

K-6 CURRICULUM

Dr Sue Knight and Dr Carol Collins have developed our curriculum framework as a community service to Primary Ethics. We are deeply grateful to them for this contribution. The curriculum content is being developed on a stage-by-stage level (Stage E1: Kindergarten; Stage 1: Years 1&2; Stage 2: Years 3&4, Stage 3: Years 5&6). Individual topics are taught over a period of two or more Primary Ethics lessons. Each topic will be supported by a set of teaching materials consisting of stimulus materials (including purpose-written scenarios and case studies, along with suggestions for relevant picture books), student-centred activities, exercises and discussion plans, and a set of explanatory teaching notes.

The topics and a short summary of the content of each are listed below. This is a living document that will be refined and amended over time.

Stage E1 (Kindy)	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3
Term 1	<p><i>Thinking together</i></p> <p>Asking good questions</p> <p>Time for thinking</p> <p>Taking turns – speaking and listening</p>	<p><i>Thinking together about questions that matter</i></p> <p>Finding answers to different kinds of questions. Children will begin to distinguish ethical from other kinds of questions and learn how to disagree respectfully.</p>	<p><i>Putting it all together: ethical inquiry</i></p> <p>Discussion topic: <i>Being left out</i></p>
Term 2	<p><i>Giving and asking for reasons</i></p> <p>When should/do we give reasons? Giving reasons to our teachers, parents, friends, brothers or sisters</p>	<p><i>Needs of animals</i></p> <p>What do animals need in order to live good lives?</p>	<p><i>Distinguishing social conventions from morals</i></p> <p>Examples: Pushing in, staring, table manners, please and thank you.</p>
Term 3	<p><i>Friendship</i></p> <p>Why do people have friends?</p>	<p><i>Acting fairly</i></p> <p>Discussing what is fair in a variety of</p>	<p><i>Telling a secret</i></p> <p>A discussion around what secrets are and</p>

	How do we know if someone is our friend? What makes a good friend?	situations familiar to Kindergarten students.	when it's OK to share them and why.
Term 4	<p><i>Why do we have rules?</i></p> <p>Do rules apply to everyone? What if there were no rules? Classroom/school-based examples.</p>	<p><i>Should we tell on people who do the wrong thing?</i></p> <p>A discussion of what 'doing the wrong thing' means and asking the questions:</p> <p>Should we always tell?</p> <p>Should we never tell?</p> <p>Should we sometimes tell?</p> <p>How can we work it out?</p>	<p><i>Caring for the environment</i></p> <p>Is it always OK to swing on the branches of a tree? Or to collect shells from the beach? Or catch tadpoles in the creek/small crabs/insects...? How do we decide what's OK to do?</p>

Stage 1.1 (Years 1-2)	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3
Term 1	<p><i>Stereotyping: Prejudice</i></p> <p>Can we tell what people are like just by looking at them?</p>	<p><i>Respectful disagreement:</i></p> <p>What does 'disagreeing respectfully' involve? Listening carefully, not making fun, questioning and asking for reasons, understanding different views.</p>	<p><i>Teasing: fun at the expense of others?</i></p> <p>Students consider questions around what it feels like to be teased and whether moral rules apply to all.</p>

<p>Term 2</p>	<p><i>Evaluating Reasons</i></p> <p>Focus on the notions of relevance and truth, aiming at intuitive appreciation</p> <p>Working out what is true</p>	<p><i>Is it always wrong to...?</i></p> <p>Exploring universal moral claims</p> <p>Are some kinds of actions always wrong, no matter what, or should we take circumstances into account?</p>	<p><i>Sharing: Why should we share? When should we share?</i></p> <p>Classroom and friendship examples.</p>
<p>Term 3</p>	<p><i>Empathy</i></p> <p>Putting ourselves in others' shoes – exercises and role play activities.</p>	<p><i>Being similar and being different</i></p> <p>How are we different from one another? What would it be like if we were all exactly the same? How are we the same?</p>	<p><i>When is it fair?</i></p> <p>Does being fair mean giving everyone in the group equal share? Or giving more to those who have contributed more to a project?</p> <p>Is it important to think carefully and for ourselves about what being fair means?</p>
<p>Term 4</p>	<p><i>Good reasons</i></p> <p>Children are encouraged to think for themselves about the (relational) properties of good reasons.</p>	<p><i>Different kinds of animals and different needs</i></p> <p>What are the differences between wild animals and pets?</p> <p>Is it OK to keep wild animals as pets?</p>	<p><i>Is it important to understand the rules?</i></p> <p>Is it sometimes hard to obey the rules laid down for us?</p> <p>Does understanding why a particular rule is important help us to follow that rule?</p>

Stage 1.2 (Years 1-2)	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3
Term 1	<p><i>Pride</i></p> <p>Using relevant examples, students will discuss the issue of what kinds of things we have a right to be proud of ... and why.</p>	<p><i>Examples and counter examples</i></p> <p>Students will engage in the practice of giving examples and counter-examples and begin to think about the role such logical moves play in everyday reasoning.</p>	<p><i>Are you the same person you used to be?</i></p> <p>Children will discuss the question, 'What is it that makes you one and the same person that you were when you were born?'</p>
Term 2	<p><i>Laziness</i></p> <p>What is it to be lazy?</p> <p>Is there anything wrong with being lazy?</p>	<p><i>How important are the reasons?</i></p> <p>Students will engage in the practice of reason giving and, through a series of examples and exercises, be encouraged to think for themselves about the importance of this practice.</p>	<p><i>Sharing with those in need</i></p> <p>Children are encouraged to think for themselves about sharing and, more particularly, where there are circumstances in which they ought to share with others.</p>
Term 3	<p><i>Courage</i></p> <p>Students will discuss the question of whether we have a moral responsibility to stand up for others who need our help (friends/not-friends), even though it may be hard/bad for us. Or whether we should put our views forward when we</p>	<p><i>Understanding and forgiving</i></p> <p>Discussion based on Ezra Jack Keat's picture book 'Maggie and the Pirate' (Four Winds Books, 1979).</p>	<p><i>Reasoning with 'all' and 'only'</i></p> <p>Using exercises, students will discuss the different meanings of 'only' and what that means when reasoning with 'all' and 'only'. Stereotyping examples.</p>

	know others, including our friends, disagree with us.		
Term 4	<p><i>Ownership / stewardship</i></p> <p>Does anyone own the forests, oceans, atmosphere etc?</p> <p>Do they need looking after?</p> <p>If no one owns them, who should care for them?</p>	<p><i>Making moral choices</i></p> <p>Do you know when you've done something wrong?</p> <p>How do you know?</p>	<p><i>Happiness</i></p> <p>What makes us happy?</p> <p>Can we be happy when everyone around us isn't happy?</p> <p>Can we be happy if we only care about ourselves?</p>

Stage 2.1 (Years 3-4)	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3
Term 1	<p><i>Being selfish</i></p> <p>Students will be encouraged to think for themselves about what it is to be selfish, and what, if anything, makes it wrong to be selfish.</p>	<p><i>Staring, excuses and reasons</i></p> <p>This topic encourages students to think about what counts as staring and what, if anything, makes staring wrong. Students will also learn what distinguishes good from bad reasons.</p>	<p><i>Disagreeing respectfully about controversial issues</i></p> <p>Students will run through a series of exercises to help them think about the issues surrounding disagreeing with others in a respectful manner.</p>

<p>Term 2</p>	<p><i>Is it right to keep animals in zoos?</i></p> <p>Empirical knowledge: purposes of zoos, nature and welfare of animals compared with humans.</p>	<p><i>'Bragging' (boasting)</i></p> <p>An examination of bragging precedes a discussion about whether bragging is the same as lying and whether it is ever right to brag or boast.</p> <p>Examples: school/home/sport/media.</p>	<p><i>Children's rights: Child Labour</i></p> <p>Using a case study example of children working in cocoa plantations in western Africa, students will discuss issues around child labour and consider what their moral responsibility is in relation to this and similar issues?</p>
<p>Term 3</p>	<p><i>Diversity and tolerance</i></p> <p>Using cultural examples, students will identify the differences in underlying factual beliefs and circumstances. Are some actions, such as bullying, morally wrong, even if some people believe they are not?</p>	<p><i>How should we treat living things?</i></p> <p>This topic invites students to think about the idea that it may be wrong to harm living things and why.</p>	<p><i>Inferring or figuring things out</i></p> <p>The act of inferring lies at the heart of ethical reasoning. Students will practice and strengthen this skill through exercises and will begin to understand the assumptions that underlie their inferences.</p>
<p>Term 4</p>	<p><i>Breaking a promise</i></p> <p>Using personal and societal examples, students will discuss issues around the rights and wrongs of breaking promises.</p>	<p><i>Thinking about giving</i></p> <p>Why do we give? When you give, do you expect to receive something in return? Do we only give gifts to people we like? How do we decide who we should give to, and how much to give?</p>	<p><i>Only 2 topics in Term 4</i></p>

Stage 2.2 Years 3-4	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3
Term 1	<p><i>Being Greedy</i></p> <p>Students will discover the difference between wants, preferences and needs and discuss the question, “What do Australians need in order to be happy?” Further discussion will centre on consumerism and ethical shopping.</p>	<p><i>Is Lying Wrong?</i></p> <p>Using examples, students will discuss what makes lying morally wrong and whether lying is wrong under all circumstances. Students will also examine the broader societal effects of lying.</p>	<p><i>Only two topics in Term 1</i></p>
Term 2	<p><i>Persuading - or getting someone to do something</i></p> <p>Students will examine the difference between persuasion based on reason, emotion, desire, peer pressure and societal expectations. They will then discuss moral issues around dishonest advertising and irrational persuasion.</p>	<p><i>Being an ethical consumer: palm oil and orang-utans</i></p> <p>Using a case study from Borneo, children will examine the issues around being an informed and ethical consumer.</p>	<p><i>Getting Even</i></p> <p>Students are encouraged to think for themselves about when, if ever, getting even is the right thing to do.</p>

Term 3	<p><i>Intention: 'I didn't mean to do it!'</i></p> <p>I didn't <i>mean</i> to do it! What do we mean when we say this? Students will examine the relationship between intention and blame.</p>	<p><i>Puzzles, clues and what follows: Introduction to validity</i></p> <p>Students will exercise their intuitive notions of validity and hidden premises by discussing a range of applicable scenarios.</p>	<p><i>Insides and outsides: Beauty and blindness</i></p> <p>What makes someone beautiful?</p> <p>Beauty on the inside vs. beauty on the outside - is one more important than the other?</p>
Term 4	<p><i>Induction</i></p> <p>Can we prove general claims true or false? How reliable is observation?</p>	<p><i>Reasoning and truth</i></p> <p>What makes a good reason? Focus on truth of premise.</p>	<p><i>Kindness and generosity</i></p> <p>What is it to be kind?</p> <p>What is it to be generous?</p> <p>Must we be kind and generous to everyone?</p>

Stage 3.1 (Years 5-6)	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3
Term 1	<p><i>Voting - an ethical issue?</i></p> <p>Students will explore what issues determine how we vote in school and government elections - and whether we should vote solely on the basis of self-interest.</p>	<p><i>Punishment</i></p> <p>Students will examine issues around punishment, leading to the final question, 'Can punishment be fair?'</p>	<p><i>Only two topics in Term 1</i></p>

<p>Term 2</p>	<p><i>Being Vain</i></p> <p>Students are encouraged to think about what it is to be vain and what, if anything is wrong with being vain.</p>	<p><i>Structure of Arguments</i></p> <p>Students will examine all aspects of arguments including premises, hidden premises, conclusions and what makes good and bad arguments.</p>	<p><i>How far does our moral responsibility extend?</i></p> <p>Using age-appropriate scenarios, students will examine the issue of how far moral responsibility should or does extend.</p>
<p>Term 3</p>	<p><i>Stealing is illegal. Is it also morally wrong?</i></p> <p>Through discussion of various scenarios, students will consider whether stealing is morally wrong in all circumstances.</p>	<p><i>Jumping to conclusions</i></p> <p>Students are encouraged to think about the logic of moral arguments, and more particularly, about the logical rules governing the use of sentences beginning with 'All' and 'Only', and to identify situations in which reasoning with such sentences goes wrong.</p>	<p><i>Homelessness</i></p> <p>Do we, as individuals and as a society, have a responsibility to help those who are homeless?</p>
<p>Term 4</p>	<p><i>Killing animals for food: Is it morally right to eat animals?</i></p> <p>Using the yes/no/don't know approach, students will state their initial opinions and reasons, which will be followed by whole class evaluation of the arguments.</p>	<p><i>Spirits, rhino horns, big bangs and genes: Why should we trust science?</i></p> <p>Students will examine false beliefs that matter and the use of theories (everyday and scientific) as explanations. They will then look at the issues of choosing between competing theories.</p>	<p><i>Fairness: treating people equally or unequally?</i></p> <p>Is it fair to treat people (or groups of people) equally? Why or why not? Is it ever fair to treat people (or groups) unequally? Why or why not?</p>

Stage 3.2 (Years 5-6)	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3
Term 1	<p><i>A fair society?</i></p> <p>Students will use <i>The Outsiders</i> story to consider issues of fairness in society.</p>	<p><i>Human Rights: do other animals have them?</i></p> <p>Human rights: where do rights come from and how are they justified? What obligations do they impose on governments and individuals? To what extent, if any, should human rights be extended to other living creatures?</p>	<p><i>Only two topics in Term 1</i></p>
Term 2	<p><i>Fatalism</i></p> <p>Are our futures and fates fixed? Does what we do today have any effect on what happens in the future?</p>	<p><i>Beliefs, Opinions, Tolerance and Respect</i></p> <p>What does it mean to respect another person's beliefs or opinions? Should we always respect the beliefs of others? To what extent should we be tolerant of moral difference?</p>	<p><i>Moral responsibility</i></p> <p>To what extent can we be held morally responsible for our actions? What might it mean for society if it turned out that even our conscious decisions were determined in advance?</p>
Term 3	<p><i>Drugs in Sport</i></p> <p>Performance enhancing drugs are banned in all sports. Students will discuss the concept of unfair advantage and whether the taking of performance</p>	<p><i>Appeal to Authority - Revisited</i></p> <p>To what extent do we still appeal unquestioningly to authorities in our everyday lives? What are the consequences of thinking and acting for one's self?</p>	<p><i>Only 2 topics in Term 3</i></p>

	enhancing drugs is morally wrong.	Students will look at examples of groups that have refused to follow blindly.	
Term 4	<p><i>Are some things just wrong?</i></p> <p>Different cultures have different moral codes. What underlies these differences and is there an independent way to judge the moral values of other cultures?</p>	<p><i>Teasing</i></p> <p>What's the difference between harmless and harmful teasing? Is teasing ever OK?</p>	<i>Only 2 topics in Term 4</i>