



---

# PASTORAL CARE & STUDENT WELLBEING POLICY

PROMOTING ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING AND WELLBEING

FOR THE  
DIOCESAN SCHOOLS SYSTEM

---

January 2020

## 1. PURPOSE

In the Broken Bay Diocesan Schools System (DSS), children and young people are at the heart of all our endeavours. Catholic schools have a strong tradition of pastoral care for the purpose of providing each and every student with the strongest foundation possible for them to flourish and reach their full potential in learning and in life. This is a journey of growth and human flourishing, undertaken in partnership with parents, who are the first educators of their children. This policy is intended to guide system and school based guidelines and practices for pastoral care and student wellbeing, meet regulatory and diocesan requirements, and be implemented in conjunction with other related policies and guidelines as outlined in Section 5 of this policy.

## 2. POLICY FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 The Catholic Context: Mission and Pastoral Care

Catholic schools strive to be communities of care and support, where every young person experiences a holistic education that develops a sense of meaning and purpose in life, to be able to live their lives to the full: *I have come that you may have life and have it to the full. (John 10:10)*. The aim of pastoral care is to promote human flourishing, as we respond in Christian service to all those in our care with love, compassion, respect and a sense of justice and responsibility. Pastoral care in a Catholic school continues the healing ministry of Jesus Christ, as it supports staff, students and families to live the Mission through their daily interactions and care for others in our community. Pastoral Care, inspired by the Gospel and the Catholic tradition, values the dignity of the human person which is shown through the belief that everyone matters.

As a Catholic faith community we uphold the intrinsic dignity of all those in our care and acknowledge that each person is created in the image and likeness of God (Imago Dei). In recognising the presence of God in every person, pastoral care focuses upon person-centred care that nurtures a sense of belonging, inclusion and identity. A sense of belonging is critical to forming a sense of self, connectedness and purpose. From a place of love and acceptance we can grow and expand our sense of who we are and how we can be in the world. The Catholic school is called into community where interconnectedness and quality relationships shape and affirm the identity of each person.

### 2.2 Australian Student Wellbeing Framework (ASWF)

“The wellbeing of children and young people is enhanced and their learning outcomes optimised when they feel connected to others and experience safe, trusting relationships. Students who feel connected, safe and secure are more likely to be active participants in their own learning and to achieve better physical, emotional, social, spiritual and educational outcomes” (Australian Student Wellbeing Framework, 2018, p2). This policy is underpinned by the [Australian Student Wellbeing Framework \(2018\)](#) which outlines key elements and evidence based practices to support the whole school community to promote wellbeing, safety and learning (refer to Appendix A).

The five interrelated elements that have been adapted for our context include:

1. Leadership – Visible leadership to inspire positive, faith-filled school communities.
2. Inclusion – Inclusive and connected school culture inspired by the Gospel values.
3. Student voice – Authentic student participation that builds student voice and agency.
4. Partnerships – Effective family, parish and community partnerships.
5. Support – Wellbeing and support for positive behaviour.

The Australian Student Wellbeing Framework supports principals, school leaders, teachers, students and their families to build a positive, safe, supportive and inclusive learning environment through explicit teaching, evidence informed practices and active participation of the whole school community.

### 2.3 Guiding principles

The Broken Bay guiding principles are informed by the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework.

- Student wellbeing is central to learning and learning contributes to wellbeing
- The quality of relationships in a Catholic school community, should be fair and just, and respect the dignity, rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals

- Pastoral care practices are fully integrated throughout the teaching and learning process together with the structural and organisational systems of a school
- A positive education approach focuses on teaching and developing students' social-emotional skills (relationships, strengths and resilience) which provide a strong foundation for students to reach their aspirations in learning and in life
- Principals, school leaders and teachers play an active role in building a positive faith-filled learning environment, where the whole school community feels included, connected, safe and respected (ASWF)
- All members of our Catholic school community (staff, students and families) "are active participants in building a welcoming school culture that values diversity, and fosters positive, respectful relationships" (ASWF)
- "Students are active participants in their own learning and wellbeing, feel connected and use their social and emotional skills to be respectful, resilient and safe" (ASWF)
- Parents have the primary responsibility for the development of their child's wellbeing. Families and communities collaborate as partners with the school to support attendance, student learning, safety and wellbeing (ASWF)
- "Staff, students and families share and cultivate an understanding of wellbeing and support for positive behaviour and how this supports effective teaching and learning" (ASWF)

### 3. CONTENT

#### 3.1 Definitions

*Pastoral Care:* refers to all actions taken within a school to promote a climate of care that enhances the personal, social, physical, emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing of students and staff. Pastoral care within a Catholic school community is inspired by the teaching and lived example of Jesus Christ, with a focus on person-centred care that nurtures a strong sense of belonging, inclusion and identity. Drawing upon the Catholic tradition, pastoral care upholds the dignity of the human person through compassion, justice and respect in the belief that everyone matters.

*Student Wellbeing:* is a student's level of satisfaction about the quality of their life at school. Optimal (or desirable) wellbeing is characterised by positive feelings and attitude, positive relationships with other students and teachers, resilience and satisfaction with self and learning experiences at school (Noble, McGrath, Roffey and Rowling 2008).

*Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):* SEL is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. The key SEL competencies include, Self-awareness, Self-management, Social awareness, Social management (Relationship skills and Responsible decision-making), ([CASEL-The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning](#)).

*Positive Education:* is the scientific inquiry into the social-emotional skills, relationships, strengths and behaviours that contribute to student wellbeing and resilience in the school context. It includes school and classroom practices that contribute to a positive, safe, supportive and inclusive community (Noble & McGrath 2014).

*Case Management:* refers to a collaborative process whereby a school case management team develops, implements, monitors and evaluates an individualised or group plan of action for students with additional support needs in collaboration with families. The case management team will coordinate and collaborate with parties involved (internally and externally to the school) and engage the student and their parents in the decision-making process. The membership of the school case management team will vary according to the school and the needs of students.

*Parent(s):* The term 'parent' or 'parents' includes any person or persons having the custody or care of a child or young person.

#### 3.2 Diocese of Broken Bay Learning Principles

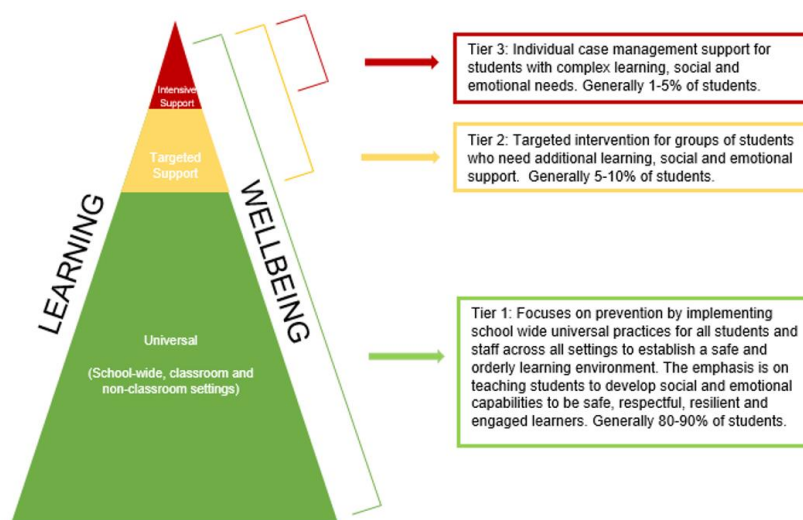
The [Diocese of Broken Bay Learning Principles](#) support this policy, as they aim to improve the educational outcomes of all students through creative and innovative learning environments that are

positive, safe, supportive and inclusive. They highlight the importance of collaboration, students having agency and being challenged in their learning and the need to nurture learning dispositions (social and emotional learning skills) that help them to succeed in learning and in life.

### 3.3 Multi-Tiered System of Support for Wellbeing

Foundational to a whole school approach to pastoral care and student wellbeing is a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework that focuses on prevention and intervention. MTSS provides services and interventions for students at increasing levels of intensity, based on students' needs. Tier 1 focuses on prevention and being proactive. It aims to prevent the development of learning, social and emotional problems by implementing high quality learning environments for all students and staff across all settings (i.e. school-wide, classroom and non-classroom). The emphasis is on teaching students to develop social and emotional capabilities to be safe, respectful, resilient and engaged learners. Tier 1 also identifies students who require more specialised and intensive assistance in Tier 2. Tier 3 supports "at risk" students with complex learning, social and emotional needs who require intensive individualised intervention often through a case management process involving students, staff and families and external providers.

The MTSS framework is adapted from the [Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports \(PBIS\) Framework](#). It is also known as the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) framework and is outlined below:



Reference: Adapted from 2019 Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS)

### 3.4 Corporal Punishment

The use of corporal punishment is prohibited in DSS schools.

### 3.5 Complaints

Complaints will be managed according to the [DSS Complaints Handling Policy](#). Complaints can be directed to the school Principal or School's Consultant and/or the Catholic Schools Office, Diocese of Broken Bay (02) 9847 0000.

## 4. GUIDELINES & EXPECTATIONS

### 4.1 Shared Responsibilities

All members of the school community (students, staff and parents) share the responsibility to contribute to a positive learning environment, where the whole school community feels included, connected, safe and respected.

All members of the school community have a responsibility to:

- support DSS and school policies and guidelines
- treat all members of the school community with dignity and respect
- work collaboratively with one another.

#### 4.2 Principals and school leaders have a responsibility to:

- implement the DSS Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing Policy and related policies such as Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Support as outlined in Section 5 and informed by the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework
- implement the five elements that is informed by the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework that underpin this policy (Appendix A)
- develop and implement school Pastoral care and student wellbeing guidelines that include the following five sections:
  1. **Leadership:** This may include reference to the school's Mission and values, pastoral care/wellbeing leadership team, systems and structures, staff roles and responsibilities, communication of school improvement priorities for pastoral care and student wellbeing, key policies and frameworks that underpin the school pastoral care practices, wellbeing data sets used to inform school improvement planning, professional learning, record keeping and monitoring.
  2. **Inclusion:** This may include reference to school pastoral care and student wellbeing teaching and learning practices to create a safe, supportive and inclusive culture eg. programs and initiatives, transition programs, staff wellbeing.
  3. **Student voice:** This may include reference to: the student leadership system and structure, student leadership development, opportunities for student agency and contribution to decision making, student surveys and focus groups, policy development, acknowledgement and award system.
  4. **Partnerships:** This may include reference to school partnerships with families, parish and the community, the Diocesan Parent Council (DPC), parent advisory groups, parent communication (eg. website, Apps, parent portal), parent education and engagement opportunities, parent surveys and focus groups, policy development, Family Liaison Officers (FLO's), CSO Aboriginal Education Officer and/or Aboriginal Education Workers (AEW's).
  5. **Support:** This may include reference to the DSS Behaviour Support Policy and school behaviour procedures eg. procedures for encouraging positive behaviour and discouraging inappropriate behaviour, case management and how to access the school.
- collect and use wellbeing data each year to inform school improvement planning such as, *Tell Them From Me*, [School Wellbeing Check](#) (Australian Student Wellbeing Framework), attendance, behaviour, counselling and [Be You](#).
- provide learning opportunities for students that develop social-emotional skills such as, self-awareness, managing emotions, setting and achieving goals, resilience, showing empathy, relationships and making responsible decisions
- ensure school – based procedures for record keeping of pastoral care and student wellbeing matters are followed eg. use of the Diocesan Electronic Student Information System (Compass/Genesis)
- plan and communicate the strategic priorities for pastoral care and student wellbeing to the school community
- provide staff professional learning opportunities in pastoral care and student wellbeing
- plan induction processes for new and casual staff regarding pastoral care and student wellbeing policy and practices
- implement transition programs and procedures eg. Kindergarten, Year 6-7, Years 10-11, Year 12 and new students.

#### 4.3 Teachers have a responsibility to:

- use pedagogical practices that promote a safe, supportive and inclusive learning environment
- develop social and emotional skills through their teaching and interactions with students.

#### 4.4 School counsellors have a responsibility to:

- contribute to the school wellbeing team
- provide clinical support and engage in case management practices with staff, students, families and consult with external agencies as required
- facilitate professional learning as required.

**4.5 Students have a responsibility to:**

- positively contribute to a safe, supportive and inclusive learning community
- seek help and report student wellbeing and safety concerns for themselves and others.

**4.6 Parents have a responsibility to:**

- support their children to develop and maintain positive, caring and respectful relationships (including online interactions)
- support 'good' attendance at school.

**4.7 The Catholic Schools Office (CSO) has a responsibility to:**

- support schools to implement Diocesan Policies that promote a safe, supportive and inclusive learning community
- provide resources and pastoral care and student wellbeing professional learning opportunities
- provide support to Principals and school counsellors in the management of pastoral and wellbeing matters.

**5. RELATED LEGISLATION, POLICIES, GUIDELINES & REFERENCES****Legislation**

- Education Act 1990
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Disability Standards for Education (2005) and Guidance Notes (2005), revised 2012.
- Ombudsman Act 1974
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- NSW Government, Keep Them Safe Online Mandatory Reporting Guide (2013)

**DSS Policies & CSO Guidelines/Support Documents**

- Acceptable Use Policy for Internet/Intranet & Network Services
- Anti-Harassment Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Support Policy
- Child Protection - Managing Risk of Significant Harm and Wellbeing Concerns Policy
- Child Protection - Addressing Allegations of Inappropriate Behaviour by Staff Policy
- Child Protection - Working with Children Check Policy
- Cyber-safety Guidelines
- Complaints Handling Policy
- Drugs in Schools Policy
- Guide for Managing Critical Incidents in Schools
- Learning Principles
- Social Media Policy
- Sustaining Strong Catholic School Communities Policy
- Quick Guide for Principals: Dealing With Social Media Concerns

**References**

- *Australian Student Wellbeing Framework* (2018), Education Services Australia, Education Council, [studentwellbeinghub.edu.au](http://studentwellbeinghub.edu.au)
- Noble, T. and Wyatt, T. (2008). *Scoping Study into Approaches to Student Wellbeing: Final Report*. Australian Catholic University and Erebus International
- Noble, T., McGrath, H., Roffey, S., & Rowling, L. (2008). *A scoping study on student wellbeing*. Canberra, ACT, Australia: Department of Education, Employment & Workplace Relations.
- OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (2017). *Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports [Website]*. Retrieved from [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org).
- *What is Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)?* (2019) The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), Chicago. Retrieved from <https://casel.org/what-is-sel/>

## 6. SUPPORT DOCUMENTS

- [Australian Curriculum Personal and Social Capability](#)
- [Australian Student Wellbeing Framework \(2018\)](#)
- [Be You](#)
- [CASEL Social and Emotional Learning](#)
- [Positive Behaviour Intervention Support \(PBIS\)](#)
- [Student Wellbeing Hub](#)

## 7. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

This policy supersedes the Pastoral Care Policy 2012. The policy implementation date is January 2020. All schools will be expected to have school pastoral care and student wellbeing guidelines in operation no later than 30 June 2020.

## 8. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed periodically and not less frequently than once every five years.

## 9. POLICY DATES

Date of completion and adoption:	2005
Date of current version:	2020
Date of next review:	2025

Authorised by  
**Dr Tony Bracken**  
Acting Director of Schools

## APPENDIX A

[The Five Elements of the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework \(2018\)](#) © Education Services Australia as the legal entity for the Education Council, p5.

					
<b>ELEMENTS</b>	<b>LEADERSHIP</b> Visible leadership to inspire positive school communities	<b>INCLUSION</b> Inclusive and connected school culture	<b>STUDENT VOICE</b> Authentic student participation	<b>PARTNERSHIPS</b> Effective family and community partnerships	<b>SUPPORT</b> Wellbeing and support for positive behaviour
<b>PRINCIPLES</b>	Principals and school leaders play an active role in building a positive learning environment where the whole school community feels included, connected, safe and respected.	All members of the school community are active participants in building a welcoming school culture that values diversity, and fosters positive, respectful relationships.	Students are active participants in their own learning and wellbeing, feel connected and use their social and emotional skills to be respectful, resilient and safe.	Families and communities collaborate as partners with the school to support student learning, safety and wellbeing.	School staff, students and families share and cultivate an understanding of wellbeing and support for positive behaviour and how this supports effective teaching and learning.
<b>EFFECTIVE PRACTICES</b>	<p>Develop the school's vision and values, building on existing strengths, to enhance student learning and sustain the safety and wellbeing of the whole school community</p> <p>Actively seek and incorporate students' perspectives about safety and wellbeing in order to promote positive learning outcomes</p> <p>Communicate the priorities for student learning, safety and wellbeing and encourage collaborative partnerships to enact the school's vision and values</p> <p>Collaboratively develop whole school policies, plans and structures for protecting the safety and promoting the wellbeing of staff, students, and families</p> <p>Regularly monitor and review school capacity to address the safety and wellbeing of the whole school community in order to identify areas of strength and those requiring improvement</p>	<p>Recognise and value the role and contribution of staff, students and families in building and sustaining school connectedness</p> <p>Respect the diversity of the school community and implement proactive strategies in order to build a cohesive and culturally safe school</p> <p>Teach, model and promote values and behaviour in order to create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments</p> <p>Foster and maintain positive, caring and respectful student-peer, student-teacher, teacher-parent and teacher-teacher relationships</p> <p>Engage in professional learning to build capacity for enhancing the social, emotional and learning outcomes of all students and in order to promote staff wellbeing</p>	<p>Provide opportunities for authentic student decision-making over matters that affect them</p> <p>Create and maintain inclusive and interactive learning environments to encourage active student participation to foster a sense of connectedness</p> <p>Actively engage students through the use of evidence-informed, strengths-based approaches to enhance their own learning and wellbeing</p> <p>Explicitly teach social and emotional skills using evidence-informed practices related to personal safety, resilience, help-seeking and protective behaviours across the curriculum</p> <p>Collaborate with students to develop strategies to enhance wellbeing, promote safety and counter violence, bullying and abuse in all online and physical spaces</p>	<p>Proactively build collaborative relationships with families and communities to create a shared understanding of how to support student learning, safety and wellbeing</p> <p>Develop strategies to sustain culturally respectful partnerships with families and communities that are welcoming and inclusive</p> <p>Build partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and community organisations to ensure a culturally safe environment and a two-way reciprocal exchange of knowledge on wellbeing issues</p> <p>Build links with community organisations, services and agencies to assist schools in the early identification of need and to collaboratively plan targeted support for all students and families, including those from vulnerable groups</p> <p>Regularly monitor and review school capacity to respond to specific instances of student and family need to protect their safety and wellbeing within the context of the school's urban, regional, rural or remote location</p>	<p>Actively seek the involvement of school staff, students and families in the promotion and recognition of positive behaviour</p> <p>Embed wellbeing and positive behaviour support strategies that are evidence-informed, promote resilience and align with the needs of the school community</p> <p>Implement a whole school systemic approach to wellbeing and positive behaviour with tiers of support to meet the diverse needs of staff, students and families</p> <p>Engage in professional learning to support the consistent implementation of the school's plan for wellbeing and support for positive behaviour</p> <p>Critically analyse and evaluate school data to inform decision-making in order to effectively respond to the changing needs of students and families</p>