



STUDENT WELLBEING RESEARCH Document 1

This research document has been developed by the Student Wellbeing Team to assist in the dissemination of evidence-based research and literature about student wellbeing. It explores the links between student wellbeing and improved student learning outcomes.

Themes:

- *Key definitions and concepts*
- *The link between wellbeing and welfare*
- *The link between social and emotional competence and learning outcomes*
- *A whole-school approach to student wellbeing*
- *The CEOM Student Wellbeing Strategy to support student wellbeing coordinators in schools*
- *References*

Key definitions and concepts

Wellbeing refers to students' physical, social and emotional development. Evidence suggests that these elements are integral rather than incidental to learning. A learner will find it difficult to engage with learning programs if they are distracted by significant physical, social and emotional issues.

Staff in schools therefore play an important role in fostering engagement and wellbeing so that each student is able to achieve their best and enjoy their educational experience (DECS *Statement of Directors 2005–2010*, p. 8 in the Working Paper South Australia, Dept of Education and Children's Services, 2005, p. 3).

The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in Australia in the Twenty First Century (MCEETYA, 2000) states:

Schooling provides a foundation for young Australians' intellectual, physical, social, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development. By providing a supportive and nurturing environment, school contributes to the development of students' sense of self worth, enthusiasm for learning and optimism for the future (p. 1).

The wellbeing of students in the school community is promoted through developing connectedness and social capital. **Social Capital** is a term used to describe the particular features of social relationships within a group or community. This includes such things as the extent of trust between people; whether they have a shared understanding of how they should behave toward, and care for one another; and the extent of participation in civic organisations, such as sporting clubs and school councils (Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (2005) 'Social Inclusion as a determinant of mental health and wellbeing', Research Summary 2, VicHealth Melbourne: Victoria). A focus on wellbeing and school community partnerships provides an opportunity for schools to build 'bridging' social capital. That is, links that cut across social groups (McGaw, 2006).

The link between wellbeing and welfare

Anecdotally the terms 'welfare' and 'wellbeing' have been used interchangeably, however current research and literature prefer the use of the term 'wellbeing'. This term reflects the inclusive nature of schooling and a whole-school approach.

- Wellbeing has a prevention and early intervention focus and involves whole-school approaches with an emphasis on school organisation, ethos and environment, community links and partnerships, and curriculum teaching and learning.

The Framework for Student Support Services in Victorian Government Schools (Department of Education & Training 1998) describes four levels of activity which comprise a whole-school approach to student wellbeing. These are primary prevention, early intervention, intervention and postvention (restoring relationships).

The wellbeing approach emphasises primary prevention and early intervention. These are defined as:

primary prevention – building structures that facilitate belonging and promote wellbeing;

early intervention – programming and planning interventions that target students identified as 'at risk'.

This is supported by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV Ltd), Policy 1.14 (1994) *Pastoral Care of Students in Catholic Schools*.

A welfare approach places its emphasis on intervention and postvention. These are defined as:

intervention – facilitating and accessing a range of support services for identified 'at risk' students; and

postvention – managing 'out of the ordinary' circumstances that require specialist support, management of trauma and limiting impact, restoring relationships.

School Improvement and Wellbeing		School Improvement and Welfare	
<i>Prevention emphasis</i>		<i>Intervention emphasis</i>	
Sustains and embeds	Ongoing initiatives: National Safe Schools Framework	Promote	One off, targeted initiatives: National Safe Schools Week
Proactive	School Focused Youth Service, School/community partnerships	Reactive	Case by case basis as issues occur
Enabling	Policies and protocols (safe school environment)	Aid	Financial assistance
Whole school approach	Classroom climate, SEL, teaching and learning approaches, safe and supportive school culture and environment, promotion of partnerships	Case Management	Referral to general practitioners, counsellors, psychologists
Restorative in nature	Strategies to develop EQ, Restorative Practices	Disciplinary in nature	Time-out, detention

Testa, D 2006, PhD Candidature Proposal

The link between social and emotional competence and learning outcomes

Evidence-based research and literature suggests the following:

- Wellbeing is central to learning and learning contributes to wellbeing.
- Students who behave in pro-social ways and demonstrate high levels of social competency also achieve highly (McGrath, 2005).
- Students who are socially competent are more likely to have productive relationships with teachers and peers.
- Effective social interaction enhances intellectual skills such as perspective taking and problem solving.
- The development of social competencies requires self-regulation in the form of:
 - managing negative emotions
 - goal setting
 - thinking about the rights of other
 - being flexible
 - persistence.

The presence of the following factors contribute to learning outcomes:

- strong pro-social peer networks
- adequate levels of the social competencies (DEET 2000)
- a sense of acceptance
- connectedness and belonging.

Early social competency and pro-social orientation and behaviour appear to pave the way for later social and academic success.

Student achievement and attitudes are influenced jointly by a number of factors that contribute to differences in student cognitive and affective outcomes (Walber et al. 1986). These being:

- student ability
- age and motivation
- the quality and quantity of instruction
- the psychological climate of the home

- the classroom social group
- the peer group outside the classroom
- the mass media.

Educational outcomes are likely to be improved when emotional wellbeing is enhanced (Zubrick, 1997).

Satisfying the social and emotional needs of students prepares students to learn and increases their capacity for learning (CASEL, 2003).

Research has demonstrated that social and emotional learning increases:

- mastery of subject material
- interest in learning and motivation to learn
- commitment to school
- morale in students and staff
- time devoted to schoolwork
- attendance in both students and staff
- prospects for constructive employment
- reduction in suspensions and expulsion (Hawkins et al. 1999, Malecki & Elliot 2002, Fraser & Walber 1991, Wubbels et al. 1991).

Several key Frameworks inform understandings and practices related to whole-school approaches to student wellbeing. These are outlined as follows:

Framework 1: A Theoretical Framework which links student wellbeing and School Improvement.

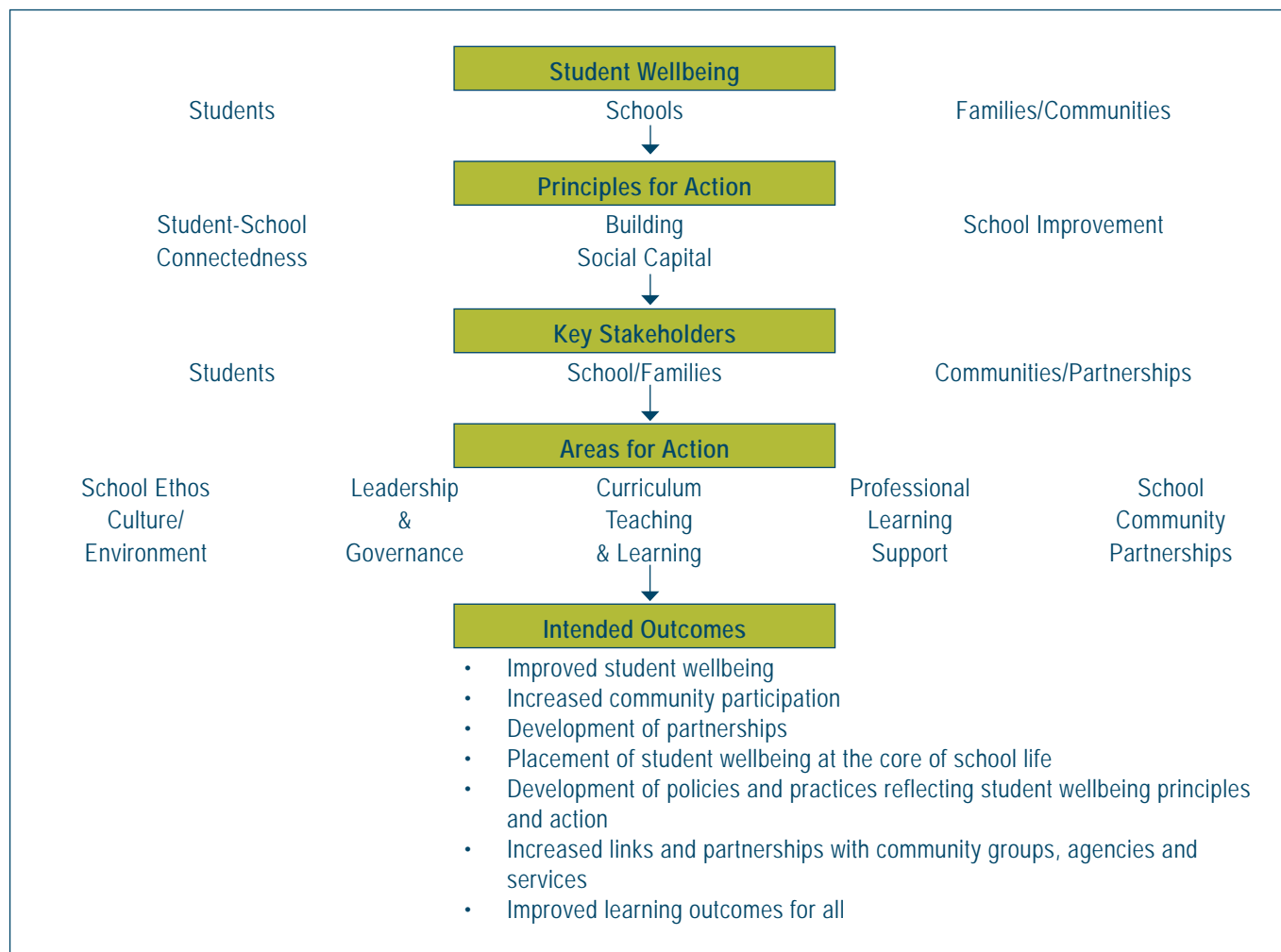
Framework 2: The Health Promoting Schools Framework which describes key components of school activity that contribute to a whole-school approach to student wellbeing.

Framework 3: The Framework for Student Support Services in Victorian Government schools which describes the prevention to postvention spectrum.

Framework 4: A CEOM Student Wellbeing Framework which provides a strategic approach to the implementation of student wellbeing initiatives for schools.

Student Wellbeing: Central to Learning and School Improvement

FRAMEWORK 1 : Key Elements of Student Wellbeing



A whole school approach to student wellbeing

A growing consensus in the literature indicates that a whole-school approach to student wellbeing provides a model that enables the education of the whole person and that this includes the physical, emotional, intellectual, moral and spiritual dimensions of the person. (AEU 2001, Best 1999, Best et al. 1995, CECV 2004, Marshall et al. 2000, McGuinness 1989, Mindmatters 1999, The Gatehouse Project 2001).

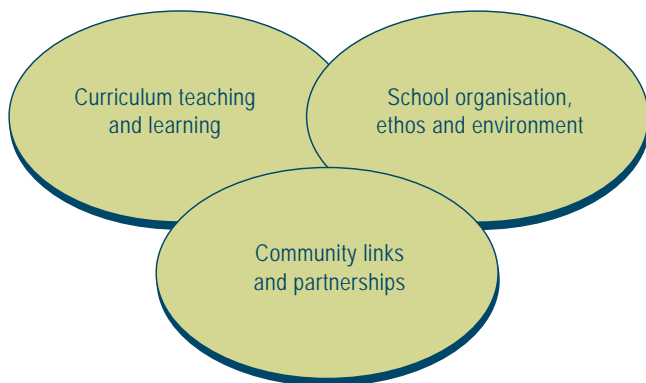
Murphy (1988) provides a comprehensive definition of a whole-school approach as:

A comprehensive and coordinated system of student support which includes activities and arrangements integrated into many levels of the total school ... Support for students will be manifested within school philosophies and beliefs and attitudes and school organisation, links with parents, the community and outside agencies, classroom practice, teacher-student relationships and curricula (cited in University of Melbourne 2003).

The social, emotional, psychological, spiritual and physical as well as academic needs of the student may be achieved through a whole-school approach to student wellbeing (Best, 1999).

FRAMEWORK 2 : Health Promoting Schools

The *Health Promoting Schools Framework* recognises 'that what occurs within schools can be grouped under three main headings: classroom teaching and learning; school ethos and environment; community partnerships and links' (World Health Organisation, 1996).



The World Health Organisation (WHO) recognises that schools are ideally placed to have a significant impact on health and wellbeing outcomes for students, teachers and other members of the school community. Through its *Health Promoting Schools Framework* the WHO supports the interconnectedness of teaching and learning outcomes, organisational ethos, environment, partnerships and community wellbeing.

FRAMEWORK 3: The Framework for Student Support Services in Victorian Government Schools

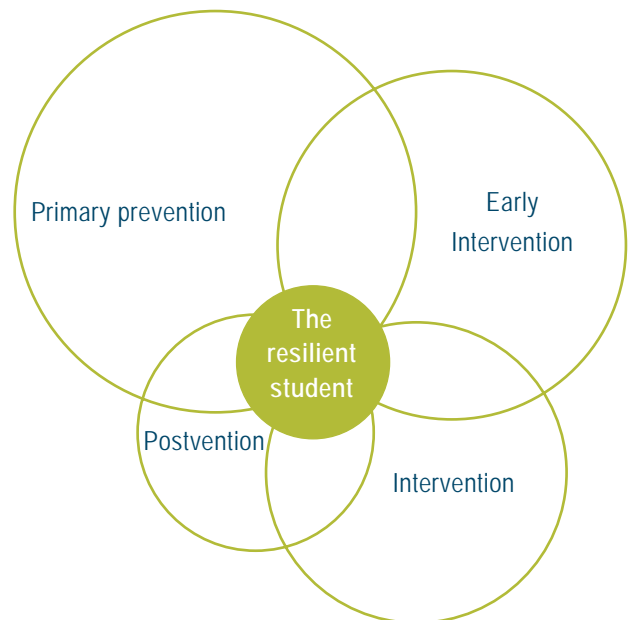
The Framework for Student Support Services in Victorian Government Schools (1998) similarly promotes a whole-school approach to support student learning and wellbeing. All of the policy, project and strategic initiatives cited share an emphasis on whole-school approaches to student wellbeing.

FRAMEWORK 4: A CEOM Framework for Student Wellbeing

The CEOM Student Wellbeing Strategy Plan 2006–2010 (2005) articulates a process which assists schools in developing a strategic approach to support the development of student wellbeing initiatives. The auditing Framework outlines the following key stages:

- establish core team
- engage school community
- gather data to inform planning
- develop strategic intent through action planning
- implementation of the CEOM Framework for Student Wellbeing
- professional learning
- evaluation.

THE FOUR LEVELS OF ACTIVITY



Reproduced from the Framework for Student Support Services in Victorian Government Schools (Department of Education 1998)

The CEOM Student Wellbeing Strategy to support student wellbeing coordinators in schools

The strategy concentrates on a whole-school approach within an emphasis on school environment and classroom climate.

The strategy will contribute to the development of:

- school-based core teams including a Student Wellbeing Coordinator;
- school-based action plans for wellbeing linked to the School Development Plan and including the use of audits and data to drive School Improvement informed by the following key documents:
 - the CEOM Strategy Plan 2006–2010
 - the School Improvement Framework and
 - the Leadership in Catholic Schools Development Framework and Standards of Practice document;
- a focus on prevention with intervention in place through appropriate policies, structures and programs;
- the promotion of school/community partnerships to promote parent connectedness and partnerships with the broader community.

The strategy is focused across the prevention to postvention spectrum.

Prevention to early intervention

- Up skilling credentialed based training – University of Melbourne and Australian Catholic University
- Operational Core Teams
- Projects and Strategies
- Professional Learning
- Programs.

Intervention and postvention services provided by the CEOM Student Wellbeing Team

- Duty Officer role
- Critical Incident Management.

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