



Introduction to Better Buddies Framework

The Better Buddies Team is pleased to be working with you and your school to implement the Better Buddies Framework. This document gives you an introduction to the Framework and helps you prepare for the road ahead

What do we do now?

The Better Buddies Framework is specifically designed to support students' orientation and transition during their first year of primary school. For this reason, your next steps may be determined by when you start once registration is complete.

Timeline for new Better Buddies schools

Term 1	Choose from one of the following options Option 1 > We can support you in trialling some activities and events, and planning and preparing throughout the year to slowly build towards fully implementing Better Buddies with the next intake of new students at your school. Option 2 > If your school community is fully supportive and prepared to undertake full implementation of the Framework immediately, we will support you in moving more quickly through the implementation process to support this year's new students.
Term 2 & 3	We will email implementation ideas to provide some structure for schools preparing to fully implement Better Buddies. These ideas help schools take small steps toward beginning Better Buddies and keep the focus on supporting students' transition during their first year of primary school.
Term 4	Schools should begin preparation for next year's intake of new students by undertaking student training with Senior Buddies. Explore ways of including your Senior Buddies in orientation and transition programs to support the incoming Junior Buddies. Book in a date to formally celebrate the launch of the Better Buddies Framework at your school in the new year.

Application & Renewal

Once accepted as a Better Buddies school there is no need to reapply for subsequent years. Your school is automatically included as a Better Buddies school into the future and you will continue to receive support and assistance from the Better Buddies Team, as well as access to new resources as they become available.



Working with your school community

While the Better Buddies Framework has been designed to avoid increasing the load on teachers, the introduction of any new program into a school will require extra effort on the part of many people.

We recommend schools take slow steps to ensure the school community takes the time to become familiar with the Framework and develops a commitment to implementing it fully to provide the best chance of long-term success.

Research shows that programs work when they are adopted by all members of the school's community. A whole school approach makes it more likely that the Better Buddies Framework messages will be conveyed effectively and that change will occur in all levels of school culture.

To assist in the work you would normally do in your day to day routine to embed and sustain Better Buddies at your school, it is important to remember to:

- **Work with students, staff, the school community and the Better Buddies Team to implement Better Buddies through stages of Planning, Implementing, Sustaining and Enriching.** Better Buddies is designed to be implemented in schools over an extended period of time.
- **Support the implementation of the Framework by allocating a staff member as a Better Buddies Coordinator and contact person.** We suggest this coordinator be a member of your wellbeing team or a teacher from one of the buddy classes.
- **Inform the Better Buddies Team of changes to school contacts over time.** This is important to ensure we remain connected with the school and continue to be able to assist you.
- **Keep in contact with the Better Buddies Team and provide information about your school's key events - via email, phone or visits - at least once a year.** This allows us to support and assist your school and promote the wonderful work you do.
- **Complete independent, online surveys through RMIT during each year.** This helps to ensure Better Buddies is effective, evaluated and capacity building. Your input is invaluable.
- **Assist with media opportunities.** The Foundation can provide expert advice and assistance in this area; you will not be working alone. We help your school to gain positive publicity. Consultation and approval with individual schools will be made prior to any media arrangements.

Involve your key volunteers (parents, grandparents and key community members, in Better Buddies Key Events



School Resources

1. Online

Visit www.betterbuddies.org.au for valuable resource for Better Buddies schools. The *Parents* section can support you in discussing Better Buddies with parents at your school and the *Kids* section has some great games that buddies can play together.

Once accepted as a Better Buddies school, the nominated school co-ordinators will be provided login details to access unlimited resource within the teachers' section of the Better Buddies website. As Better Buddies continues to grow, new activities, updates, ideas from other Better Buddies schools and additional resources will regularly be posted in the restricted teachers section of the Better Buddies Website.

2. Framework Kit

Once registered we will post the Better Buddies Framework Kit which includes the following

- Better Buddies Folder containing:
 - Introduction and rationale
 - Implementation guidance
 - Information for parents
 - Training for Senior Buddies
 - Activities and templates
- Better Buddies Framework Clip on DVD & Presentation on CD
- A Better Buddies teacher puppet
- A Buddy Bear
- Two Better Buddies posters for display in your school.

3. Other resources

National Centre Against Bullying (NCAB) is a peak body working to advise and inform the Australian community on the issue of childhood bullying and the creation of safe schools and communities, including the issue of cybersafety. An initiative of The Alannah and Madeline Foundation, NCAB is made up of a number of experts and works closely with school communities, governments and industry.

www.ncab.org.au is a good starting point to find resources related to bullying including definitions, tips, latest research and other resources.

Sharing of the information

The Better Buddies Framework is provided as a teacher resource for schools to implement, not as an individual/ personal resource. We recommend the following:

- Log it in your resource collection to ensure all staff have access to it as required and to assist us in reporting to sponsors that it is a valued resource stored appropriately in schools.
- Load the information from the CD and DVD onto the school's network for school staff to access the Better Buddies entire suite of activities, presentations and Introductory DVD. Book in a time during a staff meeting to show the PowerPoint or DVD to engage staff in the implementation of the program



Buddy Bear

Buddy Bear is the mascot of the Better Buddies Framework. Buddy Bear symbolically supports children's transition and orientation to school and gives buddy activities special focus and meaning. Teddy bears are perceived as warm, friendly, accepting and compassionate friends; they represent feelings of safety and have equal appeal to both girls and boys. The Alannah and Madeline Foundation has adopted Buddy Bear to embody the values of friendship, caring about, and sharing with others. Buddy Bear can be used in a variety of ways in the Framework, and is featured in the classroom activities.

Sponsored Schools receive a tub of 50 Bears

Schools who have successfully applied for a sponsored Better Buddies Framework receive a tub of 50 bears during their first year of implementation as part of their sponsorship. The 50 bears are distributed to new Better Buddies schools in February for use with Better Buddies activities to support students' transition to their first year of primary school.

How do schools use their Buddy Bears?

Schools choose to use their bears in a range of ways: as a class set, brought out during Better Buddies activities; as 'travel buddies' with students taking turns to take them home and writing/ speaking/ presenting about their adventures; as a 'gift' from the Senior Buddy to the Junior Buddy; or any other ways you can think of.

Purchasing Buddy Bears

Additional bears can be purchased if/ when required. An order form is available on the Better Buddies website in the resources section and a copy has been included in this information pack.

Some schools choose to fundraise to purchase bears, others include them as part of the school booklist, and others seek funding from groups such as Rotary or Lions Club. As with all Better Buddies activities and resources, how you choose to use your Buddy Bears is at your discretion and should meet the needs of your school community.