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Philosophy and Culture Document

We value

Individuality - we are all different and at Fernbrook we embrace and celebrate our differences

Relationships - we foster connectedness within our community; a place where everyone belongs equally, where adults and children are as important as each other.

Kindness - being kind often requires courage and strength, as it involves the willingness to celebrate and give attention to someone else. Being kind requires compassion and empathy which goes far beyond just polite behaviour. Kindness positively impacts working collaboratively because everyone feels safe within the group

Integrity - a person with integrity demonstrates sound moral and ethical principles, they are honest and do the right thing even when no-one is watching. Integrity is the foundation on which relationships are built

Trustworthiness - an essential human value that quantifies and defines our interdependence in relationships with others. Being trustworthy means we can have faith and confidence in each other that what we say, is what we do

Responsibility - taking responsibility for our choices and actions, and being subject to the natural consequence of them, builds accountability and empowerment. Important qualities for being able to make positive choices throughout life.

We recognise that

Even though we are individuals and have many differences, as human beings, we share many similarities and basic needs.

We all need to be

- cared for
- cared about
- respected for who we are
- heard
- valued
- accepted
- in a place where we feel that we belong

We believe

- That all children are innately creative, and it is incumbent on us to allow children to utilise and to express their creativity in every aspect of their learning
- That all children are unique individuals who learn in different ways and at their own rate
- That all children benefit from holistic education (intellectual/emotional/social/physical)
- That all children learn best when they are happy and engaged
- That all children have a right to be accepted for who they are

We provide:

- a dynamic, responsive, and child centred education
- broad-based learning experiences that delight, challenge, and inspire the children
- a focus on collaborative learning, contextual learning, and whole school shared learning.

How we do what we do:

1. We have a strengths-based focus rather than a deficit-based focus
2. We are focussed on the process of learning rather than the product of learning
3. We see the teacher as a co-learner in the educational process rather than an expert
4. We encourage active participation in the learning process rather than passive engagement
5. We view the learner as a fire to be kindled rather than a vessel to be filled or a blank slate to write upon
6. We support real life learning over book learning
7. We understand the value of multi age groups over single age groups
8. We understand the value of collaboration in the learning process over individual learning
9. We place great value on the Arts, Sciences and Humanities rather than a narrow focus on the importance of Literacy and Numeracy
10. We are educating active citizens rather than future citizens
11. We are supportive of respectful relationships between adults and children rather than hierarchical relationships between adults and children
12. We encourage children to construct their knowledge through interaction with the environment, resources, and other people rather than through the sole guidance/direction of the teacher
13. We value small groups rather than large groups and plan to always be a small school
14. We believe that learning should guide the curriculum (emergent/negotiated) rather than the curriculum predetermining learning
15. We utilise an open-ended inquiry-based approach rather than an outcomes-based approach
16. We believe that children benefit from time in order to acquire and to understand new concepts rather than imposing time limits on learning
17. We believe in the value of a real world/real life focus on learning experiences over a classroom focus
18. We value a rich, broad based, interwoven curriculum over a crowded, compartmentalised curriculum
19. We value time over timetables
20. We view assessment as an integral and ongoing part of the learning process and utilise it as a diagnostic tool for evaluating learning and for planning for future learning rather than using it as a definitive measure of a child's ability (testing).

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