



The Sponsor a Child's Education Program Information Sheet

Aim of the Program

The aim of The John Berne School's Sponsor a Child's Education Program is to generate funding assistance to cover tuition fees for students attending the school.

What is The John Berne School?

The John Berne School was established in 1998 as the Berne Education Centre to provide a positive education option for students in Years 7–10 whose education is at risk. Berne is for students who are behaviour disordered, school refusers, or who are not coping with traditional schools, either academically or emotionally. If not for an opportunity to attend a school like Berne, realistically these students will not achieve their School Certificate (Year 10) and will find it very difficult to enter the workplace, or achieve milestones recognised by the larger community.

The school aims to have 40 enrolled students most of the time and employs 20 professional staff. This high student to staff ratio is essential to the success of the program.

The John Berne School is specifically for students who need time out to improve their literacy, numeracy, and social skills in a flexible learning environment. Students are given more individual attention than in traditional schools, and are actively encouraged to move beyond what holds them back.

Who is the program helping?

The target group of The John Berne School is young people unable to complete their high schooling in a traditional school setting.

Many of the students at Berne have diagnosed behaviour and other mental health disorders. The practical programs in place at Berne aim to re-engage these students in learning and keep them at school, rather than allow them to opt out of formal education in favour of attempting to join the workforce with a qualification less than their School Certificate. The problems associated with young, unqualified and unemployed people are well known within our community, and the process of keeping these students in a structured environment has a recognised positive impact on the community.

A snapshot of Berne

- Nine of the 44 students enrolled at the end of 2006 were diagnosed with depression and anxiety.
- Some of these students have made repeated suicide attempts.
- Four students at Berne have been diagnosed with other psychiatric disorders including early schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, conduct disorder, or obsessive compulsive disorder.



- 16 of the 44 students have been diagnosed with oppositional defiance disorder.
- Seven students are mildly intellectually disabled.
- All of Berne's students have a history of school failure.
- 32 of the 44 students do not have the literacy levels needed to access the school curriculum.
- Some of our students have failed in up to six primary and secondary schools.
- Young people with these backgrounds are more prone to drug and alcohol abuse and crime, and are at risk of poorer personal outcomes and poorer potential earnings.
- All young people need adults in their lives. At Berne today, 30 of our students have problems with their fathers, 22 come from separated families, and more than a third are boys living only with their mothers.

How does the school operate financially?

Operating as an independent Catholic (Marist) school, Berne receives normal school funding from the Government. In addition, the school relies on generous financial contributions of families and community groups, made sporadically throughout the year. Operating as a true non-profit organisation, the end of year financial statements typically show a substantial deficit.

The school also levies a moderate annual tuition fee for each student, but would never turn away a family in genuine need of the unique style of education and support that Berne offers. The school also recognises that family circumstances change frequently, as does the financial ability of some families to pay tuition costs throughout the entire year.

Many students attending Berne are living in circumstances less than ideal and often their home situations contribute to the challenges they face in undertaking their schooling in a more traditional setting. The high student to staff ratio already mentioned is considered the single most important reason for the success of the school, and salaries, therefore are the largest component of Berne's operating costs.

What does sponsoring this program involve?

It costs around \$30,000 per annum to educate a student at Berne for one year. Each year, students' families are asked to contribute \$3,000 towards this cost.

Contributions towards sponsoring a student's education can be made at different levels:

Gold: Donation to cover complete education cost for one student for one year—\$30,000.

Silver: Donation to cover education cost for one student for six months—\$15,000.

Bronze: Donation to cover family tuition fee for one student for one year—\$3,000.

Blue: Donation of \$1,000 towards family tuition fee.

Donations are tax deductible

The John Berne School is a registered charity, and as such all donations of \$2 and above are tax deductible. Copies of ATO documentation are available on request.



Further information

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