focussed on bullying and culminated in a poster competition. Posters were laminated and displayed around the school as permanent reminders.</p> <p>The elected school leaders attended the National Young Leaders Day. Senior students participated in leadership training to give them the skills to lead the peer support groups and to act as buddies for Kindergarten students.</p> <p>We also provided a mentor for new enrolments.</p> <p>The school community has been kept informed of initiatives via regular reports in newsletters, on school noticeboards and at meetings. The community also participates in celebrations such as leadership inductions and special assemblies.</p> <p>Programs have been developed over the past two years and are constantly reviewed and revised to ensure their effectiveness. Data is collected via surveys, the playground register, and student referrals.</p>
<p>What we are learning...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has changed? For example, outcomes for students, staff and community members. • Comment on any related issues. • Refer to evidence where possible. 	<p>Students completed the same survey on bullying a year after the student welfare strategies had been implemented. The results showed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 20% more children stated that they felt safe at school - the number of students who recorded being bullied on a regular basis fell by 12% - 79% of students stated that they would report bullying to a teacher. On the original survey, only 36% of students identified teachers as someone they would notify if they were being bullied at school - there has been a noticeable reduction in the number of parents complaining about their child being bullied.

<p>Where to from here...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does your school community plan to maintain/improve the present situation? • Are you going to use the solution in any other area? • Would you do anything differently next time? • Any suggestions for other communities? 	<p>The school will continue to build upon the positive programs already established such as buddies and peer mediation. The programs will now be extended to promote resilience in students. Peer support in 2005 will promote family connectedness, peer connectedness and fitting in at school. This will enable students to develop social competence.</p> <p>The school has been selected to participate in a pilot program from Canada called <i>Roots of Empathy</i>. The program strives to develop a sense of connectedness, belonging and empathy with others through fostering a close relationship with a young baby from the community family. The school has also established a link with local support agencies who will conduct a positive parenting workshop on the school site.</p> <p>If bullying is not addressed, it can distract the school from its core business of teaching and learning. Prevention programs need to be in place, as do effective reporting and intervention methods. Students also need to be provided with a diversity of peer friendships. The community needs to be actively involved in the process of creating a peaceful and socially cohesive school environment.</p>
--	--