

2015 NATIONAL PLAY YOUR PART AWARD FOR INSPIRING PREVENTION INITIATIVE

To: Kids Helpline and Optus

For: Kids Helpline @ School

The Kids Helpline @ School program enables primary school students to learn more than reading, writing and arithmetic at school. It aims to support them to increase their mental health literacy, digital citizenship and help-seeking behaviour to promote their safety and wellbeing.

Each year, Kids Helpline sees an increase in the number of 13 to 18 year-olds contacting the service in a crisis situation. **The Kids Helpline @ School (KAS) program aims to reduce the stigma of seeking help early on, proactively promoting early intervention and prevention to reduce the escalation of problems to crisis level.**

Kids Helpline @ School is an innovative partnership between Optus and Kids Helpline. It proudly supports the community in being the only free, national service which brings professional counsellors into primary school classrooms via video technology (or phone).

Primary school students are given the opportunity to talk about things that are concerning them in a safe, fun and engaging classroom environment, with easy to understand language.

Since June 2013, KAS has had over 21,000 participants from primary schools across Australia. Whilst the sessions do not offer individual counselling, students are encouraged to seek help from the Kids Helpline counselling service if they need to.

89% of students surveyed about the sessions said they now know where to go for help.

The program connects with primary schools from across Australia, including remote/rural and culturally/linguistically diverse communities.

Counsellors are aware that the student's location plays an important part in their feelings and concerns and work with teachers prior to each session to tailor topics that are relevant to the primary school's situation and requirements.

Topics include: cyber-bullying, transitioning to high school, friendships and feeling sad.

The Kids Helpline @ School program is an inspiring early intervention and prevention initiative that is focused on increasing the wellbeing and safety of children.
