



Catholic Education
Diocese of Rockhampton

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework

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Scope: The purpose of this document is to articulate to Catholic Education – Diocese of Rockhampton (CEDR) staff, parents, students, education partners and the wider community – the structures, commitment, staffing and policy regarding Mental Health and Wellbeing.

Foreword

The mental health and wellbeing of Catholic Education – Diocese of Rockhampton (CEDR) is strongly grounded in Catholic Christian beliefs and values.

CEDR promotes a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing that supports the safety of all students.

Mental Health and Wellbeing is defined as “a state in which every individual realises his or her potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her community” (WHO, 2014).

CEDR prioritises schools working together with students, families and their communities to:

- support health and wellbeing
- build an inclusive, safe and connected school culture
- empower authentic student participation
- improve educational outcomes of students.

“The wellbeing and learning outcomes of young people are enhanced when they feel connected to others and experience safe, trusting relationships.” (Education Council, 2018)

Mental health is a way of describing social and emotional wellbeing. Good mental health is central to a child’s healthy development. It is associated with feeling happy and positive about oneself and enjoying life; healthy relationships with family and friends; participation in physical activity and eating a healthy diet; the ability to relax and to get a good night’s sleep; and, community participation and belonging. We need good mental health to build strong friendships/relationships, adapt to change and deal with life’s challenges (headspace National, 2016).



Wellbeing relates to the whole person and the interconnectedness of physical, cognitive, cultural, spiritual, social/emotional and psychological/personal dimensions within the person. Placing the child at the centre of our practice enables schools to build the wellbeing of students in all learning environments. Schools support student wellbeing by focusing on Catholic values, creating a safe environment which fosters connection, belonging and help-seeking. An inclusive school culture with an emphasis on combining wellbeing and learning allows for optimal student development. Schools in partnership with families will equip students to be active and empowering participants in their community. Student wellbeing is enhanced when schools collaborate and link with the expertise, support and perspective of their communities. Community engagement strengthens how students connect, belong and learn.

Student *Mental Health* & *Wellbeing* Framework





Physical

- The Physical Domain includes nutrition, physical movement, sleep hygiene, preventative health care and personal safety.



Cognitive

- The Cognitive Domain focuses on growth and learning by incorporating executive functioning, insight, reasoning, planning and creative thinking.



Social/ Emotional

- The Social/ Emotional Domain involves positive relationships, social stability, self-awareness, emotional regulation and a sense of connectedness to others. This includes pro social behaviour, social problem solving, empathy towards others, resilience, emotional literacy and the capacity for self-reflection and help seeking.



Spiritual

- The Spiritual Domain includes beliefs, values, morals and ethics, as well as a sense of meaning and purpose. Feeling connected with a power greater than oneself through religion, country, culture or community can provide hope and support a sense of peace.



Cultural

- The Cultural Domain includes strength in relationship, kinship and partnership with community, freedom from discrimination, promotion of language and traditions, spiritual beliefs, customary law and a clear connection to land, people and country.



Psychological/ Personal

- The Psychological/Personal Domain incorporates both feeling good and functioning well. Personal development, nurturing students' interests or talent, engagement, motivation and persistence to achieve, can assist with building a sense of self and autonomy.



Introduction

Learning and wellbeing are inextricably linked. Students learn best when their wellbeing is optimised, and they develop a strong sense of wellbeing when they experience success in learning.

The Educational Declaration Council (Mparntwe) highlights the importance for all young Australians to become confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners, and active and informed members of the community. This includes having a sense of self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity that enables them to manage their emotional, mental, cultural, spiritual and physical wellbeing.

The CEDR [Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy](#) supports school Leadership teams to prioritise and ensure systems are in place to promote mental health and wellbeing for all in the school community.

It is important to create a positive school culture and embed student wellbeing in all aspects of school life through connecting: the learning environment, curriculum and pedagogy, spiritual development, policies, procedures and partnerships.

This framework affirms children's rights to education, safety and wellbeing under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It emphasises the importance of students having genuine opportunities to contribute their voices to decision-making over matters that affect them.

This framework also aligns with the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework as they are both grounded in evidence that demonstrates the strong association between safety, wellbeing and learning. The four elements within this framework are closely linked to the five focus areas within the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework.

Schools are expected to demonstrate an explicit commitment to wellbeing and to communicate this pledge to their school community.

Elements of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework

Catholic Ethos and Learning Environment

CEDR schools and colleges promote the message of Belonging, Connecting, Learning. See CEDR [Teaching and Learning Framework](#).



Through the Teaching and Learning Framework learners are assisted to:

- Understand that they are loved by God
- Know that they belong to a hope-filled community of faith
- Actively seek life-giving relationships.

Each school's Teaching and Learning Framework establishes the Who and Why, the What, and the How of the learning environment. This helps to create a positive school culture and embed student wellbeing in schools.

Trauma aware frameworks represent a holistic approach to shaping school culture, practices and policies to be sensitive to the experiences and needs of traumatised individuals. These approaches focus on embedding the underpinning premise of consistent, relationally-based and predictable structures that provide the foundation of safety and wellbeing.



A safe learning environment covers the physical and online environments students engage in for school activities. Schools develop rules and consequences in collaboration with their school community. Schools provide rich learning environments that are open, respectful, caring and safe. This can positively influence an individual's mental health by building their sense of self and allowing social relationships to develop.

“Young people are not meant to become discouraged; they are meant to dream great things, to seek vast horizons, to aim higher, to take on the world, to accept challenges and to offer the best of themselves to the building of something better. That is why I constantly urge young people not to let themselves be robbed of hope.” (Pope Francis, 2019)

Curriculum

Children can be taught how to manage their emotions, to bounce back from problems, and to develop positive relationships. This is called social and emotional learning.

Families are children’s first educators. They play a primary role in fostering children and young people’s mental health (Be You, 2018).

Schools continue to add to this foundation of wellbeing and lifelong learning through curriculum. In the Australian Curriculum, students develop [personal and social capability](#) which encompass students’ personal/emotional and social/relational dispositions, intelligences, sensibilities and learning. Four key ideas of personal and social capability are self-management, self-awareness, social management and social awareness. Each of these are addressed in all learning areas at every stage of learning (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2019).

CEDR also includes [Personal and Social Development Education](#) which facilitates learning experiences that incorporate a “synthesis of culture and faith, and of faith and life” (The Catholic School, n. 37) to further enhance the development of these capabilities and support student wellbeing.

Explicitly teaching and modelling social and emotional skills related to personal safety, resilience, help-seeking and social problem solving is important for student wellbeing. Furthermore, providing clear values and expectations for behaviour also supports wellbeing. Schools prioritise mental health and wellbeing by providing learning opportunities and environments that promote healthy lifestyle choices and positive relationships.

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework



Empower and Support

There are five key areas in empowering and supporting students' mental health and wellbeing:

1. Mental health promotion (e.g. reduce stigma, create awareness, mentally healthy communities)
2. Mental illness prevention (e.g. learning resilience, reducing risk factors and enhancing protective factors)
3. Early intervention (identify early signs and symptoms and seeking help as early as possible, clear referral pathways)
4. Critical incident response (including death of school community member, natural disaster)
5. Family and clinical care provider partnerships (responding together).

Through their professional roles, school staff empower and support students' mental health and wellbeing by working in collaboration with parents, clinical care providers and specialist mental health services, to ensure school participation and wrap around care. Responding together ensures a holistic and consistent approach. It is an integral component of care planning for students requiring clinical intervention, as well as ensuring school is a supportive, safe and engaging place for all (Department of Education, 2018).

Schools demonstrate support for students through planning and documenting school processes which assist staff in responding appropriately to students at risk.

CEDR also acknowledges the benefits of building the capacity of staff to support a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing and empower authentic student participation. In supporting staff mental health and wellbeing, CEDR in turn recognises the advantages for students (Australian Government, 2018).

“Mentally healthy children and young people cope better with life challenges, tend to get along better with others and are more open to learning. Promoting mental health and wellbeing and preventing mental health conditions therefore has here-and-now, and lifelong benefits.” (Australian Government, 2018)



Partnerships

There is no single approach to address mental health and wellbeing. Responsibility for ensuring student wellbeing does not rest with one system.

Schools can unite all the people who influence children's mental health most: families, school staff, students and the wider community. Collaborating, connecting and authentically engaging with families is critical to positively impacting student wellbeing.

Respectful relationships enhance wellbeing. Building trust and care will empower and engage students and their families to learn, connect and belong. These relationships are demonstrated through genuine interactions that provide inclusion and support. They are important because they help us enhance student capacity to build their own caring and respectful relationships.

The quality of respectful and supportive relationships a student forms with adults within their learning environments is a key determinant of a student's motivation and capacity to engage with their school and their learning.

Schools also engage with a range of other services, resources and initiatives to support the health and wellbeing of all. For example:

Key Initiatives and Frameworks:

- Be You– Mental health and wellbeing resources and framework
“...Be You, a national initiative for educators, aimed at promoting and protecting positive mental health in children and young people. Our vision is for an education system in which every learning community is positive, inclusive and resilient, and where every child, young person, staff member, and family can achieve their best possible mental health.”
<https://beyou.edu.au/getting-started>
- Australian Student Wellbeing Hub and Australian Student Wellbeing Framework:
The resources available on the Student Wellbeing Hub help to create learning communities that promote student wellbeing and the development of respectful relationships. The Hub is underpinned by the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework which highlights the importance of educators, parents and students working together. We can make a difference, starting now.
<https://www.studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/>
- Qld Health Ed-LinQ Initiative:
Ed-LinQ is a cross sector initiative that supports schools to identify and access support for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties or who are showing signs of an emerging mental illness. Ed-LinQ aims to improve communication, coordination and collaboration between the education sector, the primary health care sector and the mental health sector, with the goal of improving the social and emotional outcomes of students.

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework



- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (In Child Friendly Language):
“Rights” are things every child should have or be able to do. All children have the same rights. These rights are listed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Almost every country has agreed to these rights. This document includes items, which support student voice, mental health and wellbeing.
<https://www.unicef.org/rightsite/files/uncrcchildfriendlylanguage.pdf>
- Queensland Schools Alliance Against Violence:
There are many resources available to support schools in providing effective strategies, promote positive relationships and reduce bullying and violence in schools. Schools should be selective to ensure suitability to each individual school context.
<http://behaviour.education.qld.gov.au/bullying-and-violence/schools/Pages/gsaav.aspx>
- The Family-School Partnership Framework:
The Family-school Partnership Framework was developed to promote and guide partnership building. The core principles of effective family-school partnerships are:
 - parents and families are the first and continuing educators of their children
 - learning is lifelong and occurs in multiple settings
 - partnerships, schools and school communities flourish when the diversity and strengths of families are valued and leveraged
 - community engagement expands responsibility and resources
 - partnerships grow from mutual trust, respect and responsibility
 - partnerships need committed, collaborative and creative leadership.<https://www.education.gov.au/family-school-partnerships-1>
- A Systematic Framework for Trauma-Aware Schooling in Queensland
The research in this report explains the impact that complex childhood trauma has on experiences and outcomes for students during the schooling years and beyond. The research draws from a combination of the science of child and adolescent development, the prevalence and impact of adverse childhood experiences, the long-term biomedical and intergenerational consequences of complex trauma, and developmental resilience.
<https://eprints.qut.edu.au/120276/1/Howard%2C%20State-Wide%20Framework%20Trauma-Aware%20Schooling%2C%20Research%20Report%202018.pdf>
- Berry Street Education Model (BSEM)
The Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) is a practical approach to teaching and learning that enables teachers to increase engagement with students with complex, unmet learning needs and successfully improve all students’ self-regulation, growth and academic achievement. The pedagogical strategies incorporate evidence-based trauma-aware teaching, positive education, and wellbeing practices.
<https://learning.berrystreet.org.au/focus-areas/berry-street-education-model>



- **Mackillop Education’s ReLATE (Rethinking Learning and Teaching Environments) Model**
The ReLATE model is a holistic, trauma-informed and responsive, school culture change model. Developed by MacKillop Family Services for the Australian education context, ReLATE creates a culture of safety, inclusion and wellbeing for optimal learning across the whole school, informed by international trauma-informed education principles.
<https://www.mackillop.org.au/programs/relate-model-2#:~:text=The%20ReLATE%20model%20guides%20schools,responsive%2C%20school%20culture%20change%20model.>

Catholic Education Personnel:

- **Each Catholic School and College have access to counselling services.** The primary purpose of the school Counsellor role is to support students to achieve academic success, social and emotional well-being and psychological health. In addition, the Counsellor is to assist schools to address the barriers to educational achievement. The most significant barriers are mental health issues and learning difficulties.
- **School Student Protection Contacts** are selected members of staff who focus on student wellbeing and safeguarding as key elements of their role. They receive specialised training in student protection.
- **School Leadership Personnel.** Schools and colleges may appoint staff with the specific focus of providing leadership in the area of student wellbeing.
- **Catholic Education Office Counselling Services Coordinator / Support Officer** ensures high quality counselling services are present in all schools and colleges across the diocese and to provide support to the Diocesan Director Catholic Education in the area of counselling, mental health and wellbeing.
- **Catholic Education Office Student Protection Coordinator / Officer** promotes and enhances a culture of child safe environments by providing leadership to Catholic schools/colleges and services in all student protection matters and to provide support to the Diocesan Director Catholic Education in the area of student protection.
- **Catholic Education Office Student Services Manager** supports all school communities by providing leadership in student protection and student wellbeing.
- **Catholic Education Office Project Officer – Student Wellbeing** supports all school communities by providing information and assistance in student wellbeing and trauma informed practice.



Key Partnered Support Services:

- CentacareCQ
- Royal Far West
- Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMHS)
- Headspace
- Youth Beyond Blue
- Kids Helpline
- Triple P Queensland
- Family and Child Connect (FACC)

Supporting Documents:

- [Australian Curriculum](#)
- CEDR [Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy](#)
- CEDR [Counselling in Catholic Schools and Colleges Policy](#)
- CEDR [Student Protection Policy](#)
- CEDR [Inclusive Practice in Catholic Schools and Colleges Policy](#)
- CEDR [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy](#)
- CEDR [Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools Policy](#)
- CEDR [Personal and Social Development Education Policy](#)
- CEDR [Anti-Bullying Policy](#)
- CEDR [Teaching and Learning Framework](#)
- CEDR [PSDE Curriculum](#)
- CEDR [RE Curriculum](#)

“Australian schools are learning communities that promote student wellbeing, safety and positive relationships so that students can reach their full potential.” (Education Council, 2018)



References

- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [Personal and Social Capability](#) 2019 (Viewed 28 March 2019)
- [Australian Curriculum Personal and Social Capability](#)
- Australian Government [Beyond Blue Be You](#) 2018 (Viewed 13 November 2018)
- Australian Government [Australian Student Wellbeing Framework](#) 2018
- Brisbane Catholic Education [Student Wellbeing](#)
- CEO [Personal and Social Development Education](#) (PSDE)
- Education Council [Australian Student Wellbeing Framework](#) 2018 (Viewed 13 November 2018)
- Education Council [Alice Springs \(Mparntwe\) Declaration](#) 2019
- Everymind [A framework for prevention and promotion](#) 2018 (Viewed 19 October 2018)
- headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation [Tips to keep good mental health](#) 2016 (Viewed 12 October 2018)
- Kidsmatter Primary [Successful schools start with healthy minds](#) 2013 (Viewed 24 September 2018)
- Mackillop Education [ReLATE \(Rethinking Learning and Teaching Environments\) Model](#)
- MindMatters [School staff – your wellbeing matters!](#) 2016 (Viewed 22 October 2018)
- Pope Francis *Christus vivit* 2019
- Queensland Catholic Education Commission [Student Safety and Wellbeing](#)
- State of Queensland (Department of Education) [Student Wellbeing Framework](#) 2018
- The Queensland Centre for Mental Health Promotion [Prevention and Early Intervention The Queensland Ed-LinQ initiative A framework for action](#) 2010
- The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education [The Catholic School](#) 1977 (Viewed 25 March 2019)
- United Nations [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- World Health Organisation [Mental health: a state of well-being](#) 2014 (Viewed 24 October 2018)