



St Joseph's Primary School

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Dear Parents and Carers of Year 5 and 6

The Sixth Sense - A Peer Education Lesson for Stage 3 Wednesday 14th October (Week 1 Term 4)

Next term our Stage 3 students will have the opportunity to participate in a 1 - 1.5 hour workshop that educates students about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), particularly about the interpersonal relating style that they may notice in their peers with Autism in the classroom, playground or other school settings. Some of these different ways of joining in might otherwise be misinterpreted as unusual, confusing, clumsy or rude. The rationale for this workshop is to assist all students in being better equipped to value and include all students who interact in different ways when they are provided with accurate and meaningful information about the reasons for those differences.

The program focuses on "the sixth sense" ie. our intuitive understanding of others, which is an ability that typically developing people unconsciously use all the time in their interactions with others. Through activities and discussion, students learn that their peers with Autism have limited "sixth sense" abilities. They are guided to understandings about what it might be like to have "sixth sense" limitations and how "sixth sense" differences can impact on their classmate's life at school, at home and in the community.

The goals of the workshop are:

- To heighten peers' awareness of the nature of certain differences in Autism Spectrum.
- To improve peers' understanding and support more positive peer attitudes.
- To offer peers some practical information about ways to respond to their classmate with Autism.
- To help schools create classroom and break-time social environments in which all children feel safe, valued and included.

The "Sixth Sense" is one of a number of interventions aimed at fostering socially inclusive classroom and playground settings for children with Autism and for their classmates. The workshop will be facilitated by our Catholic Schools Office Inclusion Officer, Kara Collyer and our visiting teacher for Autism, Andrea Steranko-Field. Ultimately the workshop will focus on learning about ourselves and others and about building respect and great peer support attitudes.

Kind regards

Jeannine Ucderele and Robyn McDougall
Assistant Principal Learning and Teaching and Leader of Pedagogy