



NAENAE PRIMARY – PB4L SCHOOL-WIDE CASE STUDY

For Naenae Primary, a Decile 1 school in Lower Hutt, embarking on the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) School-Wide journey has transformed students, staff and even the school grounds.

Naenae Primary has 150 students between Years 1 and 6. It has a high number of Māori or Pasifika students (about 80%) and those who speak English as a second language (25%). Until recently, it also had a problem with aggressive behaviour.

“We’ve gone from a situation where children were looking over their shoulder to see who was going to get to them next to now, where we have very few incidences of bad behaviour,” says Principal Murray Bootten.

Murray says before the school embarked on Positive Behaviour for Learning School-Wide training in 2010, their main behaviour issues were aggressive incidents – fighting and intimidation of staff and students.

The number of aggressive incidents at the school fell to zero in 2013 and there have been no stand downs.

“We started off by focussing on the positives. We knew we couldn’t change everything at once, so we just took little steps,” says Murray.

The school used the Quality Circle Time approach to teach ‘golden rules’ based on the school’s values of caring and respect for others.

Murray says consistently teaching and acknowledging positive behaviour has improved behaviour and learning across the school markedly.

“We are now all speaking the same language, in the classroom, in the staffroom and in the playground.”

Before PB4L School-Wide, staff were constantly managing behaviour incidents during break times. PB4L School-Wide coach Corey White says teachers could spend at least 15 minutes of teaching time after morning tea break dealing with these incidents. Now, no teacher time is being used to deal with incidents, increasing the amount of time for instruction.

Increasing supervision at break time and introducing a huge range of activities for the students has had a dramatic effect on behaviour. Staff run rugby, football, ICT, dance, art and ‘Craze’ (hula hoops, stilts etc) activities and the library is open to students.

“One of the things our School-Wide team talked about was keeping children busy. By providing a range of activities at break times that meet all the children’s interests, there is less likelihood they will get frustrated or angry,” says Murray.

He says teachers are now happy to spend time in the playground.

“We used to feel like the United Nations peace-keeping force going on duty. Now it’s a walk in the park.”



Students at Naenae Primary enjoy one of the many activities that have been introduced at break times as part of PB4L School-Wide



The Friendship Squad, which Murray runs, involves a group of students who ensure all children have a friend at breaks and join in games. The squad gives out gold cards to those who show the behaviour expectations of the school.

Murray says the preventative positive approach to behaviour that staff now take has helped to nurture their relationships with students and parents. As students have felt more comfortable about being at school, parents have come in more often.

“As a principal, I have had to step back and allow my staff to get alongside the parents. They can have conversations at a different level and find out what parents want to see at the school.”

In the past, Murray says the school’s reputation meant it was hard to find reliever teachers willing to work there. Now, however, relievers were spreading the word about how well the students behaved and learned. Before the changes, Murray says he was unwilling to leave school for meetings in case issues arose in his absence. Now he has no such qualms.

There has also been a change in how Resource Teachers for Learning and Behaviour (RTLBs) work within the school. The RTLBs now focus solely on improving learning and raising academic achievement rather than working with staff on behaviour issues.

The additional pride and respect that staff, students and the wider community now have for the school grounds has been reflected in a significant reduction in vandalism and tagging.

“It’s a totally different environment,” says Murray.