



## BUILDING RESILIENCE<sup>1</sup>

### Student Health and Wellbeing

At Werribee Secondary College, we believe that the best way to promote student wellbeing is by building resilience.

We believe that the school has "... the capacity to promote the resilience of ... young people. Resilience is the ability to cope and thrive in the face of negative events, challenges or adversity.

Key attributes of resilience include social competence; a sense of agency or responsibility; optimism and a sense of purpose or hope for the future; attachment to family, to school and to learning; problem-solving skills; effective coping style, pro-social values; a sense of self-efficacy; and positive self-regard."

All members of our College community have a key role to play in promoting a supportive school culture.

The approach to building resilience in young people at the College is multi-dimensional and school-wide and has five elements:

- **Partner:** with the school community, including families and local and community services
- **Lead:** activity across the school, including teaching approaches and support
- **Teach:** social and emotional learning to all students across all year levels
- **Support:** young people identified as needing additional assistance
- **Refer:** to appropriate services when required.

#### Partner:

**Improving Connectedness:** Young people who feel cared for by people at our school and who feel connected to learning are more likely to be motivated and show improved learning outcomes; they are also less likely to abuse substances, engage in violence, report mental health problems or engage in sex at an early age.

**Empowering Students:** Self-belief and empowerment are among the strongest indicators for school engagement. A broader focus encompassing young people's strengths and assets is important for building their skills and competencies as well as being an effective strategy for reducing problematic outcomes.

**Recognising the Importance of Parents:** The development of social and emotional skills is not confined to school; these skills are learned and practised in the family. Parental engagement in learning and the school has a significant impact on children's achievement. Parental involvement in schooling and the atmosphere towards learning in the home make a significant difference to educational achievement and wellbeing.

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<sup>1</sup> An initiative of the Department of Education and Training:  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/Pages/resilienceoverview.aspx>

**Lead:**

We recognise the importance of a whole-school approach to building resilience in young people, by embedding resilience at organisational, relational and pedagogical levels. We also encourage positive teacher-student relationships that have been shown to enhance student cognitive, emotional and behavioural engagement.

At a classroom level, each teacher is a leader - we model the personal and social skills that we want our students to develop and provide the collaborative learning activities that help students to engage with each other and the learning tasks.

**Promoting Positive Peer Relationships:** Whole-school approaches take a proactive approach to promoting a healthy peer environment. The quality of peer relationships significantly influences students' overall experience of school. Positive peer relationships provide friendship, support and inclusion, and are a protective factor linked to positive educational outcomes, reduced risk taking and mitigation of other existing risk factors. Negative peer relationships, such as those related to bullying, have a significant negative impact on student wellbeing. Both bullies and victims are likely to suffer from mental health problems later in their school years.

**Levels of engagement:** There are three levels by which we enhance wellbeing and engagement and build resilience – organisational, pedagogical, and relational:

**At an organisational level, we:**

- Establish a culture of high expectation for learning
- Develop a sense of optimism, purpose and school pride
- Foster a friendly, respectful and inclusive environment
- Generate a sense of optimism and purpose in students, staff and families
- Implement a positive approach to behaviour management
- Establish proactive policies addressing wellbeing and inclusion
- Make effective use of teacher professional learning
- Provide opportunities for student participation and leadership
- Foster strong partnerships with students, parents, carers, community and service providers

**At a pedagogical level, we:**

- Explicitly teach social and emotional learning skills
- Provide a relevant, rigorous and well-taught curriculum tailored to age and ability levels
- Provide a comprehensive wellbeing education program
- Use a variety of instructional methods and technologies to foster participation in learning
- Embrace the use of collaborative teaching strategies throughout the curriculum
- Provide experiential, hands-on learning opportunities
- Explicitly develop personal and social capabilities
- Use feedback and coaching effectively
- Use data to inform teaching
- Provide an engaging curriculum

**At a relational level, we:**

- Establish a friendly, respectful and inclusive environment
- Have high but achievable expectations for student learning and behaviour
- Promote positive and supportive teacher-student relationships
- Promote positive and supportive peer relationships
- Use positive approaches to manage student behaviour
- Foster a range of strategies to prevent and respond to bullying
- Provide a range of extra-curricula learning activities to foster social interaction, team spirit and school pride
- Notice and intervene when students experience problems related to learning or wellbeing

**Teach:**

We promote the personal and social capabilities of students by incorporating explicit evidence-based health, wellbeing and social and emotional learning (SEL) programs into the curriculum, and through the use of collaborative learning activities across the curriculum. Students who participate in rigorously designed and well-taught SEL programs are more resilient, show improved academic outcomes, demonstrate more positive social behaviour, and are less likely to engage in risky and disruptive behaviour, including risk-taking with alcohol and other drugs.

**Support:**

Teachers and allied professionals are well placed to identify young people with additional academic, social or wellbeing needs and to instigate school-based efforts to provide targeted support. At particular times all students need more care and attention than usual, and some young people need greater social, emotional or academic support on a more intensive or ongoing basis; this may include the provision of additional support within the regular classroom or withdrawal for provision of counselling, additional pastoral care or skills-development programs, or specialised learning activities.

Students with higher levels of social or emotional distress also continue to benefit from the provision of secure and positive routines within a supportive and friendly classroom.

Teachers work with our school wellbeing staff, leadership team, DET allied health professionals, and other service providers to provide appropriate support for those in need.

**RESOURCES:**

Resources for Teaching: <https://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/pages/View.aspx?pin=5DZ88S>  
I have downloaded these and they link to AusVELS.

Register: <http://www.achievementprogram.healthytogether.vic.gov.au/schools>

**WAYS IN WHICH THE COLLEGE BUILDS RESILIENCE:****Teaching and Learning:**

- Health and Human Relations Program at Years 7 to 10
- Student Life Program (Tutor Groups):  
<http://moodle.werribeesc.vic.edu.au/course/view.php?id=901>

**High but achievable expectations for learning and behaviour:**

- Clearly articulated classroom discipline plans (see Appropriate Behaviour Policy and Student Engagement Policy)
- Consistent follow-up from Sub-School Teams
- Respectful conversations with students and families
- Student Support Group Meetings
- Goals for students who are eligible for the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD)
- SEAL, High, Mainstream and Literacy Focus / Elementary Maths Mastery courses in Years 7 to 10
- College Promotion Policy based on achievement, but with provision for exceptional circumstances
- Informing parents and students about academic progress via the PORTAL, At Risk Letters etc

**Teacher Development:**

- Dylan Wiliam's Embedding Formative Assessment (Feedback) (2014-15)
- Developing a Werribee Secondary College Instructional Model (2015)
- Differentiated Learning (2015-16 Focus)
- Mandatory Reporting Modules
- Safe Minds Training for all members of the Principal, Student Management, and Student Wellbeing teams.

**Events and Activities:**

- Year 6 to 7 Transition Activities
- Drama Club
- Music Club
- Chess Club
- Environmental Club
- Australian Army Cadet Unit
- World Challenge
- Inter-school Debating
- House Activities – Students for Students
- Pastoral Leadership Program (Year 10 Warringa Park Project)
- Mr Riley’s Exam Preparation Techniques
- VCAL Fundraising and Community Services Program

**Student Programs:**

- Incursions: Year 10 Cheap Thrills, Year 9 Alcohol Awareness
- Year 10 Peer Support Program (Year 10s working with Year 7s)
- High Resolves (Student Global Citizenship / Leadership at Years 8 and 9 – and potentially Year 10)
- Student Leadership (House Captains and Vice-Captains)
- Supportive Friends (Senior School)
- Hands on Learning
- Salvation Army: Breakfast Club and Chill Zone
- VICSEG Refugee Programs

**Student Wellbeing Support:**

- Referral by the student or a friend, or by any member of staff
- Sub-School Teams
- Student Wellbeing Team (Robyn, Gayle and Sam)
- Department of Education and Training Allied Health Professionals

**External Agencies:**

- Anglicare
- Child First
- Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Headspace
- Safe Schools Coalition
- Wyndham Youth Services