



MARIST BROTHERS

# Berne Education Centre Annual Report, 2004

The Berne Education Centre is an Independent Catholic School owned and operated by the Marist Brothers offering a positive option for students (Years 8, 9, 10) whose education is at risk.

## Goals and Objectives:

Our goals are the same as those of any school: all true education aims at producing **persons for others**, people who can live outside themselves for others. This may sound overly optimistic in a school for needy and difficult children at risk, but any goal less than this fails to respect these children as human beings who share the same joys and hopes, grieves and anxieties as all other persons. However, we can state our goals more precisely:

### Goals:

1. To assist students to appreciate themselves as worthwhile and capable human beings
2. To assist students in the process of realising their God-given potential
3. To prepare students to take their place as just and responsible members of society
4. To prepare students to share their skills and talents with others in the workforce, and thereby contribute to the common good
5. To provide a secure, safe, enriching and challenging educational environment
6. To provide a second chance for students in difficulty, outreaching to their families and wider social networks

### Objectives: (implementing the goals)

- a. Improve each student's literacy and numeracy skills
- b. Provide a relevant and comprehensive education for all
- c. Help any capable student to gain a School Certificate
- d. Address any needs in each student not specifically educational: personal, psychological, emotional, social and spiritual
- e. Work with each student's family, especially the parents
- f. Confront specific problems a student may have, and work with each person and their families to overcome these
- g. Work to restore a student to mainstream schools wherever possible
- h. Help each student realise their immediate goals by developing a realistic "exit" plan
- i. Develop relevant personal development and camping programs
- j. Organise work-experience and voluntary service programmes

## Enrolment Procedure / Students 2004:

Berne receives referrals from a wide range of educational and welfare professionals. Parents and Carers also often make contact directly. Following initial telephone enquiry for enrolment a School Counsellor contacts enquirer to discuss enrolment suitability. An assessment is made

considering relevant information that is collected. An interview with student, parents / carers and Berne staff (Principal, Deputy, Counsellor and Year Co-ordinator) may then follow. If Berne is not suitable, or if not place is available, alternatives will be suggested to the family. If accepted into the program, an enrolment form and information pack will be given to the parent / carer.

Following are details showing numbers of students enrolled at Berne Education Centre at the start of each term during 2004:

Term 1:	Year 10:	20	Year 9:	12	Year 8:	2	Total:	34
Term 2:	Year 10:	20	Year 9:	14	Year 8:	5	Total:	39
Term 3:	Year 10:	19	Year 9:	15	Year 8:	5	Total:	39
Term 4:	Year 10:	19	Year 9:	18	Year 8:	7	Total:	44

### **Staff 2004:**

The seventeen teachers (full and part-time) employed at the Berne Education Centre all have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia. Three teachers have qualifications in Special Education. Three School Counsellors were employed full time and one Psychology student undertook a placement at Berne during the year. Other specialist positions filled at Berne include a Chaplain, Itinerant Behaviour Support Teacher, Careers Advisor and Youth Worker. One full time and one part time Office Assistants were employed. Berne operates a school canteen employing a Canteen Manager.

Volunteers: The Berne Education Centre is very grateful for the constant support of our many volunteers. It would not be possible to achieve everything we do at this school if it wasn't for the valued assistance of our generous volunteers who provide support to us in so many ways.

### **School Policies:**

Berne's school policies are published in 'The Berne Education Centre Handbook'. Policies are developed by consultation with staff and, where relevant, parents. Before adoption they are submitted to the School Advisory Board for further consultation and approval.

### **Discipline:**

Staff at The Berne Education Centre aim to provide a quality education for students at risk of not realising this opportunity. This includes the care and safety of students in our charge. Good discipline is fundamental to the achievement of these aims; hence our policy is set within the context of student welfare. On a broad level, our discipline policy relates to our ethos of self-respect, mutual respect and safety with regard to relationships within our school community, and more generally, the wider community. This level is referred to as *The Discipline Code (i)*. At another level, our policy relates to the behavioural expectations that we have of our students when they are at school. This level is referred to as *Behaviour Management (ii)*.

The policy aims to:

- reflect the Catholic Marist ethos of the school
- exist within a framework of student welfare
- underline our expected standards of behaviour
- outline responsibilities for staff, students and parents
- abide by legislation

The policy agenda is underpinned by the idea that all behaviour leads to consequences that may or may not be in the student's best interest, and that in this regard, students have autonomy of choice. We hope to develop in our students social skills that result in positive consequences. Ultimately, we hope to develop self discipline in the students to the point where they effectively take responsibility for their own behaviour.

Our policy is based on the idea that students and staff are entitled to the following expectations.

The Students can expect an environment where they can:

- live happily
- learn to the best of their ability
- contribute to Berne
- feel safe, physically and emotionally
- learn & develop social skills and self-discipline
- be treated with politeness, respect and fairness
- experience resolution of conflict

The staff are entitled to an environment where they can:

- teach and work effectively
- be treated with politeness & respect and feel safe, physically and emotionally
- experience resolution of conflict
- expect parents and carers to take an active role with regard to discipline

### **Pastoral Care:**

*“Champagnat believed that the Lord had entrusted Jean-Baptiste to him and to the Brothers, and he was to be treated as if he was their own child.”*

This belief underpins the structure of pastoral care at Berne, even though the majority of staff is lay.

We believe that all true education aims at producing **persons for others**, people who can live outside themselves for others. This may sound overly optimistic in a school for needy and difficult children at risk, but any goal less than this fails to respect the children as human beings who share the same joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties as all other persons.

Education is about the development and formation of the “whole person”: someone capable of contributing to the society to which they belong; of understanding who they are before God and their fellow human beings and of reaching the potential desired of them by their Creator.

Our school grows out of a tradition that respects the essential uniqueness of each person, yet sees the bonds that bring us to one another. We recognise that the students we are responsible for having been negatively affected by many forces, most beyond their control. However, we believe great things for them and hold realistic expectations of their capacity to overcome and to succeed.

In this light, pastoral care is a major driving force behind our program here at Berne and permeates all our initiatives.

Everyone at Berne contributes to the Catholic and Marist spirit by promoting Catholic and Marist values, and fostering positive relationships within the school community.

## **Grievance Procedures:**

Complaints or grievances can be addressed to the Principal or Deputy Principal. Complaints or grievances will be treated with confidentiality and given priority attention. Forms for specific grievances are available from the school office.

## **Statewide Tests and Examinations:**

### **2004 School Certificate**

Once again, as in all our previous years, our School Certificate results proved that our students are capable of succeeding in our unique environment. Across all the examined subjects no student received a mark lower than 50% - in fact in all their subjects the bulk of our students achieved a result of 60% or above. This was an outstanding result and is due to the hard work of the students and the dedication of our staff and volunteers.

### **2005 Goals:**

In 2005 the school wants to refine its Discipline and Management systems, and implement and strengthen three new programmes:

- a) SWAP : Suspension, Withdrawal and Assistance Programme; to help mainstream schools with students with challenging behaviours.
- b) Changing Lanes : Assisting ex-students of Berne in many ways.
- c) Buddies and Friends : a mentoring programme for current students.

## **Summary financial information:**

Berne was in receipt of recurrent funding from State and Federal Governments : all this was expended on wages / salaries. Berne is also supported by funding from the Marist Brothers and from fees, donations and fundraising. All accounts are audited yearly and the Berne Advisory Board supervises the Annual Budget. As usual in special schools, the resources needed are not equal to the resources available.

## **Conclusion:**

As the Principal of the Berne Education Centre I guarantee the contents of this report are accurate, and the Report reflects the true nature of Berne to the best of our ability. As we are a small and very busy school, committed to students with high support needs, time available for report writing is limited.

**Br. Michael Flanagan, fms  
Principal**