BARWON VALLEY SCHOOL

**Objectives**

- Early Years: Specialise the ES role to provide greater role clarity, widen career pathways, meet identified ‘gaps’ and address working arrangements.
- Middle Years: Use a paraprofessional (music specialist) to deliver a program within and outside the school context, in line with The Arts domain of the BVS Essential Learning Curriculum.
- Later Years: Trial ES staff working in community contexts without direct teacher supervision.

**Classification / Rating**

- Changing roles: ES staff  
  - Nature: Incremental
- Expanding workforce: paraprofessionals  
  - Stage: Implementing
  - Scope: Like schools

**Actions**

- Involve ES staff in delivering programs (e.g. cooking, art) to individuals and small groups of students outside the classroom, but within the school, giving ES staff the opportunity to pursue personal interests and passions.
- Deliver new music program within existing rotations for students who present with challenging behaviours and have complex learning needs.
- As part of implementing Individual Education Plans and Managed Individual Pathways goals, a student and an ES staff volunteer would without supervision walk to the local shopping centre and attend the shops.

**Impact**

- Qualitative and quantitative (Staff Opinion Survey) feedback from staff pre- and post-trial indicated positive outcomes from the three projects. Teaching and non-teaching staff raised the need to think more broadly about the role of ES staff in the school and their capacity to support teaching and learning programs in other ways. The consequent need to clarify teaching roles was noted.
- Teachers and ES staff reported increased student engagement, improved relationships with peers and staff, and a more effective learning environment. Feedback from a small sample of students showed that the program was enjoyable and exciting.
- ES staff in the Later Years program fostered stronger relationships with the students who participated. Students reported feeling more independent.
- Some ES staff involved in the Middle Years project developed a greater understanding of the students’ capabilities when highly motivated and engaged.
- Environmental limitations (e.g. lack of kitchen, space) of the cooking program impacted on delivery of the Early Years program. The students, who usually find the rotation program challenging because of changes in routine and staff were more settled and eager to participate when working with the paraprofessional. Other Middle Year students were keen to be part of the program.
- ES staff reported greater job satisfaction, noting increased respect for ES staff who have had an opportunity to follow their passions and be given some autonomy.
- The new programs led to improved learning outcomes for students, being better targeted to meet students’ individual learning styles, interests and goals.

**Future**

- Further explore specialisation and utilization of ES skills and interests.
- Employ a paraprofessional (not just limited to a music specialist) to support the Middle Years rotations program.
- Include in the roles and responsibilities of ES staff in Later Years a willingness to take individual or small groups of students into the community. ES staff are very keen to continue with the program and extend it to include activities such as bus washing at the local car wash.