

APPLICABLE TO	All Schools
DOCUMENT OWNER	Teaching and Learning – Student Support Unit
APPROVAL DATE	February 2022
APPROVED BY	CSO Leadership Team
SCHOOL ACTIONS	System Policy – Schools are to ensure their practices are consistent with this policy. A local policy is not required.
LAST REVIEW DATE/S	2017
NEXT REVIEW DATE	2024
RELATED DOCUMENTS	<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy 2013  Attendance K–12 Policy 2019  Code of Conduct 2021  Complaints Resolution Policy 2019  Continuum of School Improvement Process 2017  Early Learning Policy Successful Foundations to Flourish 2017  Enrolment Policy 2018 and related documents  Gifted Education Policy 2017  Learning Framework 2016  Learning Support Policy 2017  PDHPE K–6 KLA Policy 2019  Reporting Concerns for Children Policy 2021  Risk Management 2016  School Community Code of Conduct 2018  Serious Incidents Management Policy 2015  Social Media 2016  Sport and Physical Activity Policy 2019  Student Anti-Bullying Policy 2019  Vision Statement for Catholic Schools 2016  Work Health and Safety Policy 2020  Workplace Email and Internet Usage, updated 2017</p>

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide support and guidance for schools to develop, implement and evaluate a whole-school approach to student wellbeing. This policy and the related document: 'Wellbeing Together – Student Wellbeing and Learning across the Whole School' will guide everyday practices, programs, initiatives and resources to promote the mental health and wellbeing of students and support schools around best practice social and emotional interventions.

The approach to whole-school student wellbeing finds its foundation in the National School Improvement Tool's 'A culture that promotes learning' which is summarised as: 'The school is driven by a deep belief that every student is capable of successful learning. A high priority is given to building and maintaining positive and caring relationships between staff, students and parents. There is a strong collegial culture of mutual trust and support among teachers and school leaders and parents are

treated as partners in the promotion of student learning and wellbeing. The school works to maintain a learning environment that is safe, respectful, tolerant, inclusive and that promotes intellectual rigour'.

National School Improvement Tool, 2012

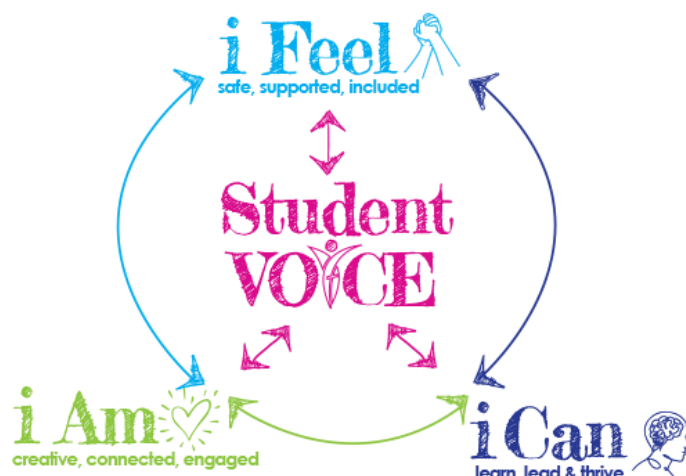
Wellbeing fits within and is complemented by the Diocesan Learning Framework, 'Creating the conditions for Supportive Learning', in the sense that 'the school is driven by a deep belief that every student is capable of successful learning. The environment is designed to be safe and inclusive, one that 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'.

Learning Framework, 2016, CSO MN

The most current research for promotion of student wellbeing suggests schools should: adopt a whole-school approach; focus on Interventions with evidence of effectiveness; establish a dedicated leadership team to drive implementation; prepare the school and staff early; provide meaningful engagement with families and create meaningful opportunities for student voice and engagement.

Runions, Pearce, and Cross, 2021

This student wellbeing policy emphasises the importance of our **Catholic faith, pastoral care** and **student voice** informing student wellbeing across the school; a **safe, supportive, and inclusive** school environment; and opportunities for students to be **creative, connected and engaged** so that they can **learn, lead and thrive**.



## Policy Statement

The Catholic Schools Office (CSO) is committed to creating quality faith-filled learning opportunities that are 'driven by a deep belief that every student is capable of successful learning'. Central to this policy is the Catholic identity and mission of a school. Our Catholic school communities provide a learning environment which emphasises developing the whole person. Our schools nurture and strengthen a student's cognitive, emotional, social, physical and spiritual development, which establishes a solid and broad foundation for lifelong learning and wellbeing, as reflected in our core value of pastoral care.

'Education plays a vital role in promoting the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development and wellbeing of young Australians...'

Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration, 2019

The Commonwealth Government recognises that schools play a vital role in promoting the social and emotional development and wellbeing of young Australians. '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.' The Australian Student Wellbeing Framework is based on the vision that 'Australian schools are learning communities that promote student wellbeing, safety and positive relationships so that students can reach their full potential'.

Australian Student Wellbeing Framework

Underpinning this policy and related framework 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

Pastoral care takes place in the context of the Paschal Mystery in the living, dying and rising of the human person, where Jesus Christ is placed at the centre of all we do. This is foundational to our Catholic faith and tradition. It assists in the cultivation of the spiritual, personal, emotional, physical, academic, moral, social, and aesthetic development of students as they grow to become fully human, active and informed global citizens. Pastoral care is informed by the principles of Catholic social teaching – the dignity of the human person; the common good; subsidiarity and solidarity (CEO, Diocese of Sale, 2021). The foundation of each relationship in Catholic school communities is pastoral care: 'Every contact is a pastoral care contact' (Cross, 2014).

## Definitions

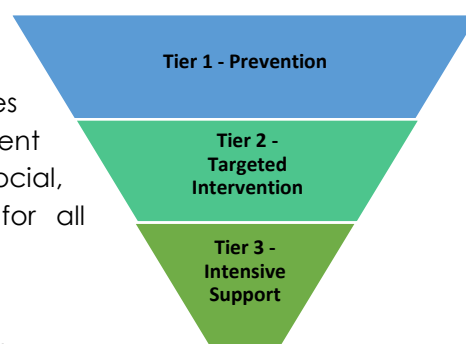
The following definitions are all informed by the lens through which a vocation in Catholic education is expressed: From and For Faith.

### Lead

The term 'lead' refers to *both* leadership and leadership skills. Leadership is defined as 'taking responsibility for the success of those around us' (Simon Sinek, 2021). *Leadership skills* refers to students having opportunities to develop leadership skills and qualities for life-long learning.

### Multi-Tiered System of Support

A Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is a data-driven, problem-solving framework to improve outcomes for all students. MTSS relies on a continuum of evidence-based practices matched to student needs (PBIS, 2021). This framework aligns academic, behavioural, social, and emotional supports to improve educational outcomes for all students.



### Student Engagement

Describes meaningful student involvement throughout the learning environment and typically includes three dimensions:

- Behavioural engagement-focusing on participation in academic, social, and co-curricular activities
- Emotional engagement-focusing on the extent and nature of positive and negative reactions to teachers, classmates, academics, and school
- Cognitive engagement-focusing on student's level of investment in learning

Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris, (2004)

## Student Voice

Student voice refers to the views of *all* students on their experiences of school, learning and wellbeing. It involves students having a say, being heard, being part of the decision-making and school improvement processes and incorporating student's perspectives. It's about adopting a culture of inclusiveness where all students of the community are heard, respected and valued.

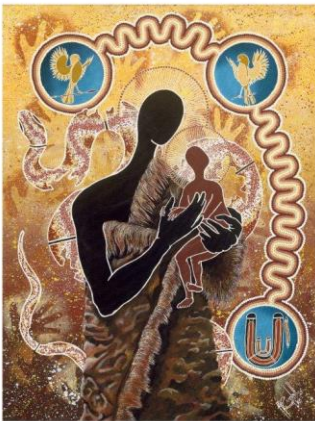
## Wellbeing

Wellbeing refers to a positive sense of self and belonging and the skills to make positive and healthy choices to support learning and achievement, provided in a safe and accepting environment for all students (Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, 2014). Student wellbeing encompasses the multi-dimensional and interconnected domains of cognitive, emotional, social, physical and spiritual wellbeing.

## Scope

This policy applies to all school staff and students and CSO employees.

## Catholic Context




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*At the heart of Everything there is always Jesus Christ*

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*'The school must begin from the principle that its educational programme is intentionally directed to the growth of the whole person.'* (CS n. 29 The Catholic School 1977)

Image by Richard Campbell – Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Catholic schools, as a missionary and educative arm of the Catholic Church, continue the mission of Jesus, to make God known in the world (CESA, 2015). As school communities in communion with parents, their Parish and the Diocese, Catholic Schools aim to draw people into relationship with each other, the school and parish community through a deep relationship with Christ (Code of Canon Law, c.796), (Pope Francis, 2014).

As faith communities we have a responsibility to help students, staff and parents/carers reach their potential as a person made in the image and likeness of God so that they 'may have life and have it to the full' (John 10:10). Catholic schools are a community of learners where everyone matters. We aspire to provide a holistic education, building active resilient staff and students with wisdom for life and life-long wellbeing.

Honouring Catholic social teaching (The Congregation for Catholic Education 2014) and through pastoral care, schools strive to be nurturing, inclusive, connected communities of care, compassion, and support. Modelled on the actions of Jesus Christ, our Catholic schools aim to promote human flourishing as we respond to the needs of those in our communities in a manner that honours the dignity of the person as a gift from God (CESA, 2015).

Through our welcoming school communities and daily interactions of care, acceptance and a sense of justice and responsibility, we promote a sense of safety and belonging. Respectful, positive, and authentic relationships affirm the identity of each person and are critical in forming a sense of self,

connectedness, and purpose. Inspired by the life of Jesus, Catholic schools seek to provide inclusive, equitable communities which value diversity, embracing all, by breaking down barriers to live a life of wholeness.

## Guiding Principles

1. Wellbeing and learning are inextricably linked. Wellbeing is integral to school engagement and successful learning and successful learning is a key contributor to positive lifelong wellbeing outcomes.
2. Parents have the primary responsibility for the development of their child's wellbeing. It is important for families and communities to collaborate as partners with the school to support attendance, student learning, safety, and wellbeing (Australian Student Wellbeing Framework, 2018)
3. Pastoral care is a unique and core value of catholic schools. Pastoral care fosters the physical, emotional, academic, social, moral and spiritual growth and wellbeing of every person and is integrated throughout the teaching and learning process.
4. Student wellbeing is most effective through a whole school approach and when
  - prioritised by leadership and adequately resourced
  - students are active participants in their wellbeing
  - embedded within policy, curriculum, culture, and everyday practice
  - implemented using a multi-tiered system of support
  - grounded in Catholic teaching and tradition
  - within a safe and supportive environment
5. Wellbeing underpins curriculum planning and pedagogy and is demonstrated through the actions, interactions, and attitudes of all school community members.
6. Teaching and learning wellbeing skills, including social and emotional skills, is a parallel, integrated, complementary process of broader academic learning.
7. Wellbeing is dependent upon, and nurtured through positive, authentic relationships. Relationships within Catholic school communities value the dignity of the person, promoting connection, safety, trust and respect for all.
8. Student voice is valued and important in informing decision-making and when reflecting on the teaching and learning environment, culture and pedagogy. By working in partnership with students, staff and the broader community, schools are able to promote inclusion and foster belonging.
9. The wellness of teachers is critical to the education, behaviour and mental health of young people (Roffey, 2015). Staff and student wellbeing are linked and therefore important that schools focus on supporting both staff and student wellbeing.
10. There are some students who will require additional and targeted support in schools when experiencing mental health difficulties.

## Responsibilities

### **The Bishop is responsible for:**

- placement of wellbeing within the context of the core work of the Church which is the formation of the human person.
- the pastoral care of the Diocesan community.
- ensuring that wellbeing is framed as part of the Christian formation of every young person in dialogue with faith, life and culture.
- ensuring the Catholic Schools Office has in place effective and appropriate policies and practices for the pastoral care and wellbeing of students.

### **The Director of Schools is responsible for:**

- ensuring that wellbeing is placed within the context of school communities of faith which nourish and strengthen students' capacity to be whole and to flourish.

- ensuring prioritisation of a whole school approach for student formation with a focus on student wellbeing articulated in system and school improvement plans.
- resourcing support structures, personnel, and professional learning.
- monitoring compliance with this policy through existing processes e.g., Continuum of School Improvement (COSI) and School Improvement Plans.

**The Parish Priest is responsible for:**

- the pastoral care of the domestic church which is the central cell of both church and society, the health of which is of primary importance.
- nurturing the spiritual health and wellbeing of the domestic church within the context of the parish and its catholic school.
- ensuring a quality of relationship including the support of the faith community of the Parish to families and students.
- faith leadership which accompanies and supports the school community.

**Catholic Schools Office**

In consultation with members of the Director's Unit, Teaching and Learning Unit and RE & Spirituality Unit, the **Education Officer (Wellbeing) is responsible for:**

- overseeing the implementation of this policy and related procedures/framework.
- dissemination of student wellbeing information.
- facilitation of diocesan-wide professional learning in the area of student wellbeing.
- support, resource and coordinate PL for the Leaders of Wellbeing and Engagement and other staff responsible for student wellbeing in schools.

The Education Officer (Wellbeing) reports to the Senior Education Officer – Student Support, in Teaching and Learning.

**School principals and leaders are responsible for:**

- prioritising student wellbeing within the school community, policy, school strategic and annual plans.
- planning, embedding and evaluating a sustainable whole school approach to student wellbeing within the school's overall vision, philosophy of learning, catholic faith and tradition.
- promoting a shared belief and understanding that all staff and students are responsible and accountable for contributing to a positive, safe and supportive learning environment.
- aligning staffing roles and responsibilities with student wellbeing policies and practices.
- appointing a wellbeing team and/or allocating a wellbeing role to champion student wellbeing in the school.
- consulting and including the school counsellor and other wellbeing staff in the whole school approach to student wellbeing.
- promoting a culturally safe, inclusive and responsive environment for students with diverse needs.
- supporting well-planned and evidence-informed student wellbeing programs and initiatives based on student needs, school and community data and guided by the multi-tiered systems of support framework.
- communicating, liaising and collaborating with parents, parish priests and the diocesan community to develop a shared understanding of student wellbeing and promote an inclusive school culture.
- ensuring all staff are aware of relevant policy, responsibilities and procedures related to student wellbeing.



**School staff are responsible for:**

- embracing a collaborative approach where all staff are responsible for supporting student wellbeing and contributing to a safe, supportive and inclusive learning environment.
- actively engaging in professional learning opportunities to address identified wellbeing needs of the school community.
- developing positive, authentic student relationships which value the dignity of the person and promote connection, safety, trust and respect for all, including students with diverse needs.
- building collaborative partnerships with parents/carers, the parish and broader community student supports.
- embedding student wellbeing policy, framework, programs and initiatives across the school and in everyday practice guided by the multi-tiered system of supports.
- explicitly teaching social and emotional skills, physical health, safe and responsible student behaviour and school expectations for student wellbeing with reference to relevant school and CSO policies, and curriculum syllabuses.

## Review

The policy is managed by the Office of the Director of Schools and will be reviewed every 3 years to maintain currency and effectiveness.

## Budget

An allocation to cover the costs associated with the implementation of this policy is made annually by the CSO.

## Legislative/Professional Guidelines

1. Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (2019)
2. *Australian Education Act 2013 and Australian Education Regulation 2013*
3. Australian Professional Standard for Principals
4. Australian Student Wellbeing Framework
5. *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)*
6. *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
7. *Disability Standards for Education 2005 and Guidance Notes (2005), revised (2012)*
8. *Education Act 1990 (NSW)*
9. Learning Framework (2016), Catholic Schools Office, Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle
10. National Catholic Safeguarding Standards 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition
11. National School Improvement Tool (2012) – Australian Council for Educational Research for the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
12. National Professional Standards for Teachers (2011) particularly Standard 1- Know students and how they learn; Standard 4-Create and Maintain Supportive and Safe Learning Environments and Standard 7-Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community
13. NSW Education Standards Authority Registration Systems and Member Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual (December 2017)
14. NSW Mandatory Reporting Guide – Department of Communities and Justice

## References

1. Australian Student Wellbeing Framework, Student Wellbeing Hub. [online] Available at: <<https://studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/educators/framework/>> [Accessed 22 August 2020].
2. Can.796 § 1. Among the means to foster education, the Christian faithful are to hold schools in esteem; schools are the principal assistance to parents in fulfilling the function of education. Code of Canon Law, c. 796, sec. 1&2, Vatican Website, June 6, 2021, [https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/eng/documents/cic\\_lib3-cann793-821\\_en.html#CHAPTER\\_I.](https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/eng/documents/cic_lib3-cann793-821_en.html#CHAPTER_I.)
3. Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Sale - Pastoral Care Policy [https://drive.google.com/file/d/17bC\\_9BcsNBluMHT1B6kLorJCYAhrJoy/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/17bC_9BcsNBluMHT1B6kLorJCYAhrJoy/view)
4. Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2020), Supporting advocacy at school – Every student is known, valued and cared for in our schools, NSW Department of Education, [cese.nsw.gov.au](http://cese.nsw.gov.au)
5. The Catholic School (1977) Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. A St Paul Publication
6. *Teachers are called upon to rise up to a major educational challenge, which is the recognition, respect and enhancement of diversity. Psychological, social, cultural and religious diversity should not be denied, but rather considered as an opportunity and a gift. By the same token, diversities related to the presence of particular situations of frailness, affecting cognitive abilities or physical autonomy, should always be recognized and embraced, to prevent them from turning into penalizing inequalities. It is not easy for schools and universities to be 'inclusive', open to diversity and able to truly help those who are going through difficulties. Teachers must be open and professionally knowledgeable when they are leading classes where diversity is recognized, accepted and appreciated as an educational asset that is beneficial to everyone. Those who find themselves in greater difficulties, who are poorer, more fragile or needy, should not be seen as a burden or obstacle, but as the most important students, who should be at the center of schools' attention and concerns.*  
  
The Congregation for Catholic Education (2014) EDUCATING TODAY & TOMORROW: A RENEWING PASSION (Instrumentum laboris 2014), Vatican Website, June 6, 2021, [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_20140407\\_educare-oggi-e-domani\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20140407_educare-oggi-e-domani_en.html), Sec II. 5.
7. Cross D (2014), 'Creating a safe school culture is a process not an event: Practical evidence for systems, schools and teachers working with students with additional needs', paper presented at the Australian Association of Special Education Conference, 2014.
8. Education Council (2019) Alice Springs (Mparntwe) education declaration. Created/Published: Canberra.
9. Jennifer A. Fredricks, Phyllis C. Blumenfeld, and Alison H. Paris, (2004) 'School Engagement: Potential of the Concept, State of the Evidence,' Review of Educational Research 74, no. 1: 59; online at <http://www.isbe.net/learningsupports/pdfs/engagement-concept.pdf>.
10. Ottawa-Carleton District School Board. (2014). Framework for Student Well-being. Ottawa, Canada Retrieved from [www.ocdsb.ca](http://www.ocdsb.ca).
11. Center on PBIS (2021). Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports [Website]. [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org).
12. '...school is a place of encounter. For we are all on a journey, beginning a process, on our way down a road' Pope Francis (2014) – Address of Pope Francis to students and teachers from school across Italy, Saint Peter's Square
13. 'The educational endeavour to foster children's flourishing is an expression of God's grace' Children: Close to the Mystery of God. A CESA Stimulus Paper (2015) Catholic Education South Australia, Thebarton (p.9)



14. *'Through our openness, engagement and valuing -through listening- children have the space to fulfil their potential.'* Children: Close to the Mystery of God. A CESA Stimulus Paper (2015) Catholic Education South Australia, Thebarton (p.9)
15. Roffey, S. (2015) Pupil wellbeing – Teacher wellbeing: Two sides of the same coin? Educational & Child Psychology Vol. 29 No. 4 © The British Psychological Society, 2012
16. Runions, K.C., Pearce, N., & Cross, D. (2021). How Can Schools Support Whole-school Wellbeing? A Review of the Research. Report prepared for the Association of Independent Schools of New South Wales
17. Simon Sinek <https://simonsinek.com/> (Accessed 4 May 2021)