

Building life skills

By Jade Jungwirth - 10/10/2023



Castlemaine Secondary College students are enjoying taking part in their weekly exercise sessions as part of Blue EDGE. Photo Jade Jungwirth.

Year seven, eight and nine students from Castlemaine Secondary College have begun a 16-week program combining physical training, mentoring and life skills for teenagers.

The Blue EDGE (Educate, Develop, Grow, Empower) program, run by Blue Light Victoria in partnership with Victoria Police, includes team building activities, sharing a meal and workshop discussions around issues affecting teenagers.

Participants include a mixture of young people who have been identified as vulnerable or at risk of disengaging; teenagers who have shown an interest in sports or emergency services; and those who display leadership qualities.

First Constable Ben Whitty from Castlemaine Police said the program was great way to interact with the school.

"The kids are able to form friendships and increase their fitness," Ben said.

"We're able to encourage conversations and engage in open communications with the students."

Chilli, a Blue Edge participant, told the *Express* that the class usually began with indoor or outdoor exercise, followed by a discussion over breakfast.

"They might ask a question like, 'if you know your friend has been shoplifting, what do you do?' things like that," Chilli said.

Blue Light Victoria facilitator Angie Lane, who began working as a Blue EDGE facilitator earlier this year, loves the proactive nature of the program.

"We know we are making a difference and that's pretty special," Angie said.

"The police are incredibly passionate and the students really enjoy getting to know them as people.

"I come from a policing family and have a teaching and welfare background, so the opportunity to be involved in something this proactive and positive is very close to my heart."
