



Mental Wellbeing and Health Policy

Purpose

Big Hill Primary School Leadership and staff acknowledge the importance of promoting positive mental health and wellbeing.

This policy confirms our commitment to:

- providing a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment
- promoting a culture of respect, fairness, and equality
- embedding social and emotional learning into the curriculum
- ensuring families, students and staff are key partners in mental health and wellbeing initiatives
- engaging and working collaboratively with local health professionals.

As a health promoting school, we will promote the mental health and wellbeing of students, staff and families through learning, policies, creating a safe and healthy physical and social environment, and developing community links and partnerships.

Policy statement

Background

Schools can play a key role in promoting mental health in all children and young people, recognising that children and young people's learning and development is supported by environments that promote mental health.¹

Mental health promotion in schools is about creating positive, safe, and supportive environments, and providing opportunities to build and practice relationship skills, resilience, and social and emotional competencies. All staff can be involved in mental health promotion as it relates to every area of the school – the culture, policies, curriculum, and activities.²

Whole school engagement

It is recognised that every member of **Big Hill Primary School** has an impact on students' health and can contribute to creating an environment that promotes positive mental health and wellbeing. All members of our school community, including staff, students, families and volunteers, will be supported to meet this policy.

At our school we engage with multiple resources, evidence-based programs which are all in line to the Victorian Curriculum.

The Resilience Project: <https://theresilienceproject.com.au/>

Smiling Mind: <https://www.smilingmind.com.au/>

Zones of Regulation: <https://www.zonesofregulation.com/learn-more-about-the-zones.html#:~:text=The%20Zones%20can%20be%20compared,this%20often%20is%20the%20case.>

We also engage a school Chaplain 2 days a week to offer support to students, staff and families.

¹ DET, Promoting Healthy Minds for Living and Learning <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/health/healthyminds.pdf>

² DET, Promote mental health: building capacity <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/mentalhealth/Pages/buildingmhpc.aspx> (last updated 28 December 2018)

Definitions

Mental health and wellbeing: For the purposes of this policy and for the Healthy Schools Achievement Program, the 'Mental Health and Wellbeing' health priority area focuses on social and emotional wellbeing, resilience and supporting positive cognitive and behavioural responses to ensure individuals can realise their potential.

Mental health: For children and young people, this means 'the capacity to enjoy and benefit from satisfying family life and relationships and educational opportunities, and to contribute to society in a number of age-appropriate ways. It also includes freedom from problems with emotions, behaviours or social relationships that are sufficiently marked or prolonged enough to lead to suffering or risk to optimal development in the child, or to distress or disturbance in the family.'³

Resilience: The ability to bounce back from adversity in order to lead a healthy and fulfilling life.⁴

Social and emotional competence: The ability to recognise and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, make responsible decisions, establish positive relationships and handle challenging situations capably.⁵

Procedures and responsibilities

Leadership and commitment

- Staff, families and students are involved in guiding the development and implementation of the whole school Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy and are seen as key partners in promoting and supporting positive mental health in the school.
- Staff, families, and students are provided with information about policy requirements, with opportunities to provide feedback and input.

Healthy physical environment

- Buildings, grounds, furniture, play equipment and resources are safe and accessible for every student.
- Quiet and reflective spaces are provided for students, staff and families.

Healthy culture

- Diversity and cultural practices are considered when implementing this policy and mental health and wellbeing practices.
- A safe, inclusive, welcoming environment is created for all community members. There is a culture of respect, fairness and equity.
- Strategies are used to promote positive and responsible behaviour, and to prevent and respond to bullying, discrimination and harassment.
- Warm, responsive and trusting relationships are actively developed and maintained between students, families and staff.

³ Raphael B, 2000, Promoting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people, Discussion paper: key principles and directions, Canberra: Department of Health and Aged Care, National Mental Health Working Group, Retrieved from [http://web.archive.org/web/20061212052146/http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/Publishing.nsf/Content/mental-pubs/\\$FILE/pmhcyb.pdf](http://web.archive.org/web/20061212052146/http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/Publishing.nsf/Content/mental-pubs/$FILE/pmhcyb.pdf)

⁴ Government of Western Australia, 2005, School Drug Education and Road Aware. Challenges and Choices, Early Childhood Resource for resilience, drug and road safety education.

⁵ Zins JE & Elias MJ, 2003, Social and Emotional Learning in Safe and Sound: An educational leader's guide to evidence-based social and emotional learning programs, Developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, USA.

- Staff model respectful interactions with each other, students and families. A positive approach to mental health and wellbeing is also role modelled.

Student teaching and learning

- Students are supported to develop social and emotional skills and learn about and care for their own mental health.
- Students are included in the design and implementation of mental health and wellbeing activities.
- Staff are supported to access professional development and resources about mental health and wellbeing education and to understand when and how to refer students to additional support.

Supported staff

- Staff are supported to learn about and care for their own mental health and wellbeing.
- Mental health and wellbeing information and policy requirements are included in staff orientation/induction.
- Leadership practices and on-the-ground support enable a work environment that minimises stress and promotes mental health and wellbeing for staff.
- Strategies are implemented to promote positive conflict resolution and to prevent and respond to bullying, discrimination and harassment.

Families and community partnerships

- Mental health and wellbeing information is provided to families and the wider community, such as information about local support services and resources about social and emotional learning.
- Partnerships are established with relevant organisations and health professionals to support mental health and wellbeing practices where appropriate.
- There are clear referral options and pathways for students, staff and families to access support services for mental health and wellbeing.

Relevant legislation and policy documents

- [DET School Policy and Advisory Guide – Health Education Approaches](#)
- [DET Student Health and Wellbeing – Mental and interpersonal wellbeing – Social and Emotional Learning](#)
- [DET Teaching and Curriculum – capabilities – Personal and Social Capability](#)
- [DET Enrolment, Attendance and Behaviour – The Student Engagement Policy](#)
- [Education and Training Reform Act 2006](#)

Related school policies (examples)

- Safe Environments
- Staff Health and Wellbeing
- Physical Activity and Movement
- Health and Physical Education

Monitoring and review

This Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy will be monitored and reviewed by the staff, school council, student representatives and the health and wellbeing team at least once every three years.

Endorsed by school council: Big Hill Primary School

Date: 23/5/23

Next review date: 3 Years