Araluen Christian College

- KidsMatter because kids matter

Intentional focus on wellbeing
Since 2009, Araluen Christian College has completed components 1, 2 and 3. The focus on KidsMatter has developed along with the school priority for addressing student wellbeing.

The school has different ways to involve parents and the community for the benefit of students. For example, the school newsletter includes parent information; the surveys of parents produce data that assists the school to offer new events and ways of communicating; and students are encouraged to understand and learn about interacting with others.

The school staff meetings include a KidsMatter Primary time slot, and the staff articulate the statement, *KidsMatter because kids matter!*

"... We wanted to develop an active approach to what we saw as a growing need about student wellbeing. We asked questions about what does wellbeing look like? How do we communicate it to parents and the community?"

_Cate Garwood, Principal_

Are you a valued member of our community?
The school has found new ways to gauge how parents feel about teaching and learning at the College. As Cate says, “We need to know if there is anything else we can do to meet the needs of our families. We recently sent out a survey and we were pleased that around 75% of families responded. We asked questions about wellbeing at ACC, including: do you feel a valued member of our community?”

One of the items commented favourably on in the survey was the employment of the school chaplain in 2012, through the National School Chaplain and Student Welfare Program. This initiative increased the opportunities for children to talk with another trusted adult who cares for their wellbeing.

Hosting parent events
The College hosts evenings for parents with specific themes e.g. Cybersafety. At the welcome to 2013 barbeque night 300 parents and carers attended, a really large proportion of the families.

After the barbeque, staff organised childcare and the parents split into two groups. One half participated in an information session about teaching and learning, and the other half continued to socialise. Then the groups swapped over. This approach enabled parents to attend a school function in a friendly context. It is an example of how the College mixes informal and formal approaches to involve parents in events.
Building up a wellbeing culture

Over the past three years the emphasis on developing structures for peer support has been very significant and reflects the Christian principles and values that are the foundation of the College. The social and emotional learning focus is through the Peer Support Program and its themes form part of the Term 3 curriculum work in the upper primary years.

The focus on specific themes assists the school community to build the culture of wellbeing. This year the theme is Relationships and Keeping Friends. Teachers work with Years 5 and 6 students to build skills and assist them to take on leadership and run sessions with younger students.

Teachers also work with concepts from Buddies and Keeping Safe to support the social and emotional wellbeing culture of the school.

“Incorporating MindMatters

Araluen Christian College is a primary and middle school and all staff attended KidsMatter training throughout 2009 - 2011.

After the leadership group attended a MindMatters training session, they agreed that the school could incorporate it in the KidsMatter approach to add to the overall approach to wellbeing across the College.

... At the end of the Peer Support Program which includes a camp for Years 5 and 6 students, we have a celebratory barbeque and students demonstrate the skills they learned to their parents. It’s a great way for families to know more about social and emotional learning.

Cate Garwood, Principal

Being part of a network of schools

Araluen Christian College is one of eight schools in the NT Christian Schools system.

While distance is a challenge, it is possible to make links and attend a face-to-face Principals’ meetings once a term.

Being part of this network provides opportunities to share what is happening and learn from the experience of other schools especially in the context of student wellbeing.

The College also participates in the Alice Springs KidsMatter Primary cluster, and a representative attends a meeting once a semester.

School Profile

Araluen Christian College
Northern Territory

- Is located in Alice Springs
- Is a primary/middle school
- Has 223 students
- Is committed to student leadership
- Has a strong community focus and partners with parents

www.acc.nt.edu.au

... We will use MindMatters to strengthen the work we undertake with students in the KidsMatter framework. It was great to see that we could incorporate both for the benefit and wellbeing of our students especially in the transition to middle school. This year the focus will be on training staff in MindMatters.

Cate Garwood, Principal

www.kidsmatter.edu.au