

Tuesday, 3 May 2016

Kids Helpline @ School participation on the rise

The number of students participating in Kids Helpline @ School class link-ups with counsellors has jumped by almost a third compared to the same period last year, Kids Helpline revealed today.

More than 2,500 students have participated in the Kids Helpline @ School (KAS) program from January 1 to March 31 this year, a 29 per cent increase to the same period in 2015.

With funding support from Optus, the free KAS video link-up sessions are available nationally and are focussed on keeping children safe and enhancing the wellbeing of the next generation.

Kids Helpline counsellors talk with classes using video technology supported by specialised lesson resources aligned to the General Capabilities of the Australian Curriculum.

yourtown CEO Tracy Adams said the program had been highly successful with more than 33,000 students participating nationally since KAS began in 2013 and, most importantly, being helped by the experience.

"KAS is an important part of Kids Helpline's commitment to protect children and young people by providing intervention and education about key issues that affect them," Ms Adams said.

"Of those who participated in KAS last year, 89% of students surveyed said they had more ideas about how to deal with the issue discussed, and 87% said they would consider contacting Kids Helpline if they had a problem.

"91% of teachers told us the sessions improved their students' understanding of the topic, and 87% of teachers reported their own improved awareness of the issue."

KAS sessions include being a school leader, cyberbullying and bullying, staying safe online, coping with change at school, developing resilience, friendship, introduction to Kids Helpline and peer pressure.

So far this year staying safe online has been the most popular topic discussed. Of all sessions booked in 2015, developing resilience was the most popular topic with close to 3,500 participants taking part.

Optus Associate Director of Corporate Social Responsibility Helen Maisano said the feedback from schools demonstrated that the program was benefiting children who may not have otherwise known where to go for help.

"Optus is proud to be supporting the Kids Helpline @ School program. Online safety is an issue that is continuing to be a concern for children. It's great that KAS is helping kids learn more about how to stay safe, both in the schoolyard and when using technology," Ms Maisano said.

Any primary school in Australia can book a session via www.kidshelpline.com.au, phoning 07 3867 1284 or emailing school@kidshelpline.com.au

KHL gives children and young people choices, support and someone to listen. KHL is Australia's only national 24/7 counselling service specifically for children and young people aged 5 to 25 years – free call 1800 55 1800 or www.kidshelpline.com.au. Kids Helpline is a service of yourtown.

ENDS

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