

Better Buddies

Creating friendly and caring primary school communities where bullying is reduced

Bullying is a serious issue in Australia, with one student in every four bullied.

Experiencing bullying can have a devastating effect on a child and can impact self-esteem, behaviour, and the ability to concentrate and perform at school. Children who bully others are more likely to go on to commit anti-social behaviour and criminal acts.

An Alannah & Madeline Foundation initiative, Better Buddies pairs students entering their first year of primary school with an older buddy to help them feel safe, valued and connected to their new school community, while older students feel valued and respected.

When students have the skills and understanding of how to engage in positive, respectful and inclusive relationships, then negative and violent behaviour – such as bullying – can be reduced.

Better Buddies introduces or enhances buddy systems in primary schools and encourages other cross-age relationships throughout the school community. It also encourages everyone to incorporate the Better Buddies values of caring, friendliness, respect, valuing difference, including others and responsibility.

The evidence-based framework complements existing school welfare programs, is easy to implement and links to national curriculum initiatives.

An independent, national survey of Better Buddies found children, teachers and school communities benefit immensely from the framework:

- **95 per cent of principals said Better Buddies has helped create a friendly and caring school community.**
- **97 per cent of teachers said Better Buddies has assisted students in their transition to school.**

Schools can apply for a sponsored position or purchase the Better Buddies framework.