

Ajuga School

Mates Puzzles program

School information



Ajuga School is a K-12 school for students with a complex trauma history and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder. Ajuga School strives to create curious students by providing an individualised approach to learning, enabling each student to reach their unique social, emotional and physical needs in order to engage in quality education.

Mates Puzzles project



Mates Puzzles is integral to the Ajuga School program. During its initial inception, every staff member and student were provided with a large puzzle piece on which they designed and then created a visual representation of their story, where they have come from, who they are today and who they might want to be into the future.

On completion, each individual puzzle piece is added to a larger collective art installation mounted on the Ajuga school entrance wall, showcasing how each member of the school comes together and symbolising belonging. When staff and students move on from Ajuga School, they have the option of taking their puzzle piece with them as part of their farewell celebration.

The program is facilitated by Aunty Danielle Mate Sullivan and endorsed by the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group.

Challenges and solutions



Ajuga School is a setting that invests in relationships and provides space and time to create, sustain and repair connections with others.

Due to the student complex trauma history, making and maintaining positive connections can be difficult. Completing Mates Puzzles has brought the school community together by breaking down barriers, sharing of stories and building pride and confidence.

Whilst our students commence Ajuga School with a history of complex trauma and/or Autism, this does not define who they are and we move forward with our students, developing new skills and competencies to be life long, curious learners.



Staff Mates Puzzles