

Guiding Principles

These Guiding Principles inform our work with children at Koonwarra Village School. They have been developed over time and are closely linked with our School Philosophy. The highlighted words are topics for which further information is available from the school.

Working Together

Relationships are the base from which all else stems. We are mindful of our role in each relationship, in each moment, and respond to each situation by choosing whether to lead, work alongside or follow the other. Our school's *behavior management policy* is based on connection, empathy and *restorative practices*.

Effective *participation in a community* takes practice, trust, a willingness to receive feedback and a balance between the *needs of the individual and the needs of the group*.

Learning

All human beings are born with an innate desire and ability to learn. Our role is to provide a learning environment that continues to nurture these qualities and actively promotes a *growth mindset* within each child.

It is beneficial for mentors to present new skills and information to groups of children working at similar skill levels. Mentors take a leadership role at various times during the *learning cycle* to ensure that the *curriculum* is adequately covered.

Providing direct instruction about *executive skills* is a practical way to empower students to achieve their goals. We use *learning contracts* to allow students to practice these skills.

Learning is most effective when its intention is visible and the activity purposeful. We are influenced by the research of *John Hattie* who has written extensively about the effect of this, and other factors that influence student achievement.

Trust between mentor and student is important to achieving an individual's learning potential.

Personal Development

Self-actualisation, the realization of one's potential, is a worthy goal to pursue. KVS *Personal Learning Projects* provide extracurricular opportunities for children to explore their talents and discover new areas of interest.

All people benefit from a high degree of self-awareness. We use a range of programs to develop children's *Social and Emotional Intelligence*.

Personal development is a life-long journey. At KVS we invite all community members to take part in this journey.

Children are Capable

Children can manage *high expectations* and thrive on the confidence that our faith in them brings. If children are struggling we provide support to reach the high bar, we don't remove the bar.

You become a good decision maker with practice. At KVS we provide lots of *choices* and have formal instruction in *critical thinking skills*.

We believe that *taking risks* is an important part of growing and learning. Allowing children to take physical, social and cognitive risks develops their ability to match their skills to the situation or environment.

Looking Outwards

We can provide the type of education we value while complying with government requirements for schools. We choose not to feel overly constrained by our *regulatory obligations* or by working with a *curriculum*.

Children are entitled to feel optimistic about their future. When we investigate the world's significant environmental and social challenges we do so from a hopeful and solution-focused perspective.

Being open to *current research* can make us more effective educators. Mentors regularly attend professional development, visit other schools and share ideas that inspire them.

We have a responsibility to give students the tools to navigate their educational experience after KVS. Our *past students regularly give us feedback* and we incorporate that into future programming and activities.