

Mill Park Heights – Mill Park, Victoria

Students Junior School Council – approx. 60 students

Background

The Junior School Council (JSC) is one of the leadership programs for students at Mill Park Heights Primary School and is made up of representatives from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. It provides students the opportunity to:

- Increase student participation in the school
- Involve students in the decision making process
- Teach students the processes and protocols to effectively achieve change
- Make students aware of and involved in School Council
- Develop a caring and responsible attitude to our school community
- Be aware of wider community decision making
- Enhance staff, the School Council and parent awareness of the students' needs and priorities

This year the JSC was responsible for implementing an environmental project within the school. They were given \$500 towards the development of the project by the School Council.

Process

The JSC attended two workshops delivered by Pat Armstrong early in 2009 to help establish a process for delivering an environmental project. The following steps were then taken by the JSC:

- Consulted with classmates, deciding on top 5 ideas (within budget),
- Presented the proposal to School Council and gained their approval.
- Decided on a project – build environmental bollards within the school grounds
- Designed posters for bollards competition
- Presented design competition winners at the school assembly
- Purchased paint and requested materials from school community.
- Painted bollards
- Organised placement of bollards and got the help of the school groundsperson

Feedback

This feedback was given by the supervising teacher of the JSC.

- Meetings were held during class time, rather than at lunchtime – this allowed an increased value in being a part of the JSC.

- Pat Armstrong’s leadership training – follow up and the release of both teachers to do this. The students learnt a lot about leadership and it gave them a sense of clarification, purpose and direction of their roles for the year.
- Having a budget and specific project that they worked towards.
- Student action teams were utilised to ensure all JSC members played a part in the variety of activities that were undertaken. This made the meetings more dynamic and focused. This moved it from just reporting back to the students being active participants in specific projects.
- Class Representatives taking responsibility for many aspects of JSC meetings, e.g. minutes, roll, running discussions, etc
- Willingness of staff to help and support the JSC.
- Working in conjunction with Environment and Sustainability Team and Whole School Events Team when there were common goals to save doubling up.
- Having a coordinator from the Grade 3/4 and 5/6 areas to help communication through the school.
- Support by leadership to provide funding when needed and to release coordinators to attend meetings.

Concepts submitted by Jenny Carafa