



Home Groups Lead Learner And Junior Lead Learner Manual

Why Home Groups?

Rationale

- Named Home Groups, the vertical tutoring program aims to create a sense of connectedness to the school and to each other where understanding of learning and wellbeing is enhanced.
- The program is built on student strengths, building resilience and capability for optimal learning where the holistic nature of the program allows for the student to achieve personal best in a variety of ways.
- Each H/G has a pattern and structure where the teacher is the facilitator of the program, named Home Group Teacher, and senior students are leaders of activities.
- The three dimensions of the program are:

1. **Talking Tuesday** - Learning Conversations/peer tutoring/Teacher interviews/discussions with small groups.

- As per the program, teachers will focus on a set group and carry out Learning conversations.

- Other students in the H/G will conduct peer tutoring or focus on some reflective writing.

2. **Thoughtful Thursday** - Local Conversations – Discussions about issues of relevance to students – ‘Living in the present’, ‘Whats going on? maybe something that is happening in the community!’

- Should be organised by either a Lead Learner, Junior Lead Learner or H/G member. This should be pre-arranged.

3. **Fun Friday** - Celebrating the Spirit /relationships – should be organised by L/L's and/or J/L/L's – you could also involve the house captains.

- Team building games

- houses

- strengths

- Expert teaching

- Gratitude

- Inter-H/G competitions

- All of these Friday activities need to be organised ahead of time – delegate the organisation so the same person is not always doing it.
- Talk to other groups – what are they doing?
- Consider moving locations – ‘fun in the sun’

Foundation

Learning and Relationships: Positive Psychology. It's the science of optimal functioning ... all strategies are firmly grounded in empirical research (it leans heavily on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and Humanistic Psychology).

The fundamentals of Positive Psychology:

1. Practising gratitude and positive thinking
2. Investing in social connections
3. Managing stress, hardship and trauma
4. Living in the present
5. Committing to your goals
6. Taking care of your body and your soul
7. Identifying and maximising character strengths

Learning dimension: Current educational research, evidence and thinking is the foundation including learning intention, criteria for success, developing a common language of learning and the capacity to take responsibility of individual learning. Learning activities take place while the teacher and student engage in a Learning Conversation.

School Values:

Integrity Excellence Spirit Opportunity Diversity

Roles and Responsibilities

Home Group Teacher

- To be responsible for the student group.
- To know the program and its resources well.
- To deliver the program in partnership with the Lead Learner.
- To evaluate the program.
- To communicate with the appropriate staff according to Home Groups structure

Lead Learner

- Have close knowledge of the program and its resources.
- Be responsible for the leadership of the students in Home Groups when required.
- Lead in the delivery of the program when required.
- Work with the Junior Lead Learner.

Junior Lead Learner

- Learn from the Lead Learner, taking some responsibility for the leadership of the students in Home Groups.

House/Mentor Captains

- As an integral part of the Home Group program and leadership in the school, House/Mentor Captains lead their houses to foster students' connectedness to their home group, house and school by creating, organising and implementing activities within their house and the school. The aims are to increase house spirit, enhance participation and engender belonging in a fun way at both annual events such as sporting carnivals and other events linked to Home Groups and the life of the school.

Roles:

To be role models to all students.

To encourage participation in house and school activities.

To organise and run house meetings.

To create, organise and implement activities and events.

To lead their own house in partnership with the other captain.

To work as a team with other captains.

To work with Lead Learners and support them in their running of Home Group activities, lessons, games and events.

Year Advisers

As all Year Advisers will have a thorough knowledge of the Home Group program, they will:

- work collaboratively as part of a team to communicate and support the program, teachers, leaders and students.
- be accessible to all students and teachers either through written reporting or through moving between the various Home Groups.
- respond to the referral forms from the Home Group teachers, to support students of concern.
- initiate learning conversations with their year group through year meetings in allocated weeks each term and during Home Groups visits.
- communicate to the relevant Home Groups teachers and Lead Learners re students of concern.

Learning Conversations

A learning conversation is a highly focussed dialogue between student and teacher designed to help the student expand his/her capacity for learning. The Learning Conversation focuses attention not only on learning and mastering content, behaviours and skills but on the process of learning itself – on meta-learning.

Working in partnership the teacher helps the student clarify and refine goals and performance outcomes and recognise and design flexible and adaptive learning strategies to enhance learning. Powerful questions encourage reflection and the development of an inner dialogue that replaces negative self-talk with open-minded observation and encouragement.

The Learning Conversation:

- Supports reflection-in-action.
- Clarifies and continually refines purposes and goals.
- Facilitates alignment of goals and performance outcomes.
- Encourages relevant and effective self-assessment strategies.
- Reveals habitual ineffective learning strategies.
- Eliminates obstacles to learning.
- Improves quality of feedback.

Focus Questions

The focus questions are designed to facilitate the learning conversations and may be used in a number of ways. They have been organised in topic areas in relation to aspects of learning and not in any order of priority. There is no expectation to address a particular number during a learning conversation.

The teacher will use professional judgement regarding which questions suit the student and context. In some cases, one question may be enough to generate a productive learning conversation, while other students may need further encouragement with particular emphasis in a certain area. A teacher may also decide to give a student a few relevant questions to contemplate or act on following a learning conversation.

The goals of the questions are to foster dialogue and offer specific and diagnostic pathways to improve learning.

Strengths

What are your strengths?
How can you identify your strengths?
What are your biggest or best achievements in school?
Why are you proud of it and why do you think you achieved this?
Have you learnt anything interesting this week?
Has anything you learnt in one subject helped you in another?
Where do your strengths help you?

Improvement

What subjects are you finding difficult?
Are you having any other difficulties at school?
If you could change one element about your learning/classroom experience, what would it be?
Where can you seek help?
Do you understand the outcomes for each lesson/activity/task/test/exam?

Goals

What are your ambitions/dreams/hope for today/this week/month/term/semester year/next few years/after school?
How far into the future do you think or plan?
To what extent do you make plans to help you achieve your goals?
Do you write your goals down?
What can you do to achieve your goals?
How well have you achieved goals before?
What helped you achieve your goals?
What hindered your achievement of your goals?
How do your strengths help you achieve goals? (Today/this week/month etc.)?

Organisation

What activities do you do every week? How can you manage these with your study?
How do you prepare for an assessment task?
How are your commitments outside of school supporting/impeding your learning?
How do you prioritise?
How does your organisation impact on your learning?
How much responsibility do you take to organise yourself?
What role do parents/caregivers/teachers have in organisation for you?

Assessment and Exams

Do you understand the outcomes of the task?
What are you meant to be learning by doing this task?
What aspects of your learning does the task address or require you to use?
How can you best show your learning?
What do you have to do? What are the task requirements?
What are the marking criteria? Do you understand them?
How can you meet the requirements of the task?
What are the key words of the task?
What are the steps you will need to take to complete the task on time and to the best of your ability?
How will you manage your time?
What stops you from starting a task?
What stops you from finishing a task or doing so to the best of your ability?
What distracts you from your task?
What can you do to limit the impact of distractions?
How can you apply the feedback from a previous task to this task?
How will you prepare for the task?

Progress

How do you think you are going?

How do you know how you are performing in a subject?

How do you make sure you understand the content of a lesson?

What questions do you ask in class? To whom? What type of questions?

What ensures you learn the lesson's content?

Do you prefer to work individually or in groups? Why?

In what ways do you seek others' views or perspectives on your work?

How does the teacher deliver content? How does this work for you?

What are the indicators for your progress? How do you know you have learnt something?

What is the most surprising/interesting/relevant thing you have learnt this week?

Reports

What do you think about your report?

What does the report identify as strengths?

What are the areas of improvement?

What goals can you set as a result of your report?

In what ways did the report meet your expectations?

To what degree does it reflect your own views of your learning, effort, attitude, behaviour, progress?

What parts of the report do you most value? Why?

What aspects of your learning are not in the report?

What is the response of your parents/caregivers to your report? What impact does this have on you and your learning?

Handy Hints for Lead Learners

HOW TO BE A GREAT MENTOR.

- **Be credible** – prepare for your H/G session – research your topic, be prepared.
- **Be a positive role model** – A member of your H/G can learn a lot from watching you – they will learn to respect you if you behave in an acceptable way.
- **Be genuinely interested in your group members as individuals.** – get to know each person in your group so that you can relate to them – chose issues to discuss that they are interested in.
- **Share your experiences & insights** – Share your experiences in an appropriate way, share your mistakes and failures too – maybe you can share challenges so that other group members can learn how to overcome these same challenges.
- **Ask open questions** – this can help you to identify real needs, values and passions in your H/G members. This is a great way to get your members to think through situations and draw out the consequences of the various choices or courses of action they can take.
- **Act as a sounding board** – everyone needs someone to listen to them. It helps others to unravel their thinking and gain insights about a situation.
- **Provide a fresh perspective** – Often you will have a fresh perspective about an issue. Your idea may help the group member to look at themselves in a different light such as seeing their behaviour from the eyes of someone else.
- **Provide helpful feedback** – If a group member tells you something and asks for advice and you are not sure how to go about the answer, ask the teacher or Year Adviser for help. Be careful not to give unwelcome or incorrect feedback.
- **Acknowledge Achievements** – Always try to highlight achievements a person may have earned. This can help build their confidence – celebrating successes can help you too.

- **Offer your advice if someone asks for it.** – Listen –help them to think through the situation –help them work it out BUT don't give them your answers. This is how you can help people learn to think for themselves and learn to trust their own judgement – these are very valuable life skills.

Tips for Encouraging Participation:

- Shy students in home groups are often that way because they do not like talking in groups; approach them individually and get to know them
- Uncooperative students can be forced to cooperate with the aid of some of your fellow home group members
- Create a question box and leave it in your home group room
- Multiple Home Groups meet-Up
- Speed Dating
- Have inter-year sub-groups within your home groups which will promote year integration and can result in the shier kids speaking up in the smaller groups
- Let Junior Lead Learners have a turn at teaching
- Spend a lesson creating a home group noticeboard so that everyone in your home group knows what is going on
- Minimise teacher input and allow Lead Learners to take over which will promote student enthusiasm. Have teacher there as a supervisor only.
- **GAMES/ACTIVITIES**
 - Heads-Down Thumbs-Up
 - Scissors-Paper-Rock(-Lizard-Spock)-Off
 - Celebrity Heads
 - Hangman
 - Charades
 - Silent Ball
 - Bang

Discussion Starters:

(Use these if you run out of ideas)

- Things of the Week
 - Word of the Week
 - Riddle of the Week
 - Pun of the Week
 - Joke of the Week
 - Quote of the Week
- **Topics:**
 - Gay marriage
 - IVF and Assisted Reproduction
 - Asylum Seekers
 - Gender equality
 - Animal testing
 - Legal driving ages
 - Legal drinking ages
 - Internet anonymity
 - Music tastes

- Movie reviews
- TV Shows
- Current political and/or social issues/events
- Sports
- Upcoming exams
- Controversial issues/questions
- Teenage drinking
- Current affairs
- Euthanasia/Assisted suicide
- Internet addiction
- Cyber-bullying
- Bullying
- Mobile phone etiquette
- Video games
- Video game addiction
- Racism
- Social networks and associated issues
- Smoking
- Drinking
- Drug/substance abuse
- Legalisation of drugs for recreational purposes (e.g. marijuana)
- Obesity
- Teen depression
- Cheating in exams
- Poverty
- Treatment of people in aged care facilities
- Is age just a number?
- Self-harm
- Societal sub-cultures
- Terrorism
- Post-9/11 America
- Drug smuggling
- People smuggling
- World Wars
- Slavery
- Kony 2012
- Julia Gillard
- Should Australia remain a part of the British Commonwealth?
- Women in contact sports
- Gay rights
- School shootings
- Nature Vs. Nurture Debate
- Barack Obama
- Religion and religious beliefs
- The End of the World