

## ***Girrawheen Senior High School - Process***

- The process began in 2005 with the staff indicating that of the 9 Key Values for Australian Schools, three were stand-outs for them (in terms of the values they would want students to adopt to become successful learners): Respect, Responsibility and Doing Your Best. There are descriptors for each of these values that underpin why they were chosen.
- Early 2006 I began an exercise in raising awareness amongst the staff regarding promoting values across the school community. **Doc #1 (No Child Will Leave Girrawheen Empty Handed)** was distributed to all staff with some explanation, and the accompanying PowerPoint® used to get the school Management Team on board.
- **Doc #2 (The Values Agenda - Where to for the School Community?)** set up the view that the three identified Key Values could be linked into the Habits of Mind curriculum that was already promoted across the school, and that Values was something that the staff needed to embrace. Our Code of Conduct was a live commitment to behave in ways that modelled these values.
- Finally **Doc #3 (Values at Girrawheen SHS - the final instalment in the first wave)** talked about linking values both through teaching and reporting, and communicating with parents and the wider community, and reminded staff that we must embrace the three key values in ways that model behaviours consistent with Respect, Responsibility and Doing Your Best.

This term the Values Committee (more a working party) will look at setting up processes that create opportunities to embed values (and particularly the three Key Values) into the curriculum, and ensure parents are in the loop. Much of this is already done at Girrawheen – it is a matter of more formally linking current programs, initiatives and practices into one “Values basket”. Additionally the committee will be responsible for setting up our Values Forum later this year.

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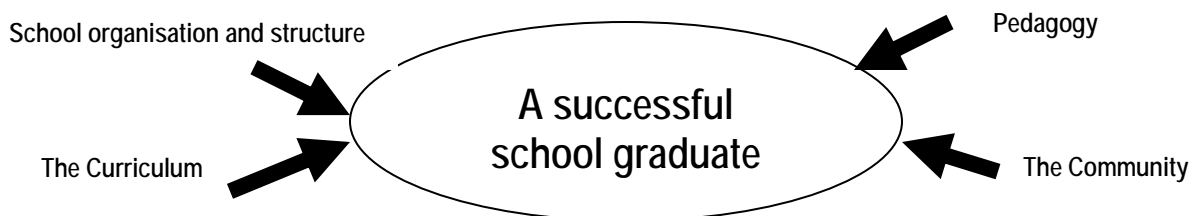
# #1 NO CHILD WILL LEAVE OUR SCHOOL EMPTY HANDED

## What are we accountable for?

- Academic outcomes
  - Citizenship outcomes
  - Health and well-being outcomes
  - Futures - focus outcomes
- } Factors that are determinates of "school success".

## Two questions

1. So what are these values that will underpin the development and maintenance of our school's culture to achieve "school success"?
2. And how are these values translated into embedded behaviours across these four aspects of a school's creative potential?



## Six key points about our Values

- The values we embrace must be articulated explicitly across the school community
- The values we embrace must have strong resonance with the school's CARE ethos, so determining the school's culture.
- The values we embrace must be easily understood and accepted by the school community.
- The values we embrace must be modelled by staff.
- The values we embrace must bring about behavioural change that leads to 'school success'.
- The values we embrace must be connected to creating a culture of excellence at Girrawheen Senior High School.

## So who leads this debate about values?

- The Principal must set this agenda.
- Middle management must promote the agenda.
- But the most powerful tool for determining school culture and teaching values is pedagogy. So teachers must embrace the values and embed them into their classroom policies and practices.

## How will our school undertake this task?

- Distributed leadership\* is an essential operational model.
- Teacher conversations will drive this process.
- Parent/community participation will underpin school actions.
- The pursuit of excellence in achieving 'school success' has to be our agreed goal.

\* Distributed Leadership: The purpose of leadership is to improve Teaching and Learning  
Teaching and Learning improvement requires continuous learning  
Learning requires modelling  
Roles and activities of leadership flow from the expertise required for learning and improvement  
The exercise of authority requires reciprocity of accountability and capacity.

## #2 THE VALUES AGENDA – WHERE TO FOR THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY?

We have already looked at the set of values promoted by National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools and determined that there are 3 stand-out values that should be promoted as key values for our student group. I have a view that it would be great if we could also embed these values into the Habits of Mind, since there is some real congruence between the some of these 16 Habits and a school's desire to have its students adopt behaviours that will promote excellence in all that they do.

(I read recently that there are 6 key goals that are important for schools to seek: teaching basic skills (reading, writing, etc); teaching essential facts; using these facts; helping young people acquire desirable habits of mind; developing character and other desirable traits; and stimulating individual development. So the Habits of Mind sit neatly within both the key learnings and the values agenda.)

So a map of the three key values and the Habits of Mind could look like:



However we also need to identify those values which, when embedded in their attitudes and behaviours, set the scene for determining the nature of staff interactions across the school community.

In describing the three values for students it is easy to see where they might fit into a set of values for staff too. For example (and if you check out our Code of Conduct you can see where this fits):

### Respect

- Treat others with consideration and regard
- Respect other's point of view
- Respect yourself

### Responsibility

- Be accountable for one's own actions
- Resolve differences in constructive non-violent and peaceful ways
- Contribute to society and civic life
- Care for the environment
- Participate in collegiate support

### Doing your best

- Seek to accomplish something worthwhile
- Try hard
- Pursue excellence

Additionally imagine how these values could be used to describe behaviours that we would want our community to adopt.

### #3 Values at Girrawheen SHS – the final installment in the first wave

Alan Hughes handed out some very useful material at Tuesday's Management meeting on some pointers teachers could use in describing values, and how they could support teacher assessment processes when considering whether a student demonstrates behaviour related to key school values. Alan's information fits neatly into our three key values, and it caused me to think about our current reporting format. Clearly if we can, across the school community, embed Respect, Responsibility and Doing your Best, then we should be reporting student behaviours in these areas whenever we communicate with parents. This way the process of placing these values "out there" will be easily done, and have a sustainable impact on the school community.

There are just two tricky bits, and I alluded to them in an earlier edition. If we are dinkum about values, then we too must embrace them, and model behaviours consistent with these values. A simple example is that "showing respect" would include a commitment to always be inclusive in relationships with students and colleagues. By inclusive I mean, for example, not singling out one child in a class of kids in a way that publicly humiliates him/her. Lots of our students really fire up when that happens because they are continuously subjected to that type of experience at home. Now that can be tough when some young upstart is giving you a hard time, and I can recall too many times when I did exactly that to some poor student. But I think I learned not to react that way, and I know students respected the fact that almost always I used Bill Rogers' "Least Intrusive" method of affecting behaviour change. So this take up of the three values by all of us will not be without challenges, but although it is perhaps too much to expect, it is not too much to ask that we all commit to this initiative.

Secondly we will need to communicate our intentions about these values to the parents of our students and the wider community, in language that is both acceptable and understandable. This too can be extremely tough. I might know a parent is not showing a responsible attitude towards his son's education, but how should I express my concerns in ways that respect his role as the parent. And what does doing your best mean to a refugee parent who is under the pump to simply fit in to a very foreign culture. However, if we don't take a stand then who will for some of our most marginalised students. Parents often tell me they have been left out of the loop in dealing with their children's challenging behaviour. My response has always been that responsible parenting is never easy, but without this positive approach their children will continue to display anti-social behaviour. Being responsible might mean calling the police when they find their son involved in criminal behaviour. It might mean taking their daughter to a drug clinic when she turns up at home drunk after a party. Never easy, but the consequences if a parent doesn't take the tough decision can be seen daily in our news.

So where to next? I will be calling together those of you interested in developing our Values response early next term. I really want to keep this agenda as simple as possible – a few clear messages have far more impact than some convoluted campaign. But we can make changes in attitudes and behaviours that develop through adopting some key values. We have done this already in so many ways at Girrawheen. Let's formalise the next step.