

26 August 2024

Response to Government Inquiry into Discrimination and Bullying in Tasmanian Schools

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.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Tasmanian Government's Inquiry into Discrimination and Bullying in Tasmanian Schools. St Brigid's Catholic School Wynyard is a Co-Educational Primary School located in the heart of Wynyard. The core purpose of our school is to provide a quality Catholic education for students in a safe, secure, and caring community that actively models Gospel values. St Brigid's Catholic School Wynyard has a current enrolment of 219 and caters for students from Kindergarten to Year Six.

The wellbeing and pastoral care of our students is a very high priority. At St Brigid's Catholic School Wynyard we have a variety of programs, practices and structures in place to ensure that our school is a safe place for students. These include:

- Breakfast Club
- Use of Rumbles and associated data
- Friendology
- Making Jesus Real program
- Class Buddy System
- Positive Behaviour Support and COMPASS to track and respond to student behaviour
- 5 day a week support from a Catholic Care counsellor and facilitation of programs such as 'An Introduction to Confidence' for students
- School Chaplain
- Strong family/school partnerships
- It Starts With Us, Child Safe and Mandatory Reporting Training
- Staff identifying and acknowledging any students who are 'caught in action' demonstrating our school values who then receive a 'Heart Card'
- Staff access to the EAP

We have, on average, approximately 70 students attend Breakfast Club that is facilitated twice a week. Breakfast Club is open for all students and allows children to have something to eat as they come into school prior to the commencement of the formal school day. Rumbles testing provides data on student wellbeing across the domains of commitment to learning, positive values, positive identity and safe protective environments. This data allows school staff to provide targeted assistance to those students who require it.

Our staff have had professional learning regarding the implementation of Friendology. Friendology was implemented with students and the community at the beginning of 2024 and focuses on empowering students with friendship skills. Friendology utilises a skills-based strategy that teaches child-friendly concepts, skills and language to help build and maintain healthy friendships. A key part of the implementation of Friendology is the teaching of vocabulary. Some of this vocabulary includes 'friendship fires', 'mean on purpose behaviour' and 'friendometer'. Our Grade 6 leaders are key drivers of this

program and have been designated as 'go to people' in the playground to assist students who are having friendship challenges.

St Brigid's Catholic School Wynyard is welcoming and inclusive to all, in particular, to those families who are disadvantaged. We provide fee assistance to families in genuine need and this fee assistance is accessed by 21% of our families. The provision of fee assistance to those who require it is a key aspect of our Catholicity in action.

STUDENT VOICES

"The best thing about my school is we learn a lot. The teachers at my school are nice because they speak nicely to us and they encourage us. I feel happy at St Brigid's Catholic School Wynyard because we are safe and the teachers are encouraging".

"The best thing about my school is I get to see the teachers and they help us. The teachers at my school are nice because they help and listen. I feel happy at St Brigid's Catholic School Wynyard because we get to play and learn and the teachers help us to stay safe".

"The best thing about my school is the welcoming people, students and staff. The teachers at my school are nice because they make everyone feel welcome. They are supportive, encouraging and kind. I feel safe at school because the teachers are trustworthy. In our school we are kind to each other because we want to have friends and make each other happy, and we can grow up to be kind, loving people".

PARENT VOICES

"As a parent of two current and one former student of St Brigid's Catholic School in Wynyard, including children with learning disabilities, we have found the school to be supportive of all students, regardless of their individual needs. We have found the school to be a safe place based on their Catholic outlook, their policies and protocols (which are well circulated) to be contemporaneous with current societal expectations, and the pastoral care and happiness of their students to be a priority as it feeds back into positive learning outcomes. I am also aware that the school has a pathway for supporting families who may struggle with the payment of fees, and have found the administration staff to be most helpful".

"Thanks to programs like Mini Vinnies at St Brigid's Catholic School Wynyard, my child is learning the importance of community and giving back. It's wonderful to see them grow into caring and responsible individuals".

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Tasmanian Government's Inquiry into discrimination and bullying in Tasmanian Schools

Regards,



Nic Saltmarsh
Principal
St Brigid's Catholic School Wynyard
stbrigidsw@catholic.tas.edu.au