





NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR VALUES EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS

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1. Introduction

The following National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools has been developed from the outcomes of the Values Education Study (2003) and widespread consultation on a Draft Framework.

The Framework recognises the values education policies and programmes already in place in education authorities and Australian schools. It also recognises that there is a significant history of values education in government and non-government schools, drawing on a range of philosophies, beliefs and traditions. It acknowledges that schools in all sectors are developing effective approaches to values education in the twenty-first century.

The framework includes:

- a context;
- an underpinning vision for improved values education in Australian schools;
- a set of values for Australian schooling, based on the National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century (1999);
- guiding principles to support schools in implementing values education; and
- key elements and approaches providing practical guidance to schools in implementing values education.

2. CONTEXT

The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), at its meeting on 19 July 2002, unanimously supported the national Values Education Study commissioned by the Australian Government to inform the development of a framework and set of principles for values education in Australian schools. MCEETYA also:

- acknowledged that education is as much about building character as it is about equipping students with specific skills;
- noted that values based education can strengthen students' self-esteem, optimism
 and commitment to personal fulfilment; and help students exercise ethical judgement
 and social responsibility; and
- recognised that parents expect schools to help students understand and develop personal and social responsibilities.

All key stakeholders in the Australian education context have a strong commitment to values education. This is reflected in the *National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century*, the Adelaide Declaration by all education ministers in 1999. The *National Goals* recognise that:

"Australia's future depends upon each citizen having the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills and values for a productive and rewarding life in an educated, just and open society. High quality schooling is central to achieving this vision. ... Schooling provides a foundation for young Australians' intellectual, physical, social, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development".

The National Goals include the goals that students, when they leave school, should:

- have qualities of self-confidence, optimism, high self-esteem, and a commitment to personal excellence as a basis for their potential life roles as family, community and workforce members, (Goal 1.2) and
- have the capacity to exercise judgement and responsibility in matters of morality, ethics and social justice, and the capacity to make sense of their world, to think about how things got to be the way they are, to make rational and informed decisions about their own lives, and to accept responsibility for their own actions (Goal 1.3).

Within the community at large there is growing discussion about how our children acquire their values and how they make sense of values promoted by the media and their peers. Parents, caregivers and families are the primary source of values education for their children but they expect support from schools in this endeavour. Values education is an essential part of effective schooling.

The 2003 *Values Education Study* revealed a broad range of varied and excellent practices and approaches to values education in Australian government and non-government schools. In particular, the Study provided a range of examples of good practice in three different domains of values education:

- articulating values in the school's mission/ethos;
- developing student responsibility in local, national and global contexts and building student social skills and resilience; and
- incorporating values into all school policies and practices, including teaching programmes across the key learning areas.

The Study clearly demonstrated the will and desire of all participating school communities to utilise values-based education to enrich students' intellectual, physical, social, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development and to respond constructively and positively to a range of contemporary challenges.

Schools which took part in the study reported an increased willingness and capacity to address values and values education in a much more explicit way or, at the very least, that their awareness of the need to do this had been raised. These schools also stressed that partnerships with parents and caregivers and their local community was fundamental to successful values education.

Some common values emerged from the school communities in the Study and from the consultation that followed: care and compassion; doing your best; fair go; freedom; honesty and trustworthiness; integrity; respect; responsibility and understanding, tolerance and inclusion. These values also arise from the *National Goals*.

From 2004, following the Study, the Australian Government is providing funding of \$29.7 million over four years to help make values education a core part of Australian schooling through support for:

- school values education forums in every school in Australia;
- drug education forums in every school;
- clusters of schools showcasing good practice approaches in line with the National Framework For Values Education in Australian Schools;
- curriculum and assessment resources for all schools to promote values education; and
- national partnership projects with parents, teachers, principals and teacher educators.

Some of the challenges addressed in the *Values Education Study* included improving whole-school cultures, developing school mission statements incorporating a set of values, including values in key learning area programmes, increasing student engagement, belonging and connectedness to schooling, fostering student empowerment and encouraging youth civic participation, improving student and staff health and wellbeing, promoting improved relationships, tackling violence, anti-social and behaviour management issues, and building student resilience as an antidote to youth suicide and substance abuse. The Study noted ways in which values education could support related initiatives such as the *National Safe Schools Framework*, the *National School Drug Education Strategy* and the *MindMatters* programme promoting mental health in schools.

3. Vision

All Australian schools provide values education in a planned and systematic way by:

- articulating, in consultation with their school community, the school's mission/ ethos;
- developing student responsibility in local, national and global contexts and building student resilience and social skills;
- ensuring values are incorporated into school policies and teaching programmes across the key learning areas; and
- reviewing the outcomes of their values education practices.

4. VALUES FOR AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLING

Nine Values for Australian Schooling have been identified for this National Framework. They have emerged from Australian school communities and from the National Goals for Schooling in Australia in the Twenty-First Century. They are presented below in alphabetical order and not in any rank order of importance.

These shared values such as respect and 'fair go' are part of Australia's common democratic way of life, which includes equality, freedom and the rule of law. They reflect our commitment to a multicultural and environmentally sustainable society where all are entitled to justice.

Individual schools will develop their own approaches to values education in partnership with their local school communities, including students, parents, caregivers, families and teachers. These approaches should be consistent with the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* and with their State/Territory policy.

Nine Values for Australian Schooling

1. Care and Compassion

Care for self and others

2. Doing Your Best

Seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard, pursue excellence

3. Fair Go

Pursue and protect the common good where all people are treated fairly for a just society

4. Freedom

Enjoy all the rights and privileges of Australian citizenship free from unnecessary interference or control, and stand up for the rights of others

5. Honesty and Trustworthiness

Be honest, sincere and seek the truth

6. Integrity

Act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct, ensure consistency between words and deeds

7 Respect

Treat others with consideration and regard, respect another person's point of view

8. Responsibility

Be accountable for one's own actions, resolve differences in constructive, non-violent and peaceful ways, contribute to society and to civic life, take care of the environment

9. Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion

Be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society, being included and including others

5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles have been developed from the *Values Education Study (2003)* and subsequent consultation. They recognise that in *all* contexts schools promote, foster and transmit values to *all* students and that education is as much about building character as it is about equipping students with specific skills. They also recognise that schools are not value-free or value-neutral zones of social and educational engagement.

Effective values education:

- 1. helps students understand and be able to apply values such as care and compassion; doing your best; fair go; freedom; honesty and trustworthiness; integrity; respect; responsibility and understanding, tolerance and inclusion;
- 2. is an explicit goal of schooling that promotes Australia's democratic way of life and values the diversity in Australian schools;
- 3. articulates the values of the school community and applies these consistently in the practices of the school;
- 4. occurs in partnership with students, staff, families and the school community as part of a whole-school approach to educating students, enabling them to exercise responsibility and strengthening their resilience;
- 5. is presented in a safe and supportive learning environment in which students are encouraged to explore their own, their school's and their communities' values;
- 6. is delivered by trained and resourced teachers able to use a variety of different models, modes and strategies;
- 7. includes the provision of curriculum that meets the individual needs of students; and
- 8. regularly reviews the approaches used to check that they are meeting the intended outcomes.

6. KEY ELEMENTS AND APPROACHES THAT INFORM GOOD PRACTICE

Some key elements stemming from the Guiding Principles that help schools to implement effective values education are identified below. They are accompanied by a range of suggested approaches designed to support schools, to help them to reflect on their existing practices in consultation with their school communities and to plan for improvement.

These approaches are not intended to be exhaustive, but provide examples of good practice to guide schools in implementing values education. They should be considered in conjunction with the 50 Values Education Study case studies, the 12 more detailed case studies reported in Values Education in Action and the other support for schools available on the national resource and professional learning website to support values education in Australian schools (http://www.curriculum.edu.au/values).

Guiding Principle	Key Elements	Suggested Approaches
2-8	A. School planning	Values education is an explicit goal of school planning.
		School values are made explicit with the assistance of the school community.
		Values objectives are made clear in planning strategies and introduced to students at an appropriate learning stage with clearly defined outcomes identified.
		Regular reviewing of values education practices against the identified outcomes is built into school planning processes.
3, 4, 8	B. Partnerships within the school community	Schools consult parents, caregivers and families within their communities on values to be fostered and approaches to be adopted (eg through school values forums).
		Values education involves the local school community in the development and teaching of values, drawing on the shared values that underpin Australia's democratic way of life in the context of the local community and its values.
		Schools involve the school community in the implementation and monitoring of values education programmes.
3	C. Whole school approach	Schools apply their values education priorities to their overall curriculum provision, their structures and policies, their procedures and rules, their funding priorities, their decision-making arrangements, their disciplinary procedures, their community relations and their welfare / pastoral care approaches.

Guiding Principle	Key Elements	Suggested Approaches
5, 6, 7	D. Safe and supportive learning environment	Schools provide a positive climate within and beyond the classroom to help develop students' social and civic skills and build student resilience and responsibility and to ensure a safe and supportive environment for values education.
		Students, staff and parents are encouraged to explore their own values.
		Values education reflects good practice pedagogy and is introduced in the curriculum at appropriate times for learners.
1, 2, 4	E. Support for students	Schools develop programmes and strategies to empower students to participate in a positive school culture and to develop their local, national and global responsibility.
		Schools use values education to build student social skills and resilience. This includes addressing issues such as behaviour management and discipline, violence and bullying, substance abuse and other risk behaviour, disconnectedness and alienation, student health and well being, improved relationships and students' personal achievement.
6, 7	F. Quality teaching	Teachers are skilled in good practice values education.
		Teachers are provided with appropriate resources to support their efficacy as teachers of values within all areas of the curriculum and total school life and to monitor this efficacy on an ongoing basis.
		Schools and educational leaders recognise that values interact with and are integral to all key learning areas.

7. GLOSSARY

PRINCIPLES

A statement encapsulating a fundamental concept for action that guides effective practice. The principles in this document are recommended guidelines for providing improved values education in schools.

RESILIENCE

A range of what might be called student 'coping strategies', or self-management qualities such as:

- personal responsibility and self-discipline;
- connection to the school and the community;
- a sense of school, community and civic engagement, participation and service; and
- overall confidence and self-esteem.

SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

An environment which protects the emotional, psychological and physical well-being of students.

SCHOOL COMMUNITY

The school community is generally considered to include students, families, school staff, other professionals, other support staff and volunteers.

VALUES

Two views:

- "... the principles and fundamental convictions which act as general guides to behaviour, the standards by which particular actions are judged as good or desirable.'"
 [J Halstead, J and M Taylor, 'Learning and teaching about values: A review of recent research', Cambridge Journal of Education, Vol. 30, No. 2, 2000, pp 169-202);
- "the ideals that give significance to our lives, that are reflected through the priorities that we choose, and that we act on consistently and repeatedly" (Emeritus Professor Brian Hill), keynote address, first National Forum on Values Education, Melbourne, April 2004. See http://www. curriculum.edu.au

VALUES EDUCATION

Any explicit and/or implicit school-based activity which promotes student understanding and knowledge of values, and which develops the skills and dispositions of students so they can enact particular values as individuals and as members of the wider community.