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26/8/24

To Whom It May Concern,

A Response to the State Government Inquiry into Bullying and Discrimination, from Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School, Devonport.

This submission addresses the particular areas of (b) and (d) of the terms of reference: (b) inquire into and report upon the measures necessary to prevent and remedy discrimination and bullying in Tasmanian schools in regard to students and staff (d) examine and recommend what efforts are being made and should be made towards meeting those obligations by Tasmanian schools in regard to students and staff

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School is a safe place for students because we have first and foremost tight structures, processes and procedures to enable the school to function effectively and efficiently with the care of each child as our priority: timetabled classes and programs, consistently high expectations of learning with Science of Learning pedagogies in all classes Kinder to Grade 6 as well as high behavioural expectations for all in the community. This is supported by documents, processes and structures alongside effective communication to all stakeholders which enables a supportive, appreciative and involved community.

Behavioural expectations are visited at each fortnight assembly and reinforced in all classrooms as well as communications to the community. We use a restorative approach to inappropriate behaviours with students, with natural consequences being applied where necessary and communication home to parents when behaviours move to Tier 2 level. We have aligned documents for behavioural expectations at OLOL that staff refined over a year, last year. These expectations are tight but also respect the individual needs of students as they are children learning how to socialise and use appropriate emotional and behavioural responses. We are here to nurture, guide, assist and understand the students.

Our Lady of Lourdes provides a 'calming' room called wingani where students can self-regulate when needed, quietly supervised by Teachers and Teacher Assistants. Our Wellbeing Team of 3 counsellors, operating over 8 days (2 on some days), an Occupational therapist, School Chaplain and 2 Student Support teachers with 2 Support TAs, ensure that all students who have additional needs (cognitive, communication, physical, emotional, social), have the necessary adjustments made to ensure learning can occur. This Wellbeing Team meets





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fortnightly on a Thursday to process student referrals for counselling and Occupational Therapy as well as addressing group work for socialisation skills and emotional regulation.

We have 99 students on Learning Plans with 11 having 1:1 Teacher Assistants.

Pastoral care is uppermost in our daily interactions with staff and students, and we have a focus on psychological safety in our environment for all. The Principal has led professional learning in this space with all staff followed up by a survey and continues regular check -ins to monitor this safety. Responses from that survey:

*'In the sense that we are a community of people who support each other, we are required to support other adults who are upset, but this is not an emotional burden. Some Staff are required to deal with highly emotional students, but I feel the procedures we have in place protect them.'*

87% of staff felt very supported to carry out their job and 93% stated that their line manager had time to support them.

*'OLOL is such a supportive environment, and you only need to say your need help/support/time/resource and so many people will come to your aid. We are so incredibly lucky here.'*

100% said there was clarity on the expectations of their role within the school. 97% were very happy with any organizational changes and processes involved in leading these changes.

*'Staff always have the opportunity to feed forward ideas/thoughts about changes. Our current Behaviour Management Policy review is a perfect example of this.'*

91% of staff stated that complaints and incidents were responded to fairly. Conflict, discrimination and inappropriate behaviors had not been experienced by 94% of staff. The Principal followed up with the remaining 6%, which had been responded to appropriately in the past.

*'There are behaviour issues amongst certain cohorts of children, however these are dealt with well in a timely manner.'*

There was no bullying, vexatious comments, insults, intimidation, humiliating comments experienced by any





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staff.

Students have a choice of outside play at break times or positive play inside depending on their social and emotional needs. We have an active daily duty of 'Time In' where students are monitored and assisted 'in the minute', when they need help on appropriate social interactions. Teachers use social stories, fiddle toys, quiet space and planned strategies from the Learning Plans to assist students to learn optimally. We outsource psychologists when needed and use their recommendations to support the student, once a care team meeting has occurred. We ensure we are an active partner with parents/carers in the education, safety and flourishing of their child.

We welcome many families to our school and have a waiting list as they are seeking the education we provide. We provide a holistic education in the true meaning of the word. The development of faith in our students leads to a spiritual awareness of God as a source of love greater than ourselves. Students have trust in God as a source of goodness in their lives. Parents speak of the welcoming culture, high levels of learning, safety for their children in all areas and learning of values/beliefs and traditions that will enhance them as they go through life.

We welcome families from the margins with currently 36 identified having English as another language and 47 students identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Our Lady of Lourdes prioritize less well off, single families and grandparents who are bringing up their grandchildren; parents with ill health, immigrants, solo families, families under financial stress and embrace all religions. We provide fee support to families on Health Care Cards and those requested assistance.

We have a full-time WHS officer dedicated to ensuring our school environment and excursions are safe for staff and students.

We have zero tolerance for bullying. We use the following to encourage respect, courtesy and consideration for others: Positive Behaviour Support (PBS); restorative justice; natural consequences, communication home to parents with a process of meetings if behaviours escalate. We use Bounce Back as a base for teaching social and emotional learning and complete the Rumbles Survey with students. Data from 2023 shows 84.9 % of our students felt high or on track with their wellbeing; attachment to school was 84.6%; and 85.9% felt there are supportive relations at school. 84% liked school; and 87% said school is a nice place to be; 82% feel good in class and 80% talk to someone at home about school; 93% felt they never got into trouble and 85% helped to fix concerns between students themselves. 96% like being themselves and 87% knew other kids liked to play with



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them. 88 % knew where and how to get help if things went wrong for them in the school and 92% felt safe at school. For the students who were low in any areas, teachers and school leaders meet to discuss supports (counselling, assistance in class, SEL group support in how to play together; skill development and socialisation skills).

Our religion classes teach everyone about God's plan for our happiness and the importance of every person and their dignity. This dignity is evident in every minute of every day and is embedded in how we communicate, think, and act. We have a very safe and supportive culture at Our Lady of Lourdes.

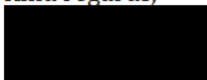
Hi Carol,

*I think in light of recent events with my child I am able to say without a doubt the support and communication all staff and students have shown us to help support and make her feel safe, heard, respected and supported, this defiantly attests to the school's stance on discrimination and inclusivity.*

*I would also like to say on this, I am so appreciative of the amazing Staff you have at OLOL, I have myself also felt so supported in helping my child navigate the things that have happened the past couple of days, they are a credit to the school and to you as the Principal*

One thing that has been really important to my children is the buddy systems. They just love interacting with their buddies – they can even recognise them from years ago when they see them in the community. They always look forward to their turn at being the 'buddy'. I think this fosters a safe environment in the playground and 'checking in' with other students to see how they are. The kinders' integration into the school playground community is also an example of this. The students value looking after each other from a young age. The mingling of age groups is fantastic.

Kind regards,



Carol Seagar  
(Principal)

