

Understanding Your Child's Progress

It is important to understand that students will go through a number of stages as they progress through The Bidgee School program. Not all students will follow this pattern but it may be a useful guide in helping you understand where the student is up to in relation to their progress.

Stage 1: What a lovely young person!

- **The Honeymoon stage:** The student spends time checking out the group, the structure, the limits and personalities of the teachers. They watch to see who to avoid and who to join in with or intimidate. *The student normally conforms to classroom rules and routines during this stage.*

Stage 2: Trying our patients!

- **Limit Testing.** The student feels more comfortable and begins to test the classroom limits and consequences. It is important at this stage for the students to know who is in control and that consequences will follow each of their choices.
- **Active Resistance.** The most difficult and demanding stage. The student aims to destroy all attempts to make the program successful. Many students will try to 'split' staff and parents/caregivers. During this stage it is important not to overreact to the child, or believe everything the child tells you. Avoid being drawn into power struggles. *Behaviour may be extreme and irrational.*

Stage 3: Gaining many skills in behaviour.

- **Beginning Trust and Achievement.** The student begins to participate but not with any consistency. The defiant behaviour lessens and they begin to feel more comfortable.
- **Program Acceptance and Progress.** The student is more actively involved in the program and interested in learning. The level of participation in discussions and activities increases and *they appear much happier.*
- **Clear Academic and Social Improvement.** This is an enjoyable stage. The student feels more secure, confident and comfortable and begins to internalise these changes. *Re-integration is discussed with the returning school and parents/caregivers at this time.*

Stage 4: Re-integration. Saying 'goodbye'

- **Separation and Regression.** With increased time in mainstream class the student knows it will soon be time to leave the support school. *This may raise feelings of anger, anxiety and sadness causing regression in behaviour.* It is much easier for them to break away if they act as if they don't like the teachers and the setting.
- **The Expression of Genuine Feelings of Attachment and Sadness:** These are the final days when the student is settled in their new behaviour, though sad at leaving. It is time for staff and fellow students to say to their farewells.

When the student returns full time to regular schooling they are followed up by The Bidgee School Staff on a regular basis and as needed.