



## Buddy Program Guidelines

### RATIONALE

Buddy systems teach, and give children the opportunity to practise the important values of respect, care, valuing difference, responsibility, friendship and including others. By looking after and caring for smaller, vulnerable children who are just starting school, older children learn the skills associated with empathy and compassion through activities in the classroom and in the playground.

Creating connectedness enables both older and younger buddies to bond more closely with their school, thereby increasing the likelihood of more positive social behaviour. When students feel connected to their school, they also feel valued and safe and less likely to either bully or be bullied. Buddy systems help reduce negative behaviours such as bullying.

Teaching pro-social values and skills through buddy programs, including Bounce Back, contributes to the development of resilience, a protective factor for children.

Students engage in real world learning with buddies teaching literacy and numeracy skills, which promotes the relevance of learning. Additionally, through the Kitchen Garden program, students are provided with experiences which encourage and develop a healthy lifestyle. Younger children feel safe and cared for while older children feel valued and respected.

### OBJECTIVES:

The buddy program:

- strengthens the school community and helps to challenge stereotypes, misconceptions or fears that students hold about younger or older age groups;
- helps students to feel valued and supported;
- teaches important social skills; and
- creates a caring ethos in the school.

### TARGETS:

- develops positive cross-age relationships;
- provides opportunities for peer tutoring;
- contributes to a positive and caring school culture;
- contributes to more positive behaviour by providing positive role models;
- develops pro-social values and skills;
- involves parents;
- develops responsibility;
- builds self confidence;
- develops empathy;
- promotes inclusion;
- discourages bullying.



## PROGRAMS

The buddy program is composed of three elements:

### 1. **BUDDY PROGRAM**

- Assists introduction of Kindergarten to school and teaches Year 4 students Leadership skills through formal training and practise;
- Provides support for Kindergarten programs in literacy and numeracy; and
- Connects students through pro-social activities of playground support in Term 1, teaching playground games, picnic lunches and other fun activities throughout the year.

### 2. **BOUNCE BACK**

Year 4 students support their Kindergarten buddies in the attendance and participation during the school's Bounce Back program and which is guided by Year 6 leaders.

### 3. **KITCHEN GARDEN PROGRAM**

Year 3 and Year 4 train as leaders in the Kitchen Garden Program and then support their Kindergarten buddies in their introduction to the program.