



## Student Wellbeing Policy

### 1 Context

- 1.1 In recent years, mental health has been richly researched, highlighting a concerning rise in young people's state of being. Importantly, schools have been recognised as playing a key role in the prevention and promotion of youth mental health (Waters, Sun, Rusk, Cotton & Arch, 2017) and wellbeing, which directly correlate to positive student outcomes and achievements (see, e.g., Reupert, 2020; Waterhouse, 2020). Research evidence shows that students with high levels of wellbeing are more likely to have higher academic growth and achievement and complete Year 12; better mental health; and a more pro-social, responsible and lawful lifestyle (Australian Catholic University and Erebus International, 2008).
- 1.2 Furthermore, the most recent Programme for International Student Assessment ("PISA") 2018 report showed that:
- School climate is closely associated with students' sense of wellbeing;
  - Positive student wellbeing was also associated with a higher proportion of resilient students;
  - Students reporting a greater sense of belonging at school tend to display higher academic motivation, self-esteem and achievement and are also less likely to engage in risky and antisocial behaviours;
  - A supportive and caring school environment is linked to a lower prevalence of bullying;
  - Students with a strong sense of belonging at school are also more satisfied with their life; and
  - Focusing on a whole of school approach that encourages parent engagement and supports school staff, will help to increase student wellbeing, which in turn will have a positive flow-on in other areas of school life.
- (OECD, 2019)
- 1.3 In realising its mission and vision, Cabra seeks to nurture the whole person, placing great value on the support of student wellbeing.

### 2 Policy Statement

- 2.1 In keeping with the Cabra Mission, all policies, structures, services, programs and curricula of the school reflect the College's commitment to the wellbeing of students.
- 2.2 Cabra promotes the integration of pastoral and academic domains of the school, providing a whole-school approach to student wellbeing and growth.

### 3 Definitions

**Wellbeing** refers to the refers to the psychological, cognitive, material, social and physical functioning and capabilities that students need to live a happy and fulfilling life (OECD, 2017).

### 4 Scope

- 4.1 This policy applies to all students, parents/caregivers and staff working within or for Cabra Dominican College.



- 4.2 This policy is supported by parents/caregivers and staff working within or for Cabra Dominican College.

## 5 Principles

- 5.1 At Cabra, nurturing student wellbeing is multidimensional in approach and is based on the following principles:
- (a) every person at Cabra has the right to feel safe, connected, valued, listened to, and cared for;
  - (b) establishing genuine and respectful relationships between students and staff is the norm;
  - (c) a sense of belonging is paramount to an individual's wellbeing and effective learning;
  - (d) student wellbeing is enhanced through a strong partnership with school and home;
  - (e) a comprehensive approach to building resilience and addressing mental health issues is critical to the development of positive young minds;
  - (f) well-developed social and emotional skills are important elements of wellbeing;
  - (g) there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between engagement, wellbeing, and student outcomes;
  - (h) the creation of a learning environment that facilitates and supports students' active engagement in learning, encourages cooperation, and promotes behaviour that benefits other people will have a positive effect on wellbeing;
  - (i) schools can provide a number of protective factors to enhance wellbeing;
  - (j) skills and mindsets that promote positive emotions, positive relationships, resilience and character strengths can be explicitly taught and assessed by schools (Green, Odes and Robinson, 2011).
- 5.2 All people to whom this policy applies will work to implement and realise the principles detailed in Clause 5.1 above.
- 5.3 A number of documents and frameworks exist to establish strong relationships, a sense of belonging and a feeling of safety (all components of wellbeing), including the Cabra Working Together Principles, relevant codes of conduct and school policies. It is therefore incumbent on students to abide by the expectations set out in these documents to support their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others, and for staff and parents to support students in adhering to the same.
- 5.4 Staff will undertake sufficient professional learning to ensure they are aware of contemporary best-practice in student wellbeing, and are able to facilitate such practice as part of their day-to-day interactions.
- 5.5 Staff will nurture and contribute to a positive, welcoming environment in which they know the students entrusted to their care. In so doing, staff will foster an environment which provides opportunities for each individual's needs, gifts and talents to be used and realised.

## 6 Related Documents and References

- Australian Catholic University and Erebus International (2008) Scoping study into approaches to student wellbeing: Literature review. Report to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations: Canberra.
- Green, S., Oades, L., & Robinson, P., (2011) Positive Education: Creating flourishing students, staff and schools. *In Pysch*, 16-18.
- OECD (2017), *PISA 2015 Results (Volume III): Students' Well-Being*, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264273856-en>.
- OECD (2019), *PISA 2018 Results (Volume III): What School Life Means for Students' Lives*, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/acd78851-en>.
- Reupert, A. (2020). *Mental health and academic learning in schools: approaches for facilitating the wellbeing of children and young people*. Routledge, an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group.
- Waters, L., Sun, J., Rusk, R., Cotton, A., & Arch, A. (2017). Positive Education: Visible Wellbeing and Positive Functioning in Students. In M. Slade, L. Oades, & A. Jarden (Eds.), *Wellbeing, Recovery and Mental Health* (pp. 245-264). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/9781316339275.021.
- Waterhouse, A. (2020). *The brain and learning : supporting emotional health and wellbeing in school*. Routledge.

## 7 Revision Record

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