

Barwon Learning Centre

'Student Wellbeing and Discipline Policy'



TO MEET THE PERSONAL, SOCIAL, LEARNING AND CULTURAL NEEDS OF THE STUDENTS

PERSONAL

- Staff
 - Well-being priority
 - Daily debriefs
 - Celebrations of success
 - Maintain team approach
- Students
 - Hygiene, food (basic needs met at all levels)
- Parents/Community
 - Develop relationships of trust and respect so parents and community are bonded to the school
- Agencies
 - True agents of support

SOCIAL

- Staff
 - End of term functions, celebration of birthdays and special events
- Students
 - Ongoing development of pro-social skills through daily practice and FSRF (Fun safety and respect Friday's)
- Parents/Community
 - Encourage involvement in shared community activities
- Agencies
 - Free recreational activities for children after school and during the holidays

LEARNING

- Staff
 - Ongoing professional learning at an individual, team, and whole school level.
 - Working from staff strengths
- Students
 - Regular testing and tracking of literacy and numeracy
 - Sustainable education across edu systems
- Parents/Community
 - Involve and respond to the particular needs of the parents and community members.
- Agencies
 - Continue to support parents and community members.

CULTURAL

- Staff
 - All staff are culturally competent
 - Create culturally relevant positions for experts in working with children in trauma
- Students
 - Support students to develop a strong sense of their own identity and pride in their Aboriginality
- Parents/Community
 - Involve parents and community in the life of the school and to support the achievement of BLC goals.
- Agencies
 - To develop mutually respectful relationships, to enhance the achievement of BLC's goals.



Barwon Learning Centre's 'Student Wellbeing and Discipline Policy' has been developed over a two-year period of workshops on 'Intergenerational Trauma and Healing' by Emeritus Professor Judy Atkinson. Workshops have been undertaken by all staff at B.L.C.. Parents, caregivers and community members were also involved in workshops.

The evolution from punitive practices to reparative practices has been unanimously supported by all stakeholders.

What works?

Barwon Learning Centre has since adopted a more holistic approach to behaviour management than is commonly practiced within the education system. Instead of a consequence-based approach, that relies on punitive measures to coerce appropriate behaviour; at Barwon Learning Centre we identify inappropriate behaviour as being a symptom of a larger social discomfort felt by the student. That being the case, Barwon Learning Centre recognises that there are more effective ways of engaging students who were not self-regulating appropriately, than punish them for their inability to behave as expected. Instead of punishment, BLC promotes a repair model of behaviour adjustment. One of the most important aspects of this approach is providing an environment where students see good behaviour constantly modelled in front of them by their teachers, and where their efforts to do the same are acknowledged and rewarded with praise. When students are unable to adopt good behaviours they are not challenged in confrontational ways where detailed consequences can often escalate an easily diffused incident, to a traumatic episode. The reparative model is underpinned by modalities of Indigenous healing promoted by the Healing Foundation, and of peer reviewed best practice of behaviour management, as documented in the Calmer Classroom initiative, commissioned by the Victorian Child Safety Commissioner. These approaches are reparative and restorative. This philosophical point of departure from past practice forms the basis of a whole of school social skills teaching matrix, that distills all of these elements into a program called 'educare' which has transformed the way in which negative behaviour is managed at Barwon Learning Centre.



To further develop and embed the concepts of Educare at Barwon Learning Centre we have developed six healing modalities that align within 'We Al-li' cultural tools for healing, because at Barwon Learning Centre we are able to recognise that our children and their families are in trauma. The strongest cultural tools have been found to be music, dance, art, theatre, body work and nature discovery.

B.L.C.'s 'Student Wellbeing and Discipline Policy' is developed on the 7 R's of the 'Educaring' Approach:

- 1) Respect for each child as a unique human being, with unlimited potential.
- 2) Right to be safe, protected and allowed to grow and learn at their optimal level within cultural and spiritual ways of being in the world, at home and within the school and community.
- 3) Responsibility – learning responsibility for life choices and behaviours.
- 4) Reciprocity – the mutual exchange of caring and sharing.
- 5) Relatedness – how the child engages in the world in which they live and learn.
- 6) Resilience – flexibility, hardiness.
- 7) Resonance – empathy, character, moral fibre; the language of the heart.

A Friday 'Fun, Safety and Respect' Program has also been developed and implemented to further develop students' pro-social skills, and to support their positive interaction within their community.

'Calmer Classrooms – A guide to working with traumatised children' which was produced by the Victorian Safety Commissioner, is a comprehensive guide to working with children who are suffering from trauma. This document has been introduced at B.L.C. as our primary source of strategies for working with students in trauma who display emotional and behavioural disturbances.

Students at B.L.C. are explicitly taught strategies for resolving conflict.

In the event of a violent incident causing harm, the Principal will follow the Department of Education and Community's Policy of Suspension.

Teachers model calm, respectful relationships in their daily interactions with all members of the school community.

A 'Whole School Reward' System has been developed to specifically acknowledge and reward engagement in learning, school attendance and respectful interactions with others.

"Some trees need more water than others."
- Elder Harry Walker

August 2014

