

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

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Please accept a submission for the inquiry from St Nicholas' School Tamworth.
The principal of this school is Mr Chris Bentley.

These 2 page document details in brief new arrangements to cater for a situation which must be common across Australia, a lack of males in the primary teaching profession.

This programme is innovative and has worked successfully since commencing at the start of the year. I am sure that such material will be of use in any published findings because it is based on actual practice and will provide schools in similar situations with suitable models to develop their own response.

I wish you success with your work and thank you for the opportunity to present this submission.

Regards

Dr Paul Thornton
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MEN-TOR

THE NEED:

Due to changes of staff at the School, the staff line up in 1999 had only one male (the Principal) amongst twenty-five full-time and part-time teachers. The School Community saw this as a disadvantage to all the students for the following reasons:

- there was a significant number of single mothers who had custody of students
- a significant number of students had no contact with males the Teachers and Parents had many concerns regarding boys education issues
- women teachers felt that their treatment of boys was a little unfair at times
- men did not attend school functions at the same rate as women
- this situation was a negative when it came to enrolments.

THE AIM:

To create a positive environment for all students with male and female role models being seen as partners in the School Community.

OBJECTIVES:

At the initial meeting late in 1999 the following objectives were developed for the group:

- not to replace the Parents, Teachers and Friends in its role of fund raising and working
- bees
- to try to get away from male stereotype activities
- men from all sections of the community will be encouraged to join in
- informal meetings will be held each term to clarify activities.
- to help individual students with problems, within the framework allowed
- to model correct male behavior in all situations
- to be available to all students
- to provide support to the teaching staff of the School
- become a support group to the Principal
- discuss openly issues of importance
- support each other
- run functions or support school functions
- to keep an open mind to the further development of the group
- to be a positive force within the community, especially on school matters.

IMPLEMENTATION:

SO far the following has been achieved:

- a Dad's breakfast cooked for the whole school.
- four meetings held at the school and a local hotel, these are attended by ten to twenty men
- providing classroom helpers and expertise on Talent Days
- running a regular touch football competition
- performing a number of physical tasks around the school
- attending special School Masses with class groups
- discussing important school and educational issues
- doing yard duty with the teachers
- the development of a members list (45 at last count)
- providing support for school activities, more men now attend.

MEN-TOR

FUTURE PLANS:

This term the group will:

- organise and run a disco in conjunction with the SRC
- continue with previous programs
- join in the schools lunch club program and focus on some children with need, supervised by the Principal.

EVALUATION:

This program has been seen as very positive by the School Community; it has also received media coverage, so from a PR aspect it has been very successful. However the deeper achievements are the real value of it. We will continue with a soft approach as we want to develop the membership. We now have a group of men who are at home in the school situation and are devoted to its development and the welfare of its members. More can be achieved.

FOR FUTHER DETAILS CONTACT:

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