



# MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

**Scope:** This policy applies to all in Catholic kindergartens, schools and colleges conducted by Catholic Education - Diocese of Rockhampton (CEDR).

## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

Catholic Education – Diocese of Rockhampton (CEDR) will promote a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing to ensure optimal learning outcomes and safe and working learning environment for all. The promotion of mental health and access to wellbeing initiatives is founded on our vision for Catholic Schools, the Catholic values that inspire us, the key principles of Catholic Social Teaching and appropriate to the needs of the school community.

## 2. DESCRIPTION

Mental health and wellbeing should permeate all aspects of school life and learning. The wellbeing of children and young people is enhanced, and their learning outcomes optimised when they feel connected to others and experience safe and trusting relationships. Students who feel connected, safe, and secure are more likely to be active participants in their learning and to achieve better physical, emotional, social, and educational outcomes. Educators who feel valued and supported are more likely to engage positively with students and build stronger connections within the school community. Enhancing the inclusivity and wellbeing of students and their educators delivers overall long-term social, health and economic benefits to the Australian community (Education Council, 2022). Sustained change is best achieved when a school makes a commitment to collectively improve the mental health and wellbeing of the whole community. This supports educators to share their learnings and translate knowledge into practice and enables positive changes to policies and procedures, pedagogy, and physical environments (Be You, 2019).

The World Health Organisation (2022) defines Mental health as a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in. Mental health is a basic human right, and it is crucial to personal, community and socio-economic development.

Reinventing Australian Schools (2023) indicates that children who are healthier are better learners, and in turn, better learners are often healthier, with greater overall wellbeing into their adult years. It is further acknowledged that mental illness can detrimentally affect students' classroom behaviours, social and emotional functioning, academic achievement, and school engagement (Monash University, 2020).



Recognising and promoting mental health is an essential part of creating a safe and healthy workplace. When a proactive approach to the mental health and wellbeing of employees is implemented, the expected benefits are:

- Increase in productivity
- Increase in engagement and job satisfaction
- Thriving workers
- Increase in attraction of top talent
- Decrease in work-related injuries and illnesses
- Decrease in absenteeism
- Decrease in turnover (Queensland Government, 2022).

### 3. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

The School/ College Community will provide:

1. a trauma informed whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing that includes students, families and staff. This will be embedded into school structures and practices, and is reflective of the CEDR [Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework](#) and the five elements of the [Australian Student Wellbeing Framework](#) (2022).
2. an inclusive, respectful, and interactive learning environment which encourages connection and promotes a supportive school culture where mental health and wellbeing is a priority.
3. physical and online environments which promote safety, reflection, and healthy social connections.
4. opportunities for authentic student and staff decision-making over matters that affect them in relation to mental health and wellbeing.

The School / College Leadership will provide:

1. opportunities for the teaching of Social Emotional Learning skills which may include: resilience, emotional literacy, emotional regulation, pro-social behaviour, social problem solving, physical education, nutrition and sleep hygiene, as well as promoting healthy relationships and help seeking behaviours.
2. clear guidelines, procedures, effective responses and strategies that are developed in collaboration with staff, students and parents/carers, to enhance wellbeing, promote safety, and counter violence, bullying and abuse in all online and physical spaces.
3. opportunities to collect and analyse data to gain a better understanding of individual and school-wide levels of wellbeing and use the data to inform action that promotes growth in wellbeing.
4. professional learning opportunities to build knowledge, responsiveness and capacity of school staff in regards to mental health and wellbeing.
5. information to staff on accessing the *Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace* Guide, which aims to assist employees to understand what mental health and mental illness are, how to identify mental health risks and provide strategies for minimising these risks.
6. opportunities and support to families through raising parent awareness and supporting parenting skills in relation to mental health and wellbeing.
7. information to all students and families regarding access to the school counselling service.
8. information regarding referral pathways for mental health assessment and treatment.



9. links to community services including e-mental health online resources, to build capacity for mental health promotion, illness prevention and early intervention.

CEDR will provide:

1. an Employee Assistance Program to all staff.
2. information and support to school leadership on current evidence-based programs and frameworks in the area of mental health and wellbeing.
3. professional learning opportunities to build the capacity of school leadership to support diversity within the school community.
4. guidelines for schools to respond to risks relating to mental health and wellbeing.
5. Consultation, advice and support to principals and school leadership teams.

#### 4. REFLECTION MATERIAL

##### CATHOLIC EDUCATION POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

- [Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework](#) v2 2020
- [Staff Code of Conduct](#) v6 2024
- [Information and Communications Technologies Codes of Practice](#) v8 2024
- [Student Anti-Bullying](#) 2023/09
- [Information and Communication Technologies](#) 2024/08
- [Pastoral Care](#) 2020/05
- [Personal and Social Development Education](#) 2023/08
- [Prevention and Elimination of Abuse, Racism, Bullying and Harassment](#) 2021/08
- [Student Counselling in Catholic Schools and Colleges](#) 2022/02
- [Student Protection](#) 2025/04
- [Workplace Health and Safety](#) 2021/03
- [Integrity in Relationships](#) 2019 (Brochure)
- [Defining features of Catholic Schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century](#)
- *Mental Health and Well-being in the workplace* v3 2022
- *Postvention Guidelines: Suicide / Attempted Suicide* v2 2018
- *Procedure for Responding to Workplace Bullying and Sexual Harassment (Code of Conduct)* v5 2024
- *Responding to Non-Suicidality Guidelines* v2 2024
- *Responding to Suicidality Guidelines* v3 2023
- *Responding to staff suicide risk* v2 2024
- *Student Engagement and Behaviour Support (Draft Policy)*

##### REFERENCES

- Student Wellbeing Hub [Australia Student Wellbeing Framework](#)
- Monash University *School-based prevention and early intervention for student mental health and wellbeing: Evidence brief*. Authors: Berger, E., Reupert, A. & Allen, K. 2020



- Melbourne Graduate School of Education at University of Melbourne, the Centre for Community Child Health at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, and the Faculty of Education at Southern Cross University, Australia *Reinventing Australian Schools for the better wellbeing, health and learning of every child* Sahlberg, P. 1, Goldfeld, S.1,2, Quach, J.1,2, Senior, C. 3, and Sinclair, C 2. 2023
- World Health Organisation [Mental Health](#) 2022
- Queensland Government [Mentally healthy workplaces toolkit](#) 2022
- [Office of the e-safety Commissioner](#)
- Principles of Catholic Social Teaching [Principles of Catholic Social Teaching](#)