

Positive Education at Bunbury Grammar



BUNBURY CATHEDRAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Bunbury Cathedral Grammar School has actively embraced Positive Education, with a range of related student programs and by undertaking extensive staff professional development.

In our Primary school all staff and students explore a new character strength every two weeks. Students are introduced to the character strength in class and in assembly. They set personal goals with respect to that strength in their school diaries and older students present short talks on the use of the strength to their peers and to younger students. Our regular Chapel services and assembly awards are based around displays of character strengths.

Discovering character strengths is a highlight of Year 7. Our School Psychologist and the Year 7 teachers run a twelve-session program of exploration into each of the character strengths and their associated unique icons. This culminates in students completing the VIA survey and identifying their own signature strengths. The students also enjoy “spotting” their teachers’ character strengths and signature strengths as they are revealed. A major component of our Year 10 program involves students embarking on a 10 day Outward Bound camp. Character strengths again become a focus for the students as they revisit their signature strengths and how they may have changed over the previous three years. Camp leaders are made aware of each of the students’ signature strengths and our strength icon cards and stickers are employed to assist students in exploring their strengths, the strengths of their group members, and the collective strengths of the group throughout the camp activities and challenges.

Efforts are made to embed the use of character strengths in all that we do across the School. All students’ strengths are displayed for staff on our student management system and they can be called upon when setting goals with students or when facing challenging pastoral care situations. Student leaders are encouraged to reflect upon their strengths when applying for leadership positions. Classroom teachers are embedding the principles of Positive Education into the curriculum to effectively educate for wellbeing alongside academic learning.

We have collaborated with schools from across Australia to develop our positive practices and significant visiting speakers have provided workshops to staff. We know that engagement is vital, and this flows when students and staff immerse themselves in activities where they can use their personal strengths. Staff have explored their character strengths and choose to display their signature strengths on office doors as a reminder to students that we “are all in this journey together.” Wellbeing classes across the years complement a character strengths approach by exploring concepts such as mindfulness and growth mind-set, with the ultimate aim of assisting all students to flourish.



Exploring our Character Strengths



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The School has created and personalised icons for each of the character strengths to make them our own and to reflect our natural bushland environment. A snapshot of each icon and explanation is given below.



Notes and appreciates beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in all domains of life.



A courageous person who does not shrink from threat, challenge, difficulty or pain. Speaks up for what is right. Acts on convictions.



Thinks of new ways to do things. Never content with doing something the conventional way if a better way is possible.



Curious about everything. Always asking questions, finds all subject and topics fascinating. Likes exploration and discovery.



Treating all people fairly as an abiding principle. Does not let personal feelings bias decisions about other people. Gives everyone a chance.



Forgives those who have done one wrong. Always gives people a second chance. Guiding principle is mercy and not revenge.



Aware of the good things that happen to oneself, never taking them for granted. Usually takes the time to express thanks.



Honest person, not only by speaking the truth but by living life in a genuine and authentic way. Down to earth and without pretence.



Expects the best in the future, and works to achieve it. Believes that the future is something that one can control.



Does not seek the spotlight. Lets results speak for themselves. Does not regard oneself as special, and others recognise and value their modesty.



Likes to laugh and tease. Bringing smiles to other people is important. Tries to see the light side of all situations.



Thinking things through and examining them from all sides. Relying only on solid evidence to make decisions. Able to change one's mind.



Kind and generous to others, never too busy to do a favour. Enjoys doing good deeds for others, even if one does not know them well.



Excels at leadership tasks: gets things done and preserves harmony within the group. Makes everyone feel included.



Values close relations with others, in particular those in which sharing and caring are reciprocated. Feels most close to the same people who feel most close to him/her.



Loves learning new things. Has always loved school, reading and museums - anywhere there is an opportunity to learn.



Works hard to finish what is started. No matter the project, 'gets it out the door' in timely fashion. Does not get distracted when working.



May not think of self as wise, but friends hold this view. Friends value perspective on matters and turn to person for advice.



A careful person, with consistently prudent choices. Does not say or do things that they might later regret.



Self-consciously regulates feelings and actions. A disciplined person in control of appetites and emotions, not vice versa.



Aware of the motives and feelings of other people. Knows what to do to fit in different social situations; knows how to put others at ease.



Has strong beliefs about higher purpose and meaning of the universe. Knows where one fits in the larger scheme. Beliefs shape actions.



Excels as a member of a group. A loyal and dedicated team-maker, always doing one's share; works hard for the success of the group.



Regardless of what one does, approaches it with excitement and energy. Never does anything half-heartedly. Life is an adventure.