**Middle Years – Buddies Program!**

By Anne O'Reilly

As part of our Year 6 Leadership, both classes participate in a Buddies program with our new Prep students. Every Year 6 student is ‘buddied’ with a Prep student and, each week, complete activities that are fun and educational.

Though lots of fun and excitement, this program has many other benefits….

“Research shows that cross-age relationships, such as those developed in buddy programmes for Foundation students, promote a safe, inclusive and connected school culture.

Buddy programmes benefit both ‘big’ and ‘little’ buddies. The positive relationships formed between experienced students and those new to the school community can promote little buddies’ optimal adjustment to school. This has a positive effect on learning and is a marker of future school success. Big buddies can develop leadership skills and empathy, enhancing their self-awareness, self-confidence and self-esteem – characteristics that have a positive effect on learning.”

Taken from [www.safeschoolshub.edu.au](http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au)

Here are some thoughts from our Year 6 students:

“I love Buddies because we can help them learn and prepare for Year 1. We can help them settle in and not be scared of us ‘big kids’

“I love Buddies because it is a great learning experience and the Buddies are so cute and funny. It is fun!”
“It’s good to see the excitement in my Buddy when we do activities.

“I think we participate in Buddies because our buddies get a chance to interact with older school children and learn from our behaviour choices.”

Next year these Year 6 students will have another opportunity to buddy-up with another student in the Peer Support program with the Year 11 students – though they’ll be the ‘little’ buddies again!