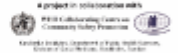




# Safe School Accreditation



At a 'magnificent' celebration on the 11th August, Woodend School received formal accreditation as Australasia's first designated Safe School. Principal Graeme Barber says the night was an amazing experience, with around 1000 people attending - including all the students and their families, invited dignitaries and guests from around New Zealand.



The school's head boy, Matthew Price and head girl, Brittany Farrant delivered a power point presentation, explaining the school's journey to accreditation. Each of the school's three syndicates presented safety items to the gathering. "We had a lot of comments of how great it was to see the kids living and expressing the safety message we have adopted - and how emotionally secure and happy they seemed which is very important to us."

The Safe School concept is fostered and promoted by the WHO Safe Community Network [www.phs.ki.se/csp](http://www.phs.ki.se/csp) SCFNZ is an Accrediting Centre for Safe School Community International Accreditation Programme ([www.safeschoolciap.org](http://www.safeschoolciap.org)). Dr Carolyn Coggan of SCFNZ led the formal accreditation ceremony, and was joined by speakers Mayor Jim Gerard, Waimakariri MP Clayton Cosgrove and ACC General Manager, Injury Prevention Darrin Goulding in congratulating Woodend School on their exceptional efforts.



Woodend School has had a remarkable turnaround from 2001 when the school embarked on its safety upgrade - after serious concerns were raised about the emotional and physical well being of its students. There were problems with children at risk crossing the Main North Road, being bullied by others, or in danger of being injured by unsafe playground equipment or behaviour.



Scenes from the accreditation event



"Both staff and parents were expressing concern, so we decided to develop a model that looked at both the emotional and physical safety of our students. We started by gathering data to identify the needs, and then talked to parents, staff and students to narrow down what the real issues were. We then started to methodically work our way through making changes," says Mr. Barber.

The school began working with a number of organisations with a focus around injury prevention, emotional safety, anti-bullying and road safety to develop an integrated approach to safety within the school. Pupils too were heavily involved in driving the changes.



These included moving the designated safe crossing point, painting flush medians, cycle lanes and a no parking area. In the classroom, students set

learning goals. They also designed a new playground and established rules for its use as well as doing playground duty to identify and reward safe play. As a result, rough play and unintentional injuries have been reduced by 50%.



With the help of SCFNZ, the school applied to the Safe Schools Movement to become a designated Safe School. Dr Carolyn Coggan director of SCFNZ says, "This school is an excellent example of how a community development approach within a school setting can improve safety for staff, students & the wider community. It is also important to recognise that the school is in one of New Zealand's accredited Safe Communities, Waimakariri, a member of the WHO Safe Community Network and the local council deserves to be acknowledged for that".

"In their application Woodend School describes how over 19 programmes have resulted in improvements to the health & safety of students & staff. Woodend School has certainly raised the bar for schools worldwide which are looking for accreditation," she said.

Mr. Barber said. "Providing the best possible learning experience for every child in a safe physical and emotional environment was always the goal of the safety programme. The accolades the school has received following its achievements has been an 'amazing spin-off'.



There is a real sense of participation, ownership and pride around learning with the safe environment that exists in and around the school. The school will continue its journey by regularly reviewing and improving all its policies, programmes and practices".

In 2005, Woodend School (Waimakariri District Council) also gained national recognition winning both the 'Strengthening Community' category and the Supreme Award for their work in achieving the status for designation as a Safe School at the National Local Authority Community Development Awards. These awards are designed to recognise and celebrate the contribution of local authorities and government agencies to enhance the wellbeing of communities.



Judges were particularly impressed, as they described the process that the school followed towards achieving the first Safe School status in New Zealand and recognised that this was an "outstanding example" of community development.

They also recognized that:

"it is a credit to Principal Graeme Barber for his leadership in the school, together with the commitment that the whole school demonstrates to safety, that makes Woodend an exceptional example to other schools both nationally and internationally".

This community development approach is in line with the goals of the New Zealand Injury Prevention Strategy (NZIPS) of developing safe environments and a positive safety culture. Mr. Graeme Barber has now been appointed as Educational Advisor to the Safe School Community International Accreditation Programme.

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**Safe Communities Foundation New Zealand (SCFNZ)**

Hurstmere House, Suite 5A, 128 Hurstmere Road, Takapuna, PO Box 331399, Takapuna, North Shore 0740, New Zealand.

Tel: +64 9 488 7601 Fax: +64 9 488 7602 Email: [contact@scfnz.org](mailto:contact@scfnz.org) Web: [www.safecommunities.org.nz](http://www.safecommunities.org.nz)

SCFNZ is a: Certifying Centre and

Affiliate Safe Community Support Centre of the WHO Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion;

Accrediting Centre for Safe School Community International Designation Programme.

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