INDUCTION OF NEW STAFF

to LARGS BAY SCHOOLS

WHAT
Induction is the process by which staff new to a school are provided with opportunities to learn about key concepts and structures central to their work in the school. Smyth (et al, 1995) takes the view that induction, whilst it may encompass initiation of new or experienced staff into policies and routines of the school, is more broadly associated with introduction to the wider culture of the school. Moulton (1994) believes that induction is about “personal and professional socialization”.

WHY
Staff begin their work in a new school with a particular work history. In addition, their comfort level about the change they have made, the new role they are being asked to perform in a new environment and their placement circumstances, all lead to a range of different induction needs for different individuals. Consequently, ownership of, and responsibility for induction of new staff needs to be shared by the individual and existing staff in the school. Staff members new to a school bring with them a range of personal and professional experiences, knowledge and skills. A responsive induction program enables them to use this to build on understanding of their new context.

The purpose of the induction program is to:
• inform new staff members about the existing structures and procedures within the Largs Bay Schools
• provide support to enable new staff to make a smooth transition to work at Largs Bay Schools
• decrease the level of unproductive stress experienced by staff new to the school while at the same time increasing their level of challenge, excitement and personal success
• enable staff new to the school to assume a high level of control over their learning and so build their confidence and self esteem
• assist staff members in establishing working relationships with their new colleagues and members of the Largs Bay Schools community.

HOW
The focus of an induction program in the early stages will be on meeting the individual's basic needs and assisting them in developing confidence and independence. The Induction process at Largs Bay Schools focuses on the following aspects:

Welcome
• a letter, welcoming them to Largs Bay Schools and inviting them to describe their induction needs so that a relevant program can be provided
• a personal telephone call, again welcoming them and seeking information about what they see as their key induction needs
• their visiting the school prior to the commencement of the new school year or prior to the commencement of their appointment.

Training
Training sessions where new staff can learn basic information about the school in as interactive a way as possible. During the Pupil Free days at the beginning of the school year new staff will be involved in sessions aimed at building knowledge of the school, its community and its teaching and learning program. For those staff members who begin part way through a term or at the beginning of terms 2, 3 or 4 alternative strategies will need to be considered (eg. weekend seminars, after hours sessions, cluster school sessions).

Documentation
Staff Handbook
A concise, up-to-date documentation of school policies, procedures and routines including names of all personnel, their responsibilities and location, school map, yard duty areas, site specific policies and procedures. This can be accessed in hardcopy or on computer / school intranet.
Site Learning Plan
This enables new staff to be aware of the school's immediate and long-term priorities for change.

School Policy Folder
This includes more detailed information about specific school policies and procedures.

Induction Checklists
New staff members are asked to complete an Induction Checklist that focuses mainly on OHS&W issues that are critical for them to know.

Buddy System
A Buddy System (or mentoring for beginning teachers), where a new teacher has opportunities to meet with, observe and/or co-teach with one or more established staff members is provided as a means of providing direct support when it is required. These arrangements will be in place until participants decide that induction needs have been met. A buddy (preferably located close by, and compatible with the new staff member) will be approached to help with the induction of new staff. Their role will include:
- conducting a tour of the school - formal and/or informal
- introductions to individuals and their role (eg. school service officers, members of school leadership team, visiting support professionals)
- providing specific information about school procedures utilising the skills and knowledge of key staff members (eg. Photocopying, locating equipment etc)
- providing specific information about school programs (student behaviour management policy and procedures, catering for students with special needs, Aboriginal Education, LO.T.E, N.I.T programs)

The buddy will have a good deal of knowledge about the school and its routines. In particular, the ability to listen, empathise, respond and link with other resources are important aspects of the role of the buddy.
A checklist is provided for Buddy staff members to guide them through the process.

Informal Support
Informal support from leadership will be provided so that the needs of the new staff member can be monitored (eg. visits to classes to see how things are going, occasional extra release time to pursue individual needs or catch up with workload, occasional after school chats over a cup of coffee etc.)

Reflection and Evaluation of the Needs of New Staff
Through regular meetings between the new staff member and their line manager issues are identified and addressed through problem solving, realistic goal setting and development of strategies for the implementation of plans (this is integrated into the regular Performance Management structures existing within the school).

Review and Evaluation of the Induction Program
A review of the induction is conducted at the end of Term One each school year, involving new staff members & the leadership team. Questions need to be addressed, such as:
- to what extent does the induction program meet the specific needs of all new staff?
- what particular issues weren't addressed and need to be in future?
- how might induction be made more responsive to the individual needs of new staff?
- how might the individual needs of new staff be more effectively assessed?
- what strategies could we make use of to ensure new staff make a smoother transition to our school?
- what resources do we need to access to make our induction program more effective?

Support for TRT’s
- A succinct one page TRT Induction document is provided for TRT’s. They are also asked to fill in an Induction Checklist for TRT’s on their first TRT day each year. A copy is kept on file.
- TRT Box - in a distinctive colour, one in each classroom across the school for easy identification. Information specific to the class is kept in this box, eg. attendance records, timetable, class program, information about students with special needs, custody requirements etc..
- Regular TRT’s are also given the opportunity to attend other training and development activities throughout the year, eg school pupil-free days.