

APPLICABLE TO	All schools
DOCUMENT OWNER	Teaching and Learning Services
APPROVAL DATE	September 2017
APPROVED BY	CSO Leadership Team
SCHOOL ACTIONS	School policy – each school may adapt this policy for use as a school policy, with procedures consistent with and aligned to the principles and practices outlined in this policy.
LAST REVIEW DATE/S	New policy
NEXT REVIEW DATE	As needed
RELATED DOCUMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal Education 2013 Addressing Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace 2010 Anti-Bullying 2012 and supporting resources Child Protection Code for Professional Standards 2005 Child Protection: Reporting Concerns for Children Updated 2015 Complaints and Grievances Resolution 2013 Continuum of School Improvement Process 2017 Drug Education 2004 Early Learning 2017 Enrolment Policy 2013 and related documents Gifted Education 2016 Learning Support 2017 Pastoral Care 2003 Risk Management 2016 Serious Incidents Management 2015 Social Media 2016 Vision Statement for Catholic Schools 2016 Workplace Email and Internet Usage, updated 2017

Purpose

The Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy aims to provide a framework for the policies, programs, resources and practices implemented at system and school level with the purpose of supporting and enhancing the wellbeing of students, and all within its school community. It refers to the overall climate of care that exists within a Catholic school.

The approach to wellbeing and pastoral care fits within and is complemented by the diocesan Learning Framework, *Creating the conditions for Supportive Learning*, in the sense that 'the school is driven by a deep belief that every student is capable of successful learning. The environment is designed to be safe and inclusive, one that promotes academic rigour. A high priority is given to building and maintaining positive and caring relationships between staff, students and parents, and the wellbeing of all.'

MN Learning Framework 2017

Student wellbeing is the focus of this policy. Research shows that high levels of mental health are associated with increased learning, creativity and productivity, more pro-social behaviour and positive social relationships, and with improved physical health and life expectancy. Situated within the Learning Framework demonstrates the very clear links between student wellbeing, student learning and student safety and the practices and resources that connect them and our vision for Catholic schools. A range of strategies and resources for wellbeing are available through this element in the Learning Framework <https://lf.mn.catholic.edu.au/>

This policy emphasises **student wellbeing** as its focus within a **Catholic school context** through the lens of three interconnecting areas – **successful learning, safe and inclusive environment and positive and caring relationships** – and through the nine areas of the **National School Improvement Tool**, as reflected in the following diagram.

WELLBEING IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



Policy Statement

The Commonwealth Government recognises in its 2010 Statement on wellbeing the National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF), that schools play a vital role in promoting the social and emotional development and wellbeing of young Australians. Student resilience and wellbeing are essential for both academic and social development and these things are optimised by the provision of safe, supportive and respectful learning environments. The Framework is based on the vision that all Australian schools are safe, supportive and respectful teaching and learning communities that promote student wellbeing.

National Safe Schools Framework, Australian Government 2010

Central to the Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy is the Catholic identity and mission of a school. It places emphasis on developing the whole person – attending to his or her spiritual, social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs – and establishes a solid and broad foundation for lifelong learning and wellbeing, as reflected in the current policy on Pastoral Care (2003).

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle endeavour to provide for each member participating – students, parents, staff, clergy and system personnel – the experience of high quality interpersonal relationships of care and support. Our schools ... seek to promote a respectful, secure and healthy environment in which students grow to be discerning self-disciplined and contributing members of society.

Pastoral Care Policy 2003

In addition, and underpinning the Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy, is the Vision Statement for Catholic schools, which clearly articulates this identity and purpose: *At the heart of everything there is always Jesus Christ. Catholic schools educate from and for a community of faith; from and for excellence in learning; in a rigorous, creative and critical pursuit of truth...*

Vision Statement for MN Catholic Schools 2016

Definitions

The literature sets out a range of definitions and contexts in which wellbeing is experienced. Wellbeing is defined as ‘a positive and sustainable condition that allows individuals, groups, organisations and nations to thrive and flourish’ (Huppert, Baylis & Keverne 2005). Further, according to the World Health Organization, mental health is a ‘state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own 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.’

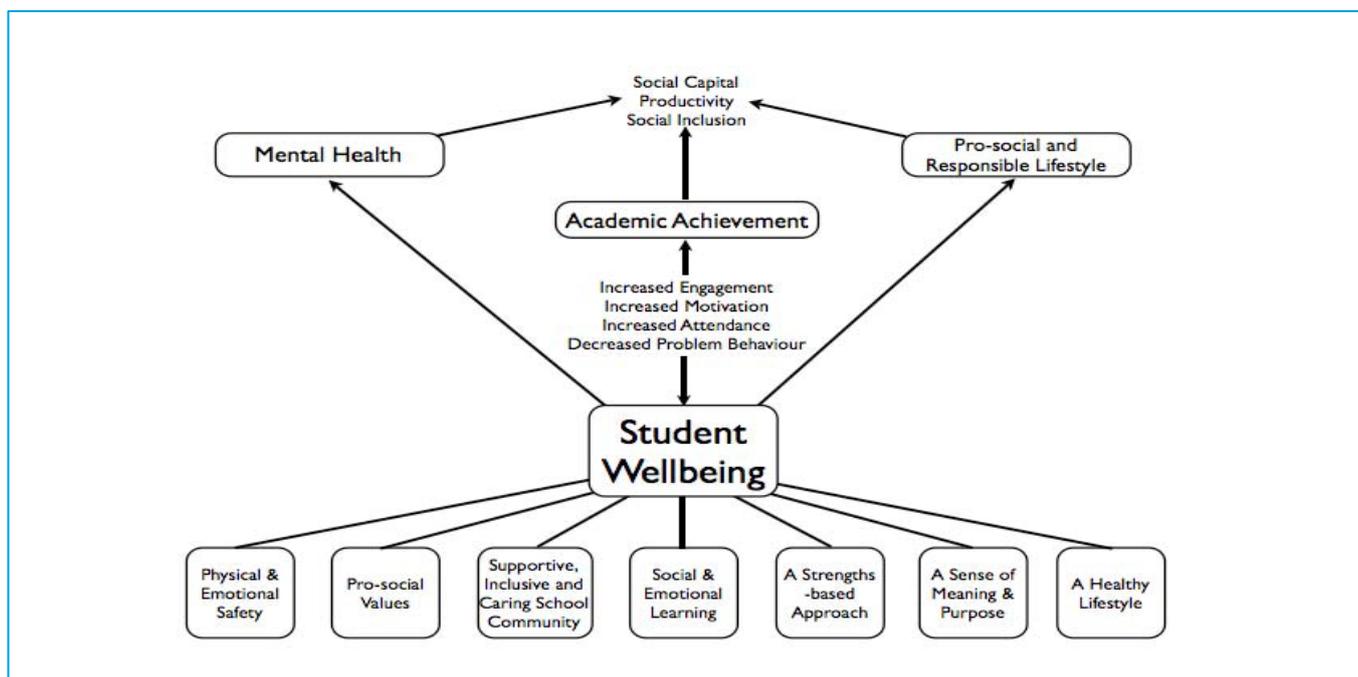
The promotion of wellbeing involves whole school approaches, which incorporate a supportive ethos, strong relational values and skills, student participation, and collaborative partnerships with learning integrated across the curriculum. Movements such as Positive Psychology and Positive Education, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and Strengths-Based approaches all add value and provide direction to the wellbeing discourse.

With students as the focus, and based on the literature, this policy adopts the following definition for diocesan schools:

‘Wellbeing is understood as a sustainable state characterised by **positive relationships at school, positive attitudes, resilience**, being able to **maximise strengths and high levels of satisfaction with learning experiences**. Wellbeing is best promoted in a **safe and supportive school.**’

Noble & Wyatt 2008

Mental health and wellbeing ultimately is about being cognitively, emotionally and socially healthy – the way we think, feel and develop relationships – and not merely the absence of a mental health condition.



Noble, T. and Wyatt, T. (2008). *Scoping Study into Approaches to Student Wellbeing: Final Report*. Australian Catholic University and Erebus International

Scope

This policy applies to all school staff and system personnel in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

Guiding Principles

In this context, the approach to wellbeing and pastoral care is based upon these beliefs:

- **each person** has gifts and is unique
- structures, procedures and practices should reflect espoused Gospel values
- **quality, positive and respectful relationships** are fundamental to effective learning and genuine pastoral care
- **diversity is valued** and all members of the school community feel **respected and included**
- **wellbeing is central to learning**
- every student is capable of **successful learning**
- wellbeing encompasses the **total care of students** and all others in the school community
- the **responsibility of care is entrusted to all members** of the school community
- **parents, teachers and leaders play key roles** in promoting wellbeing
- **students are active partners** in the development and achievement of their own wellbeing

Links with the National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF)

Critical to the implementation of this policy is the National Safe Schools Framework (2011). It provides the platform for the wellbeing of our students, to equip them to act for their own and others' wellbeing. *In a safe and supportive school, the risk from all types of harm is minimised, diversity is valued and all members of the school community feel respected and included and can be confident that they will receive support in the face of any threats to their safety or wellbeing.*

National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF, 2011 p.2)

The NSSF comprises a range of support materials including an Audit Tool, which identifies nine key elements to assist schools in reflecting, planning, implementing and maintaining a safe, supportive and protective learning community that promotes student safety and wellbeing. These nine elements are based on a combination of good practice, research-based literature, and feedback from representatives from all educational systems, sectors and educators.

Please refer to the Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Procedure – Students for further information, and the link to the NSSF.

<https://studentwellbeinghub.edu.au>

Links with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST)

Underpinning this policy are the Standards, which detail the expectations of teachers with specific reference to the wellbeing of students:

- 1.1.2 Use teaching strategies based on knowledge of students' physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics to improve student learning.
- 4.4.2 Ensure students' wellbeing and safety within school by implementing school and/or system, curriculum and legislative requirements.

Links with the Curriculum

Implementation of NSW Syllabuses set out outcomes and the content in Key Learning Areas. They also incorporate the general capabilities of the Australian Curriculum such as Literacy; Numeracy; Information and Communication Technology Capability; Critical and Creative Thinking; Personal and Social Capability; Ethical Understanding; and Intercultural Understanding which are integrated and interconnected across the curriculum.

Teaching programs K–12 should select the relevant content and outcomes, and incorporate the resources and strategies that align with and demonstrate the relevant elements of this Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy. Particular reference should be made to the Diocesan Religion Syllabus K–12, and the NSW Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) Syllabus K–10, especially the interrelated strands of Health, Wellbeing and Relationships, and Healthy, Safe and Active Lifestyles. The syllabus takes a strengths-based approach, which fits well with this policy and procedures.

Links with the Continuum of School Improvement (COSI), the Catholic Identity Improvement Tool (CIIT) the National School Improvement Tool (NSIT)

This Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy supports the system review processes (COSI) and related reflective practices such as the Catholic Identity Improvement Tool (CIIT) as well as incorporating the NSSF audit tool as part of overall consideration of the *Safe and Supportive* element of the Cycle.

The policy also aligns with the National School Improvement Tool (NSIT) with specific reference to domains 3, *A culture that promotes learning* and 4, *Targeted use of school resources*.

Responsibilities

The following information sets out levels of responsibility for all involved in creating the conditions for learning within a safe, respectful and positive environment.

SCHOOLS

Schools are responsible for:

- **Developing procedures** based on this system policy that specifies, in the context of a Catholic school, directions and strategies to be achieved for students for **successful learning, safe and inclusive environments and positive and caring relationships**.

- **Using the NSSF Audit Tool** and its nine elements as an entry point to gauge the 'health and wellbeing' of their schools, and, as a subsequent basis to guide the development of wellbeing and pastoral care policies, and implementation of programs and supporting resources.
- **Observing all legislative requirements** and engaging as necessary with system personnel, Zimmerman Services and external agencies in relation to student wellbeing.
- **Ensuring that staff have a working knowledge of government legislation** and system policies and procedures.
- **Creating and maintaining safe and positive learning environments** based on a Catholic worldview.
- **Aligning staffing roles and responsibilities** with student wellbeing policies and practices (e.g. principal, REC, assistant principal welfare, student coordinators, class teachers).
- **Resourcing teaching programs, support structures and personnel** with appropriate and relevant strategies and resources.
- **Selecting resources and programs that align with the vision and mission, culture and climate** of the Catholic school.
- **Modelling and promoting** socially responsible values and behaviour.
- **Explicitly teaching** socially acceptable and responsible behaviours with reference to relevant school and system policies, and curriculum syllabuses.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE (CSO)

The CSO is responsible for:

- **Placing wellbeing and pastoral care as a priority** within the System Strategic and Annual Plans.
- **Providing professional learning and training opportunities** to school and system personnel for example, at assembly days for secondary student coordinators, assistant principals and teachers.
- **Resourcing system support** structures and personnel, training and development.
- **Providing staffing including counselling services** to all schools through an allocation of staffing 1:1000.
- **Providing support personnel such as pastoral care workers** based on availability and need.
- **Modelling and promoting** socially responsible values and behaviour underpinned by the Catholic ethos and mission of the Church.
- **Monitoring compliance** with this policy through existing processes, such as the Continuum of School Improvement (COSI) and Annual School Improvement Plans.

Budget

The Catholic Schools Office is committed to ensuring its schools have safe and supportive environments. A proportion of its annual budget will be devoted to providing adequate staffing resources and professional learning opportunities to support the endeavours of schools in implementing their wellbeing and pastoral care policies.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis, and evaluated as needed, dependent on legislative and/or diocesan changes. Schools should review their procedures on a regular basis to ensure alignment with structures and selected resources.

Legislative/Professional Guidelines

Australian Education Act 2013

Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)

Disability Discrimination 1992

Disability Standards for Education (2005) and Guidance Notes (2005), revised 2012

National Professional Standards for Teachers, 2011 (particularly Standard 4: Create and Maintain Supportive and Safe Learning Environments, p.14)

NSW Government, Keep Them Safe Online Mandatory Reporting Guide, 2013