Penguin Primary School: ‘Yes, we are a KidsMatter school’

Beginning with KidsMatter
Penguin Primary school had already been using Bounce Back and Program Achieve when it implemented KidsMatter Primary in Term 1 2011.

The school wanted to do something more to strengthen the concept of emotional wellbeing in students, and it began the processes to introduce KidsMatter through training staff.

Taking on social emotional learning
Social and emotional learning has a strong place at Penguin Primary School.

With the introduction of KidsMatter, the Action Team actively promotes social emotional learning themes to teach across the school at the same time.

Each class learns about a theme such as self-awareness or emotions in three 45 minute-lesson blocks over five weeks.

So far this year, teachers have covered three different themes in this way. This joint approach means that there is consistency across the school, and teachers notice that students are using a common language to talk about emotional health and their feelings.

Action Team meets regularly
The Action Team is composed of seven members. These include a representative of the Leadership Team; three teachers; School Chaplain; the School Social Worker; and a parent.

We are building up our library resources in areas such as ‘managing emotions’, ‘recognising feelings in others’ and ‘how to include others’. We know this is an ongoing process and we are intertwining the social and emotional learning with other areas in the curriculum. This is a way to embed KidsMatter in our school.

Adam Lane, KidsMatter contact

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Earlier this year the Action Team hosted a Component 3 training session for representatives from five other schools in the region.

VIP Day 2011

During the first year of KidsMatter the focus on the theme; ‘every face has a place’ was important. It fitted well with the purpose of school’s annual VIP Day.

This is a significant event in the school calendar when each student invites a very important person (VIP) who may be a parent, grandparent, other relative or a person who is important in his or her life.

Each year the school opens its doors for a morning to the VIPs who share learning with their student hosts. In 2011 each student presented and decorated an image of him or herself and attached it to a large display board in each classroom.

The students and their VIPs were able to discuss the meaning of their image. Many students invited more than one VIP, and over 1,000 people wore the VIP badge at Penguin Primary School. VIP day in 2011 was also an occasion to feature KidsMatter.

VIP day in 2011 was also an occasion to feature KidsMatter. We wanted people to understand what our school was taking on. We wanted to say to our VIPs: ‘Yes, we are a KidsMatter school. We value learning about emotional health and we respect differences and aim to include everyone.’ We wanted to promote our message about emotional wellbeing to parents and families and other people our students invited into the school.

For more information about Penguin Primary School VIP Day 2011, see the story using the following link on the national KidsMatter website: www.kidsmatter.edu.au/primary/news/penguin-primary-school-vip-day.

What’s different at Penguin?

KidsMatter links perfectly with the school vision – A view to the future: Building Connections for Success. The school vision talks about students gaining valuable skills that will be used in their lives in the future.

We want students to build resilience, social skills; use different coping strategies; and develop positive self-esteem which all link to our vision and to the KidsMatter Initiative. Because of these strong links, the introduction of the KidsMatter at Penguin Primary has been both seamless and fully supported by our whole school community.

Adam Lane, KidsMatter contact

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Penguin Primary School

Tasmania

- Has 370 students from K – Year 6
- Is 30 kms west of Devonport
- Is located next to Penguin High School
- Is situated on the hill overlooking the town of Penguin, with spectacular views of Bass Strait.