

Submission
No 52

**INQUIRY INTO EDUCATION AMENDMENT (ETHICS
CLASSES REPEAL) BILL 2011**

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 20/12/2011

Partially Confidential

Submission for Primary Ethics in NSW Primary Schools.

Dear Committee,

I am the mother of three Primary school children who attend [redacted]. My eldest has been in the Primary Ethics class this year and I would like to share a story from her school that I think is important for the committee to hear and take into consideration.

I have in the past been involved in some of the charities who assist homeless youth. In the later part of the year the Primary Ethics curriculum had a section on homelessness. Because of my experience with this issue I was asked to come in as a guest presenter to talk to the three classes about the issues of homelessness as an adjunct to the curriculum.

During the first discussion, which was an introduction to the topic, I was dismayed at the attitude and prejudices of some of the children. Many expressed a view that I had hoped would not be present in young children. After two weeks of the curriculum we invited two young people who had been assisted in their time of need by OASIS and could represent the views of the homeless from a first-hand point of view.

This was one of the most wonderful days I have spent with Primary school children. The children listened to the young peoples' stories attentively and respectfully and then asked many questions. In just two weeks it was evident that their views had radically changed (for the better) due to the Primary Ethics curriculum. Instead of fear and prejudice the children displayed, realism, empathy and understanding. A video of the speech can be seen on the Primary Ethics website.

So inspired were these young people they went one step further, organising a whole of year sleepover to raise money for OASIS and to raise awareness of the issue.

What a remarkable outcome.

I would also like to note the full hearted support OASIS (who are part of the Salvation Army) gave to this initiative, showing that secular and Christian alike can work together to produce wonderful outcomes.

Please allow this fantastic program to continue so we can enable the breaking down of prejudices and the development of not only strong social consciences but the passion to then take action.

Kind regards

Parent of three