

Building Better Schools with Evidence-based Policy

**Adaptable Policy for Teachers and
School Leaders**

Edited by **Kelly-Ann Allen, Andrea Reupert,
and Lindsay Oades**



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Building Better Schools with Evidence-based Policy: Adaptable Policy for Teachers and School Leaders provides an extensive set of free-to-use policies for building better schools.

The policies included in this book cover a broad range of popular topics for schools that are not readily accessible, and each policy is built on theory, driven by research, and created by experts. Each policy is based on substantial evidence, and this is ensured through the inclusion of contributors who are active and highly reputable in their respective fields. Most schools are obliged to write and maintain policy, and not all school leaders have the required skills, time, or expertise to do this effectively. *Building Better Schools with Evidence-based Policy: Adaptable Policy for Teachers and School Leaders* is a time-saving resource for schools. It aims to address the reported research-to-practice gap in education by delivering accessible evidence-based practice in a ready-to-use, adaptable format. All policies within this book are designed to be adapted and tailored to the unique diversity and needs of each school as reflected by the context and the people that make up the school community.

This book is relevant to every person who works in a school – worldwide. Users of this book can rest assured that each policy has been carefully formulated from the current understandings of best practice. This is a practical innovation and an example of how schools can use research evidence in their day-to-day practices.

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Routledge

Taylor & Francis Group

LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2021
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A catalog record has been requested for this book

ISBN: 978-0-367-45887-4 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-0-367-45889-8 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-003-02595-5 (ebk)

Typeset in Times New Roman
by Taylor & Francis Books

The contributors of this book wish to dedicate this book to all school staff. You are our treasured colleagues, educators of our children, and gatekeepers of the next generation. We acknowledge your loyalty to and perseverance in the profession and hope this book provides a resource that will help you meet your personal and organisational aims and objectives towards building better schools.



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<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

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Foreword

The Homeless Project is delighted to participate in the funding of *Building Better Schools with Evidence-based Policy: Adaptable Policy for Teachers and School Leaders*.

One often wonders “where does homelessness begin?” Many of the hundreds of vulnerable people that I’ve spoken to discuss their school experiences in a negative way. I’d like to reflect on a personal experience during year 10. I recall a dark school day when the class bully attacked me. To my great relief a senior teacher stopped the fight and hauled us off to his office only to tell the two of us that the school policy prohibits fighting on the school grounds and during school hours. He then ushered us from his office. I felt quite let down and the bully insisted that we finish the fight under the pine trees across the road after school. It was a minor miracle that I was not seriously injured. Who knows, the result of that incident could have led to a slippery slope of terrible outcomes. Books such as *Building Better Schools* will help to refine and improve school policies so that they may offer more appropriate interventions.

I’d like to thank the 70 plus academics who have selflessly donated their time towards the writing of this book. *Building Better Schools with Evidence-based Policy: Adaptable Policy for Teachers and School Leaders* will help towards building a better world and will hopefully contribute towards improved protective factors against disengagement, risk taking behaviours, crime, victimisation, and homelessness.

To this end, we have also made this resource freely available via the link on our website www.thehomelessproject.org.au

As school policies gradually evolve, it is hoped that one day all students will be more likely to look back on their school days as a place of productive learning, safety, and positive life experiences.

Stuart Allen
Director

Preface

This book boldly aims to provide a practical and useable vehicle for scholarly research to be integrated directly into the day-to-day practices occurring in schools. Studies highlight a gap between research and practice in schools. This book aims to address this problem.

The editors of this book have been practitioners as well as academics. We understand the importance of disseminating science to the people who will benefit the most from access to evidence-based practices.

The book is designed for practitioners and educators in schools. We hope that the policies contained within will save you time but also place rigorous scholarly direction at your fingertips. Given the robust evidence base presented in this book, funding bodies and educational researchers may benefit. Accordingly, the book also provides direction for research and funding priorities.

We hope that the policies inspire great work that helps build better schools globally.

Kelly-Ann Allen, Andrea Reupert,
& Lindsay Oades

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our major sponsors: The Homeless Project, Black Dog Institute, Communities That Care, Psychological Assessments Australia, the Australian Psychological Society's Psychologists in Schools Interest Group, and the Global Belonging Collaborative. Your generous support has given this book wide utility and broad distribution. You have helped make this book reachable to all schools, worldwide.

Thank you for the public and community donations that have also supported making this book freely available to schools. Special thanks to Denise Wong, Kylie Allen, Julie Marshall-Novak, Linda Howey, Christine Grove, Pamela Snow, Samantha Politis, Peter Malliaros, Jill Young, Joshua Neal Howard, and Jacinta Ohagan. We also thank our anonymous donors.

We would like to thank three individuals in particular for their contributions and support during the early stages of the book and for their leadership and commitment to research translation for the betterment of society. Professor John W. Toumbourou, Chair in Health Psychology, Deakin University, Associate Professor Mark Rickinson, Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at Monash University and director of The Q Project: Quality Use of Evidence Driving Quality Education, and Professor Deborah Corrigan Director of Education Futures at Monash Faculty of Education.

We would also like to thank our team of highly talented practitioner reviewers who worked alongside academic reviewers: Jessica Clark, James Peterkin, Dianne Summers, Rhiannon Young, Megan Thomas, and Dr Trupti Prasad. A special thanks goes out to Jill Young for her reviewing and consultancy during the development of this resource. Her lifelong commitment to improving the lives of all students is acknowledged and appreciated.

A very special thanks to Sally Kenney, Kilvington Grammar School, and Ruth Anne Hui Tsien Keh from the University of Melbourne in helping prepare this book for publication, and to Emma Cleine for generously supporting this book by providing her beautiful original art for the cover.

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1 Implementing school policy effectively

*Kelly-Ann Allen, Andrea Reupert, and
Lindsay Oades*

Introduction

Evidence-based policies are critical to the way that contemporary schools are run. Policies serve regulatory functions, and may also create standards of quality for teaching and learning, and opportunities for authentic engagement of staff, students and communities. For the first time, this book brings together research from different disciplinary and international scholars to deliver practical, evidence-based policy for schools.

With policies written by leading scholars in their field, this book collects in one place a rigorous and comprehensive yet accessible compendium of policies that schools can use and adapt. The specialist expertise of the authors means that each policy identifies key principles and issues that need to be considered by school communities across different domains, and anchored in the empirical realities of teaching and learning.

The book provides new understandings in policy development and content for schools to immediately adapt and apply. This makes it unique amongst other contemporary, research-orientated books. The provision of evidence-grounded policy exemplars that forms the heart of the book means that the book is uniquely placed to start the conversation between researchers and schools, and bridge the research-practice schism.

This opening chapter will explain the rationale for the use of evidence-based policies in schools and the need for schools to be equipped with ready-to-adapt policies. This chapter will also discuss why academics have a moral responsibility to translate and transform their work for the public. Finally, this chapter will detail how to consider the implantation issues related to the policies within the book. Readers will be given suggestions as to how they can most effectively use this book through adapting and tailoring policy to fit within their own unique schools and contexts.

Schools need policy

School leaders use policy to create standards, ensure consistency, support vision and mission statements, meet certain accreditation standards and/or

guide day-to-day practices (Allen et al., 2017; 2018). It is a requirement for most schools to have supporting policy that is, at a minimum, known and accessible to parents, staff, and in some circumstances, students. There is also a need for policy to remain current and in keeping with best practices (Efreom-Lieber & Lieber, 2010; Magor-Blatch, 2011). Thus, there is an obligation for school leaders to review and update policy documents regularly. Notwithstanding the importance of policies for schools, the processes of writing and maintaining policy can be a significant burden on school leaders and their staff.

School leaders and staff are not always resourced or qualified to meet the demands required to effectively write or update school policy. In general, school staff report not having enough time to engage in policy writing and suggest they lack the required expertise. Moreover, training and professional development available for policy writing are variable or non-existent for many school staff.

The problem with policy

Schools face several systemic challenges when attempting to assemble and write solid policy documents. In general, teaching staff, including school leaders, report increased stress and burnout, and describe feeling under-valued and underpaid (Roffey, 2012). In the UK, an analysis of 27,500 teachers who trained between 2011 and 2015 found that a quarter had left the profession. Data from Australia captured through the Hunter Institute of Mental Health found that up to half of the 453 Australian teachers sampled leave the profession in the first five years after graduation. School staff report various stressors including long hours, high workloads, disruptive and overcrowded classrooms, an overemphasis on testing, prescriptive curricula, teaching subjects that they do not have content knowledge in, a lack of input into decision making and the unavailability of supports for students with additional needs (Bahr et al., 2018). In the United States, we see similar concerns. In fact, it has been estimated that in addition to the significant portion of teachers who leave the profession, up to 8% change schools. Teacher turnover rates pose a major challenge for school leadership (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). Many of the concerns we see in the teaching profession are experienced globally. Writing policy documents, including identifying the appropriate data to inform these policies, provides yet another potentially onerous task for school staff.

Another issue stems from the fact that using research and evidence to improve practice is complex and skilled work that requires thoughtful engagement and appropriate evidence (Earl & Timperley, 2009; Rickinson et al., 2020). It is not surprising, then, that there continue to be situations where the results of empirical research are not applied within practice and school policy (Hempenstall, 2006). This lag in knowledge is possibly why many

schools still implement outdated educational practices not supported in the literature (e.g., the teaching of learning styles, reading recovery). There are many barriers affecting this, including problems related to leadership, culture and ethos, time, staff capability and a lack of training opportunities (Reupert, 2018; Prendergast & Rickinson, 2019). Likewise, many school libraries do not have access to database subscriptions, making it difficult for school staff, such as teachers, to access research-driven knowledge.

In addition, though some school staff have access to information that can help inform common and generic policy statements (e.g., anaphylaxis, after school care or academic achievement), it is increasingly acknowledged that schools need to focus on the development of the *whole student* (Waters et al., 2017), a priority supported by most schools (Allen et al., 2018). This means that there is mounting pressure on schools to implement approaches towards building social and emotional competencies, positive relationships, a sense of school belonging and emotional wellbeing in students alongside attaining literacy and numeracy competencies. These kinds of priorities take educators into new areas of practice and policy development.

Overall, school leaders require policy documents to support whole-school, evidence-based approaches. Policy in such areas requires a high level of specific expertise that may not be easily available to schools. *Building Better Schools with Evidence-based Policy: Adaptable Policy for Teachers and School Leaders* provides schools with policy in areas that are not readily accessible and require specialised evidence-based knowledge. Policies that aim to build better schools take into consideration the *whole student*, in an evidence-based manner. Therefore, this book addresses a critical gap in school policy internationally.

From a different perspective, the research community needs to connect their research with the realities of the day-to-day running of schools. To do this, researchers need to find accessible ways of disseminating their work in a clear, succinct manner. *Building Better Schools with Evidence-based Policy: Adaptable Policy for Teachers and School Leaders* is designed to address the research-practice gap by offering the best practice policy directly to schools in an accessible and useful way. Thus, the dual purpose of this book is to provide school leaders and staff with a useful, time-saving resource for building important policy and, at the same time, provide academics and researchers with a clear and effective vehicle for disseminating their research to the people who will benefit from it the most.

How to use this book

The policies to be included in this book cover a broad range of popular topics that are not readily accessible to schools, and each policy is built on theory, driven by research and created by policymakers and experts. Each policy is based on substantial evidence and this is ensured through the inclusion of

contributors who are active and highly reputable in their respective field. Each policy is presented in a ready-to-use and adaptable format that includes guidelines for school policy makers to help guide them in removing and adapting text to create their *own* school-specific policy. The keyword here is *adaptable*. All policies within this book are designed to be adapted and tailored to the unique diversity and needs of each school as reflected by the context and the people that make up the school community.

All policy included in this book is free for schools to use as their own.

The importance of evidence-based practice in schools

Evidence-based practices are well established practices or interventions that have undergone a rigorous evaluation process and demonstrated effectiveness with specific population groups, for example, certain school communities, year levels or students with particular needs (Reupert, 2020). Rather than relying on the pendulum swings of fads and opinion, evidence-based practice relies on significant and reliable evidence, obtained by rigorous, replicable methods. Understanding and applying data-driven evidence provides an opportunity for genuine and sustainable structural change in the way we teach and support students. Commonly espoused as models of “gold standard”, the use of data-driven, evidence-based practices typically identifies “what works” and, accordingly, is essential to driving policy and thereby continuous improvement in schools.

It is also important, though, to recognise that research evidence does not replace but rather complements the professional expertise of educators. In other words, the challenge is integrating professional expertise with the best external evidence from research in specific contexts (Sharples, 2013). This brings us on to the important challenge of implementation.

Implementing policy with fidelity

Most teachers would agree that it is not worthwhile having a terrific intervention or idea if nobody implements it. When implementing policy, it is important for schools to consider:

- How will key stakeholders be identified and how will they become actively involved in decisions related to the policy (particularly those decisions that affect them)?
- How does the policy need to be adapted to a particular school setting?
- How will information about school policy be disseminated to, and understood by, students, parents, teachers and school staff?
- What will the timeline for policy implementation look like and when can evaluation, feedback, monitoring or follow up occur?
- Is the concerned policy *feasible*? Does it match the *skills and willingness* of implementers? Is it appropriate for the *available resources*?

- Do staff need short-term or long-term professional development or training to implement the policy for themselves and students?

Evidence for Learning (2019) provides best practice foundations for implementation that can be applied to the implementation of school policy. They suggest that schools engage in a six-stage process to effectively plan and implement school policy (Figure 1).

Foundations for good implementation

- ✓ Treat implementation as a process, not an event. Plan and execute it in stages.
- ✓ Create a leadership environment and school climate that is conducive to good implementation.

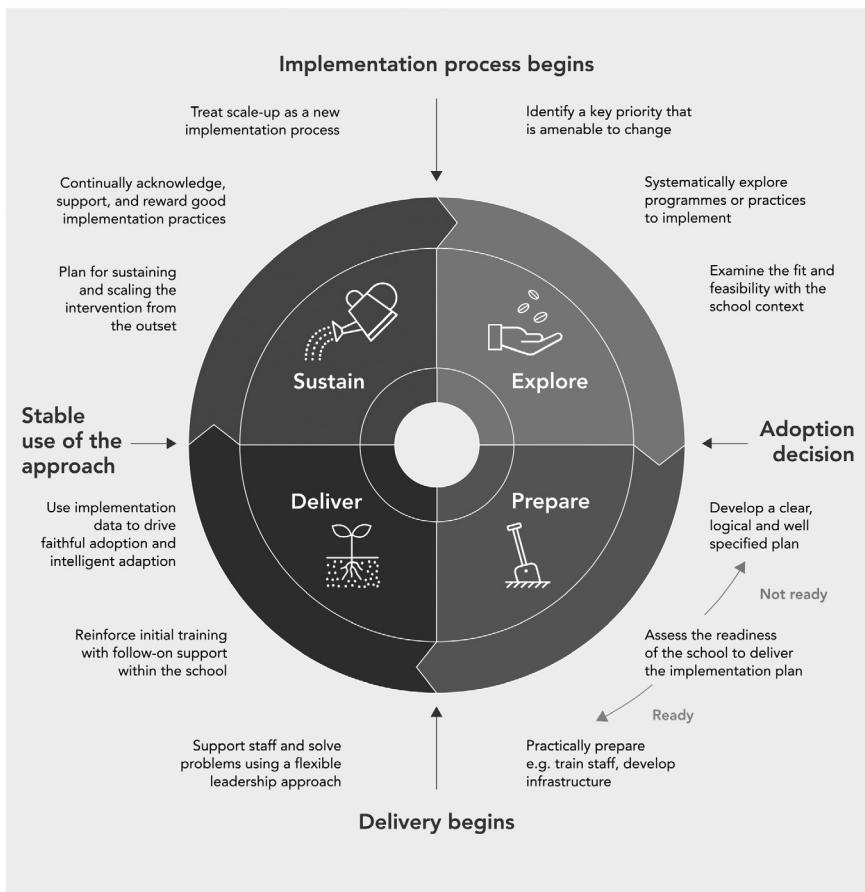


Figure 1: Implementation can be described as a series of stages relating to thinking about, preparing for, delivering, and sustaining change.

Figure 1.1. The stages of implementation.

Image provided with permission from *Evidence for Learning* (2019).

The foundations for good implementation include (Adapted from *Evidence for Learning*, 2019):

- 1 Treat implementation as a process, not an event plan, and execute it in stages.
 - Allow enough time for effective implementation, particularly in the preparation stage; prioritise appropriately.
- 2 Create a leadership environment and school climate that is conducive to good implementation.
 - Set the stage for implementation through curriculum, routines and practices.
 - Identify and cultivate leaders of implementation throughout the school.
 - Build leadership capacity through implementation teams.
- 3 Define the problem you want to solve and identify appropriate programs or practices to implement.
 - Specify a tight area of focus for improvement that is amenable to change.
 - Determine a program of activity based on existing evidence of what has – and hasn’t – worked before.
 - Examine the fit and feasibility of possible interventions or policy to the school context.
 - Make an adoption decision.
- 4 Create a clear implementation plan, judge the readiness of the school to deliver that plan, then prepare staff and resources.
Develop a clear, logical, and well-specified implementation plan:
 - a) Specify the active ingredients of the intervention clearly: Know where to be “tight” and where to be “loose”.
 - b) Develop a targeted yet multi-stranded package of implementation strategies.
 - c) Define clear implementation outcomes and monitor them using robust and pragmatic measures.
 - Thoroughly assess the degree to which the school is ready to implement the innovation or policy.
 - Once ready to implement an intervention or policy, practically prepare for its use:
 - a) Create a shared understanding of the implementation process and provide appropriate support and incentives.

- b) Introduce new skills, knowledge and strategies with explicit upfront training.
 - c) Prepare the implementation infrastructure.
- 5 Support staff, monitor progress, solve problems and adapt strategies as the approach is used for the first time.
- Adopt a flexible and motivating leadership approach during the initial attempts at implementation.
 - Reinforce initial training with follow-on coaching within the school.
 - Use highly skilled coaches.
 - Complement expert coaching and mentoring with structured peer-to-peer collaboration.
 - Use implementation data to actively tailor and improve the approach.
 - Make thoughtful adaptations only when the active ingredients are securely understood and implemented.
- 6 Plan for sustaining and scaling an intervention from the outset and continuously acknowledge and nurture its use.
- Plan for sustaining and scaling an innovation from the outset.
 - Treat scale-up as a new implementation process.
 - Ensure the implementation data remains fit for purpose.
 - Continuously acknowledge, support and reward good implementation practices.

(Adapted from *Evidence for Learning*, 2019, p. 6–7)

Final thoughts

All school policymakers should ensure that students and staff have sufficient *buy-in* to the creation and implementation of policies that most concern them. Parents, staff, students, school leaders and often the broad school community benefit from knowing and understanding about the utility of such policies. Schools must consider how their school policy will be adapted, shared, understood, enacted, used and reviewed. Too often, school policies are published and forgotten. School leaders need to take an active role in ensuring this does not happen. Evidence-based policy helps schools understand the important research base that drives best practices. This book includes a summary of the research evidence to ensure that policy users can understand the research base and methods that underpin the policy they are providing to their school. In sum, policies should be implemented intentionally, authentically and with fidelity. The following checklist from *Evidence for Learning* (2019) provides a summary:

Fidelity checklist for implementing policy

- Plan and prepare. The implementation of a policy is a process, not an event.
- Set a conducive environment for effective implementation through strong leadership.
- Identify the problem you wish to address.
- Create a clear and concise implementation plan; assess the capacity of the school; train the staff and identify resources.
- Implement the policy; monitor the progress; revise where needed.
- Build sustainability into your implementation plan.

(*Evidence for Learning*, 2019, pp. 6–7)

Evidence-based policy is the foundation of effective school management and practices. But for school policies to work effectively and continuously improve, efficient planning and implementation are essential.

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Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the consultation of Associate Professor Mark Rickinson, Monash University, for his assistance in the development of this chapter.

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2 Applying the science of learning in the classroom

Pamela Snow and Caroline Bowen

How to use this policy

The concept of evidence-based education (EBE) enshrines the use of well-designed, clearly reported, readily accessible scientific studies to establish which education practices and procedures are efficient and effective. It is a relative newcomer to the education literature in general (Davies, 1999) and to special education (Cook, Tankersley & Landrum, 2009; Travers, 2017). When implemented well, EBE impacts all aspects of education practice, from policymaking to classroom teaching. It facilitates evidence-based instruction, evidence-based learning, and reflective practice (Schön, 1984) in initial and ongoing teacher education, in lifelong professional learning, and in classrooms. Barriers to EBE include a largely unresolved debate over “what counts as evidence”, teachers’ capacity to access, understand and evaluate scientifically derived evidence, and time constraints.

The objective of this policy is to guide the **[INSERT name of school]** community to **assess** new and “old” evidence, **end** practices found wanting or that are outdated, **retain** those with adequate levels of evidence, and/or **adopt** practices with stronger scientific credentials, and **justify** their choices based on sufficient professional development, on-site coaching, and necessary support for teachers to implement best practices.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] Applying the science of learning in the classroom

Rationale

Children’s classroom time is fixed in terms of hours per day and weeks per year. If pedagogy is closely informed by the best-available research evidence, the use and benefits of students’ and teachers’ class time will be maximised. This is particularly crucial, and potentially beneficial, for three overlapping categories of students whose progress must be accelerated by

schooling, not simply held constant. They are students (i) from disadvantaged backgrounds, (ii) who have neurodisabilities, and/or (iii) who display concomitant learning and behaviour difficulties. This combination of learning and behaviour issues often obscures underlying language and literacy support needs in the early years (Graham et al., 2020) and secondary school (Snow, 2019). Regrettably, significant numbers of students do not receive appropriate support services and/or are exposed to practices for which the evidence base is weak or non-existent (Bowen & Snow, 2017), as well as those which have been shown to be ineffectual (e.g., Foxx & Mulick, 2016).

Rather than adopting well-founded support methods, schools regularly fall prey to popular, unevidenced, sometimes well-meaning, often attractively packaged and usually profit-driven intervention programs—especially “remedial” programs—to address learning (attention, memory, reading, writing, and numeracy skills), “mindset”, and behavioural self-regulation, at all instructional tiers.¹ These frequently promise much but show little return on parent and school financial investment, or staff, parent, and student time.

In clinical and public health, the last three decades have seen unquestioning reliance on expert opinion and practitioner personal preference and habits, replaced by the development of evidence-based protocols to guide practice. A comparable shift is beginning in education, despite many educators feeling ill-equipped to evaluate new instructional and support approaches, and to understand the research reports that describe them. For this reason, they seek accessible and helpful algorithms and protocols to aid them in the process of adhering to evidence-based principles and to support them in implementing what is increasingly referred to as the Science of Learning (Deans for Impact, 2015).

As a paradigm, evidence-based practice (EBP) emerged from clinical medicine in the 1990s, most notably the work of a small number of UK-based physicians, such as Sackett, Muir Gray, Cochrane, and others (Claridge & Fabian, 2005; and see Sackett, et al., 1996). These workers recognised that the knowledge, beliefs, and habits of experienced practitioners are subject to entrenched bias and blind spots. The existence of such sticking points means that practitioners and practices must be open to modification over time as the scientific evidence about underlying disorders changes, and research about optimal management is refined. EBP met with some initial resistance in clinical medicine, but despite its acknowledged (and expected) ongoing limitations, it is now a cornerstone of the pre-service preparation of a wide range of health professionals, continually informing their professional development across their working lives.

In some quarters, there is a preference for the term “evidence-informed” practice, reflecting the fact that evidence changes and there are many sources of evidence on which staff in schools can draw. Another term that appears occasionally is evidence-based *education* (EBE). We think all three

terms, which do have slightly different meanings, are acceptable, provided that none of them refer to in-house collection of assessment data on individual children (which of course has an important place in classrooms in its own right but does not align with the meaning of EBP). The corollary in medicine would be evidence-based practice referring to doctors making treatment decisions based on pathology results following a full blood examination. Rather, EBP in education (or EBE) means basing decisions about pedagogical practices on findings from empirical research, published in peer-reviewed journals. Acknowledgement of the notion of *levels of evidence*² is also important, as one methodologically weak study in a low-impact journal (as an extreme example) should not exert the same degree of influence over school decision-making as a meta-analysis of several empirically robust studies. In between these extremes, we invariably find the full range of studies in terms of design sophistication, robustness, and relevance to classroom realities.

Importantly, evidence-based practice has never been solely about empirical data, and neither has the science of learning. Evidence-based practice has always been about the best case-by-case alignment of research evidence with available resources and (in the case of clinical medicine) patient preferences. Published, peer-reviewed sources are, however, a non-negotiable key element of evidence-based practice. Moreover, the concept of patient preference (or “consumer” preference) can be used by analogy to align instruction to teachers’ understanding of their students and the types of background knowledge they may possess and require going forward as part of a content-rich curriculum (Pondiscio, 2019).

The US-based Deans for Impact group (2015) summarises this thinking thus: “The Science of Learning does not encompass everything that new teachers should know or be able to do, but we believe it is part of an important—and evidence-based—core of what educators should know about learning”.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on assessing new evidence, discontinuing certain practices, and adopting new practices, based on adequate professional development and support, including classroom-based coaching. The policy might also serve as an exemplar for other schools. It is noted that some practices may be “new” to a school while having been in place for some time in other schools, while other practices will be novel to the whole sector.

Scope

This policy applies to current and future teachers, staff, school leaders, and parents of students who attend [INSERT name of school]. A whole-

school approach to evidence-based classroom instruction (EBE) and support is overseen by school leadership, partnering with parents in the school community, and allied health professionals such as school psychologists and speech-language pathologists.

Policy statement

School management

Our school endeavours to employ capable teachers who are knowledgeable and skilled with respect to the Science of Learning, e.g., the linguistic basis of early and ongoing reading instruction, alongside evidence-based approaches to other core curriculum areas, notably numeracy. Our teachers willingly work in a community of practice to maintain and strengthen their skills and those of others, and where indicated, to modify these on the basis of shifts in evidence, across all school years and instructional tiers. This includes discontinuing approaches that are no longer deemed sufficiently robust to warrant the use of student and teacher time, as well as school and parent financial support.

[INSERT name of school] ensures that teachers have access to professional development that promotes an understanding of the scientific method and the ability to critically appraise new education research evidence, and closely related research evidence from other disciplines (e.g., audiology, ophthalmology, developmental psychology, and occupational therapy). This professional development covers quantitative and qualitative research, and levels of evidence of published findings. Distinguishing peer-reviewed from non-peer-reviewed literature is an important aspect of this policy. Teachers also have access to professional development that affords them cognisance of rationales behind new approaches and opportunities to gain some mastery of new practices *before* classroom implementation. Classroom coaching by skilled mentors is provided, to promote and sustain changed and/or best practice.

[INSERT name of school] implements teaching approaches, programs, and interventions with fidelity. That is, new approaches and programs are delivered as intended, and staff do not deviate or “pick and choose” according to their interests and comfort levels with an instructional approach.

[INSERT name of school] consistently applies and promotes teaching approaches that are derived from sound theoretical principles that have been empirically tested, with findings published via peer-reviewed literature. Approaches supported by independent evidence are preferred over those where real or possible conflicts of interest exist.

[INSERT name of school] does not support the use of approaches that are not based on scientifically accepted principles and/or peer-reviewed literature. Teaching approaches and interventions promoted in electronic media that contain testimonials and loose references to “research” are viewed with extreme caution. We actively avoid sustained use of poorly evidenced approaches out of habit or familiarity.

Teachers

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] are recruited for their current level of knowledge of evidence-based instruction (EBE), their support and/or willingness to upskill through in-house and other targeted forms of professional development, and their ongoing engagement in communities of practice pertaining to pedagogy and behaviour management.

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] consistently adhere to evidence-based pedagogical approaches at all classroom and intervention levels, in order to promote consistency of instructional support and progress monitoring approaches and provide maximal opportunities for mastery. This applies particularly to students who struggle academically and/or psychosocially, who may need RTI (Response to Intervention) Tier II and/or Tier III support.

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] actively engage, as part of a community of practice within the school, to review, maintain, and extend their knowledge of the evidence-based pedagogy, and support their peers to do likewise.

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] provide evidence-based advice and resources to parents about how to support children’s learning and behaviour, and provide guidance and support to parents who have questions about resources they locate through their own research. This applies to all children, regardless of the presence of a formal or supposed diagnosis of disability.

Parents

Parents of children attending [INSERT name of school] are provided with up-to-date, accessible evidence-based resources about learning and behaviour and are encouraged to be involved in early and ongoing discussions with teaching and support staff about their child’s progress. Parents are also provided with opportunities to attend information sessions about teaching and support approaches employed at [INSERT name of school]. Parents are provided with printed information about pseudoscience and the exploitative methods used by promoters of such arguments in targeting parents who have legitimate concerns about their child’s progress.

Rating of evidence base



Figure 2.1. Reading Instruction and Support Rating of Evidence.

Author Note: The application of evidence-based principles and the science of learning in education is not widely enough established or researched for impact to be “excellent”. However, there are instances of such impact. We recognise that in many cases, making a shift towards the science of learning will be met with some resistance and reluctance, and it requires the cessation of some teaching and progress monitoring approaches that are familiar and comfortable to teachers. Adopting a commitment to evidence-based approaches is difficult without strong school leadership support and a whole-school policy framework.

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Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Notes

- 1 “Instructional tiers” refers to Response to Intervention (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006) in which Tier 1 is universal classroom instruction and Tier 2 is small-group targeted intervention for students whose assessment data indicates gaps in knowledge or skills that need to be addressed in order for them to keep pace with the curriculum (including behavioural difficulties). Tier 3 refers to 1:1 interventions for the small percentage of students who do not make adequate progress as a result of Tier 2 services. At all tiers, the model assumes careful use of well-validated measures that are carefully interpreted by classroom teachers and the provision of intervention approaches that are based on solid theory and empirical evidence.
- 2 Further information about the multiple levels (anywhere between four and ten) of evidence in health is provided by Burns, Rohrich and Chung (2011). The application of this principle in education is partially addressed by the US Institution of Educational Studies’ What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), which applies a fairly coarse classification of evidence as “minimal”, “moderate”, and “strong”. It is also noted that some WWC reviews have been criticised for lack of methodological rigour, e.g., Chapman and Tunmer (2011) and McArthur (2008), thus calling into question some of their conclusions about the effectiveness of certain pedagogical approaches.

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3 Student wellbeing interventions and implementation

Dianne A. Vella-Brodrick and Tan-Chyuan Chin

How to use this policy

Positive Psychology, which promotes feeling good, functioning well and doing good, is gaining traction in education settings. Wellbeing is recognised as being important in its own right and as a prerequisite for learning. With growing pressure on schools to embed wellbeing content in an already busy curriculum, many schools draw from external interventions, talks and one-off student wellbeing experiences. Many of these practices do not have sufficient support from research to justify and support their expense or the time taken to invest in them. The purpose of this policy is to discuss the importance of implementing and embedding interventions that are empirically robust. To ensure their sustained practice and benefits, programs also need to have sufficient scope and sequence within the school's existing program and relevance for the school community.

Selecting quality wellbeing interventions for students can be a daunting task for schools. This policy is intended to guide educational leaders and school communities to develop a clear process for including student wellbeing interventions at their schools. It will elucidate some of the critical factors that are associated with the most successful wellbeing interventions. Hence, it serves as a useful compass for schools seeking to implement wellbeing interventions and to optimise the positive effects for students of these interventions.

This policy example is intentionally broad and school policy creators are encouraged to delete and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] Student wellbeing interventions and implementation

Rationale

Wellbeing interventions seek to improve the mental health of individuals or groups using strengths-based strategies focused on building positive emotions,

engagement, quality relationships, meaning and feelings of accomplishment as reflected in Seligman's (2011) Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment (PERMA) model. The development and uptake of wellbeing interventions in school settings is escalating (Green et al., 2014; Slemp et al., 2017). This is in part due to the growing recognition that schools have an important role to play in helping to promote student wellbeing. Wellbeing interventions have the potential to curb mental ill health and to impart useful wellbeing skills that can lead to enhanced wellbeing (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). School-based wellbeing interventions have also been found to be beneficial, particularly when they integrate positive psychology interventions (Cilar et al., 2020).

A universal approach to wellbeing in a school context means that most young people will have access to the wellbeing intervention irrespective of their mental health status. Widespread implementation will contribute to a common language and understanding of wellbeing, help promote equity and erode the social stigma often associated with seeking help from mental health professionals (Gray & Daraganova, 2017; Rickwood et al., 2005). While this is a positive step in helping to address the mental health crisis experienced by many young people (Carlisle et al., 2019; Vos et al., 2015) and to promote optimal states of functioning and flourishing, those who are responsible for selecting student wellbeing interventions can feel overwhelmed with the vast number of choices available. Many questions arise and it can be difficult to select the "right" wellbeing initiative. For example, what content or program should be included and for what student Year levels? What is the ideal length of time to run the initiative? What evidence is there that this is a good program? How will we know if the program is working for our students?

It is imperative that any intervention associated with the mental health and wellbeing of young people has a strong evidence base of relevant benefits. Although positive interventions generally focus on promoting wellbeing and are considered to be engaging, we cannot underestimate the possibility of harm with any mental health intervention and thus responsible steps need to be taken in the selection, resourcing, monitoring and evaluation phases.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to help guide school communities in selecting and delivering student wellbeing interventions that are both effective for and relevant to achieving the desired wellbeing outcomes.

Scope

The policy is relevant to school communities who are involved in the selection of student wellbeing initiatives. This can include teachers wanting to integrate wellbeing education in some of their classes, School Leaders who would like to roll out an intervention for a cohort of students or wellbeing, pastoral care

and leadership staff who would like to adopt a whole-school approach to wellbeing education.

Educational groups such as Departments of Education or School Networks may also have an interest in adopting wellbeing interventions for multiple schools. This policy would be equally relevant to these groups and takes on critical importance when project findings of intervention efficacy are intended to inform the practices adopted in other schools.

There should be a dedicated team – with a clear leader who has relevant experience in student wellbeing – that oversees the program selection and delivery, including the ethical requirements, monitoring and communication of program effects.

[INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

Foundational principles and governance

[INSERT name of school] will adopt a strategic approach for implementing wellbeing interventions that is consistent with implementation science, ethics and best practice principles (Glasgow, Harden, Gaglio, Rabin, Smith, Porter, Ory & Estabrooks, 2019; King et al., 2020; Kwan, McGinnes, Estabrooks, Waxmonsky & Glasgow, 2019). A strategic approach provides a clear process for change and is useful for identifying anticipated outcomes (Stein & Valters, 2012).

[INSERT name of school] will adopt a comprehensive systems approach to wellbeing interventions. Wellbeing interventions sit within a complex system and hence, they are likely to work best using a whole-school approach that aligns with and supports the intervention (Hoare, Bott & Robinson, 2017; Waters, 2011).

This includes:

- 1 Creating opportunities within all school life to practice and discuss the usefulness of the wellbeing intervention.
- 2 Modelling key components of the wellbeing intervention by school staff.
- 3 Ensuring the application of the wellbeing intervention is visible to students and the school community through policy, day-to-day communications and behaviour.
- 4 Fostering collaborations between wellbeing staff such as school counsellors and psychologists, the pastoral care team and health education teachers, as well as with community health services.

[INSERT name of school] will develop a plan that is endorsed and fully supported by school leadership and school parent committees (Hoare, Bott & Robinson, 2017; Waters, 2011).

[INSERT name of school] will consult with experts in the field (such as other schools with extensive wellbeing experience, child and youth service groups, and university scholars well versed in the application of wellbeing

science) to receive advice on the wellbeing intervention plan. This supports the importance of the science-practitioner relationship and ecological validity (Soutter, O'Steen & Gilmore, 2014).

[INSERT name of school] will demonstrate a high level of “readiness” prior to implementing the intervention, such that school staff will be sufficiently motivated and prepared to implement the student wellbeing program (Hoare, Bott & Robinson, 2017; Waters, 2011).

Student contribution, engagement and access

[INSERT name of school] recognises that wellbeing education needs to be meaningful and relevant to students’ needs (Vella-Brodrick, Chin, & Rickard, 2019; Vella-Brodrick, Rickard, & Chin, 2017). Hence, we will consult with students to better understand what their wellbeing needs are.

[INSERT name of school] will provide students with a safe and confidential forum to voice their experiences, challenges and concerns (Powell, Graham, Fitzgerald, Thomas & White, 2018).

Students will be given the opportunity to contribute to the planning, design and implementation of wellbeing initiatives at [INSERT name of school]. The school can facilitate the co-design by using a range of age-appropriate methods, such as focus groups, interviews and self-report surveys to incorporate students’ perspectives and expectations (Blomkamp, 2018). This transforms the students’ participation from receiving education and information, to being involved through active engagement and consultation, and ideally being part of the decision-making process by co-designing and co-producing the activities to share and balance the power and participation between staff and students (Slay & Stephens, 2013).

[INSERT name of school] will involve young people in the decision-making process associated with wellbeing programs that concern them. Their views should be considered particularly as age and maturity increases (Lansdown, Jimerson & Shahroozi 2014).

[INSERT name of school] will provide equitable opportunities for all students to contribute to and participate in student wellbeing interventions. This will help to make programs relevant to diverse groups (Lansdown et al., 2014).

[INSERT name of school] will provide wellbeing interventions that are accessible, relevant and responsive to the contextual and cultural needs of our students. The social-ecological model suggests that optimal change and outcomes are facilitated by interventions that consider and address the interrelatedness of individual, familial, inter/intrapersonal and community contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

[INSERT name of school] will implement evidence-based wellbeing interventions but will adapt these where necessary to suit the specific school context (Street, 2017).

Adequate support and training for staff and students

[INSERT name of school] will provide staff with professional development opportunities and adequate time release to acquire knowledge and build capacity to achieve optimal outcomes for all members of the learning community (Chin, Stevenson, Jacques-Hamilton, & Vella-Brodrick, 2019; Soutter, O'Steen & Gilmore, 2014).

[INSERT name of school] will ascertain the level of resources needed and available to support the intervention. We will also source additional resources needed to successfully deliver the program. Building internal capacity supports a whole of school approach and enables sustained practice (Desimone, 2002).

[INSERT name of school] will ensure professional support services are available to students to protect them and to enable their rights (Lansdown et al., 2014).

Allocate adequate resources to assess wellbeing needs, effects and impact

[INSERT name of school] will routinely conduct a wellbeing needs analysis to guide the selection of relevant interventions. The intervention needs to meet current needs and valued outcomes. This will promote student buy-in, which can contribute to students' engagement in active learning (Cavanagh et al., 2016).

[INSERT name of school] will measure and monitor the wellbeing of students using reliable quantitative and qualitative methods on a regular basis (e.g., annually), including at baseline, to examine if there are shifts in wellbeing in response to the intervention. Measurement needs to be built into any wellbeing strategy as this will help to determine how well the program is working to achieve the intended outcomes (Glasgow et al., 2019; Seligman, 2013).

[INSERT name of school] will acquire relevant expertise to accurately analyse and interpret data collected via standardised measures or specialised tools. This is consistent with the recommendation to optimise both internal and external resources (Zhang, 2016).

[INSERT name of school] will monitor and document the implementation process to ensure the program is being delivered as intended (Glasgow et al., 2019).

[INSERT name of school] will collect feedback about the intervention experience, from those delivering the program, program recipients and significant others such as parents. This will enable the intervention to be improved for future delivery and increase the likelihood the intervention will be maintained (Noell & Gansle, 2009).

Rating of evidence base



Figure 3.1. Student Wellbeing Interventions and Implementation Rating of Evidence.

Author note. There are a number of well-established design and implementation frameworks that have been well-supported. While there is some short-term evidence, more information about longer-term impact is needed. Given the whole-school and systems approach, an investment in relevant resources is needed for improved success.

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Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Further reading

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4 Load reduction instruction policy

Andrew J. Martin and Paul Evans

How to use this policy

Load reduction instruction (LRI) is an approach to instruction that seeks to reduce the cognitive burden on learners by optimally balancing explicit instruction with guided independent learning. LRI refers to a set of pedagogical principles that can be used to improve student learning, motivation, and engagement. This policy on LRI applies to classroom teachers for implementation in the everyday course of pedagogy. This policy can also be applied by educators in learning support roles. At the school level, it is recommended that school leaders support teachers to integrate LRI in day-to-day classroom instruction, as well as one-on-one instruction as appropriate. It is also recommended that teachers and relevant support staff receive professional development to ensure LRI is implemented in line with the evidence base. This policy is intentionally broad and school policymakers are encouraged to delete and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best serves the learning needs of students in their school.

[INSERT name of school] Load reduction instruction policy

Rationale

Research has shown that explicit instruction is significantly associated with students' achievement gains (Evans & Martin, 2020). This is because it presents learning material in a way that reduces the cognitive burden on students as they learn (Sweller, 2012; Sweller et al., 2011). Then, as students develop sufficient knowledge and skill, they can be provided with more independence as learners—such as through guided independent activities or guided discovery learning (Liem & Martin, 2013). Introducing independent learning too early in the instructional process, and without sufficient guidance, can overload learners' working memory (Mayer & Moreno, 2010); however, if learners do not move to guided independent learning after they have become fluent in the required knowledge and skill, they can become bored and disengaged (Kalyuga et al., 2003; Kalyuga et al., 2001). Thus, explicit instruction and independent (or discovery) learning do not represent a false dichotomy; rather, the success of one depends on the success of

the other. Load reduction instruction (LRI) (Martin, 2016; see also Martin & Evans, 2018; 2019) has been recommended as an instructional approach that emphasizes explicit instruction in the initial stages of learning, and then a progression to guided independence as the automaticity and fluency in knowledge and skill develop. The overall approach, therefore, resembles a careful mix of teaching strategies, ranging from *I-do* strategies like demonstration, modelling, and explaining, *we-do* strategies like scaffolded practice and experimentation, and *you-do* strategies such as guided real-world projects.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for implementing LRI as a means of easing the cognitive burden of student learning.

Scope

This policy applies to teachers, relevant learning support staff, and school leaders. Teaching and relevant learning support staff will apply LRI in the classroom, in small groups of students, or one-on-one as appropriate. School leaders will support and further inform teachers' implementation of LRI.

Policy statement

Teachers and learning support staff (“educators”)

Educators recognize that academic life becomes increasingly demanding as students move from one grade (year level) to the next (Martin, 2015). Each year at school, the difficulty of subject matter and the frequency and amount of assessment escalates. Educators need to understand that this imposes significant cognitive demands on students (Kirschner, et al., 2006).

Educators at [INSERT name of school] seek to ease the cognitive burden on students in the early stages of their learning and then administer more challenging schoolwork as they develop the relevant knowledge and skill (Liem & Martin, 2013).

Educators do so by attaining the optimal balance between explicit instruction and guided independent learning (Martin & Evans, 2018).

LRI (Martin, 2016; see also Martin & Evans, 2018; 2019; Martin et al., 2020) is an instructional approach aimed at attaining this balance. It initially involves explicit instruction. Then, as students' knowledge and skill build, it involves less structured approaches such as guided independent learning (e.g., see evidence on the expertise reversal effects; Kalyuga et al., 2001; 2003).

To implement LRI, educators at [INSERT name of school] observe the following principles at key points in the learning process: Principle #1: Reduction of task difficulty during initial learning, as appropriate to learners' prior knowledge; Principle #2: Instructional support and scaffolding through the task; Principle #3:

Ample structured practice; Principle #4: Appropriate provision of instructional feedback-feedforward; and Principle #5: Guided independent application and learning (Martin, 2016; see also Martin & Evans, 2018; 2019; Martin et al., 2020).

- Principle #1: Educators reduce the difficulty of a task during initial learning (i.e., new concepts or at the beginning of a new topic) as appropriate to learners' prior knowledge by: revising key ideas as needed; clearly modelling/demonstrating how to do something; breaking work into "bite-size" manageable chunks; and, doing regular checks of students' learning in the early stages of a topic, task, or activity.
- Principle #2: Educators provide instructional support and scaffolding by: ensuring that students' attention is focused on the central information and material (not on irrelevant material); having logical sequencing of how information is presented to students; organizing information under themes or big ideas; giving students sufficient time to master a task; providing worked examples so students know what a completed task looks like; providing templates to scaffold students through a task; and, adjusting tasks to individualize for the student where appropriate.
- Principle #3: Educators provide ample structured practice through deliberate practice (students rehearse material or a skill until learned); mental practice (students rehearse something in their mind); and guided practice (students are prompted through a structured task). Structured practice could be focused on new knowledge or revisiting material covered previously so as to maintain fluency.
- Principle #4: Educators provide instructional feedback-feedforward by sharing examples of good/completed work if students have difficulty with a task; providing feedback, which is specific information about the correctness of an answer or response; and providing feedforward that comprises feedback and specific suggestions for future improvement. Educators also use feedback regularly during lessons as information for them to continue or alter the course of the lesson according to whether students are understanding the material.
- Principle #5: Educators provide opportunities for independent practice and guided discovery learning through: guided independent practice where the learner attempts similar problem tasks to tasks already rehearsed (after relevant skills and knowledge have been developed); and guided discovery learning where the learner attempts ill-defined or novel problem tasks (typically conducted after guided independent practice). Importantly, even in the context of independent learning activities, learners may still need explicit instruction in metacognition and self-regulated learning (e.g., planning their learning, managing projects, and monitoring progress towards goals), and working in groups (Evans & Martin, 2020).

In balancing student- and teacher-centred approaches, educators at [INSERT name of school] progress students through three stages that closely align with the sequence of LRI Principles #1–5 (Martin, 2016), often referred to as an *I-do, we-do, you-do* approach (e.g., Archer & Hughes, 2011; see DeRuvo, 2009 for a summary in relation to at-risk students):

- First, educators implement the student-centred instruction phase (I-do). Here, educators organize and present instructional material with full regard for students' prior learning and ability.
- Second, after the initial student-centred instruction, educators initiate the student-centred exchange phase (we-do). Here, the educator provides students with guided practice, questioning, and worked examples, and checks for students' understanding through these activities.
- Third, when the educator is satisfied the student has the key knowledge and skill, they initiate the student-centred learning phase (you-do). Here the educator assigns an appropriate problem task where the student can take more responsibility for independent practice, checks, and reviews their own work, and engages in further discovery or exploration.
- Thus, educators understand that at different stages of LRI, student and teacher roles shift from (a) teacher instructional salience to (b) distributed teacher and student interaction to (c) student learning salience.

Educators at **[INSERT name of school]** apply LRI to students of all ability levels (Martin, 2015). Even high ability students are novices in the early stages of a new topic or problem task and thus require educators to implement Principles #1–4. However, high ability students will typically move from novice to expert status with relatively less practice and rehearsal than other students (Martin, 2016). They are thus usually able to move to guided independent learning (Principle #5) more quickly than other students.

School leaders

School leaders at **[INSERT name of school]** ensure that educators know the five LRI Principles.

School leaders at **[INSERT name of school]** ensure that educators have sufficient knowledge of students' prior knowledge to enable appropriate delivery of LRI Principles #1–5.

Sufficient time at **[INSERT name of school]** is allocated to educators to share with each other examples of successful LRI practices.

Efforts are made at **[INSERT name of school]** to ensure students' learning is monitored to facilitate targeted and appropriate delivery of LRI.

[INSERT name of school] has a comprehensive approach to identifying learning gaps and identifying how LRI principles can be applied to address them.

[INSERT name of school] endeavours to employ capable educators who understand the cognitive dimensions of student learning, and instructional approaches that manage the cognitive burden on students as they learn.

[INSERT name of school] endeavours to employ capable educators who have a strong repertoire of explicit instructional practices and also evidence of high quality guided independent, discovery, and inquiry-based learning approaches.

[INSERT name of school] ensures that educators have access to professional learning that can build successful practices in LRI.

[INSERT name of school] has strategies in place to evaluate, build, or strengthen an educator's explicit and guided independent instructional

strategies (e.g., peer observation, peer mentoring, ongoing professional development, induction programs for new staff, etc.).

Rating of evidence base



Figure 4.1 Load Reduction Instruction Rating of Evidence.

Author Note: **NATURE AND QUALITY OF EVIDENCE BASE:** The body of evidence spans experimental research by cognitive load theory researchers, major meta-analyses by other cognitive/instructional psychology researchers, and large-scale school reform research. More recently, LRI practices are supported by large-scale correlational research. The explicit instructional strategies tend to have accumulated the largest body of empirical support, with guided independent application supported by research demonstrating “expertise reversal” effects and similar. **EVIDENCE OF IMPACT:** The evidence base for explicit instruction has shown efficacy for students at all levels of ability and learning capacity, including students who are academically at-risk. The effect sizes for explicit instruction tend to be moderate to large. Relative to explicit instruction, the nature of independent and discovery learning processes can make it difficult to assess impact using experimental designs, generating effect sizes, etc. Correlational research into LRI tends to demonstrate medium effect sizes. **GENERALISABILITY:** LRI is purposefully designed to apply to a wide range of students who differ in terms of prior learning, personal attributes, and ability. LRI Principles #1–5 are designed to enable engagement with learners appropriate to their novice and expert status. To note, there is a strong evidence base on explicit instruction for at-risk learners. There is some evidence for a greater proportion of guided independent application for high ability learners (e.g., as per “expertise reversal” effect under Cognitive Load Theory (CLT). Thus, LRI traverses a wide range of students. **IMPLEMENTATION EASE:** LRI is a concrete, stepwise, practical instructional approach designed to be implemented in the everyday course of pedagogy and learning support. LRI is flexible enough that it can be applied in a range of subject areas and domains and across the course of lessons and programs. **POTENTIAL FOR IMPACT:** Based on experimental, correlational, and meta-analytic research, there is significant potential for impact. Indeed, principles underlying LRI have been adopted by state departments of education (e.g., CESE, 2017; 2018) and suggest high-level support for the potential impact of such approaches.

Authorship

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Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE). (2017). *Cognitive load theory: Research that teachers really need to understand*. Sydney: NSW Department of Education.

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Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Expert consultation

LRI is designed to be administered without the need for other professional support or resourcing. Notwithstanding this, professional development (and similar) would support its quality implementation across the school. Also, for optimal differentiated application, teachers may consult with learning support staff, other teachers, and relevant counsellors/psychologists (and parents/carers as appropriate).

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5 Personalised wellbeing planning

Lindsay G. Oades and Aaron Jarden

How to use this policy

Student wellbeing is important, as is academic performance. Moreover, wellbeing and academic performance are related. Through personalised wellbeing planning and coaching, students can enhance both wellbeing and academic performance in the context of a dynamic and challenging world. This policy highlights how schools can utilise the potential learning and wellbeing benefits of personalised planning for wellbeing, while also supporting students to achieve academically. The policy is designed to be used flexibly, by using the three evidence-based principles – personalisation (Lu et al., 2014; Pane et al., 2015), connection and choice (Deci & Ryan, 2012; Diener, E., Biswas-Diener, R., et al., 2018) – and evidence-based action planning (Hagger & Luszczynska, 2014). These principles, which have students at the centre, are relevant to the whole school, teachers, parents and caregivers. Furthermore, as personalised wellbeing planning is a process involving collaboration and coaching, it is, by definition, tailored to a student's age, ability and context, and accordingly, sits above various programs operating within the school. Personalised wellbeing planning can be integrated with curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Importantly, it is recommended that personalised wellbeing planning and coaching fully utilises the offerings afforded by online technology, catalysed by the coronavirus pandemic, particularly to encourage collaboration between students, teachers and parents. When implementing a Personalised Wellbeing Planning policy, it is recommended that it is considered in a staged fashion across several years in order to (a) fully realise the potential of this combination evidence-based principles; (b) become integrated with existing programs; and (c) ensure that it accommodates the wide range of ongoing demands made on school staff.

This policy example is intentionally broad and school policy creators are encouraged to delete and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] Wellbeing planning policy

Rationale

In recognition of the importance of student wellbeing and its relationship to academic performance (Adler, 2017; Marques et al., 2011), schools play an important role in assisting students to learn skills to manage their own wellbeing and support the wellbeing of others. To wait until a student deteriorates in their mental wellbeing before referring them to counselling or medical services is *old paradigm* thinking. Likewise, it is also old paradigm thinking to view learning about wellbeing solely for illness prevention purposes. Wellbeing is important in its own right, and relates to being capable. A new paradigm, aligned with social and emotional learning and positive education, is to equip students with knowledge and skills about and for wellbeing. There is a need to share the responsibility across the community for wellbeing, rather than relying on external professional or, particularly, clinical services. The aim of this policy is to build student, staff and parent skills and capabilities around wellbeing (Seligman et al., 2009) and wellbeing literacy (Oades et al., 2017). However, this policy goes further by seeking to personalise learning by enabling students to be engaged in coaching (Green et al., 2006) and to make personalised plans for their own wellbeing and its close relationship to academic performance. These plans should be personalised to the context of the student (Ciarrochi et al., 2016), relevant to their age, culture, personality, values, personal conceptualisation of wellbeing, motivation, language use about wellbeing, and aspirations. With the assistance of coaches (who may be a range of school staff or, when relevant, an external coach), and in consultation and collaboration with parents or guardians when possible, optimally, a student will set, enact and monitor progress towards their personally chosen goals and activities relevant to their own wellbeing. Optimally, progress towards working on wellbeing-enhancing activities (rather than wellbeing *per se*) will be reported within academic and other non-curricular activity.

An overarching principle is that the process itself will promote agency of the student, with the key implicit learning that wellbeing itself can be changed and often improved through skills, learning and actions. Such a process enables students to integrate and use generic curriculum for their personal situation.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support the development and implementation of personalised wellbeing plans for students across the whole of the school community. The policy position offered here is one in which a school representative works together with students and parents to maximise educational outcomes and wellbeing, by supporting students to self-regulate their wellbeing actions and academic actions.

Scope

This policy applies to school leadership and teaching staff of **[INSERT name of school]**. It is a shared responsibility between students, staff and parents and

carers that personalised wellbeing plans are developed with students, enacted by students and monitored by school systems, each year. As such, the development and enactment of this policy and related procedures should take the needs of the whole school community into consideration. This may require some reasonable adjustments and exemptions for individual students or specific teaching and learning contexts.

Policy statement

Personalised wellbeing planning: [INSERT name of school] aims for all students of our school to have a personalised wellbeing plan, as we value student wellbeing and academic performance. We endorse the three principles regarding student wellbeing and academic performance that underpin personalised wellbeing planning: (1) *Personalisation*; (2) *Connection and Choice*; and (3) *Evidenced-Based Action Planning*. Each of these has a long-standing and strong scientific literature base.

Personalisation

At [INSERT name of school] students not only learn about wellbeing, they learn about it in a personalised way through planning, action and reflection.

At [INSERT name of school] our approach to personalising wellbeing for students involves considering their personality, social context, values and other individual differences.

We acknowledge that individual understandings of wellbeing can be different from student to student and, as such, so will the goals, activities and strategies used to maintain or increase their wellbeing.

At [INSERT name of school] we strive to use evidence-based resources (books, programs, courses, etc.) that have been shown to work for many people.

Students at [INSERT name of school] are explicitly taught to ask questions about what gives them meaning in their lives.

Connection and choice

At [INSERT name of school] school leaders and teachers realise the importance of connection in building wellbeing, and that social connections are major drivers of wellbeing.

At [INSERT name of school] we understand that when it comes to wellbeing and performance planning, collaboration – working together towards common goals – helps students to feel connected and supported.

Students and teachers at [INSERT name of school] understand that wellbeing is a shared responsibility, and that supportive, collaborative conversations about and for wellbeing are essential. These collaborative conversations support the choice and autonomy of students, and enable students to think critically about what is most important to them.

Evidenced-based action planning

At [INSERT name of school] we realize that it is difficult to experience sustained wellbeing and perform well without taking some planned actions (e.g., exercise, study, trying to make new friends) at some point in the journey.

Students at [INSERT name of school] are encouraged to take actions towards their personalised goals in ways that are consistent with the research about action planning. This includes having tangible actions that are monitored and specific to a context.

At [INSERT name of school] students are taught that wellbeing and performance is most likely to happen and improve when actions are planned, reviewed and supported by a valued other person.

Rating of evidence base



Figure 5.1. Personalised Wellbeing Planning Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. This policy is built from several evidence bases, corresponding to each of the three principles mentioned. Evidence-based action planning as a principle points to ongoing evidence as it is generated. Evidence of impact takes time. This approach is new, hence impact is unfolding now. Because this approach is based on general principles derived from evidence, the generalisability is high. Adaptation to context is essential. Implementation ease depends on the scope and intensity of what is implemented. There are aspects of the principles that can be implemented relatively easily. Full scale programs, coaching and online offerings following through to school reports will require significant resources. The potential impact is significant. If implemented successfully, then significant gains in wellbeing, performance, self-efficacy and parent involvement in student wellbeing and performance can be enhanced. The utilisation also of digital technology will be consolidated.

Authorship

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Related policy and documents

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Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Further reading

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Expert consultation

It is recommended that, in addition to consultation with school administration, school teachers, wellbeing staff, parents and students, further consultation by school leadership is made with experts in coaching psychology, medical professionals and information technology experts to assist with building online platforms to assist in developing these personalised wellbeing plans. Training in how to coach and create action plans collaboratively with students is necessary.

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6 Play policy framework for schools

Marilyn Fleer

How to use this policy

Paradoxically, there is increasing pressure on schools to deliver greater academic outcomes, at the same time that there is a desire for innovative, skilled, 21st-century graduates to meet future societal needs. In response to this, some schools have sought to engage learners in key learning areas through play-based pedagogy in support of nurturing creative minds. In this policy, the rationale, purpose, and scope of play pedagogy for schools will be outlined within the context of a play policy framework to support schools with the task of building new thinking and learning for the future. This policy example is intentionally broad and school policy creators are encouraged to delete and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] Play policy framework for schools

Rationale

Increasingly in Asian heritage communities, schools are looking for ways to enhance the learning of 21st-century skills, whilst maintaining a culture of enjoyment during the process of learning (e.g., Fleer & van Oers, 2018). Many schools are advocating to their communities about the value of play for children's learning (e.g., Ministry of Education, Singapore, 2019). At the same time, in many Western heritage communities, there is growing evidence of pressure to formalise learning and reduce the playtime of children (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2017). As a result, more international attention is being directed to what evidence and challenges surround play as a pedagogy for effective learning in school settings. This evidence is important for guiding policy development.

What is known about practices and learning outcomes of using a pedagogy of play in schools has primarily come from Western heritage communities. The evidence, although limited, has demonstrably shown increased school learning outcomes (Maher & Smith, 2017; Wainwright et al., 2020). The

following are examples of the play pedagogy: mathematical achievement from block play in Italy (Pirrone et al., 2018); literacy outcomes through arts play in Greece (Theodotou, 2019); potential for increased oral language of Indigenous children in Canada (Peterson et al., 2018); positive potential of drama on science achievement in Sweden (Walans & Enochsson, 2019); and a combination of child-led and teacher-guided play improving knowledge of science concepts in Australia (Sliogeris & Almeida, 2019).

Overwhelmingly, studies discuss the value of a pedagogy of play for schools that goes beyond school achievement and towards the wellbeing of students (O'Connor, 2017). There is evidence of social and emotional outcomes for children participating in the play contexts of Forest Schools in the UK (Coates & Pimlott-Wilson, 2019) and of school achievement alongside emotional resilience and self-regulation for children from disadvantaged communities in Forest Schools in the UK (McCree et al., 2018). Traditional games in schools have also been found to increase student motivation in Macedonia (Trajkovik et al., 2018), and when school tasks are perceived by children as play, higher levels of wellbeing have been reported in Wales (Wainwright et al., 2020).

Taken together, the evidence from studies of a pedagogy of play in schools is sufficiently robust to advocate for play and to develop a play policy framework for supporting the wellbeing of the student, alongside the maintenance and enhancement of learning outcomes.

Purpose

The key objective of this policy is to support a whole of school approach to the introduction and development of a play pedagogy in classrooms for student learning and wellbeing.

Scope

This policy supports the senior leadership team, the teaching teams, the students, and students' families with implementing a pedagogy of play. [INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

Leaders

[INSERT name of school] has drawn upon research evidence to stay informed about what a pedagogy of play in schools looks like in practice (e.g., Walsh et al., 2019; Fleer, 2019), its value for student learning and wellbeing, and its impact on the school community. [INSERT name of school] recognises that leadership support is critical for a whole of school approach for a pedagogy of play (Barblett et al., 2016). This means:

- supporting teachers to transition into valuing and using a pedagogy of play in schools (Mardell et al., 2019; Nolan & Paatsch, 2018)
- resourcing play to make it inclusive for all children (Lester, Jones & Russell, 2011)
- ensuring pedagogical continuity between prior to school settings as children transition into school (Nicholson, 2019)

Teachers

The teaching team at [INSERT name of school] has drawn upon research evidence around effective implementation:

- to embed play-based learning into classroom practice as an integrating approach rather than a separate activity to be given as a reward (Jay & Knaus, 2018)
- for motivating students to want to learn concepts to enrich their play and development (Trajkovik et al., 2018)
- to balance curriculum by giving equal time and status to play, self-regulation, and academic activities (OECD, 2017)
- by organising assessments through play as a valuable approach to determining achievements in highly motivating conditions (Jay & Knaus, 2018)
- through room organisation (Nolan & Paatsch, 2018) that gives different areas for different activities, relaxing spaces, and connects indoors and outdoors (Young & Murray, 2017)
- by organising multi-functional equipment and resources to encourage student autonomy and inclusive access (Young & Murray, 2017)
- high-level interactions between students and teachers during play (Nolan & Paatsch, 2018)

Students

At [INSERT name of school] students experience continuity in pedagogy when transitioning into primary school (Nolan & Paatsch, 2018). They understand that they have responsibilities in determining learning outcomes as part of the pedagogy of play approach in school (Walsh et al., 2019) and their self-directed behaviours support the wellbeing of the learning community of the classroom and school (Nolan & Paatsch, 2018).

Community

[INSERT name of school] has committed to communicating with families about the value of their child learning through a play pedagogy in schools.

Rating of evidence base



Figure 6.1. Play Policy Framework for Schools Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. There is excellent evidence for effectiveness the policy in before-school settings, and if that evidence is used in conjunction with the related studies, then the policy is strongly grounded in research. Studies report impact or give guidance on what worked and what the challenges were. The constant variable is pedagogy of play in schools, and the study context and areas reported are broad, which together gives strong evidence for generalisability to other schools for what has been referenced in this policy document. Resourcing is in supporting teachers to transition to the use of a pedagogy of play to support learning in schools. The rest is easy to implement. It is cost neutral in terms of resources, but high-cost for professional development (PD). Transformative change in the experience of the learner in schools is the potential result.

Authorship

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[INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

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Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Further reading

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7 Excellence in Indigenous education

Marnee Shay and Jodie Miller

How to use this policy

Excellence in Indigenous education uses a strengths-based approach to implementing broader Indigenous education policy imperatives. This policy incorporates the goals of a broad range of current Indigenous education policies into an applied way of addressing school-based issues associated with persisting Indigenous education disparities. This new policy will reframe much of the broader policy impetus into school-based approaches to Indigenous education informed by concepts of excellence, strength and aspiration that centres the voices and leadership of Indigenous peoples. Underpinned by Indigenous Research Theory (Rigney, 2006), Critical Race Theory (Ladson Billings, 2005) and Postcolonial Theory (Gandhi, 2019), the policy takes an evidence-based approach to Indigenous policy reform and will provide schools with a streamlined approach to doing Indigenous education that is orientated to Indigenous agency, partnerships and reciprocity. By using the process of co-design (Australian Government, 2020), schools will be able to provide spaces for meaningful community and school partnerships and collaborations to transpire. School leaders and staff will be provided with a framework to work in collaboration with Indigenous students, their families and communities to co-design and localise programs to address education goals that are aimed at enhancing the learning of all students in Australian classrooms.

[INSERT name of school] Excellence in Indigenous education

Rationale

The field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education is saturated with literature that reinforces a bleak outlook in relation to educational outcomes for Indigenous peoples. Amongst the most researched peoples on the planet, there continues to be an abundance of research taking place on the “subject” of Indigenous peoples (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). Much of this research continues to be undertaken by predominantly non-Indigenous researchers and without

significant data that privileges the voices and lived experiences of Indigenous peoples (Shay, 2016).

Although there is an abundance of research in the field of Indigenous education, the topic of Indigenous education can be interdisciplinary and complex to research. A synthesis of the literature that focuses on Indigenous learners in schools revealed six key themes where research is focused: identity, cultural capability of educators, engaging with Indigenous families and communities, presence of Indigenous cultures in schools and employment of Indigenous peoples in schools and leadership (Shay & Heck, 2015). In addition, there has been a sustained focus in the literature on embedding Indigenous knowledges and perspectives into curriculum (Phillips & Lampert, 2012; Sarra, 2011) as well as the need to enhance the wellbeing of Indigenous learners in schools (Kickett-Tucker, 2009).

In 2017 the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) published an international study that included Canada, New Zealand and Australia and that investigated promising practices in seeding success for Indigenous students (OECD, 2017). The aim of the study was to identify promising policies and practices that resulted in success for Indigenous students in these three countries and build an evidence base to assist in better policy development and outcomes for Indigenous young people. Despite the existing deficit discourse reinforcing gaps, failures and the problematizing of Indigenous students, the OECD reported that there were many promising practices evident across all three countries, all underpinned by discourses of excellence and success. Moreover, they also reported that not only were these practices of benefit to Indigenous young people, they also benefit non-Indigenous young people by providing a more safe and inclusive schooling environment.

Research in Indigenous education is heavily influenced by political discourse. A focus in policy over the past decade has been on the Close the Gap agenda, which is a quantitative, data-driven policy approach that highlights gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people in literacy, numeracy, attainment and attendance school outcomes (Australian Government, 2018). This has resulted in deficit discourses influencing policy development and practice (Hogarth, 2018). In response to ongoing calls for Indigenous people to be included in policy development in order to counter these deficit discourses, in 2019 the Australian Government introduced a co-design approach as the new way forward in policy development and implementation in any policy area that affects Indigenous peoples (Australian Government, 2020).

Current national key policy responses to improving Indigenous outcomes include professional standards for teachers and school leaders such as strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (APST 1.4), which need to be supported by school leaders through developing teaching programs that support equitable and ongoing participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Australian Institute for Teaching and School

Leadership [AITSL], 2018). Leaders need to engage in collaborative relationships with community representatives and parents/carers to support and develop these teaching programs (AITSL, 2018). A second professional standard indicates that teachers and leaders need to understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (AITSL, 2018). Furthermore, the embedding of Indigenous knowledges and perspectives in the national curriculum has also been identified as a cross-curriculum priority area by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2018).

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the shared responsibility of education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for the whole school community, inclusive of parents and community, students, staff, teachers and school leadership. It emphasises the importance of co-design and strengths-based approaches building on evidence-based practices. Every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student has the right to experience excellent teaching and learning practices that affirm their culture and identity. Every student in Australian classrooms has the right to learn about Australian histories and Indigenous peoples, cultures and languages. The policy provides practical steps for current policy imperatives in Indigenous education underpinned by the concept of excellence.

Scope

This policy applies to students, teachers, staff, school leaders and parents and community members of **[INSERT name of school]**. A strengths-based approach to excellence in Indigenous education is overseen by all members of the school community with an emphasis on partnership and co-design. The policy emphasises a way of implementing existing Indigenous education goals that emphasises strengths, agency, partnership and co-design.

Policy statement

School management

At **[INSERT name of school]** we affirm Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the First Australians and have the oldest living cultures in human history. We also acknowledge that Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples have strong cultural traditions and speak diverse languages and dialects, other than Standard Australian English.

To ensure the wellbeing of all members of our school community, **[INSERT name of school]** has a range of strategies to actively address the issue of racism (Bodkin-Andrews et al., 2013).

[INSERT name of school] ensures all school staff undertake regular cultural capability training that includes local knowledges and knowledge holders (i.e., Elders) (Gorringe & Spillman 2009). Where possible, this training should link closely to the community in which the school is located.

Leadership at **[INSERT name of school]** has specific strategies to engage in active and genuine partnerships with local Indigenous families and communities, providing meaningful opportunities for input into all aspects of education involving their children (Lowe et al, 2019).

[INSERT name of school] values Indigenous knowledges and proactively ensures their presence through display of flags and the map of Indigenous Australia; use of local languages on signage; and inclusion of cultural spaces, such as yarning circles (Davis & Grose, 2008).

[INSERT name of school] is committed to ensuring the employment of Indigenous leaders, teachers and support staff at the equivalent percentage of the Indigenous student population (Santoro & Reid, 2006).

[INSERT name of school] creates a culture of high expectation relationships, with an emphasis on teacher-student relationships (Sarra et al., 2018).

[INSERT name of school] provides Indigenous students with a range of opportunities to excel, including in academic disciplines, cultural activities and the arts (Shay & Miller, 2019).

As a key priority, **[INSERT name of school]** will implement Indigenous knowledges and perspectives across all curriculum areas (ACARA, 2020). This will be led in conjunction with community members and parents to localise the perspectives embedded in the curriculum.

Programs implemented at **[INSERT name of school]** will be endorsed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community representatives, and **[INSERT name of school]** will ensure that they meet the needs, priorities and aspirations of their communities (Australian Government, 2020). In addition to this, ongoing evidence and accountability measures will be collected to ensure that the program is continuing to improve and support excellent education practices for the school community.

The leadership team at **[INSERT name of school]** will act on parent, student and community suggestions and feedback (Povey et al., 2016).

Teachers

Teachers at **[INSERT name of school]** have specific principles and practice to support and affirm the identities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Shay, Sarra & Woods, 2020).

Teachers at **[INSERT name of school]** seek to have positive relationships with Indigenous students, their families and communities (Buckskin, 2012).

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] have the skills and confidence to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and knowledges across all curriculum areas. They will co-construct curriculum with community members, parents and students (Armour & Miller, 2020).

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] draw on evidence-based practices to support a strengths-based approach to teaching, learning and assessment that is culturally responsive and provides the opportunities for students to excel (Miller & Armour, 2019).

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] ensure all students are presented with a range of Indigenous role models across all fields and professions (Shay, Sarra & Woods, 2020).

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] embed critical self-reflection as a regular professional practice (Phillips & Lampert, 2012).

Students

All students at [INSERT name of school] will engage respectfully with learning about Indigenous and Australian cultures, histories and peoples.

At [INSERT name of school] all students are encouraged and will be given the opportunity to use their personal strengths in their learning. Teachers will adapt learning experiences to link closely with students' local contexts to provide these opportunities (Armour & Miller, 2020).

Students at [INSERT name of school] from all cultural backgrounds will contribute positively to creating a sense of belonging for all students in their school community.

Parents

[INSERT name of school] is a school that is culturally welcoming and promotes agency for parents. It values and welcomes all parents, guardians and family members into the community.

Parents of [INSERT name of school] are empowered to support their child's learning and engage meaningfully in school life.

[INSERT name of school] engages with positive communication with parents and works with community leaders and agencies to foster two-way communication (or multiple communication channels) with families (Povey et al., 2016).

[INSERT name of school] will form respectful and collaborative partnerships with parents (the agents for their child) to seek feedback and overall satisfaction with school and communication from the school (Reschley et al., 2008).

Educational opportunities for parents are provided throughout the year at [INSERT name of school] that directly link to programs that support their child's learning. These opportunities enhance connectedness with the school and other parents (Povey et al., 2016).

Rating of evidence base



Figure 7.1. Excellence in Indigenous Education Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. There are complexities in rating the existing evidence in the field of Indigenous education. Indigenous peoples have been excluded from knowledge production and have been subject to racialised constructs produced by what is termed the “colonial gaze”. Whilst there is a growing number of Indigenous scholars, the vast majority of knowledges produced in the field of Indigenous education have been produced by non-Indigenous scholars. This has resulted in bias within the realm of what is considered evidence.

Authorship

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[INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Building better schools through visible and transparent practice

School belonging

Student wellbeing interventions

Teacher wellbeing

Using research evidence to inform classroom practices

Inclusivity and equity in the classrooms through student voice and agency

Using research evidence to drive school improvement

School-community collaboration policy

Supporting transitions

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Further reading

United Nations for Indigenous Peoples: Recommendation on education <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/mandated-areas1/education/recs-education.html>

United Nations for Indigenous Peoples: Education <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/mandated-areas1/education.html>

Expert consultation

To enact this policy, school leaders will need to consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in their local community. Indigenous peoples from the communities in which the school is situated are important and valuable knowledge holders and to successfully implement this policy, schools must work in partnership with diverse members of these communities.

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8 Alcohol and other drug use policy

Tracy Evans-Whipp and John W. Toumbourou

How to use this policy

Alcohol and other drug use, including tobacco use, is a common but preventable source of physical and mental harm for students, which can trigger habits that leave a legacy of harm in future years. Schools can play an important role in the prevention of alcohol and drug use (Faggiano et al., 2014; Foxcroft & Tsartsadze, 2011; MacArthur et al., 2018; Thomas et al., 2013). Evidence-based alcohol and other drug use policies can reduce experimentation, reduce harmful use, and encourage recovery from disorders.

This policy should align with state and national laws and local education policy guidelines. It should be developed through existing consultative structures within the school and should integrate with other school policies (e.g., discipline, bullying, student welfare).

A partnership approach based on a “whole of school” model in which the school’s policies, practices and programs are aligned, is recommended (Fletcher et al., 2008; Shackleton et al., 2016). Schools should seek to integrate school policy with community partner efforts to reduce locally elevated risk factors and to enhance protective factors. These partnership approaches can prevent student alcohol and drug use (Toumbourou et al., 2019), while also informing treatment referral options.

It is recommended that a core committee representative of the whole school community be established to develop the policy. Schools may consider representatives from outside agencies (such as alcohol and drug researchers, youth drug agencies, or community services) to join the committee.

This policy is intended for use by secondary schools, although primary schools may draw on certain aspects if they are facing drug and alcohol issues in their community. This policy example is intentionally broad, and school policy creators are encouraged to delete and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] Alcohol and other drug use policy***Rationale***

This document covers alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, and other illicit drug use, including non-medical use of pharmaceuticals. Schools require a policy to clearly outline expectations for preventing and responding to alcohol and other drug use. School policy should include guidance for teachers, parents, and visitors and define procedures to respond to student drug-related incidents at school or on school programmes (school-related events). The policy should also provide details about how the school will approach and address prevention and intervention regarding student alcohol and other drug use.

School policy should accord with national policies, which recommend abstinence from tobacco and illicit drugs (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017). Strongly promoted abstinence messages in schools have been shown to reduce student drug and alcohol use (Evans-Whipp et al., 2007; Evans-Whipp et al., 2013; Evans-Whipp et al., 2015).

To promote abstinence norms, the policy should be clearly communicated to students and other stakeholders and then monitored and consistently enforced (Coppo et al., 2014; Evans-Whipp et al., 2004).

While aiming to prevent student alcohol and drug use, policies should also seek to retain students found in breach of policy in the school setting and offer treatment to students who are using alcohol and other drugs. While schools are responsible for the safety of the student population, policies that use suspension and exclusion are harmful to students who are at risk of disengagement from the school system and further antisocial behaviour (Hemphill, Heerde et al., 2012; Hemphill, Herrenkohl et al., 2012). Retaining students identified with more minor policy breaches provides opportunities for the school team to demonstrate competence to equitably address student health problems.

Efforts to prevent student alcohol and drug use are enhanced by school staff working with community coalitions to reduce risk factors and increase protective factors (Toumbourou et al., 2019). While school alcohol and drug education programs should promote abstinence, they should also inform of harm minimization principles, especially for older students.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to promote a culture of non-drug use and responsible decision making among students while at [INSERT name of school] and beyond through the shared responsibility of the whole school community. It provides a framework for prevention, intervention, and sanctions regarding alcohol and other drug use by students. The policy is underpinned by national health guidelines, which recommend that students do not use alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, or other illicit drugs and aims to protect and promote the health and wellbeing of all students of [INSERT name of school].

Scope

This policy is relevant to the behaviour of all students, staff, parents, and visitors of [INSERT name of school]. It applies to individuals while on school grounds or at any function or activity organised by the school (Barnett et al., 2007). It provides guidelines for staff in exercising their duty of care to students about drug and alcohol-related incidents.

[INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

Expectations

Students on [INSERT name of school] premises or under [INSERT name of school] supervision must not use, be under the influence of, or transact in alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, or other illicit drugs including non-medical use of pharmaceuticals.

Staff, parents, and visitors of [INSERT name of school] are required to remain drug and alcohol-free on school grounds and to support this policy actively.

[INSERT name of school] will ban the use, sale, or promotion of alcohol on school grounds or at school events for the purpose of fundraising.

Given that parent and community norms and behaviours influence student behaviour (Ryan et al., 2010; Toumbourou et al., 2018), all [INSERT name of school] events will be alcohol and drug-free, not just those where students are present.

Communication of policy

[INSERT name of school] ensures that the policy is clearly and regularly communicated to all members of the school community (staff, students, parents, and visitors). [INSERT name of school] provides clear information and guidelines to parents (Evans-Whipp et al., 2007). Student comprehension of the policy may be tested to check understanding. Parents may be asked to sign a statement to the effect that they have read the policy and agree that they are bound by it.

Role of parents

[INSERT name of school] encourages parents to support abstinence by not supplying or allowing students to use alcohol or drugs.

[INSERT name of school] recommends that parents use state guidelines that empower them to refuse approval for their child to use alcohol at social events.

[INSERT name of school] will provide parent education sessions to support parent knowledge about alcohol and drugs and the school's drug and alcohol policy.

Parents will be informed if their child has been involved in an alcohol or drug-related incident or if there are reasonable grounds to suspect their child of alcohol or drug use.

Parents will not be allowed to bring alcohol to, or consume alcohol at school events.

Monitoring and enforcement

[INSERT name of school] will annually monitor staff, student, and parent understanding of the alcohol and drug policy and procedures.

[INSERT name of school] will regularly monitor for student drug and alcohol use via inspection of public areas on school grounds.

[INSERT name of school] will build trust between staff and students for confidential reporting where students are concerned about their own or their peers' alcohol or drug use. [INSERT name of school] will avoid practices that can undermine trust such as random locker checks or drug testing.

Where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion of alcohol or drug use, school staff will assess the student's academic and personal circumstances. The Head of Year and Principal will be made aware of this investigation. The information collected will remain confidential until the investigation is completed.

[INSERT name of school] enforces all aspects of the policy consistently so that students have a clear understanding of the consequences of breaching the school policy (Evans-Whipp et al., 2010; Evans-Whipp et al., 2013; Evans-Whipp et al., 2015; Lovato et al., 2007; Mélard et al., 2020).

Primary prevention

[INSERT name of school] provides drug and alcohol education appropriate to age to all students. Alcohol and other drug education is delivered by the students' regular classroom teacher (Davis et al., 2018; Van Hout et al., 2012) in health or personal development classes. Schools should implement programs that have been evaluated and shown to be effective (e.g., <https://positivechoices.org.au/resources/recommended-programs/>). Online programs may be delivered (Champion et al., 2013; Newton et al., 2010; Teesson et al., 2020).

[INSERT name of school] provides evidence-based universal programs to develop social competence (such as resilience, positive development, decision-making skills) and positive social norms (through correcting students' overestimates of drug use rates, recognising high-risk situations, increasing awareness of media, peer and family influences, and refusal skills) (Faggiano et al., 2014; Foxcroft & Tsartsadze, 2011; Lee et al., 2014; Teesson et al., 2012).

Primary prevention programs provided by [INSERT name of school] will promote abstinence. They will also include, for older students, some harm minimization components such as practical knowledge and skills to enable young people to have a safety plan and to enable safer decisions regarding drug use (McBride et al., 2004; McKay et al., 2014; Midford et al., 2018; Midford et al., 2015; Newton et al., 2010; Vogl et al., 2009).

Early intervention

[INSERT name of school] provides supports to students needing assistance via a student counsellor/welfare coordinator and/or referral to relevant health and welfare agencies.

[INSERT name of school] supports teachers through training and resourcing to identify and help students at risk of developing drug and/or alcohol problems.

[INSERT name of school] provides support and training for staff in welfare or drug education roles about youth drug use and support services.

Student drug-related incidents

Responses to student drug-related incidents are guided by a priority of care for students at risk while ensuring the ongoing safety of other students and staff and protecting healthy school norms. Where student behaviour is identified in breach of policies, discipline procedures seek to retain students in education and assist the student in overcoming any problems relating to alcohol and other drug use.

[INSERT name of school] will adopt the following procedures following drug and alcohol incidents:

- Students and families will have been forewarned by communication of this policy and procedures before events.
- [INSERT name of school] will nominate a staff member who will respond to the school community and media inquiries.
- The school community and media will be advised that [INSERT name of school] has a policy and procedure it is implementing.
- Students involved in alcohol and drug incidents will be subject to a range of consequences depending on the circumstances. These include:
 - a Loss of any office held
 - b Counselling by a teacher or pastoral care staff member about the dangers of alcohol and/or drugs
 - c Referral to an outside agency for counselling (Tanner-Smith & Lipsey, 2015), family therapy (Rowe, 2012), or other available treatment services to promote recovery
 - d Being sent home from school excursions, camps, or tours
 - e In more serious incidents, suspension from [INSERT name of school]

- f Notification of police
- g Expulsion from [INSERT name of school]
- Responses will be graded such that alcohol and drug use of an experimental nature deemed manageable by the school will remain confidential to affected students and families.
- Parents and guardians will be advised and involved in assertive management of school abstinence policies.
- School responses to alcohol and other drug incidents that involve legal offending will be guided by police and legal involvement.

Policy review

The policy will be regularly (2–3 years) reviewed and updated. Changing information about state and national laws, drug education programs, developments in the school program, and feedback from the school and partner community will be considered in future iterations or revisions.

Rating of evidence base



Figure 8.1. Alcohol and Other Drug Use Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. There are currently no randomised control trials (Coppo et al., 2014); however, theoretically the policy can have large impacts. There is cross-national and widespread implementation.

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Professor John W. Toumbourou, Chair in Health Psychology, Deakin University

[INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Further reading

Some examples of evidence-based drug education programs:

- Climate Schools: <https://www.climateschools.com.au>
- School Health and Alcohol Harm Reduction Project (SHAHRP): <http://ndri.curtin.edu.au/research/research-specific-sites/school-health-and-alcohol-harm-reduction-project>
- Get Ready: Drug education in Victorian schools project: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>

Background reading on parent drinking at school events:

Munro, G., Buykx, P., Ward, B., Rae, J., & Wiggers, J. (2014). Adult drinking in Australian schools. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 38(3), 205–208.

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9 Feedback for learning

Cameron Brooks, Rochelle Burton, and John Hattie

How to use this policy

Feedback is a critical process of learning that is shaped by many factors including school culture, curriculum, assessment, and pedagogy (Black & Wiliam, 2018; Hattie & Clarke, 2019). This policy example is intentionally broad and school policy creators are encouraged to delete and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school. A school policy on feedback is best formed through consultation with key stakeholders in the feedback process: students, teachers, and parents. Feedback policy is ideally adopted at the whole of school level with direct communication with the school community (i.e., parents) to help develop a culture of learning that is underpinned by effective feedback processes. Furthermore, whole school feedback policy should seek to make explicit the connections between feedback and curricula, assessment, and pedagogy. Feedback policy should aim to inform teachers about how to use feedback effectively in the classroom. To evaluate policy impact, schools should implement processes that make both learning success and learning progress visible.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] Feedback for learning

Rationale

Feedback is one of the most powerful processes used by teachers to influence learning (Hattie, 2009). Feedback has been credited with high effect sizes on student achievement (Hattie, 2009) and is seen as instrumental in improving student learning outcomes. The power of feedback, however, cuts both ways with highly variable effects recorded (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). This means that feedback can have highly positive effects upon learning but also highly negative effects where students may, in fact, be turned off learning – indeed a major review showed that about one-third of feedback can be negative (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). School leaders and teachers need to be aware of the conditions and variables that make feedback effective for students and therefore conducive to learning improvement.

Feedback is effective when it: (i) clarifies success; (ii) informs the learner of progress relative to success; (iii) offers guidance about the next steps to improve; and (iv) when it is received, understood, and actionable (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Effective feedback processes should cause thinking with the aim of feedback interpretation leading to improvement. The responsibility and effort associated with giving of, receiving of, and acting on feedback needs to be shared between students, peers, and teachers (Wiliam, 2016). Best practice engages the learner as an active agent in the feedback process; that is, the recipient of feedback (such as the student or the teacher) needs to listen, interpret, and make decisions about reacting to the feedback (Jónsson & Panadero, 2018). The effectiveness of feedback is a function of the quality, timing, and information value for the giver and the receiver. Teachers acting as facilitators of feedback should aim to develop sustainable feedback practices such as active review and critique to help build students' nose for quality (Claxton, 1995; Sadler, 2010). Teachers should also review their own practice and seek feedback to help improve their impact on their students (Hattie, 2012).

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline key conditions and practices that are conducive to effective and sustainable feedback practices.

Scope

This policy applies to the students, teachers, school leaders, and parents of [INSERT school name]. [INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

A culture of learning

[INSERT name of school] views feedback as a fundamental process to improve student learning outcomes. Feedback needs to be just in time, aimed at the level of the learner, and aimed to improve the curiosity and effectiveness of learning (Hattie, Gan, & Brooks, 2016). Our school creates a culture in which feedback is sought and welcomed.

At [INSERT name of school] we believe that effective feedback aims to improve the learner rather than simply fix the work. Students at our school are aware that feedback requires effortful engagement to receive, interpret, and act on the feedback message, and that this is a regular part of learning.

Errors, mistakes, or misconceptions are seen as part of learning at [INSERT name of school], and are seen as opportunities for improvement. We acknowledge that feedback feeds on errors. Our students know they may not

be successful at their first attempt and effective feedback processes can guide them toward their next steps.

[INSERT name of school] is committed to putting in place development for any members of the school community to broaden their knowledge or skills in delivering and receiving effective feedback and thus creating a culture of learning.

Our students and teachers are familiar with protocols on giving, seeking, and receiving feedback such as directing the focus of feedback to the work, not the self/person (Boud, 2015).

Review practice

[INSERT name of school] implements practices such as collaborative planning with teachers and school leaders to develop a shared understanding of the learning intent and success criteria (Hattie & Clark, 2019).

Backward mapping from summative evaluations is a process used to formulate formative assessment opportunities to elicit evidence of student learning and progress.

Formative assessment meetings are scheduled with teachers and school leaders to review their impact on students, using evidence of learning from the whole class as opposed to a few selected student samples (Hattie, 2012).

Clarify success

At [INSERT name of school] we make the learning intent and success criteria visible and appropriately challenging for students so they know what they are working toward (Hattie, 2012).

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] co-construct success criteria with students by using an active critiquing process where students deconstruct and evaluate aspects of stronger and weaker models, responses, and work samples (Lee, Mak, & Yuan, 2019).

Students are actively involved in mapping the success criteria to models or exemplars to help visualise success (Berger, Rugen, & Woodfin, 2014).

At [INSERT name of school] we believe that students can demonstrate learning by transferring knowledge and skills from one context to another, hence, models used in class must be different to the specific context or questions of the summative evaluations.

Check in on progress

At [INSERT name of school] we do not grade formative assessment as grades can interfere with the feedback message, but we do provide the student with specific information about how to improve (Shute, 2008).

Our teachers use informal and formal methods of formative assessment to gauge where students are at in relation to the success criteria and learning

intent. The use of low-stakes pre-assessment at the start of, or early in the learning period to ascertain student prior knowledge is a process at [INSERT name of school] to maximise the window of opportunity for improvement.

School leaders at [INSERT name of school] support teachers both inside and outside of the classroom to develop effective formative assessment practices and questions.

Our teachers view ongoing student formative assessment and summative evaluation responses not only as evidence of student learning progress but also as a reflection of their teaching impact.

Students at [INSERT name of school] see formative assessment as an opportunity to receive improvement-based feedback rather than a process of examination. Hence, our students have an expectation they will be engaged in feedback processes throughout their learning.

Promoting improvement

[INSERT name of school] allocates resources that allow teachers to collaborate and review evidence of student learning from formative assessments with the aim of making decisions about the next steps for teaching and subsequent student improvement.

Our teachers understand the importance of activating students in feedback and instigate processes such as critiquing of stronger and weaker work samples and peer review prior to students engaging in self-review of their own work.

Students at [INSERT name of school] are taught to receive feedback (whether that be self, peer, or from a teacher) about how to improve in time to act on this feedback to improve learning outcomes (Brookhart, 2017).

Feedback at [INSERT name of school] includes both information about what to improve and guidance about how to improve.

Authorship

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Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL): Effective Feedback for Schools https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/research-evidence/spotlight/spotlight-feedback.pdf?sfvrsn=cb2eec3c_12

Rating of evidence base



Figure 9.1. Feedback for Learning Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. The policy is built from a body of work with a substantial evidence base with a low risk of bias that could be considered to be of adequate quality. There are some reviews that question the dependent and independent variables used in feedback meta-analyses and whether negative effects are consistently reported (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). The research evidence used in the policy demonstrates high levels of impact with high effect sizes recorded (Hattie, 2009). The research used within the policy provides substantial evidence for generalisability to the broader population. Feedback pedagogy is an integral component of all aspects of teaching and learning. Feedback, formative assessment, and assessment for learning are regarded as relatively low-cost and low-resource initiatives that can be implemented by the teaching and school leadership teams (Higgins, Katsipataki, Villanueva-Aguilera, Coleman, Henderson, Major, & Mason, 2016). Resource consideration may need to be given to teacher release. There is excellent potential for impact from this policy. Teaching practice can be enhanced as teachers will develop deeper understandings of the criteria for success and evidence of student learning. Students have the potential to become more actively engaged and self-regulated (Hattie, 2012).

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Further reading

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10 Activity participation policy

Philip Ward

How to use this policy

Physical activity participation is an essential contributor towards mental health, which is viewed as a multifaceted state of wellbeing. Depression and anxiety symptoms are indicators of poor mental health, whilst self-esteem and self-concept are potential hallmarks of good mental health (Ahn & Fedewa, 2011). Encouraging physical activity is a form of mental health promotion, and the school environment provides an important opportunity to communicate the health benefits of participation in physical activity, both during attendance at school and in daily family life. This policy example is intentionally broad and school policy creators are encouraged to delete and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school.

Policies related to activity participation should have five main goals:

- 1. To promote autonomous regulation.** Self-determination theory suggests that long-term participation in physical activity is most likely to be sustained when an individual adopts autonomous regulation and where behaviour reflects personal interests and values (e.g., “I enjoy playing football with my friends during the lunch break”). This contrasts with non-autonomous regulation, where an individual feels constrained to adopt behaviour due to external pressures (e.g., “I don’t really enjoy doing calisthenics during physical education classes, but I do it because it is compulsory”). Schools that prioritise sports or reward and praise one activity over another will lessen the likelihood of a student’s achieving autonomous regulation in relation to structured physical activity.
- 2. To ensure barriers to physical activity participation are minimised for all students.** It is important to ensure that all students are able to participate in school-based physical activity programs. Physical or intellectual disability should not be a barrier to participation, with appropriate adjustment of skill level requirements. Emphasis should be placed on enhancing individual performance over time, rather than merely focussing on performance relative to others.

3. **To enhance physical activity outside of scheduled sport and exercise classes.** Although organised sport and exercise classes provide an obvious means to increase physical activity, there are other opportunities that can be used to increase physical activity participation for students who do not wish to participate in individual or team sports. Non-exercise-related physical activity can also build fitness, and this can then make it easier for students to participate in sporting activities.
4. **To encourage adults to model positive behaviour to enhance physical activity participation.** Although some staff members have particular expertise in physical education, promoting physical activity participation should be an important goal for the whole school community. Thus, when schools implement an activity participation policy, they should provide opportunities for school staff and parents to model physical activity to students.
5. **To reduce sedentary time.** Reducing the amount of time students are sedentary is beneficial in addition to encouraging more physical activity. There is clear evidence that reducing sedentary time (time spent sitting) produces substantial health benefits independent of how much structured physical activity (e.g., sport or exercise) people undertake (Owen et al., 2010). Some schools with adequate resources could consider providing students with access to standing desks that enable them to spend part of the school day learning whilst standing.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] Activity participation policy

Rationale

Physical activity provides multiple benefits for young people. Appropriate practice of physical activity assists:

- Development of healthy bones, muscles and joints;
- Development of cardiorespiratory fitness;
- Development of better coordination and movement control;
- In maintaining a healthy body weight, in combination with a healthy diet.

Physical activity also provides important benefits for mental wellbeing and can reduce the impact of mental illnesses, including depression and anxiety (Biddle et al., 2018; Dale et al., 2019). In addition, increased physical activity can prevent anxiety and depression (Schuch et al., 2018; 2019). In addition, participation in physical activity can assist in the social development of young people by providing opportunities for self-expression, building self-confidence, social interaction and integration. It has also been suggested that physically active young people more readily adopt other healthy behaviours (e.g., avoidance of tobacco, alcohol and drug use) and demonstrate high academic

performance at school, although such benefits may be subject-specific and differ between girls and boys (Ludyga et al., 2020). The type, context, frequency, duration and intensity of physical activity will also impact mental health and academic performance outcomes.

Purpose

This policy outlines the benefits of physical activity participation for students and key factors that will enhance students' school-based participation in physical activity.

Scope

This policy applies to all students, and to ensure maximum impact, staff from the school should also be encouraged to take part in physical activity programs.

[INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

We believe that the best exercise is the one that you enjoy.

At [INSERT name of school] we encourage students to make their own decision over exercise participation.

At [INSERT name of school] we help students identify the types of physical activity they enjoy and develop the skills that will enhance performance and mastery of their chosen activity or sport.

At [INSERT name of school] there is no type of physical activity that is compulsory for all students.

Staff at [INSERT name of school] acknowledge the benefits of participation in all sport. We therefore do not reward and praise engagement in the performance of one sport over another. Thus, all sport participation is welcomed and one particular skill set (e.g., ball skills in football or tennis) is not prioritised over another (e.g., skateboarding).

At [INSERT name of school] we endeavour to ensure that all students are able to participate in school-based activity programs, irrespective of their skill set.

We recognise that some students will excel at sports; however, we understand that it is critical that all students are provided with opportunities to try different sports and activities to enable them to find what works for them.

Our staff understand that non-participation is a sign that a student has not yet found the right activity, not that they are *bad* at sports.

At [INSERT name of school] we look for alternative ways for students to participate in physical activity beyond organised sport, for example, walking or cycling to school, and encouraging the use of stairs rather than elevators.

School staff and adult family members of the [INSERT school name] community promote the importance of physical activity participation in students.

We encourage school-wide activities such as cross-country running or step challenges where everyone participates, including the professional school leadership, administrative and custodial staff, to help reinforce the message that physical activity participation is for everyone, not just elite athletes. Likewise, we encourage parents to model positive behaviours related to physical activity.

At [INSERT name of school] we take steps during the course of a school day to discourage sedentary behaviours. Students are therefore encouraged to break up long periods of sitting, using mini-breaks to stand and stretch.

Rating of evidence base



Figure 10.1. Activity Participation Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. The literature represents a large body of evidence with clear positive benefits. It is well established that even modest changes in physical activity provide substantial physical and mental health benefits. In respect to generalisability, there have been studies conducted in many settings, although fewer have been undertaken in low- and middle-income countries. Many of the recommendations in this policy can be implemented with little or no cost. There is excellent potential for impact, as establishing good physical activity habits in youth will likely lead to these positive behaviours being adopted over the lifespan.

Authorship

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 [INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Mountjoy, M., Andersen, L. B., Armstrong, N., Biddle, S., Boreham, C., Bedenbeck, H.-P. B., & van Mechelen, W. (2011). International Olympic Committee consensus statement on the health and fitness of young people through physical activity and sport. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 45(11), 839.

Vanderloo, L. M., Cairney, J., Choquette, L., Collet, J. P., Davies, T., Faulkner, G., et al. (2018). *Expert statement on physical activity and brain health in children and youth*. https://www.participation.com/sites/default/files/downloads/expert_statement_on_physical_activity_and_brain_health_in_children_and_youth.pdf/

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Further reading

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Expert consultation

School administrators will need to discuss implementation procedures with specialist physical education staff, and ensure counsellors are aware of important health benefits of physical activity in preventing or reducing symptoms of common mental disorders, such as depression and anxiety.

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11 Embedded careers education

Lucas Walsh and Joanne Gleeson

How to use this policy

Changes in global labour markets, increasing competition for employment and changing shapes of traditional careers are creating challenges for young Australians as they leave school for different employment, education and training pathways. Sound and comprehensive careers education is critical to ensure students develop knowledge of post-school pathways and labour markets, employability skills, career goals and plans, as well as the confidence to make career-related decisions. This policy highlights how schools can appropriately and effectively support students planning and enacting their post-school transitions through the provision of a comprehensive careers education approach. This policy example is intentionally broad and school policy creators are encouraged to delete and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school]: Embedded careers education

Rationale

Recent decades have seen changes in labour markets that greatly impact young Australians (Black & Walsh, 2019). For example, there has been a rise in casual, part-time and on-call work (Hajkowicz et al., 2016; International Labour Organization [ILO], 2020), with Australia having one of the highest proportions of employees engaged in temporary jobs compared to other countries (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2019). An aging population also means that Australians are working longer, which intensifies competition for work (Thomas & Gilfillan, 2019). Other trends such as automation are changing the types of jobs available, with over a third of all current jobs in Australia at risk of disappearing or significantly changing in profile in coming years (OECD, 2019). For young people, these changes mean fewer permanent

available jobs, intense competition for work and declining working conditions. Over half of all young Australian workers are in casual jobs and are getting paid less, experiencing lower working standards and suffering from less job security than older employees (Dhillon & Cassidy, 2018). They also want to work more but are finding it difficult to do so. A third of Australian youth are now unemployed or underemployed, with youth unemployment more than double that of the wider working population (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2020; OECD, 2019).

Further, these changes are impacting how young people understand the concept of a career. The traditional idea of a single, stable, career is being replaced by a “portfolio career”, with young people today expected to have as many as 17 different jobs over five careers in their lifetime (Foundation for Young Australians [FYA], 2017, p. 6; Inkson, 2015). The long-held assumption that higher education qualifications will lead to desirable and secure work is also being challenged (Chesters & Wyn, 2019). Even medium to highly educated young people are finding it difficult to obtain work (OECD, 2019), with university graduates sometimes experiencing a mismatch between their qualifications and available jobs (Karmel & Carroll, 2016). This does not mean that higher education qualifications are not crucial to securing desirable work; they just do not guarantee it. These trends are worrying Australian youth (Carlisle et al., 2018; 2019; Chesters & Wyn, 2019; Wyn et al., 2017), who then feel pressured to continually seek credentials, experiences and higher levels of education to improve their employability (Black & Walsh, 2019; Oinonen, 2018).

Young people need both the skills and aptitudes to navigate these post-school challenges, and careers education from the earliest age has been advocated as an effective and appropriate way to support them (Patton, 2017; Patton & McMahon, 2014; Skorikov & Patton, 2007; Watson & McMahon, 2017).

Purpose

The key objective of this policy is to connect careers education at **[INSERT name of school]** with our school's aims, plans and curricula and involve the whole school community in better supporting students with their post-school transitions that are aligned with the 21st-century workforce.

Scope

This policy applies to school management, teachers, staff, school-based careers advisors, and current students and parents/guardians of **[INSERT name of school]**. It also relates to community partners, such as employers.

Policy statement

[INSERT name of school] acknowledges the nature of contemporary employment, higher education and training markets and is committed to supporting students through the provision of relevant and effective careers education that assists them to make successful post-school transitions. (Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee [EEJSC], 2018; Torii & O'Connell, 2017).

[INSERT name of school] believes students' career development needs to be fostered as an ongoing lifelong process of managing learning, work and life (Patton & McMahon, 2014). Careers education from the earliest age is therefore essential and is a school priority (Patton, 2017; Skorikov & Patton, 2007; Watson & McMahon, 2017). Careers education will be provided to students from [INSERT Years] (i.e., Year 1 through Year 12) and will include structured, developmentally appropriate activities.

At [INSERT name of school] the post-school pathway or goal of each student will be valued and supported and not be judged relative to another student's plans or academic outcomes or the aims of the school overall (EEJSC, 2018). [INSERT name of school] recognises that post-school transitions look different for each individual student and will help students and their families understand the full breadth of transition opportunities available (Dik, Duffy, & Eldridge, 2009; Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007; Inkson, Dries, & Arnold, 2015). [INSERT name of school's] careers education approach will therefore not disproportionately emphasise academic achievement and higher education pathways at the expense of other employment, education and training opportunities and destinations (Bowen & Kidd, 2017; Torii & O'Connell, 2017; Urbis, 2011). Students should understand the variety of pathways available post-school.

[INSERT name of school] believes it is important that our students experience a broad range of career-related activities that will help them build and master career skills to support effective post-school transitions (Ithaca Group, 2019; Polvere & Lim, 2015).

[INSERT name of school] is committed to drawing on research evidence to supplement and improve our careers education approach (e.g., McMahon & Patton, 2015) in line with professional standards and government guidelines (Career Industry Council of Australia [CICA], 2019; Department of Education & Training [DET], 2019), as well as being responsive to the contemporary labour market and higher education challenges students may face.

School management

Clear careers education goals and program delivery expectations have been articulated in our school plans (Ithaca Group, 2019). [INSERT name of school] is committed to benchmarking the performance of our careers education program annually (CICA, 2014). Further, from [INSERT date],

[INSERT name of school] will establish an advisory panel of business and other employer representatives and school partners to review the school's careers education approach and its connection to contemporary employment and education markets.

[INSERT name of school] commits to providing sufficient and capable resources to support the school's careers education agenda (Patton & McMahon, 2014). As such, [INSERT name of school] has arranged professional development, internships, incursions and mentoring opportunities for teachers and advisors through external partnerships to improve their knowledge and capacities with regards to worlds-of-work and post-school employment, education and training opportunities for students. [INSERT suggested supplement] These partnerships and their benefits are listed in Supplement 1.

At [INSERT name of school] we are committed to utilising the latest resources and guidelines provided by state and federal governments that help us meet the aims and needs of our careers education approach (DET, 2019).

[INSERT name of school] has committed to partnering with a number of business, tertiary education, training and community partners to assist delivery of a relevant and comprehensive careers education program to our students (Lonsdale, 2011; Lonsdale et al., 2011; Torii, 2018; Walsh, 2016). [INSERT suggested supplement] These partnerships and related programs including the anticipated benefits to our students are listed in Supplement 2.

To ensure our careers education approach is as comprehensive and responsive to labour market changes as possible, individual counselling time between teachers, advisors and students has been prioritised for all [INSERT Years] (i.e., Year 1 through Year 12) students (Meijers & Lengelle, 2012; Meijers, Lengelle, Winters, & Kuijpers, 2017).

Teachers and school advisors

Teachers and school-based careers advisors will have the appropriate qualifications (CICA, 2019) where applicable and meet the professional development expectations, knowledge standards and performance criteria outlined in [INSERT name of school's] school plans (Ithaca Group, 2019).

Teachers and school-based advisors at [INSERT name of school] will endeavour to help students explore their own career identities (Savickas, 2011; 2012) such that their developing self-images can be connected with future careers and worlds-of-work (Côté & Levine, 2016; Su, 2014).

To support our commitment to fostering lifelong career development approaches in students, teachers and school-based advisors at [INSERT name of school] are expected to adopt and role model lifelong learning attitudes and

approaches to their own career development (McMahon & Patton, 2000; Patton & McMahon, 2014).

Students

Students' understanding and acknowledgement of post-school contemporary employment and education settings underpin [INSERT name of school's] careers education approach. Students will be assisted to acquire the skills and aptitudes necessary to take accountability for their own learning, exploration and decision-making regarding post-school transitions (Patton & McMahon, 2014). This includes understanding their rights and responsibilities in the workplace as employees and potentially as employers or business owners. Further, [INSERT name of school] will commit to helping students develop employability and career management skills (Bridgstock, 2009; Tomlinson, 2017), in particular, resiliency and flexibility (del Corso, 2017; Duarte, da Silva, & Paixão, 2017), as well as contingency career planning abilities (Borg, Pryor, & Bright, 2014; Creed, Macpherson, & Hood, 2011).

Students at [INSERT name of school] will experience a range of work-based learning, internships, volunteer programs and networking events, and school-based enterprise programs from [INSERT Years] (i.e., Year 1 through Year 12) to not only facilitate their connection with worlds-of-work and allow for exploration of different vocations but to help them develop and apply employability and career management skills (Bowen & Kidd, 2017; Eggleston, 2018; Polesel, Klatt, Blake, & Starr, 2017; Pope, Berman, Tee, & Williams, 2014; Rodriguez, Fox, & McCambly, 2016). [INSERT suggested supplement] These work-related opportunities, including the anticipated benefits to our students, are listed in Supplement 3.

Parents, guardians and broader school community

[INSERT name of school] believes in the positive influences that parents, guardians and significant others can have on students' career development. We encourage all members of our broader school community to familiarise themselves with the careers education approach at [INSERT name of school] and support students by engaging in career conversations and exploration activities outside of school (Soresi, Nota, Ferrari, & Ginevra, 2014; Watson & McMahon, 2017).

[INSERT name of school] will seek to engage parents, guardians and students' significant others where possible in learning activities, information sessions and other communications forums regarding the importance of their roles in supporting students' career development (Ginevra, Nota, & Ferrari, 2015; Patton, 2017; Watson & McMahon, 2017).

Rating of evidence base



Figure 11.1. Embedded Careers Education Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. Substantial evidence exists regarding the benefits of careers education for students whilst at school. Relevant research has been referenced to support each policy statement. Whilst research acknowledges certain aspects of this policy as important (e.g., benchmarking careers education performance, school partnerships, teacher/advisor professional development through external partners, student career identity focus), additional or further Australian-based research would be beneficial. Much of the research referenced to support each policy statement includes evidence of impact. Some policy statements (e.g., recognising different career plans for each student and suspending judgement or comparison to others) would benefit from research and evidence impact extended to teachers' and school leaders' perspectives, not just students' perspectives. Consideration of different school contexts and student populations could have been more evident in the research supporting some policy aspects (e.g., benchmarking careers education performance, partnerships, teacher/advisor professional development through external partners). Policy reflects good practice that occurs in many schools already. Some recommended actions will require changes to curricula, development of relationships with external partners (if these don't already exist), expansion of existing careers education activities to younger year levels and investment in teacher/advisor professional development. There is excellent potential for impact if a comprehensive careers education approach is adopted and recommended actions implemented.

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[INSERT relevant staff members]

Related policy and documents

[INSERT relevant policy and documents]

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on [INSERT date].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT date].

Supplements

Supplement 1: Teacher and school advisor careers education professional development opportunities at [INSERT name of school]

<i>Partnership Program/ Opportunity</i>	<i>Benefits</i>
e.g., ABCN <i>Partners in Learning</i> program https://www.abcn.com.au/our-programs/developing-leaders	<i>Partners in Learning</i> supports business and school leaders by linking them together to share experiences and expertise, solve problems and explore leadership challenges. It provides both leadership support for school principals beyond the education environment and the opportunity for business leaders to make a significant contribution to a school and the broader community.
e.g., CICA #Work2030 webinar discussion forums https://cica.org.au/projects/	An 8-part webinar series featuring panels of industry experts, career advisors and students providing opportunities for teachers and advisors to learn different perspectives regarding post-school transitions, ask questions and participate in online discussion forums.
e.g., Beacon Foundation <i>Collaborative Classrooms</i> program https://www.beaconfoundation.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Beacon-Volunteering-Brochure-Folded.pdf	A professional development workshop attended by teachers, advisors and business representatives who co-develop lesson plans that combine the school curriculum and authentic work practices.

Supplement 2: External careers education opportunities for students at [INSERT name of school]

<i>Partnership Program/ Opportunity</i>	<i>Benefits</i>
e.g., ABCN <i>Aspirations</i> program https://www.abcn.com.au/our-programs/employability-and-stem	<i>Aspirations</i> is a mentoring program for Year 11 students to broaden their awareness of career options and help them make informed decisions about their choices and pathways beyond school. Working in small groups, it provides students with an understanding of the skills required in a modern work environment including interview techniques and developing essential employability skills, while also exploring post-school options.

e.g., Beacon Foundation
Work Readiness programs
<https://www.beaconfoundation.com.au/what-we-do/high-impact-programs/>

e.g., FYA Worlds of Work [WOW] program
<https://www.fya.org.au/programs/worlds-of-work/>

e.g., RMIT Careers and Employability session
(Victorian-based opportunity) <https://www.rmit.edu.au/events/2020/may/steer-your-career>

A series of half and one-day work readiness programs to boost employability skills and build real-life connections to worlds-of-work for students in Years 7–12. Programs are designed to ensure young people feel more confident and prepared for their transition from education into the workforce.

WOW is an online program that equips young people with the enterprise skills and careers management skills to be prepared for the future of work. Tailored for students in Years 8–10, *WOW* activities facilitate meaningful career-linked experiences that aim to answer the question “What does it take to succeed in life and work?”

A workshop that introduces students to models of career development learning and how they can assist students to make a successful transition out of secondary school and beyond. Activities will provide students with the opportunity to do some self-reflection to assess where they are currently, understand what employers are looking for and consider what they can be doing inside and outside the classroom to achieve their goals.

Supplement 3: Work-related experiences for students at [INSERT name of school]

<i>Experience</i>	<i>Benefits</i>
e.g., Work Experience Week video project https://studyworkgrow.com.au/work-experience/	Each student secures a week of work experience, during which they interview individuals connected to different aspects of their experience and collect their reflections. Each student then creates a video of their experience which is presented to class and parents.
e.g., Volunteering (South Australian context provided) https://www.education.sa.gov.au/parenting-and-child-care/volunteers/student-volunteers/student-volunteer-programs-benefits-and-approaches	Series of integrated classes and volunteering opportunities. Each student secures a volunteering opportunity which is then incorporated into a series of classes and reflection activities over a term.

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12 Appropriate staff and student relationships policy

Nicholas Gamble and Christopher Boyle

How to use this policy

The relationship between school staff and students is very important. It has the potential to impact on the wellbeing, academic progress and sense of belonging for students and job satisfaction and retention of school staff. However, despite being a rare occurrence, recent coverage around the world has also shown that school settings have been implicated in the abuse of young people. Therefore, in order to protect both school staff and students, a clear policy on the interactions and social relationships between school staff and students is needed.

It is important to be aware that there are legislative requirements in many jurisdictions that place limits on interactions and require school staff to refrain from some interactions with students. The implementation of this policy must set expected behaviours and interactions above these mandated levels. There will also be specific professions working in schools such as psychologists, counsellors and social workers who may have legal and ethical obligations that exceed other school staff (Australian Psychological Society, 2007; Boyle & Gamble, 2014; Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia, 2017). The obligations for these staff may even preclude them from attending some school gatherings.

School leaders should implement policies around interactions and relationships with students that set out to maintain and promote positive relationships but also to protect students and staff from inappropriate relationships. School leaders will need to consider legislative and policy requirements in their jurisdiction and professional requirements of staff in developing this policy.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] Appropriate staff and student relationships policy

Rationale

There is an underlying power differential between school students and school staff (Richmond & McCroskey, 1984; Schrot et al., 2007). It is important for

school staff of all types to be aware of their influence and position of trust and power. This position of power can impact relationships between staff and students. Although the differential may be more obvious in the interactions between teaching staff and students in that these members of staff will grade work and communicate with parents, it is present in all relationships between school staff and students. All school staff have a position of power and influence that is explicitly or indirectly felt by the student body (Allan & I'Anson, 2004). It is important that all school staff are mindful of this differential in relationships when they interact with students.

There is discussion in the academic literature about the importance of developing relationships between teaching staff and students in the school setting (Bernstein-Yamashiro & Noam, 2013) and digital environments (Asterhan & Rosenberg, 2015). With the rise of social media platforms, there has been a focus on interactions between staff and students on these platforms. The findings in relation to academic achievement and engagement have been mixed with much of the discrepancy said to come from how the tools are used (e.g., Dohn & Dohn, 2017; Lu et al., 2016; Matzat & Vrieling, 2016). However, there are also reports of social relationships developing between staff and students that have led to sexual and physical abuse (e.g., Moulden et al., 2010; Steely & Ten Bensel, 2019). Therefore, it is critical for school leaders to have a clear policy for school staff in relation to interactions and relationships in both the physical and online environments.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the shared responsibility of students, parents and guardians, and school staff in engaging in appropriate interactions and relationships. It is vital for all members of the school community to engage in interactions, behaviours and relationships that foster professional interactions between school staff and students. These include nurturing and mentoring relationships when professional roles require it. However, personal or social relationships and/or interactions should not occur between staff and students in online or in person settings.

Scope

This policy applies to current and past students, teachers, staff, school leaders and parents of [INSERT name of school]. A whole school approach to appropriate relationships is needed and this is the responsibility of the school community.

[INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

[INSERT name of school] requires staff to interact in an appropriate professional manner with students, parents, and former parents and students. Staff members within the school hold a position of power and influence and must be mindful of this differential in their interactions.

The underlying expectation of all staff at [INSERT name of school] is that their interactions and relationships with all students and parents foster a positive learning environment within a caring, supportive and inclusive school environment (Zollers et al., 1999).

[INSERT name of school] staff must only engage in professional relationships with their students, even if other types of relationships are initiated by the student. Staff should also be mindful of how relationships may be perceived by others (Department of Education United Kingdom [DEUK], 2011; NSW Department of Education and Communities [NDEC], 2014; Victorian Institute of Teaching [VIT], n.d.).

Due to their inherently risky nature, [INSERT name of school] recommends that school staff do not follow or accept friend requests from students or parents on social media, socialise with students at gatherings outside of school or see any given student in informal settings when providing support (e.g., at your house) (NDEC, 2014). In the very rare circumstances when these might be deemed appropriate, parental consent and approval from the head of [INSERT name of school] are required.

The staff of [INSERT name of school] understand that professional relationships with students and parents are based on mutual respect (Hallinan, 2008; Queensland College of Teachers, n.d.).

Staff at [INSERT name of school] understand the dynamic nature of diversity in the students and families enrolled at the school and respond in a positive and responsive way to the unique attribute of each child (National Education Association [NEA], 2010; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; VIT, n.d.).

There is a progressive correlation between positive and supporting professional relationships (den Brok et al., 2004; Dohn & Dohn, 2017). Staff at [INSERT name of school] engage in supportive and child-focused professional relationships with students and parents.

Given their influence, [INSERT name of school] reminds staff to be extremely conscious of the nature of comments and jokes to ensure that they are free of prejudice in those areas covered by anti-discrimination or other similar legislation in their jurisdiction. However, beyond this, it is essential to ensure that students and/or parents do not feel embarrassed or disrespected by staff comments (DEUK, 2011; NEA, 2010).

Online relationships

[INSERT name of school] does/does not allow staff to communicate via social media with students and/or parents regarding school business.

[INSERT name of school] does/does not allow staff to communicate via text messaging with students and/or parents regarding school business.

[INSERT name of school] permits the use of social media to communicate with a student for the strict purpose(s) of [List specific approved uses of social media in school]. These interactions should only take place if the staff member has a dedicated social media profile for professional purposes (Muñoz & Towner, 2011).

[INSERT name of school] permits the use of text messages to communicate with students for the strict purpose(s) of [List specific approved uses of social media in school].

[INSERT name of school] is mindful that school staff's presumed private conduct on social media sites may be publicly shared with students and parents. Staff are reminded to be conscious of maintaining an appropriate demeanour even in private online spaces and that no details about students or parents are to be posted online (O'Connor & Schmidt, 2015).

Parents and families

[INSERT name of school] does not recommend developing social relationships with parents and/or older siblings of current students as it can lead to a conflict of interest and can further increase the influence and power of the staff member. If there are pre-existing relationships, care should be taken to minimise any negative impact on the student (Australian Psychological Society, 2016; NDEC, 2014).

Although it is important to consider the age of the child and the context, [INSERT name of school] school staff should be cautious giving or receiving gifts from students. The cost, occasion and motivation of the gift should be considered. Gifts that facilitate or encourage social connections to be established outside of the professional relationship are not to be exchanged (NEA, 2010; NDEC, 2014; Wang, 2008).

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Related Policy and Documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Inclusion policy

Wellbeing policy

Safety policy

Counselling policy

Anti-bullying and discrimination policy

Rating of evidence base



Figure 12.1. Appropriate Staff and Student Relationships Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. For many aspects of this policy, direct research is limited as school staff engaging in relationships outside of those detailed here are in breach of their legal, professional and ethical obligations. Therefore, it is difficult to empirically investigate some of these issues. For this reason, a mixture of empirical research that supports the appropriate behaviours and policy documents from international regulatory bodies was used to develop this policy. There is strong evidence that school staff who reflect on and monitor their interactions with students and parents face a lower risk of developing inappropriate relationships. As the majority of these issues covered relate to ethically appropriate behaviour, the policy documents for a range of international jurisdictions were evaluated for consistency. It does require teachers to consider and adapt their behaviour (especially in online contexts) but not unreasonably so. If school staff limit their behaviour and engage as described, the potential for problematic relationships developing will be substantially reduced.

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

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13 Self-injury response and intervention policy

Emily Berger and Janis Whitlock

How to use this policy

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an outline of a policy addressing productive responses in schools to students who have self-injured. This policy example is intentionally broad and school policy creators are encouraged to delete and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete, or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] self-injury response and intervention policy

Rationale

Non-suicidal self-injury (otherwise referred to as self-injury and deliberate self-harm [DSH]) refers to deliberate actions to harm one's own body (Nock & Favazza, 2009). Behaviours include self-inflicted cutting, burning, hitting, scratching, and any other behaviours that cause harm to a person's body (Martin et al., 2010). Educators may witness and be the first responder to a student who has self-injured, may have a student disclose acts of self-injury to them, or may need to monitor a student in their class who has a history of the behaviour (Berger et al., 2014a; 2014b).

An estimated 7.5 to 46.5% of adolescents have engaged in self-injury at least once (Cipriano et al., 2017; Martin et al., 2010). Self-injury is prevalent among males and females (Jacobson & Gould, 2007). People with a history of mental illness, with prior engagement in self-injury, who have family members or friends who have self-injured, who abuse drugs or alcohol, or who have a history of trauma or physical or sexual abuse are at greatest risk of engaging in self-injury (Toste & Health, 2010).

There are a number of reasons that people may self-injure; regulating unwanted thoughts and emotions is understood as a primary underlying goal (Nock & Favazza, 2009). A growing body of research suggests that the physical pain and relief that follows self-injury essentially tricks the

brain into perceiving relief from emotional pain (Franklin, 2014). Self-injury can also be contagious, meaning that youth adopt the practice after observing it in other people or through media (Toste & Health, 2010).

Purpose

This school policy aims to assist educators in identifying and sensitively responding to self-injury in school settings. Despite the fact that self-injury and suicide thoughts and behaviours (STB) are distinct phenomena – one is undertaken to feel better (self-injury) and the other undertaken to end the capacity to feel at all (STB) – they can co-occur (Owens et al., 2002). Indeed, self-injury is a risk factor for STB and so should trigger a suicide risk assessment. That said, since non-suicidal self-injury should not automatically trigger the same emergency protocols that STB often triggers, self-injury and STB school policies should be distinct.

Scope

This policy applies to all school staff team members, including teachers, school leaders, and the school mental health worker(s) for [INSERT name of school], and parents/carers and students of [INSERT name of school] when responding to students who have self-injured.

[INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

This school policy aims to address the issue of non-suicidal self-injury and is based on extant templates in the areas of non-suicidal self-injury and deliberate self-harm (DSH). The following policy components are focused specifically on self-injury but also address the increased risk of STBs for self-injuring adolescents.

1 Roles and responsibilities of teachers and other school staff

The following table delineates the roles and responsibilities of all school staff at [INSERT name of school]. Identification of a school crisis team or point people is appropriate for schools who do not have full-time access to a school nurse or school mental health staff member (Bubrick et al., 2010; Walsh, 2012). These point people or members of the crisis team will be educators and school staff with specialist and ongoing training in responding to and managing instances of student self-injury and mental illness.

<i>Staff member</i>	<i>Role in relation to student self-injury</i>
Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Noticing the signs of self-injury 2 Monitoring students for changes in behaviour 3 Referral of students to the school nurse, point people, or the mental health staff member at [INSERT name of school]
School nurse/ school point people/crisis team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Noticing the signs of self-injury 2 Monitoring students for changes in behaviour 3 Development of school self-injury policy 4 Treatment of wounds 5 Assessment of wound severity 6 Wound care advice for students 7 Conducting of suicide risk assessments 8 Notifying parents/carers and offering support and advice 9 With parental permission, refer students to a mental health professional
School mental health worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Noticing the signs of self-injury 2 Monitoring students for changes in behaviour 3 Development of school self-injury policy 4 Conducting of suicide risk assessments 5 Providing counselling to students and parents/carers 6 Notifying parents/carers and offering support and advice 7 With parental permission, provision of treatment and/or referral of students to another mental health professional
School leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Noticing the signs of self-injury 2 Monitoring students for changes in behaviour 3 Development of school self-injury policy 4 Advising and consulting with school mental health staff/school nurses/point people 5 Notifying parents/carers and offering support and advice 6 Referral of students to the school nurse, point people, or the mental health staff member at [INSERT name of school].

2 Professional development for school staff

Teachers and school leaders require training to be able to respond to and refer students if they witness self-injury or if a student discloses self-injury. School nurses, mental health staff, and school crisis teams/point people should receive additional training to conduct a suicide risk assessment, assess the psychological and/or physical health of the self-injuring student, contact the student's parents or carers, and refer the student to a mental health service or accompany the student to the hospital emergency department (Berger et al., 2014b; Walsh, 2012).

3 Witnessing a student self-injuring

School staff at [INSERT name of school] who witness a student self-injuring should respond using a calm, compassionate, and non-judgemental approach. School staff should avoid showing anger, horror, panic, frustration, or disgust (Toste & Health, 2010). Adopting a low key, dispassionate demeanour and asking questions based on respectful curiosity is the central pillar of student-staff interactions related to self-injury (Walsh, 2012). School staff should not move directly into attempting to fix or otherwise solve student problems and should not deny student feelings (Berger et al., 2015). Self-injury implements (e.g., blade or lighter) should be removed using a calm and compassionate manner, and the staff member should stay with the student until another member of school staff (preferably a school nurse or mental health worker/point person) can attend to the student (Berger et al., 2015). If there are open wounds that need attention, the first contact staff member may escort the student to the school nurse/point person/crisis team at [INSERT name of school] for treatment of the wounds (see section on wound care and harm minimisation) (Bubrick et al., 2010; Onacki, 2005).

4 Noticing signs that a student has self-injured

The following are signs that teachers or other school staff might notice if a student engages in self-injury. Because of feelings of shame or guilt, fear of negative reactions, and/or because self-injury is used for coping, students may avoid seeking help (Berger et al., 2013). Signs that a student has self-injured include:

- a Unexplained scars and wounds which may include cuts, burns, scratches, or bruises
- b Students wearing clothing with long sleeves and pant legs. This behaviour is particularly concerning when the weather is warmer and students do not want to participate in sporting and swimming activities
- c Students engaging in secretive behaviour and withdrawing from other people
- d Students searching online or writing and drawing about self-injury in school essays, journals, and artwork
- e A student showing disregard for their own physical safety and health, their hygiene, or their personal appearance (Berger et al., 2015; Bubrick et al., 2010; Toste & Health, 2010; Walsh, 2012).

5 Monitoring the student following self-injury

Students who have a history of self-injury should be monitored for changes in their behaviour. The previously presented warning signs may be used to monitor these students (see section on noticing signs that a student

has self-injured). The other purpose of monitoring students who have a history of self-injury is due to the likelihood of self-injury reoccurring and the emotional, mental, and physical consequences of self-injury (e.g., infection, scarring, anxiety, shame, or depression) (Bubrick et al., 2010; Toste & Health, 2010).

6 Wound care and harm minimisation

School nurses, mental health personnel, and point people/crisis team members should discuss with students who self-injure how they can care for their wounds, how students identify when a wound is not healing, and when students may be experiencing physical complications from their injuries. Harm minimisation also involves conversations with students about how sterile the implements are that they use to self-injure. How to approach this conversation with students is detailed here:

- Use neutral, non-judgemental language
- Use pragmatic and matter-of-fact questioning
- Use the student's language for their wounds, scars, and self-injury
- Allow the student space and time to discuss their self-injury, wounds, and scars
- Listen to the students without an agenda or attempting to solve their problems
- Address any questions from the students about self-injury
- Refer to what you know about self-injury more generally and enquire if this is the same or not for the student.

7 Self-injury contagion in schools

Contagion of self-injury in schools can be addressed in a number of ways:

- a Deliberately showing wounds and scars should not be permitted by students at school
- b Students should be educated about the risks of contagion of self-injury and the importance of not showing their scars and wounds to prevent peers from adopting the behaviour
- c Discussing self-injury as one of many maladaptive coping strategies and discussing adaptive methods of coping with students
- d Telling students that all maladaptive behaviours (including self-injury) require help from an adult and identifying which adult they can speak to if they suspect or know of a peer that has self-injured or if they themselves have self-injured
- e School staff should receive training regarding how to compassionately speak to students about displaying wounds, while also not increasing the student's sense of shame or excluding students from school or

school activities (e.g., sporting events) (Toste & Health, 2010; Walsh, 2012).

8 Engaging with parents and carers

Offering support and advice to parents/carers about the risks associated with self-injury, the facts about self-injury, and how parents can respond to their self-injuring child is the role of the school nurse, school mental health staff member, school crisis team or point people, and members of the school leadership team at [INSERT name of school]. Advising parents and caregivers on how and when to engage with mental health services and specialists external to [INSERT name of school] is also the role of these members of staff. The decision to inform parents/carers about the self-injury is based on the student's level of risk for further self-injury and STBs, the severity of the injuries caused by the student when self-injuring, the potential risk posed to students by notifying the parents/carers, and the need for a referral to a mental health service external to [INSERT name of school] (Bubrick et al., 2010; Toste & Heath, 2010; Walsh, 2012). A notification to child protection services is required if parents/carers repeatedly and without explanation fail to enact the advice of health professionals (Walsh, 2012).

9 Conducting a suicide risk assessment

A suicide risk assessment should be conducted at by [INSERT name of school] school nurse, mental health professional(s), or point people/crisis team with students who have been identified as engaging in self-injury (refer to [INSERT name of school] policy on suicide). An assessment of the student's risk for further self-injury and their mental health should also be conducted and treatment should be provided to the student based on the outcome of this assessment (Toste & Health, 2010). Suicide and self-injury risk assessments should continue to be conducted with students who have a history of either of these behaviours or with students who continue to express thoughts related to suicide and/or self-injury.

10 Feedback loop and self-care

Support and feedback should be provided to the referring teacher or school staff team member, as long as the confidentiality of the student is maintained (Berger et al., 2015; Walsh, 2012). To maintain the confidentiality of the student, this feedback may take the form of informing the referring teacher or staff member that they responded correctly to the student and/or by providing strategies for staff regarding how they might respond to students who self-injure in the future.

Rating of evidence base



Figure 13.1. Self-injury Response and Intervention Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. There is a good evidence-base for the recommendation included in this policy. The results of this evidence-base are consistent and with a low risk of bias. The research evidence used in this policy demonstrates levels of impact that are not known. The research used in this policy is generalizable and representative of the broader population of young people who self-injure and across schooling contexts. Self-injury school policy requires a mental health professional, school nurse, point person/crisis team to be available and for all school staff to have training and awareness of student self-injury and how to respond. A school self-injury policy is able to minimise or prevent further student self-injury and to equip school staff to manage this behaviour in schools. Appropriate management of self-injury in schools will help to facilitate student help-seeking for peers or themselves for self-injury.

Authorship

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[INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Teacher wellbeing

Mental health promotion

Suicide

Risk assessment

Mandatory reporting

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of Review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Further reading

- Nock, M. K. (Ed.). (2009). *Understanding non-suicidal self-injury: Origins, assessment, and treatment*. American Psychological Association.
- Walsh, B. W. (2012). *Treating self-injury: A practical guide* (2nd ed.). The Guilford Press.

Expert consultation

Consultation with mental health providers and services is recommended to enact this policy. A crisis team/point people and expert mental health personnel are required to assess, manage, refer, and/or provide treatment to students who have self-injured or who are reported or suspected of self-injury.

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14 School trauma-informed practice policy

Emily Berger and Karen Martin

How to use this policy

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an outline of a policy addressing trauma-informed practice in schools. This chapter will first define trauma and adverse childhood experiences and the implications of these experiences for children and adolescents. An outline of the trauma-informed practice policy for schools is then provided. This policy example is intentionally broad to enable and encourage school policy creators to adapt the example below to create a policy that best serves their school context.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] Trauma-informed practice policy

Rationale

Trauma and adverse childhood experiences include exposure to child physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical neglect or emotional neglect, children having a parent with a mental illness or who abuses drugs or alcohol, having parents who become separated or divorced, or children who have a parent who has been incarcerated (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2019). Trauma and adversity in childhood also include exposure to domestic violence in childhood, experiencing the death of a parent or significant other, exposure to refugee, terrorism, or war-related trauma, exposure to natural or manmade disasters, and experiencing an accident or injury (Perfect et al., 2016). Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) may be diagnosed after a child or person experiences exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013).

Children exposed to trauma are at higher risk of experiencing impaired executive functioning, delayed academic achievement, anti-social and disruptive classroom behaviour, school suspensions, and grade retention (Perfect et al., 2016). Trauma and adverse childhood experiences are also risk factors for psychological issues for children, including PTSD, depression, anxiety

disorders, and conduct disorders (Perfect et al., 2016). Adverse childhood experiences also lead to greater engagement in health risk behaviours (e.g., alcohol abuse, drug use), physical morbidity, lowered academic achievement, higher unemployment, and welfare dependence in adulthood (CDC, 2019; Kezelman et al., 2015). More than two-thirds of children in the USA have been reported to experience at least one traumatic event before they are 16 years of age (Copeland et al., 2007).

Purpose

This school policy aims to address the issue of the impact of trauma and adverse childhood experiences on children in schools using a trauma-informed practice framework. It is recommended that all schools have a trauma-informed practice policy. It is important to note that this policy does not address school mandatory reporting policy of child abuse and neglect. This policy should be used in conjunction with [INSERT name of school] policy on mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect.

Scope

This policy applies to all school staff members, including teachers, school leaders, and school mental health workers for [INSERT name of school], and parents and students of [INSERT name of school]. The specific roles and responsibilities of school staff are listed according to the four Rs of trauma-informed practice (see the following section) that were developed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2014), and the research evidence suggesting a whole-school education, support, and coaching program in response to childhood trauma (Berger, 2019; Dorado et al., 2016).

This policy does not include offending parents/carers, defined as the “parents who perpetrated the trauma for which the child is receiving treatment such as a parent who perpetrated the child’s sexual abuse or domestic violence” (Cohen & Mannarino, 2015, p. 557).

[INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

[INSERT name of school] will use the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) four Rs or a similar model to guide delivery of trauma-informed professional learning to school staff members. The four Rs include:

- *Realisation* of the impact of trauma and the potential pathways to recovery
- *Recognition* of the signs and symptoms of trauma in students

- *Responding* to students impacted by trauma by incorporating knowledge about trauma and trauma-informed practice into classrooms and within [INSERT name of school]
- *Resisting Re-traumatisation* of students and secondary (vicarious) trauma of school staff through use of trauma-informed school policies, procedures, and practices (SAMHSA, 2014).

Realisation: [INSERT name of school] will ensure that all school staff members have access to professional learning about events and experiences that are considered traumatic and the potential effects of trauma and adverse childhood experiences on students (SAMHSA, 2014).

Recognition: [INSERT name of school] will ensure that all school staff have access to professional learning about the signs and symptoms that a student may have been exposed to trauma or adversity (SAMHSA, 2014).

Responding: [INSERT name of school] will ensure that all school staff have access to professional learning and ongoing coaching about incorporating knowledge of trauma and trauma-informed practice into classrooms and within [INSERT name of school] (SAMHSA, 2014).

Resisting Re-traumatisation: [INSERT name of school] will ensure that all students and school staff members are supported to avoid re-traumatising students who have experienced adversity or trauma, and to prevent secondary (vicarious) trauma of staff, through trauma-informed school policies, procedures, and practices (SAMHSA, 2014).

Roles and responsibilities of school staff

All school staff roles and responsibilities

All school staff are responsible for attending professional learning about trauma and how to implement trauma-informed practice in [INSERT name of school].

School leaders' specific roles and responsibilities

- School leaders at [INSERT name of school] will invest in trauma-informed practice, policy, and procedures within [INSERT name of school]. School leaders will invest through: ensuring that all school staff receive trauma-informed professional learning; allocating appropriate facilities (e.g., therapy rooms, quiet spaces) for students exposed to trauma; employment of school staff who can provide trauma screening, assessment, and intervention services; and allocating school staff who can track and monitor the use of and recommend changes to the trauma-informed approach at [INSERT name of school].
- At [INSERT name of school] school leaders will:

- Attend professional learning on the implementation of trauma-informed practice. This professional learning will encompass how to provide coaching and debriefing to school staff members, information on noticing the signs and symptoms of secondary (vicarious) traumatic stress among school staff, and detail how to support parents/carers of students exposed to trauma.
- Deliver a written school trauma-informed practice policy at **[INSERT name of school]** and ensure that all school staff members are familiar with this policy and the school mandatory reporting policy.
- Ensure that all school staff at **[INSERT name of school]** have received professional learning on childhood trauma and trauma-informed practice.
- Provide coaching and debriefing to school staff as they respond to students who have experienced trauma and when they use the principles of trauma-informed practice.
- Ensure that the physical environment of **[INSERT name of school]** is equipped to support the emotional regulation of students who have experienced trauma and the coaching and debriefing practices of school staff personnel.
- Refer students and parents/caregivers of students who have experienced trauma to mental health services and ensure that all parents/guardians are provided with information about the trauma-informed practice policies and procedures used at **[INSERT name of school]**.
- Develop referral pathways to mental health providers and community services who can provide support to trauma-exposed students and their parents/guardians.

School mental health workers' specific roles and responsibilities

At **[INSERT name of school]** school mental health staff will:

- Attend professional learning on the implementation of trauma-informed practice. This professional learning will encompass how to provide coaching and debriefing to school staff team members, information on noticing the signs and symptoms of secondary (vicarious) traumatic stress among school staff, and detail how to support parents/carers of students exposed to trauma.
- Consult with school leadership on a written school trauma-informed practice policy at **[INSERT name of school]** and ensure that all school staff are familiar with this policy and the school mandatory reporting policy.
- Ensure that all school staff members at **[INSERT name of school]** have received professional learning on childhood trauma and trauma-informed practice.
- Provide coaching and debriefing to school staff as they respond to students who have experienced trauma and when they use the principles of trauma-informed practice.
- Ensure that the physical environment of **[INSERT name of school]** is equipped to support the emotional regulation of students who have experienced trauma and the coaching and debriefing practices of school staff.

- Refer students and parents/caregivers of students who have experienced trauma to mental health services and ensure that all parents/guardians are provided with information about the trauma-informed practice policies and procedures used at [INSERT name of school].
- Attend professional learning about screening, assessment, and group and individualised treatment of trauma and traumatic stress disorders of children and adolescents.
- Provide screening, assessment, and group or individualised treatment to students who have experienced trauma. Including and supporting non-offending parents/carers during therapy is also recommended where possible (Cohen & Mannarino, 2015; Jaycox et al., 2009).
- Develop clear referral pathways to mental health providers and community services who can provide support to trauma-exposed students and parents/guardians.
- Liaise on a regular basis with the leadership team at [INSERT name of school], to ensure consistency in approach towards the student's wellbeing.

School trauma-informed practice principles

[INSERT name of school] will use an evidence-based trauma-informed framework (for example, the Attachment, Regulation, and Competency [ARC] framework) when responding to students who have been impacted by trauma (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2018; Dorardo et al., 2016; Holmes et al., 2015). The ARC framework consists of the following school trauma-informed approaches, and this model is consistent with other evidence-based models for trauma-informed practice in schools (Berger, 2019).

Foundational Strategies: Foundational Strategies consists of enhanced student Engagement, Education, and Routines and Rhythms (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2018).

Attachment: There are three pillars within the student-parent/caregiver Attachment domain – Caregiver Affect Management, Attunement, and Effective Response (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2018).

Regulation: There are two target areas within the Regulation domain for students' emotional regulation – Identification and Modulation (of emotions; Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2018).

Competency: There are three target areas within the student enhanced Competency domain – Improved student: Executive Functions, Self-Development and Identity, and Relational Connection (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2018).

Trauma-Experience Integration: Trauma-Experience Integration is the principle of increasing students' Distress Tolerance and Regulation, Curiosity and Reflection, and Engaging in Purposeful Action (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2018).

[INSERT name of school] will deliver the Attachment, Regulation, and Competency (ARC) trauma-informed framework (or similar framework) across four tiers including:

- 1 Professional learning for all school staff personnel about childhood trauma and trauma-informed practice
- 2 Ongoing group-based professional learning for school staff team members and group-based intervention for students who have been exposed to trauma
- 3 Ongoing individualised coaching for school staff members and individualised intervention for students who have been exposed to trauma
- 4 Engagement with external mental health providers and community services and education for parents/guardians about trauma-informed practice (Berger, 2019; Dorado et al., 2016).

Rating of evidence base



Figure 14.1. School Trauma-Informed Practice Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. This policy is based on growing evidence about the effectiveness of trauma-informed practice for improved student wellbeing and teacher wellbeing. Research is of moderate quality but with some potential bias regarding the outcomes of trauma-informed care. The research evidence used in the policy demonstrates moderate levels of impact but with limited evaluation of the outcomes of trauma-informed practice across time and settings. Minimal evidence has been provided on the effectiveness and sustainability of trauma-informed practice across different educational settings and student groups. Trauma-informed practice policy requires initial and ongoing training for all school staff, access to mental health professionals both within and external to the school, and changes in the school environment to facilitate student and staff wellbeing. School trauma-informed practice policy will address the initial and ongoing social, emotional, behavioural, and learning needs of the two-thirds of students impacted by trauma, as well as the needs of their parents/carers, and prevent re-traumatisation of children. It will also prevent secondary (vicarious) trauma and burnout among school staff members.

Authorship

Dr Emily Berger, Monash University

Dr Karen Martin, The University of Western Australia
[INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policies

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Student wellbeing interventions

Personalised wellbeing planning

Supporting transitions

School belonging

Teacher wellbeing

Youth homelessness

Managing family violence

Mandatory reporting

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Further reading

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- Cohen, J. A., Mannarino, A. P., & Deblinger, E. (2017). *Treating trauma and traumatic grief in children and adolescents* (2nd ed.). The Guilford Press.
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (2014). SAMHSA's concept of trauma and guidance for a trauma-informed approach. https://ncsacw.samhsa.gov/userfiles/files/SAMHSA_Trauma.pdf

Expert consultation

Consultation to enact this policy is required with school mental health professionals, including school psychologists and counsellors, and with external mental health and community wellbeing services.

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15 Mental health promotion policy

Rob Donovan and Julia Anwar-McHenry

How to use this policy

Schools can play a major part in influencing the mental health of both students and staff. Hence there is a need to not only take steps to assist those with mental health problems but also to create an environment that builds and supports good mental health. This policy provides concrete suggestions for schools to plan and implement activities, both in and out of the classroom, known to promote good mental health.

It is recommended that a Mental Health Promotion Committee, consisting of staff and student representatives, be formed to assist in ideas for implementation of the Policy overall and for organising mental health promoting activities.

As for other policies in this Handbook, the Policy can be incorporated into school values and rules, with a rotating series of posters around the school to remind students and staff of things they can do to keep mentally healthy. It is recommended that students be encouraged, perhaps via quarterly competitions, to submit ideas for such reminders.

[INSERT name of school] Mental health promotion policy

Rationale

Mental health is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2004) as: “a state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”. As outlined by Koushede and Donovan (2020), a prosperous and sustainable society requires a mentally healthy population. That is, an individual’s mental health affects cognition and ability to learn, which in turn affect educational attainment and employment. Furthermore, mental health problems have been shown to be important risk factors for unintentional and intentional injury and the risk of marginalisation (WHO, 2004). Overall, good mental health is profoundly important to quality of life and the capacity to cope with life’s ups and downs; it is also protective

against physical illness, social inequalities and unhealthy lifestyles (UK Faculty of Public Health & The Mental Health Foundation, 2016; Huppert, 2014).

Schools are an important setting for mental health promotion to prevent mental health problems (Power et al., 2008), enhance quality of life and contribute to the social and economic development of individuals, communities and nations (WHO, 2000; Anwar-McHenry et al., 2016). This is because many mental health problems and disorders have a peak age onset in childhood or adolescence (McGorry et al., 2007), and young people spend almost half their waking lives at school. Hence, their experiences and relationships at school have a substantial impact on their wellbeing, influencing both behaviour and academic performance (Bourke, 2003). In line with these findings, and mindful of the crucial role that schools play in young people's lives, having and acting on a mental health promotion policy should be a priority for schools around the globe.

One approach for promoting student and staff mental health and wellbeing in schools is the three domains of the *Act-Belong-Commit* (or *ABC for Mental Health*) campaign: *Act* refers to keeping active physically, socially, mentally and spiritually; *Belong* involves keeping connected to friends and family, being involved in groups, or joining in local community activities; *Commit* refers to a commitment to an interest or a cause, such as volunteering, learning a new skill or challenging oneself, and setting goals to achieve these commitments (Donovan & Anwar-McHenry, 2014).

Purpose

The purpose of the Mental Health Promotion Policy is to provide a framework to enable the embedding of mental health promotion campaigns (such as the above *Act-Belong-Commit Campaign*) within the classroom, the school environment and the whole school community in order to build and maintain the mental health and wellbeing of students and staff and prevent the onset of mental health problems.

The **[INSERT name of school]** Mental Health Promotion Policy aims to encourage students to adopt mentally healthy behaviours early in life, build resilience so they can cope better with problems and stress, reduce stigma around mental illness and increase openness about discussing mental health. At the same time, the Policy aims to build the capacity of school staff to create mentally healthy school environments and foster partnerships between schools and their communities.

Scope

The Mental Health Promotion Schools Policy provides directions for equipping all school staff with the guidance, resources and training for translating the principles and ethos of mental health promotion into the whole school

setting, and involving all members of the school community and, where applicable, local community organisations.

[INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

[INSERT name of school] will undertake activities to ensure that students and staff become more proactive about their mental health.

[INSERT name of school] will facilitate and undertake activities that aim to strengthen and maintain student and staff mental health.

[INSERT name of school] will facilitate and undertake activities to build and maintain student and staff knowledge of and participation in activities that strengthen mental health and wellbeing.

[INSERT name of school] will form and provide resource support for a Mental Health Promotion Committee, including representatives of students, teaching and non-teaching staff, and parents, that will be responsible for implementing mental health promotion activities in the school.

[INSERT name of school] will support this Committee to seek advice and assistance from relevant authorities and organisations already involved in mental health promotion activities in their locality/state/nation (for example, *Five Ways to Wellbeing* in the UK; *Act-Belong-Commit* in Australia; *ABC for Mental Sundhed* in Nordic countries).

In cooperation with these expert sources, [INSERT name of school] will draw up a plan of activities on an annual basis.

In cooperation with these expert sources, [INSERT name of school] will also decide on measures of impact on an annual basis (including surveys of students and staff to measure awareness and adoption of behaviours that strengthen mental health).

[INSERT name of school] will facilitate all staff, teaching and non-teaching, to attend workshops or access online mental health promotion professional learning.

[INSERT name of school] will use the WHO Guidelines for Health Promoting Schools to embed mental health promotion principles and practices into the school curriculum, the school environment, and the community in which the school is located (see Anwar-McHenry et al., 2016).

[INSERT name of school] will ensure that mental health promoting activities involve active participation by students and teachers (rather than simply passive instructions).

[INSERT name of school] will ensure parents are kept fully informed of the school's commitment to mental health promotion and the activities undertaken by the school for that purpose.

[INSERT name of school] will foster the sustainability of mental health promotion activities in the school (for example, via measures such as rotation

and renewal of committee members, competitions and awards for active participation, annual calls for new ideas, or variations on activities).

Rating of evidence base



Figure 15.1. Mental Health Promotion Rating of Evidence.

Authorship

Professor Rob Donovan is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Western Australia and Founder of the Act-Belong-Commit Mental Health Promotion Program.

Dr Julia Anwar-McHenry is a Teacher in the Education Department of Western Australia.

[INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

Safety policy

Counselling policy

Anti-bullying and discrimination policy

Staff belonging policy

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Recommended reading

- Anwar-McHenry, J., Donovan, R. J., Nicholas, A., Kerrigan, S., Francas, S., & Phan, T. Implementing a mentally healthy schools framework based on the population wide Act-Belong-Commit mental health promotion campaign. *Health Education*, 116 (6), 561–579.
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16 Reading instruction and support

Pamela Snow, Kate de Bruin, and Linda Graham

How to use this policy

Strong reading skills are critical for academic success. Exposure to effective reading instruction is important for students of all ages but particularly critical for those in the first three years of school in order to prevent gaps in student achievement and progress. This policy highlights the key components of reading that should be taught, as well as the instructional approaches that research shows are most effective. Also outlined are recommendations that research suggests are key to providing timely and equitable interventions on the basis of need. This policy example is intentionally broad and authors of school policy are encouraged to refine and adapt the suggestions below to create a policy that best reflects the needs and context of their school.

[INSERT name of school] Reading instruction and intervention

Rationale

Strong reading skills¹ are critical for academic success at all levels of schooling. To ensure that *all* students achieve reading competency, instructional time must be used judiciously to maximise exposure to explicit, systematic, and evidence-based instruction. This is important because research shows that this instructional approach optimises students' engagement with the curriculum and reduces the likelihood of them falling behind. Maximal exposure is particularly critical in the first three years of school; however, continued effective teaching of reading during the upper primary and secondary school years is necessary to ensure that all students continue to make progress throughout their education.

Considerable advancements have occurred in the last 30 years in understanding what the reading process is and what it means for a child to transition from novice to proficient by the middle years of primary school. Three international inquiries in the past 20 years have helped inform this understanding: the US National Reading Panel (2000), the Australian National Inquiry into the Teaching of Reading (Rowe, 2005), and the UK Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading (Rose, 2006). All three have emphasised the

importance of teachers being highly knowledgeable about the linguistic constructs that underpin the English writing system² and teaching beginning readers in ways that are explicit, systematic, and evidence-based.

It is important to regularly screen the progress of all students using reliable curriculum-based measures of achievement in reading to identify whether classroom teaching is adequately supporting all students to become skilled readers. In the early years of primary school, universal screening should specifically focus on decoding and language comprehension skills. If universal screens indicate particular students are underperforming on measures of reading, it is then important to undertake further assessments using valid and reliable measures that can detect particular difficulties at the subcomponent level, indicating whether any of the “big five” (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension) need support at a higher instructional tier (Graham, White, Tancredi, Snow, & Cologon, 2020). Regular universal screening through curriculum-based measurement and high-quality measures of subcomponent skills enable timely identification of individuals requiring appropriately targeted intervention at a higher tier of classroom support, as enacted through the Response to Intervention (RTI; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006) and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS; Hall, 2018) models.

Acting on data from well-validated assessment tools able to detect difficulties at the subcomponent level to monitor student progress and identify those needing support (Graham et al., 2020) reduces the likelihood of internalising and externalising mental health problems, both of which have high comorbidity with reading difficulties and require access to a range of expensive specialist services that are not always available (Snow, 2016). This policy is premised on the principle that the overwhelming majority (95%) of children can and should be proficient readers by mid-primary school (Hempenstall, 2013) and that all students should be able to access effective support and intervention on an equitable basis (Chard, 2013).

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to enable schools to provide high-quality evidence-based reading instruction and support to benefit every student. The policy is designed to assist schools in developing and implementing a consistent whole-school approach that ensures all children receive optimal instruction using practices and programs that are supported by scientific evidence in lieu of those that have been found to be ineffective or for which there is insufficient supporting evidence. It also supports schools in using data to ensure that their resources are deployed on the basis of need to provide evidence-based and appropriately targeted interventions on an equitable and timely basis.

Scope

This policy applies to current and future classroom and specialist teachers, allied health professionals, school leaders, and parents of the students at **[INSERT name of school]**. A whole school approach to reading instruction and support is

overseen by school leadership in partnership with parents and allied health professionals, such as school psychologists and speech-language pathologists.

Policy statement

School Management adopts a *science of reading* theoretical framework in which a clear emphasis is placed on the cognitive foundations of learning to read (Tunmer & Hoover, 2019). This model is derived from the Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986) and emphasises the cognitive, linguistic, and background knowledge dimensions of early reading mastery. In particular, it recognises two complementary skill sets: word recognition and language comprehension (and a range of subsidiary skills under each), the teaching of which require high levels of teacher knowledge and explicit classroom instruction.

School Management also adopts a *Multi-Tiered System of Supports* (MTSS; Hall, 2018) model in which the evidence-based practices used for teaching reading to all students (Tier 1) are complemented by more intensive instruction to small groups of students performing somewhat below benchmarks (Tier 2) or to individuals performing well below benchmarks (Tier 3). Access to higher tiers of support is provided to students on the basis of school-wide screening, and student progress in Tiers 2 and 3 is routinely monitored. Interventions provided are those that are supported by best available evidence. In a recent longitudinal study in seven Australian primary schools, the evidence behind the various intervention programs and practices delivered was assessed. Only one of the programs used in these seven schools – MiniLIT – is supported by empirical evidence. The remaining programs and practices – Words Their Way, Guided Reading, Leveled Literacy Intervention, and Reading Eggs – are either supported by limited non-peer-reviewed evidence or no evidence. None had the requisite focus on phonics instruction to address the phonemic decoding weaknesses apparent in the participant sample (Graham et al., 2020).

Our school endeavours to employ capable teachers who are knowledgeable and skilled with respect to the linguistic basis of effective reading instruction and ongoing support. We commit to maintaining and strengthening teachers' skills within a culture of continuous improvement. We commit to supporting the reading progress of every student (Chard, 2013) regardless of age or disability.

[INSERT name of school] ensures that teachers have access to quality professional development that promotes the science of reading and discourages approaches for which the evidence base is weak or lacking (Moats, 2020; Snow, 2016).

[INSERT name of school] implements with fidelity teaching approaches, programs, and interventions that place a clear emphasis on the cognitive foundations of learning to read (Tunmer & Hoover, 2019) and provides access to effective interventions according to student need. This model is derived from the Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986), emphasising the cognitive, linguistic, and background knowledge dimensions of early reading mastery. In particular, it recognises two complementary skill sets: word recognition and language comprehension, the acquisition of which require high levels of teacher knowledge and explicit classroom instruction.

[INSERT name of school] consistently applies teaching approaches that promote systematic attention to phonemic awareness; knowledge of the alphabetic principle and its role in supporting children to decode through words; vocabulary, background knowledge, and comprehension skills. In the early stages, we employ decodable texts to promote practice and automaticity in phoneme-grapheme correspondences that have been explicitly taught. We routinely screen students for adequate progress in these areas, using well-validated, fit-for-purpose tools capable of assessing performance at the sub-component level and on which staff have received training. We then provide more intensive, evidence-based interventions on the basis of these data for those students performing below benchmarks.

[INSERT name of school] does not support the use of instruction or intervention approaches that have poor alignment with the science of reading, most notably: commencing reading instruction by teaching large numbers of decontextualized “sight words” to be learnt by rote; using predictable, levelled texts in the early stages of reading; using the Three-Cueing (or Multi-Cueing) method; encouraging children to arrive at an unknown word by using context and picture cues; providing blocks of class time for silent reading; and/or using tools such as Running Records (Clay, 2002) to monitor progress.

Teachers

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] are recruited for their current level of knowledge of the science of reading and/or their willingness to be upskilled in this through in-house and other targeted forms of professional development.

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] understand the different types of phonics instruction (Wheldall et al., 2017) and their relative merits as early reading instruction approaches (Castles et al., 2018).

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] consistently adhere to pedagogical approaches informed by the science of reading at all classroom and intervention levels, in order to promote consistency of instructional and progress monitoring approaches and maximal opportunities for mastery, particularly in the case of students who struggle with reading (decoding and/or comprehension).

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] actively engage as part of a community of practice within the school to maintain and extend their knowledge of the science of reading and support peers to do the same.

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] provide evidence-based advice and resources to parents about how to support children at all stages of the reading process and provide guidance and support to parents who have questions about resources they locate through their own research.

Parents

Parents of children attending [INSERT name of school] are encouraged to be involved in early and ongoing reading instruction and will be provided with

evidence-based printed materials, as well as opportunities to attend information sessions about the teaching of reading and approaches employed at [INSERT name of school].

Parents of children attending [INSERT name of school] are encouraged to focus on letters, letter sounds, and the decoding of words, along with vocabulary and inferencing skills when reading and playing with their child in the early years of primary school.

Rating of evidence base



Figure 16.1. Applying the Science of Learning in the Classroom Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. The evidence itself that underpins this policy is strong. The translation of the existing body of evidence into teacher pre-service education and hence classroom practice has been weak. Many schools have a high degree of autonomy with respect to the way(s) in which they teach reading. Schools in which approaches outlined here have been systematically and sustainably adopted have demonstrated significant improvements in reading performance. Impact is, however, easily reduced by changes in key personnel within a school. The science of reading can be applied to schools regardless of the socio-economic profile of the families in its community. There is some evidence, in fact, to suggest a disproportionate benefit for schools in low-socioeconomic status (SES) areas (Meyer, 1984) and/or those serving children from low-SES backgrounds (Stuart, 1999). Implementing this policy requires a clear whole-school vision for the teaching of reading, as well as strong and knowledgeable leadership who demonstrate a willingness to “stay the course” on a significant level of change over at least a three- to five-year period. It also requires a willingness by staff to discard familiar, though less impactful practices. The potential gains in student performance and behaviour associated with the adoption of this policy are substantial. However, this is challenging, for reasons noted above, with respect to the degree of knowledge and practice change required of staff and the professional development resources these demand.

Authorship

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[INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Notes

- 1 Because the term “literacy” is sometimes applied to skills other than reading, writing, and spelling, in this chapter, we will refer to *reading skills* to explicitly connote the decoding and comprehension skills under consideration.
- 2 These include but are not limited to: the fact that English has a semi-transparent orthography; the fact that English is a morpho-phonemic language in which speech sounds (phonemes) are represented by letters and letter combinations (graphemes); and the fact that morphemes (small units of meaning within words) encode constructs such as plurality, negation, and tense. In English, we have 26 alphabet letters with which to represent 44 speech sounds, and we do this by using graphemes to represent those speech sounds which do not have a directly corresponding letter (e.g., the sound /ʃ/ in “sheep” is represented by the grapheme “sh”). These and many related important concepts are covered by Moats (2000).

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17 Catering for gifted and talented students in the regular classroom

Joe Santoro and John Munro

How to use this policy

Catering for gifted and talented students in classrooms is a priority in educational provision. While many schools include the needs of gifted and talented students as a policy, they find its implementation challenging (Munro, 2013). Schools are best equipped to realise policy in this area when they implement a multifaceted professional learning program that is referenced on how gifted and talented students learn in the regular classroom (Munro, 2016). This policy example is intentionally broad and school policy creators are encouraged to delete and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] Catering for the gifted and talented in the regular classroom

Rationale

Having a high capacity to learn in and of itself is not sufficient for developing talented outcomes (Munro, 2017). Furthermore, high ability students whose abilities and ways of knowing are not well understood or valued in the regular classroom and who may lack opportunities to show what they know are at an increased risk of disengagement from regular classrooms (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014; Camilleri, 2017). Effective provision for gifted and talented students involves recognising the diversity of gifted learners in terms of the multiple ways of being gifted in the classroom and implementing pedagogy that takes account of this (Munro, 2017). Therefore, schools must provide opportunities to foster talent development for gifted and talented students in order for these students to be engaged in learning and to realise their potential.

Purpose

Gifted and talented students are authentically included in a school when they have the opportunity to convert their gifted learning to talented outcomes (Munro, 2017). The purpose of this policy is to guide the development and

implementation of practices that guide the education of gifted and talented students in the regular classroom so that their talented outcomes are realised.

Scope

This policy applies to school leaders, teachers, and students. A collaborative effort is required in order to achieve improved outcomes that can be sustained within a school community.

[INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

Developing staff professional knowledge

The identification of high ability students and the implementation of effective classroom provisions that cater to their needs are both strongly related to teacher knowledge and attitudes (Kronborg & Cornejo-Araya, 2018). The first step in evaluating a school's capacity to provide learning opportunities for gifted and talented students is for the school leadership to identify what teachers know about gifted learning and teaching, how they cater for gifted and talented students, and what they need to learn about it (Munro, 2017). Teachers may need up-skilling to identify how these students know and think in the classroom and to modify their teaching and curriculum provision (VanTassel-Baska, & Stambaugh, 2005).

At [INSERT name of school], our school leadership will consider what our teachers know about gifted learning and teaching and will focus on opportunities to develop staff professional knowledge and classroom practice (Munro, 2017).

Professional development opportunities at [INSERT name of school] will consider what constitutes gifted knowing and thinking, how to assess this, the multiple ways in which students can be gifted, and how to skilfully differentiate teaching and provide appropriate learning opportunities (Munro, 2017).

Providing learning environments that foster talent development

Contemporary theories of giftedness from a talent development perspective note how the student's learning environment and culture affect whether they form talented outcomes. Recent talent development models (e.g. Gagné, 2010; Perleth & Heller, 1994; Ziegler & Phillipson, 2012) consider the influence of culture on the conversion of a gifted learning capacity to talented outcomes. School leaders who are interested in shaping their schools as "talent developing" organisations need to know how to implement the conditions that can facilitate the talent development process (Munro, 2017).

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] will encourage gifted students to present their intuitive theories about the topics they are learning (Schwitzgebel, 1999) and will provide a classroom environment that values this (Munro, 2017).

School leadership at [INSERT name of school] will evaluate the extent to which teachers implement a classroom climate that encourages students to share their intuitive theories and ideas about the topics they are learning (Munro, 2012; 2017).

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] will encourage gifted students to pursue their intrinsic motivation during learning tasks (Gagné, 2010; Munro, 2017).

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] will support the social and emotional development of gifted students (Munro, 2017). Gifted students will have opportunities to engage with school psychologists or school counsellors or will be referred to external support where necessary.

Identification of giftedness within the classroom and differentiation procedures

Despite teachers having an awareness and understanding of some characteristics that they expect to see for gifted students, these do not always consider the multiple ways in which students can be gifted (Munro, 2017). Furthermore, some students present with co-occurring learning difficulties that can mask their gifted learning capacity, which are the “twice-exceptional” or “dual-exceptional” learners (Munro, 2017; Neihart & Betts, 2010). When students’ strengths or ways of learning are not well understood, this can lead to underachievement and disengagement from classroom learning (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014).

School leaders at [INSERT name of school] will provide professional learning opportunities for staff to understand the multiple ways of being gifted in order to improve identification procedures (Munro, 2017).

Identification procedures at [INSERT name of school] will target the multiple ways in which students can be gifted including the *school-house gifted* (Renzulli, 2005), that is, those students who are academically gifted and learn well what is taught at school.

Identification procedures at [INSERT name of school] will also target students who are able to extend what is taught at school and can make links with ideas beyond what is taught. These students are the *creatively gifted* (Renzulli, 2005; Sternberg, 2005).

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] are committed to looking for evidence of gifted learning in its multiple forms within their classrooms (Munro, 2019).

Teachers and school leaders at [INSERT name of school] will make recommendations for referral to a psychologist when it is suspected that a student might be *twice-exceptional* (Neihart & Betts, 2010). For example, the gifted student might also present with a specific learning disorder (e.g. dyslexia), ADHD characteristics, emotional or behavioural difficulties, or Autism Spectrum Disorder (Rogers, 2010).

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] will use regular classroom activities such as concept mapping (Munro, 2014a; Santoro, 2016) and problem-solving tasks (Munro, 2014b) to assess gifted students’ knowledge and to infer their capacity to generate higher-level outcomes. Gifted students’ concept maps and their solutions to complex problems usually show evidence of inference, the capacity to generate complex propositions and sophisticated organization of knowledge.

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] will provide opportunities for students to infer the types of questions that might be answered when presenting

a new topic (Munro, 2017). The types of questions that students suggest can indicate the complexity of students' thinking.

School leaders at [INSERT name of school] will evaluate what staff know about how to differentiate the curriculum, their approach to teaching, and how they scaffold talented outcomes (Tomlinson, et. al., 2004), and they will assist staff in developing differentiation plans that focus on developing each of these aspects of differentiation (Munro, 2017).

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] will consider the multiple ways of knowing or different aspects of knowledge that can be used to understand and learn about a topic (Munro, 2013).

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] will help gifted students to set learning goals and will provide guidance for students to negotiate their personal learning path through a topic (Munro, 2017).

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] will provide opportunities for gifted students to engage in self-directed problem-solving activities for topics they are learning (Munro, 2017).

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] will encourage gifted students to persevere with learning activities and think about topics of interest (Munro, 2017).

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] will provide opportunities for gifted students to share their understanding of a topic, in its multiple forms, so that students can benefit from gifted students' unique understanding of the topics (Munro, 2017). This will provide opportunities for gifted students to develop their capacity to share their knowledge in meaningful ways (Sternberg, 2005).

Rating of evidence base



Figure 17.1. Catering for Gifted and Talented Students in the Regular Classroom Rating of Evidence.

Authorship

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[INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Inclusion policy
Professional development policy
Counselling policy
Assessment policy

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Further reading

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Expert consultation

School psychologists and heads of learning and teaching (or similar role) should be included as part of the policy development within individual contexts in order to provide additional support and insight within their areas of expertise. External support from experts within the field of giftedness should be consulted to develop staff professional knowledge where appropriate.

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18 Teachers' work with digital technologies

Neil Selwyn and Amanda Heffernan

How to use this policy

Policies relating to the use of digital technologies in school usually address issues including “Appropriate Use”, “E-Safety”, network security, and data protection. However, digital technologies are now an integral part of how teachers are expected to engage with school-related work. While digital technologies can support some teachers in engaging with their school work on a more effective and flexible basis, the same technologies can also impact negatively on the working lives of others.

This policy draws attention to the need for schools to ensure that all teachers work with digital technologies in ways that: (i) enhance the quality of their work *and* (ii) are beneficial to their wellbeing. Digital technology use varies considerably across schools. As such, any policy needs to be co-created on a whole-staff basis and refined to best fit the technological practices of individual schools. Some of these suggestions within this policy are deliberately provocative and intended to start conversations within a school community. If your school rejects the suggestion of banning emails outright, then what restrictions might you want to impose, or do you see the use of email as entirely unproblematic? The policy provides options and guidelines for important considerations for schools to adapt to their own context and digital environment.

[INSERT name of school] Teachers' work with digital technologies

Rationale

Digital technologies impact the working lives of teachers in ways that would have been difficult to anticipate a few years ago. Schools have shifted much of their administration and governance to digital platforms. Planning, assessment and feedback, accountability and reporting, and most formal communications are undertaken via digital methods that are accessible regardless of time and location (Selwyn et al., 2017). Digital technologies have become a key means of informal communication and interaction within every school community (Hutchinson et al., 2020). Digital technologies have enabled the intensification (pace) and extension (into non-working hours) of work, which has detrimental effects on health and wellbeing.

These technologies have also increased the standardisation and automation of teachers' work, from automated feedback and grading tools, through to templated lesson planners and personalised learning systems. While these technologies are a source of support for some teachers (relieving them of repetitive and/or routine tasks), they can also limit teachers' autonomy and professional judgement (Alirezabeigi et al., 2020; Selwyn, 2019).

The rise of personal devices in school and the increasing availability of "free" online resources and apps mean that teachers are now increasingly expected to take responsibility for choosing and adopting digital classroom resources. With teachers finding apps to use in their own classrooms alongside "official" school software, schools no longer have full oversight of the software being used. While apps and platforms can support innovative teaching and learning practice, they also raise a number of risks – from issues of "third party" use of student data, through to inappropriate pedagogical design (e.g., Manolev et al., 2019; Williamson, 2018). Outside of the classroom, digital technologies are implicated in increased expectations of availability through digital communications. Teachers now face a range of online communication concerns, e.g., social media contact with students, online harassment from parents, or simply the impersonal ways that technologies can sometimes be used.

Finally, schools need to be aware of the new form of "digital labour" that teachers are now engaging in through digital technologies. This additional work – often unpaid and usually unnoticed – raises a number of issues for teachers and their employers. Types of work here include the growing trend for online professional development sessions, as well as teachers' voluntary participation in mass online "professional learning networks" and informal teacher communities on social media (see Bergviken Rensfeldt et al., 2018, Carpenter et al., 2019). Some teachers engage in additional social media work by sharing resources and ideas through platforms such as Instagram, Pinterest, and YouTube's "Edu" channel. Such practices can lead to more professionalised forms of online exchange. Commercial platforms allow teachers to sell their self-produced lesson plans, worksheets, and other classroom resources to educators worldwide. These forms of digitally mediated work are undertaken by teachers in addition to their classroom and school-related duties, and can impact on schools in unforeseen ways (Selwyn, 2016).

Purpose

This policy outlines the roles played by school leadership, teachers, and IT staff in supporting teachers' use of digital technology in ways that enhance teachers' capacity to work effectively and safely.

Scope

These guidelines apply to school leadership and all staff at [INSERT name of school]. Importantly, they are guidelines that should be contextualised to meet the

local needs of your school. These guidelines should be developed in the spirit of protecting teachers from detrimental effects and risks of technology uses, while not restricting their freedom to engage with technology in ways that are personally beneficial.

Policy statement

The following policy presents guidelines to guide and inform teachers' choices at [INSERT name of school] when working with digital technologies.

The guidelines draw attention to the wider implications of teachers' work with digital technologies and encourage teachers to think about how their work with digital technologies might impact on the school experience of others.

These guidelines will be reviewed regularly and adapted to fit the digital infrastructure of [INSERT name of school].

Best working practices relating to internal school email

[Option 1]

- Ban the use of email altogether

[Option 2]

- We commit to considering the impact of email traffic on staff workloads and commit to minimising unnecessary emails by:
 - Limiting the number of emails that any member of staff (regardless of seniority) can send within any 24-hour period;
 - Banning the CC-ing and BCC-ing of recipients;
 - Banning "Reply All" responses.

[Option 3]

- We commit to considering ways to minimise email traffic within a school. We ask senders to consider questions such as: Who needs to be copied into emails? What emails could be avoided with a quick conversation in person? What needs to be recorded via email or other digital platforms for accountability and record keeping purposes?

Best working practices relating to digital communication with students and caregivers

At [INSERT name of school] we acknowledge that digital technologies offer opportunities to establish connections **and believe it is crucial that schools support teachers in their daily online interactions with others.**

At [INSERT name of school] we encourage online interactions to be approached with the same care given to maintaining respectful relationships

and appropriate interactions offline, while acknowledging that online interactions and relationships are distinctly different.

[INSERT name of school] provides:

- Guidelines and expectations to staff for reasonable response times and communication procedures (e.g., communicate clearly to caregivers that teachers are unlikely to check their email throughout the working day and define an expected response timeline, such as 48 hours).
- Clear procedures for communicating with school communities (e.g., communicating through school email addresses, having a single point of contact for specific issues for students, caregivers, and external stakeholders).
- Codes of conduct when using personal devices and/or personal accounts for school business and vice versa (e.g., not using personal phones to take photos of students for class records; not providing personal email addresses or telephone numbers; providing teachers taking excursions or camps with a school phone so they aren't sharing their personal contact details).

Best working practices relating to learning management systems

[INSERT name of school] commits to:

- Ensuring that all teaching staff (regardless of seniority) have the same system rights, settings, and permissions.
- Ensuring that Learning Management Systems and other schoolwide platforms are configured to inform all users what data is being generated by their use of the system and what is being done with that data.

Shared expectations around overwork

[INSERT name of school] commits to:

- Collectively developing acceptable working guidelines for working with digital technologies to minimise the extension of work into personal hours.
- Considering the possibility of “digital business hours” to be clearly communicated with the school community.
- Encouraging all staff to turn off email and app notifications and scheduling specific usage times instead of feeling required to respond as emails or notifications arise.

Teachers choosing to use new applications and software in their classrooms

[INSERT name of school] commits to:

- Ensuring transparency in what software and apps are being used by staff and supporting teachers in making these decisions.

- Taking care, oversight, and accountability for the procurement of software regardless of cost (ranging from “free” software and apps to large schoolwide systems)
- Developing a “vetting” process for new devices, software, and applications being adopted by teachers. We will consider using principles similar to the data protection impact assessments (DPIA) that the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation requires of many European organisations. We commit to identifying and analysing how data privacy might be compromised by the adoption of any new piece of digital technology.
- Maintaining an open and up-to-date list of the apps being used throughout the school to:
 - Avoid overlaps and doubling-up;
 - Allow IT staff to offer advice and support;
 - Enable teachers to swap recommendations and concerns.
- Considering including the use of classroom apps or software as part of the school’s professional learning/development – supporting staff to become “more informed, critical consumers” of education apps (ISTE, 2019).

Staff at [INSERT name of school] should thoroughly read the Terms of Service for any new app and consider the following questions:

- Did students have to make an account to start using that app? If so, did they have to provide personal information (email, name, age, etc.)?
- Does the app require parental permission? Who has access to the email and other information once students have created that account?
- Does the app developer share user information with others? (This information will be in their privacy policy.)
- Does the app collect additional information such as location or contacts?

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] should also ask the following questions regarding the pedagogical implications of the software:

- What models of pedagogy does the software promote?
- What assumptions are made about students and learning?
- What are the software’s core values?
- What does the software allow to happen that could not be done by another existing means?

Teachers engaging in social media as “micro-celebrity” or “teacher influencer”

At [INSERT name of school] we understand the importance of protecting student and staff privacy when using social media. As such:

- Staff should maintain care when sharing information or images relating to their classes, being especially aware of identifying students or colleagues.

This includes never posting photos of students on personal social media accounts (even if their caregivers have given permission for the school accounts to post photos) and never providing identifiable details about students in stories or anecdotes.

We also understand the importance of protecting the integrity of our staff, students, and school community. As such:

- Staff should disclose all interests and links established through commercial activities including sponsorship opportunities, corporate affiliations, influential public roles and profiles, and financial incentives for being seen to use a certain product or be aligned with an edu-business due to public profiles on Twitter, Instagram, and other social media platforms.
- Staff should disclose any commercial sponsorship or tacit endorsements – especially if acting as a paid affiliate for a commercial organisation or provider. Any external interests should be declared through formal and appropriate documentation procedures. Teachers should avoid real or perceived conflicts of interests when discussing products and companies in relation to work.

Teachers sharing resources online beyond the school community

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] will be clear about who owns the intellectual property created within a school before making use of platforms such as TeachersPayTeachers, Amazon Marketplace, and Etsy, which allow teachers to sell their self-produced lesson plans, worksheets, and other classroom resources to educators around the world.

Rating of evidence base



Figure 18.1. Teachers' Use of Digital Technologies Rating of Evidence.

Authorship

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[INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Further reading

- International Society for Technology in Education [ISTE]. (2019). Better edtech buying for educators: A practical guide. ISTE. [Practical advice and examples to support schools become “more informed, critical consumers of EdTech.]
- Future of Privacy Forum. (2019). *The policymaker’s guide to student data privacy*. <http://studentprivacycompass.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/FPF-Policy-makers-Guide-to-Student-Privacy-Final.pdf> [Helping policymakers develop thoughtful approaches to student data privacy: legislation, rules, policies, and technical safeguards that protect student data and can adapt to a quickly evolving technological environment.]

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19 School belonging policy

Kelly-Ann Allen, DeLeon L. Gray, Gökmen Arslan, Kathryn Riley, Dianne Vella-Brodrick, and Lea Waters

How to use this policy

School belonging as a concept is unique to school environments and is influenced by a range of factors including school climate, cultural processes, broader societal issues, and historical/current events. A policy on school belonging enables school communities to develop collaborative engagement with staff, students, and families. School networks also have a significant role to play in helping create the conditions for belonging. This policy is structured to allow users to adapt it in a manner that serves the local, immediate demands of their contexts. Policies are most effective when they are known and implemented by the people who are their intended audience. For a policy on school belonging, it is recommended that effort is invested into ensuring that key stakeholders (e.g., students, parents, school staff, and community members) have a sense of agency and voice, and a role in shaping the policy content. The process of refining the school belonging policy in this way will be as important as the policy itself. School leaders should ensure that policies are embedded in day-to-day practices by using them in practical and tangible ways. A policy on school belonging could be incorporated into school rules, displayed as a poster in a classroom, or printed in the student diary. School belonging should be an explicit school value. Gray et al. (2018) recommend that schools develop *teams* to review existing policies and practices within a school to ensure that all methods within a school facilitate belonging for students and do not unintentionally ostracise or exclude specific individuals or groups.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] Student belonging policy

Rationale

School belonging—or a sense of psychological membership at school—represents the extent to which students feel accepted, respected, included, and supported in their school environment (Goodenow, 1993). When students have a sense of school belonging, they feel confident that they *fit in* and feel

safe at school (Riley, 2017). A sense of school belonging is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that is influenced by many factors and variables within a school setting, including individual differences (Allen et al., 2018a). Yet it is important to keep in mind that policies can promote or hinder the extent to which all students—regardless of their background, ability status, gender identity, racial identity, or sexual orientation—have opportunities to belong at school.

School belonging has been found to be an essential component for student wellbeing, academic outcomes, and physical health (Allen et al., 2018a; Arslan, 2018; Arslan et al., 2020; Abdollahi, 2020) and should be valued and prioritised in schools (Allen et al., 2018b). It is estimated that approximately 1 in 3 students does not feel a sense of belonging to school (OECD, 2019). Therefore, to address this issue a student's sense of school belonging should be valued and nurtured within school settings (Allen, 2020a).

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the shared responsibility of belonging for the whole school community inclusive of parents, staff, teachers, students, and school leadership. Every individual within a school community can help create a climate of belonging.

Scope

This policy includes the role that students, teachers, staff, school leaders, and parents play in promoting a sense of belonging for others in the [INSERT name of school] community.

[INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams within the school who may be managing a whole school approach to school belonging].

Policy statement

School management

[INSERT name of school] is committed to providing consistent and structured opportunities for students to build positive relationships with each other, their teachers, their parents, and staff at our school. Teachers at our school *know* their students and seek feedback from their students about their relationship, rapport, and level of engagement. Through school-wide events, assessments, and programming, we provide both time and space for teachers to build relationships with their students (Shochet et al., 2011; Waters et al., 2010).

School leadership (e.g., principals/administrators) create formal structures to consult students on school policy decisions and build their sense of agency. Their voices are represented in policy-making decisions (in the form of a diverse student advisory committee comprised of students from various

socioeconomic backgrounds, linguistic backgrounds, ethnic backgrounds, performance levels, and (dis)ability statuses).

Efforts are made at [INSERT name of school] to ensure continuity of care for students during their time at school (Garcia-Reid et al., 2005; Whitlock, 2006).

Our school endeavours to employ teachers who are not only skilled in content areas but also culturally competent and sensitive to students' social and emotional needs (Battistich et al., 1996; Whitlock, 2006).

[INSERT name of school] ensures that teachers have access to professional development that encompasses improving student-teacher relationships and ways to foster positive, safe, and fair classroom environments that build on the strengths and assets that students bring into the classroom (Allen et al., 2011; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

[INSERT name of school] has strategies in place to evaluate, build, or strengthen a teacher's sense of belonging to school (e.g., teacher mentoring programs, induction programs for new staff) (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

[INSERT name of school] implements programs, interventions, and/or classroom-based curriculum that teaches social, emotional, and cultural competencies to students (Allen et al., 2017; Frydenberg, 2009; Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010).

[INSERT name of school] has a comprehensive and tiered approach to preventing, identifying, and managing mental health concerns (Waters et al., 2010; Wilkinson-Lee et al., 2011; Roche & Kuperminc, 2012).

Teachers

Staff at [INSERT name of school] acknowledge that a positive student-teacher relationship is one of the most effective ways to build a student's sense of school belonging (Allen et al., 2018a).

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] are encouraged to provide personal support, affirmation, and inspiration for learning, as well as academic support to students (Shochet et al., 2011; Waters et al., 2010).

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] demonstrate fair and consistent restorative justice approaches to issues of school discipline (Sakiz, 2012).

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] provide students with opportunities for personal agency over their learning (Wentzel, 1998; Ryzin et al., 2009).

Teachers make regular (positive) contact with parents for proactive and positive communication (Allen et al., 2020; Reschly et al., 2008).

Teachers actively emphasise the value of what students are learning for uplifting their communities, honouring their ancestral heritage, and combatting issues of social justice and social inequality in school and society.

Teachers are supported by administrators in recognising and responding to the way larger societal, systemic, and structural inequalities are impacting historically marginalised students in their schools.

Teachers actively build upon the knowledge systems, experiences, and perspectives that students bring as assets into the classroom and school.

Teachers ensure that students understand the importance and purpose of what students are learning (Walker, 2012; Battistich et al., 1996; Whitlock, 2006).

Students

[**INSERT name of school**] encourages students to support each other academically as well as personally (e.g., peer mentor programs, study clubs, homework group) (Reschly et al., 2008; Ryzin et al., 2009).

[**INSERT name of school**] has an induction procedure for new students and transition programs at key transition points for students (Ryzin et al., 2009).

All students at [**INSERT name of school**] are expected to be inclusive, respectful, and affirming toward each other (Goodenow & Grady, 1993; Reschly et al., 2008).

Students are encouraged to have high personal expectations and goals around their learning and social wellbeing, with assurance that teachers will support them in reaching these high standards (Heaven et al., 2002; Klem & Connell, 2004; Guthrie & Davis, 2003; Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2006).

At [**INSERT name of school**] all students are encouraged to use their personal strengths (Proctor et al., 2011) and are made aware that they all have a role to play in contributing to a culture of belonging at their school (Allen, 2020b).

Parents

Parents of [**INSERT name of school**] are encouraged to be involved in school life in meaningful ways (Reschly et al., 2008).

[**INSERT name of school**] provides multiple communication channels for parents that consider their needs and preferences (Reschly et al., 2008).

The school seeks feedback from parents about their overall satisfaction with the [**INSERT name of school**] and communication from teachers and school leaders more generally (Reschly et al., 2008).

[**INSERT name of school**] aims to make parents feel welcomed when they are at school.

Educational opportunities for parents that enhance their connectedness and belonging with the school and their children are available throughout the year (Kelly et al., 2012; Stoddard et al., 2011; Waters et al., 2010).

Rating of evidence base



Figure 19.1. School Belonging Rating of Evidence.

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[INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Inclusion policy

Wellbeing policy

Safety policy

Counselling policy

Anti-bullying and discrimination policy

Staff belonging policy

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Recommended reading

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20 Apps for secondary school student mental health and wellbeing

Simone Gindidis and Mark Larsen

How to use this policy

Schools play an important role in supporting student mental health and wellbeing. Apps have fast become a useful tool to support young people's wellbeing due to the ubiquitous ownership and use of smartphone and tablet technology. Utilising apps to promote positive health and development enables schools to connect with students' increasingly digital needs. The development of policy to support the appropriate use of apps in this way is, therefore, necessary to encourage positive health outcomes and digital competence amongst students. This is only possible, however, if key stakeholders such as Allied Health and teaching staff are aware of the complexities associated with promoting responsible engagement with quality apps and avoid recommending poor quality or potentially harmful apps. School policy creators are encouraged to involve key stakeholders – including students – in this process. By adopting a school policy on apps for mental health and wellbeing, high-quality apps can be sourced for students who are most vulnerable to the potential risks of unchecked app use, such as accessing incorrect health information or unknowingly sharing personally identifiable information.

Updating and communicating effective policy on information and communication technologies is challenging due to the speed with which technology evolves. This policy example is predicated on the best available evidence at the time of writing and should be regularly reviewed to ensure technological, legal and ethical relevance. A policy on app use could be incorporated into a school-wide approach to personalised wellbeing practices and digital literacy curricula. This could be communicated on posters and infographics (Murray et al., 2017) made available to students in hardcopy format around campus wellbeing areas and through online mediums such as school social media or learning management systems. This policy should be considered alongside existing school mobile phone policy, particularly where exemptions can be granted for students using apps to manage symptoms associated with a mental health condition. This policy example is intentionally broad and school policy creators are encouraged to delete and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school]'s use of apps for student mental health and wellbeing

Rationale

Wellbeing teams in secondary schools play a pivotal role in supporting students to navigate a critical stage of life. Young people today appear to be navigating the same developmental challenges as those before them; however, they are now doing so within an increasingly technologically integrated world. The advent of the internet, smartphones and other forms of technology has fundamentally changed the way in which people are educated, communicate and work. Adolescents appear to favour the use of smartphones in particular: in 2015 it was estimated 80% of all Australian teenagers possess and use a smartphone (The Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2016). Smartphone apps, therefore, provide an avenue for wellbeing teams to facilitate unprecedented access to mental health information, assessment and interventions.

Young people are at risk of independently searching for and using poor quality apps containing inaccurate counselling guidance and advice (Furlonger & Budisa, 2016). It is incumbent upon schools to ensure high quality, digitally relevant support tools are recommended to students that cater to the increasingly technological needs of young people.

Purpose

Young people often experience a number of barriers to accessing professional help for mental health issues. The purpose of this policy is to provide wellbeing and school leadership teams with research-informed guidance on the promotion of apps to support student mental health and wellbeing; specifically:

- Locating mental health and wellbeing apps
- Identifying high-quality apps
- Assessing app security and data collection practices

Scope

This policy applies to students, teachers, school leaders and Allied Health staff of [INSERT name of school]. This policy outlines important considerations for the recommendation and responsible use of apps for student wellbeing. By supporting the use of apps in this way, [INSERT name of school] is in no way advocating for student use of apps in lieu of accessing a mental health professional. Instead, [INSERT name of school] recognises the importance of equipping students and staff with evidence-informed guidance for how to identify apps that may assist students experiencing difficulties whilst they are seeking support from an appropriately trained professional.

[INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

[**INSERT name of school**] acknowledges the crucial role played by schools to support the emotional and behavioural wellbeing of young people (Lawrence et al., 2015).

Apps are a form of mobile technology readily used by secondary school-aged young people to communicate with one another and access information (Farmer, 2014; Madden et al., 2013; Roy Morgan Research, 2016; Taylor & Silver, 2019). In the same way that educational apps and computing programs used at [**INSERT name of school**] provide students with the opportunity to rehearse and extend on classroom learning, apps can offer information and strategies to support students who may be experiencing symptoms associated with poor mental health such as stress, worry and sadness (Gibson et al., 2016; Gindidis et al., 2019b; 2019a; Wilansky et al., 2016).

There are a number of inherent challenges to using apps for mental health and wellbeing. These challenges primarily relate to data security, privacy and poor app design (Das et al., 2018; Gindidis et al., 2018; Grist et al., 2017; Kyrios et al., 2015; Larsen et al., 2019; Nicholas et al., 2015). Educators are encouraged to consider these limitations to ensure [**INSERT name of school**] promotes responsible use of low-risk apps for student wellbeing.

Studies suggest apps used in isolation are not as clinically effective as face-to-face interventions delivered by mental health practitioners. When required, staff will ensure students recommended apps for their mental health are also referred for internal, school-based support. [**INSERT name of school**] strongly recommends students engaging with apps for mental health and wellbeing consult a mental health professional such as a psychologist.

Privacy legislation relevant to [**INSERT country where school is located**] should also be reviewed to establish compliance when considering apps, for example, the 13 Australian Privacy Principles (APP) of the Privacy Act (1988) (Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, 2020).

Reviewing apps

[**INSERT name of school**] will ensure a member of staff reviews apps due to inherent difficulties with comprehension of privacy policies (Das et al., 2018). Unresolved privacy and security questions will be escalated to the App Developer and where necessary, [**INSERT name of school**]’s legal team or council.

[**INSERT name of school**] will consider reviewing apps not categorised as “mental health apps” such as music or exercise apps that have functions shown to promote positive health outcomes (Gindidis et al., 2018).

[**INSERT name of school**] will ensure the following key information is reviewed for each app to be recommended for student use:

- Intended audience (e.g., Was it designed for this age group?)

- App developer (e.g., Was it developed by an academic or healthcare organisation, a commercial group, or a private individual?)
- Frequency of app updates (e.g., Apps last updated over six months ago may be associated with more quality concerns [Mercurio et al., 2020].)
- Privacy policy (e.g., does a policy actually exist? Are there assurances that data will not be shared with, or sold to, third parties? [Wu et al., 2017])
- Data collection practices (e.g., Does the app ask for personal identifiers such as name or date of birth, or integrate with Facebook? [Huckvale et al., 2019])
- Evidence to support app benefits (e.g., Apps may describe unreliable therapeutic approaches [Larsen et al., 2019] or may fail to faithfully implement evidence-based strategies [Huguet et al., 2016].)
- Ease of use (e.g., Poor usability is likely to lead to poor engagement with the app, and bugs and crashes can reduce confidence in the effectiveness of the app [Torous et al., 2018].)

[INSERT name of school] will refer to available app quality and security review frameworks to assess app quality, for example: the Mobile Application Rating Scale (Stoyanov et al., 2015) and the App Behaviour Change Scale (McKay et al., 2019).

Recommending apps to students

[INSERT name of school] will only recommend apps which are downloaded through official app stores (e.g., Apple App Store, Google Play Store) due to risks associated with apps from other unofficial sources (The OWASP Foundation, 2020).

Wellbeing staff at [INSERT name of school] will ensure apps recommended for student wellbeing and mental health include evidence-based behaviour change strategies, such as: psychoeducation, goal setting, self-monitoring, coping planning, relaxation and problem solving (Australian Psychological Society, 2018; Gindidis et al., 2018; Kallapiran et al., 2015; Lukens & McFarlane, 2004; Michie et al., 2013; Rickwood et al., 2005).

[INSERT name of school] will not recommend apps based on app store ratings (Nicholas et al., 2015) or testimonials (Larsen et al., 2019) as these are not good indicators of app quality.

[INSERT name of school] will only recommend to students high-quality apps that have been deemed safe. Determination of app quality and safety will be based on the key information criteria outlined in the “Reviewing apps” section of this policy.

Staff and students

Student digital literacy is a core skill in today’s world and at [INSERT name of school] every effort is made to embed technology across the school’s curriculum – including student welfare.

Students of [INSERT name of school] will be encouraged to develop the skills necessary to undertake app quality and security reviews in an effort to limit the gap between policy and competency (Jacobson et al., 2010; Porat et al., 2018). Student-led activities such as group projects will involve exploration of the key quality indicators previously outlined relating to app security, user experience, privacy and evidence. Activities will be embedded within relevant learning areas such as legal studies, civics and citizenship, and computer studies.

Rating of evidence base



Figure 20.1. Apps for Secondary School Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. Research indicates that young people are increasingly expressing a preference for engaging with mobile wellbeing and mental health supports. Evidence of app efficacy is mixed and possibly biased, with app developers and researchers often one and the same. Although quality apps are in the minority, studies of high-quality, evidence-informed and co-designed apps are suggestive of positive engagement and outcomes. Smartphone ownership and app download metrics indicate that apps offer young people on-demand access to information and adjunctive wellbeing support. Young people's ability to discern high-quality apps is an important skill currently lacking explicit integration into school curriculums. Evidence used to inform this policy is not informed by studies that consider school contexts. Implementation of this policy is predicated on the digital competency of staff. Unlike many other school policies, this policy will need to be regularly reviewed to ensure compliance with evolving legislation and technology. App recommendations should be updated periodically to ensure continuing relevance and appropriateness with app updates. Policy enactment will not involve significant funds. In addition to being used by school wellbeing staff, appraisal of mental health and wellbeing apps can also potentially be embedded across digital citizenship and health curricula.

Authorship

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[INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

Mobile phone policy

Student wellbeing policy

Health and wellbeing services

Electronic devices policy

Safety policy

Privacy statement

Counselling policy

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Further reading

American Psychiatric Association. (2018). *App evaluation model*. <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/mental-health-apps/app-evaluation-model>

Department of Health. (2020). *Head to health*. <https://headtohealth.gov.au/>

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Orcha. (2020). *COVID-19 Health Apps*. <https://covid19.orcha.co.uk/>

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Expert consultation

School information technology, computing and/or technical teams

Department of Education (or equivalent) legal team

School allied health and wellbeing professionals

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21 School cultural congruity

Mihya Weber, Chloe Zhang, Alessandra Mittelstet, and Shane R. Jimerson

How to use this policy

School cultural congruity refers to the cultural match between the school and the students and families who are served by the school. Elements of cultural (in)congruity exist within all areas of the school environment. For example, differences in school and student or family cultural values may exist in school rules and policies, expectations for students and parents, curriculum, methods of teaching, and approaches to discipline. Nonetheless, establishing a school environment that is culturally congruent with the student population is valuable in promoting positive student academic outcomes (Amatea, 2009). School leaders, teachers, and student support staff are key in developing a culturally congruent school environment and should receive professional development and ongoing support to implement strategies aimed at promoting school cultural congruity. This policy example is intentionally broad and school policy creators are encouraged to delete and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] School cultural congruity

Rationale

The importance of K-12 school climate has been increasingly recognized by researchers and educators. School climate reform is recommended to promote healthy relationships and lower dropout rates among students. School climate impacts students' academic success and socio-emotional wellbeing and can mitigate the negative impact of disadvantaged socioeconomic status. School climate has been identified as a protective factor for the learning and positive life development of students (Thapa et al., 2013). A positive school climate is characterized by having norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures that promote people's positive experiences of school life (Thapa et al., 2013). School cultural congruity, which emphasizes a cultural match between the school and

the students and families served by the school, is one important aspect that reflects the general school climate.

Cultivating a school environment that is culturally congruent with the student population can be valuable in promoting positive student outcomes, particularly through encouraging parent engagement. The importance of parent engagement in children's learning is long established (Oswald et al., 2017), yet many schools struggle to achieve high levels of parental engagement. Christenson and Sheridan (2001) highlight the importance of schools and show how their current infrastructure may be excluding some families. School environments that are exclusionary to some students and families will have negative effects on the learning outcomes of those students. Castellanos and Gloria (2007) define cultural congruity as the fit between the student's and the educational institution's values, which promotes connectedness with the school environment. Christenson and Sheridan (2001) highlight that cultural mismatches between a school and students/families occur when values held sacred in one culture are misunderstood or invalidated in another. This mismatch may be seen across a variety of elements in the school context, including expectations for behaviour, levels of performance, problem-solving, goal setting, and behaviour management methods (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001). This mismatch between educators and students can have adverse effects on parental engagement efforts and student learning outcomes. By promoting a culturally congruent school environment, students and parents can engage more fully in learning opportunities.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on promoting a school culture that is congruent with the students and families served.

Scope

This policy applies to school leadership personnel, teachers, and student support staff. School leaders are essential in implementing and supporting staff in school-wide changes. Teachers and support staff will apply elements of establishing a sense of cultural congruity in the classroom with materials used, approaches to learning, and interactions with parents and students.

[INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

Christenson and Sheridan (2001) emphasize that cultural mismatches between a school and students/families occur when values held sacred in one culture are misunderstood or invalidated in another. Accordingly,

- Staff at [INSERT name of school] recognize that their experiences and cultural values may differ from students and parents.
- School leaders and educators at [INSERT name of school] strive to understand students' and their family's cultural background as it relates to their experiences with school.
- Staff at [INSERT name of school] engage in ongoing professional development to better understand how dominant cultural norms impact how we approach the education of our students.
- Staff engage in ongoing professional development to better understand the cultural norms related to education of students and families with diverse backgrounds at [INSERT name of school].
- Staff at [INSERT name of school] view diversity as an asset to the learning experience of all students and seek to honour cultural differences.
- School leaders at [INSERT name of school] seek consultation with cultural brokers when working with students and families from different cultural backgrounds.
- Staff at [INSERT name of school] embrace feedback and adjust accordingly with an open mind.

Cultural mismatch may be seen across a variety of elements in the school context, including expectations for behaviour, levels of performance, problem-solving, goal setting, and behaviour management methods (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001). This has implications for school leaders.

- School leaders at [INSERT name of school] seek parent feedback on expectations of behaviour and approaches to discipline should infractions occur.
- School leaders at [INSERT name of school] seek parent feedback on expectations of academic performance and approaches to intervention.
- Educators at [INSERT name of school] seek parent feedback on goals for students and approaches to problem-solving when goals are not met.
- Educators at [INSERT name of school] seek parent feedback on role expectations for parents and educators.
- Educators at [INSERT name of school] engage in ongoing and proactive communications with parents and students and ensure their feedback is considered and implemented.

Christenson and Sheridan (2001) highlight the importance of communicating with parents clearly and in a way that is understandable to them.

- Written communication at [INSERT name of school] is disseminated to parents in their preferred language and mode of communication.
- School staff at [INSERT name of school] engage parents in meetings in a manner that is informative, engaging, and respectful.

- School leaders at [INSERT name of school] ensure that educators have reliable access to translators and interpreters when communicating with parents who speak a different language.
- School staff at [INSERT name of school] provide ongoing opportunities for parent feedback on how to promote effective and culturally and linguistically appropriate communications.

Amatea (2009) explains that when instruction is only administered from a single perspective and does include diverse approaches, students from different backgrounds are likely to experience increased challenges in achieving positive academic outcomes.

- Educators at [INSERT name of school] incorporate a variety of instructional approaches and methods for evaluating student achievement.
- Educators at [INSERT name of school] utilize course materials that reflect the diversity of the student population.
- Educators at [INSERT name of school] incorporate examples in teaching that are reflective of student experiences.
- Educators at [INSERT name of school] involve the students in the selection and incorporation of reflective materials and examples.
- School leaders at [INSERT name of school] provide consistent support to teachers and support staff to engage in culturally congruent practices with students and families.
- School leaders at [INSERT name of school] provide regular training opportunities for teachers and support staff to improve their cultural competence in teaching.
- School leaders at [INSERT name of school] provide educators with necessary materials to implement culturally relevant assignments and decorations in the classroom.

Authorship

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[INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Rating of evidence base



Figure 21.1. School Cultural Congruity Rating of Evidence.

Author note. Robust evidence supports the importance of cultural competence and culturally relevant practices in education. Though school cultural congruity is a new construct to be examined in K-12 education settings, elements of the construct are strongly supported. Positive student outcomes have been extensively documented in higher education but not yet examined in K-12 education settings. However, the impact of culturally relevant practices in K-12 education is long established. Cultural congruity has been extensively investigated in higher education but is new to primary and secondary education settings. However, the value of cultural responsiveness in K-12 education is long established. Most elements of school cultural congruity can be achieved by adapting routine practices. Depending on the discrepancy between the dominant culture and the student population, additional materials (e.g., books that reflect diverse cultures) may be needed to achieve full implementation. Though school cultural congruity is a relatively new construct to be examined in primary and secondary education settings, given the strong evidence of positive student outcomes associated with elements within the construct of cultural congruity, the potentiality for positive results is high.

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Further reading

- Amatea, E. S. (2009). *Building culturally responsive family-school relationships*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
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Expert consultation

The policy should be informed by school teams focused on diversity, equity, inclusion, and culturally responsive instruction. Comprehensive school safety planning teams could provide positive contributions to developing culturally congruent safety plans and interventions. There would also be value to coordinating with the school administrators to ensure school leaders have resources and support necessary to effectively implement new policies.

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22 Inclusive education for students from refugee or migrant backgrounds

Clemence Due

How to use this policy

Students with refugee and migrant backgrounds bring with them a range of complex needs as well as strengths. Importantly, students with refugee or migrant backgrounds are diverse and have educational needs which vary depending on context. As such, this policy example is intentionally broad and school policy creators are encouraged to delete and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school. This policy encourages collaboration in local context with parents, broader family members, and communities, as well as education departments to ensure that the policy meets the needs of all stakeholders. Policies concerning students with refugee and migrant backgrounds should be implemented school-wide (e.g., rather than only within intensive English classes or sections of schools), given the large body of evidence concerning whole of school approaches.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] Inclusive education for students from refugee or migrant backgrounds

Rationale

Students with refugee and migrant backgrounds face a range of challenges, including negotiating changing identities, challenges learning about and “fitting in” to a new culture, and issues such as discrimination or social exclusion (Woods, 2009; Riggs & Due, 2011). In addition, they may have previously experienced issues that have the potential to affect their ongoing psychological and physical wellbeing, such as experiences of torture, trauma, dislocation, and disrupted education (Christie & Sidhu, 2002). Taken together, these factors lead to a complex interplay of issues that affect young people’s sense of wellbeing and identity in their new country (Correa-Velez et al., 2010; Gifford et al., 2009). These complexities are particularly salient within educational contexts, where students with migrant or refugee backgrounds frequently encounter the sociocultural and physical environments of their resettlement

countries for the first time. Schools can provide an important avenue for support for young people with refugee or migrant backgrounds, with previous research indicating that positive educational experiences can boost self-esteem and resilience, encourage community participation and the development of peer relationships, and enable young people to build on their existing skills, knowledge, and abilities (Block et al., 2014; Correa-Velez et al., 2010; Keddie, 2012; de Heer et al., 2015).

Moreover, the educational experiences of young people with migrant or refugee backgrounds are important due to the critical role that education has to play in a range of developmental outcomes for young people, including not only intellectual and cognitive development along with academic growth for several years after arrival in a resettlement country (Motti-Stefanidi & Masten, 2013), but also in relation to a range of areas related to childhood development and wellbeing more broadly. Early experiences of education are particularly important in this regard and can play a crucial role in developing school engagement, which is particularly important in relation to ongoing educational achievement and ensuring that a gradual process of disengagement leading to attrition does not occur (Marks, 2000; Fredricks et al., 2004).

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline whole school approaches for inclusive education for students with refugee and migrant backgrounds for all members of a school community, to ensure that refugee and migrant students are supported at school and their strengths recognised.

Scope

This policy applies to all members of the school community, including present and past students, teachers, other staff such as bi-lingual bi-cultural workers and support staff, school leaders, parents, and broader refugee and migrant communities associated with the local school contexts. Whole school, inclusive approaches are vital when working with this cohort of students.

[INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

School management

[**INSERT name of school**] works closely with the families of students with migrant and refugee backgrounds as well as their broader communities where appropriate. This includes invitations to school events, translation of materials where possible, and engagement with specific cultural/ethnic community events (Taylor & Sidhu, 2011).

[INSERT name of school] enables multiple opportunities for students from refugee and migrant backgrounds to contribute to school culture and processes, so that their knowledge and strengths are reflected in the school environment. Educators work together to ensure that this involvement is school-wide rather than only in any specialised classes (Pugh et al., 2012).

[INSERT name of school] has a key focus on ensuring whole school approaches that include consideration and active focus on students with refugee and migrant backgrounds and their contributions to and inclusion within the school community (Pugh et al., 2012; Keddie, 2011; Keddie, 2012).

Efforts are made at [INSERT name of school] to ensure that transition from specialised English language classes or schools into mainstream classes at [INSERT name of school] is supported. This includes allocation of resources where possible, sufficient orientation time for students, and visits between classes or schools where appropriate (Fischer, 2010).

Training and professional development concerning issues faced by students with refugee or migrant backgrounds is provided for *all* teachers at [INSERT name of school]. This includes training concerning trauma-informed, culturally responsive education (Matthews, 2008; Due et al., 2015).

[INSERT name of school] supports teachers who work with students with refugee and migrant backgrounds including recognition that these teachers may experience vicarious trauma. [INSERT name of school] has appropriate referral pathways to mental health services for these teachers (Baak et al., 2020).

[INSERT name of school] has strategies in place to evaluate any content specific to students with refugee or migrant backgrounds, including provision of English language education (Woods, 2009).

Teachers

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] work with whole school approaches to ensure that the strengths of students with refugee and migrant backgrounds are foregrounded in the school environment. This includes, for example, ensuring that subjects that do not rely on English (such as art or sport) are included in classes as much as possible (Pugh et al., 2012; Due et al., 2016a).

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] engage with parents and communities of students with refugee and migrant backgrounds to ensure that they understand the context of students' lives and that school is a culturally safe space for students to be (Block et al., 2014; Keddie, 2012).

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] endeavour to work within trauma-informed frameworks in recognition of the higher burden of mental illness (and particularly trauma) within this cohort of students (Baak et al., 2020).

Students

[INSERT name of school] encourages students to support each other, with particular emphasis on interactions between those students who have refugee or migrant backgrounds and those who do not (Due et al., 2016a).

At [INSERT name of school] all students are encouraged to use their personal strengths and to draw upon their cultural background, first or additional languages, and existing knowledge to inform their current learning (Due et al., 2016b).

[INSERT name of school] works with students to provide appropriate language resources, and students for whom English is an additional language are encouraged to ensure they engage with these resources (de Heer et al., 2016; Olliff & Couch, 2005).

All students at [INSERT name of school] are encouraged to be inclusive and respectful, particularly in relation to culture and ethnicity (Walton et al., 2014).

Parents and communities

[INSERT name of school] provides multiple communication channels for parents including translation of materials as appropriate for larger language groups. Parents are encouraged to be actively engaged with these communication channels (Olliff & Couch, 2005).

The school seeks feedback from parents and broader communities about their satisfaction with the [INSERT name of school], including its level of involvement within refugee and migrant background communities (Keddie, 2012).

Authorship

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[INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Wellbeing policy

Inclusion policies

Cross/multi-cultural educational policies

Counselling policies

English literacy policies

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Rating of evidence base



Figure 22.1. Inclusive Education for Students from Refugee or Migrant Backgrounds Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. The evidence base concerning best practice educational approaches for students with refugee and migrant backgrounds is generally good, although the focus is on secondary school students rather than primary school students. Some studies are smaller and context-specific, making overall interpretation of results difficult at times. Exploring impact as a result of these policies is a relatively newer area of research and thus findings are emerging. There are some clear principles that have a strong evidence base across contexts, such as the benefit of whole school approaches. However, there will be variations in practice based on cultural, ethnic, or language backgrounds of students, as well as the situation of the school itself, thus generalisability needs to be considered with care. Some of the policy suggestions here will require additional resources or training of staff.

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Recommended reading

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23 Teacher wellbeing

Rebecca J. Collie

How to use this policy

Teacher wellbeing is an important outcome in its own right, and it also has significant carryover effects for positive student and school outcomes. This policy is intentionally broad and school policy creators are encouraged to delete and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school. For a policy on teacher wellbeing, it is ideal if teaching staff have a role in developing the policy. Practices that promote teacher wellbeing should not only be pursued by individual teachers but should also be embedded across the whole school. This policy could be consulted in advance of major reforms or changes to procedures in the school. Policy consultation will help to ensure that teacher wellbeing is considered and respected during the development and implementation of any changes. This policy could also be used at the beginning of the school year to ensure that teacher wellbeing is considered in decision-making. For example, the policy might guide the scheduling of events across the school calendar so that undue burdens on teachers are avoided.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] Teacher wellbeing policy

Rationale

Wellbeing has been considered by humans for millennia and there are many ways to define this concept (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Teacher wellbeing refers to positive and effective functioning at work (Collie et al., 2016). Researchers use many different approaches to measure and examine teacher wellbeing. For example, researchers may ask teachers about their satisfaction with their job or their level of engagement at work (Collie et al., 2012). Teachers who are satisfied and engaged at work are functioning in positive and effective ways. Teacher wellbeing may also be measured by asking teachers about their experiences of various positive emotions (e.g., joy) and negative emotions (e.g., sadness) at work—and then weighing the prevalence of these different emotions across the course of a school week (e.g., Eldor & Shoshani, 2016).

When teachers experience more positive emotions than negative ones, they are considered to be faring well at work. Yet another way to examine teacher wellbeing is to check that teachers are not experiencing undue levels of stress and emotional exhaustion at work (e.g., Arens & Morin, 2016). Stress occurs when teachers feel overwhelmed and unable to manage their work demands, and emotional exhaustion occurs when teachers feel emotionally drained and worn out (Maslach et al., 2001).

The importance of student wellbeing has been known for some time. Nowadays, schools are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of teacher wellbeing. Promoting teacher wellbeing is a worthy and important aim in itself. Teacher wellbeing is linked with a range of positive psychological, physical and occupational outcomes among teachers (e.g., greater commitment to work, greater work motivation, lower work-family conflict and greater mental health; e.g., Collie et al., 2016).

Teacher wellbeing also has many positive carry-on effects for students and schools. Teachers experiencing greater wellbeing are able to form stronger connections with students, are less likely to quit the profession or change their job, and have students who are more likely to attain improved learning and achievement outcomes (e.g., Arens & Morin, 2016). Teacher wellbeing is, then, essential for individual teachers, and it also plays an important part in fostering healthy and effective schools.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the roles played by school leadership and teaching staff to support teacher wellbeing. It is essential that teacher wellbeing is promoted across the entire school, alongside efforts for and by individual teachers.

Scope

This policy applies to school leadership and teaching staff of **[INSERT name of school]**.

[INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

School management

[INSERT name of school] has multiple avenues for promoting teacher wellbeing.

Positive relationships are an essential foundation for wellbeing (Ryan & Deci, 2017). **[INSERT name of school]** prioritises the importance of positive relationships among all school community members (Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Martin & Collie, 2019). Our school provides teaching staff with time

to build positive relationships with students and opportunities to develop effective collaborative practices with colleagues (Pianta et al., 2008; Sharrocks, 2014).

Our school provides teachers with access to teaching resources and professional learning, which are essential for promoting confidence in teaching and, in turn, healthy and effective functioning at work (Collie et al., 2020; Mattern & Bauer, 2014).

Our school has put strategies in place to reduce extraneous workload during busy times of the year (e.g., meeting free weeks, relief from supervision duties during peak marking periods; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018).

Supportive leadership practices are well-known to be linked with teacher wellbeing (Collie et al., 2016) and are embedded across different levels of leadership in our school. For example, our school leaders aim to:

- seek input from teaching staff in school-level and department-level decision-making;
- listen to teachers' perspectives;
- provide teaching staff with clear directions and guidance regarding their roles/positions (e.g., outlining expectations for different roles, ensuring that all teaching staff understand what is expected of them);
- meet with teachers individually at least once per year in a formal annual review meeting and, where possible, at other opportunities throughout the year to "check-in" and support teachers' professional development and mental health;
- provide choice and options about work and related tasks where feasible (e.g., allowing teachers to leave early once they have finished teaching for the day; e.g., Collie et al., 2012; Lee & Nie, 2014).

[INSERT name of school] implements a whole-school approach to building a positive and supportive school culture for all members of the school community (Collie et al., 2012). Social and emotional learning (SEL) curriculum is also implemented to promote social and emotional development and wellbeing at our school (e.g., using published programs or resources; Weissberg et al., 2015).

[INSERT name of school] provides all staff with mental health support (e.g., access to an Employee Access Program for confidential counselling). In addition, we provide recommendations and access to mental health programs (e.g., mindfulness apps) that teachers can use in their classroom and for their personal wellbeing at home (Jennings et al., 2017; Klingbeil & Renshaw, 2018).

Early career teachers at our school are provided with additional support to thrive as they build experience and capacity in the profession (e.g., reduced face-to-face teaching load; assigned mentor; Kelly et al., 2019).

Teachers

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] are encouraged to build positive relationships with students. We embed curriculum dedicated to social and emotional development and wellbeing in our scope and sequence (e.g., SEL, curriculum; Weissberg et al., 2015).

Our teachers are encouraged to develop their confidence in teaching, which is important for wellbeing at work (e.g., Granziera & Perera, 2019). For example, teachers are able to select the areas of professional learning they would like to focus on. In addition, our school provides opportunities and time for professional learning communities and peer observations among teaching staff.

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] are supported to navigate the common challenges that can occur in the teaching profession (e.g., competing deadlines, challenging student behaviour; Martin & Marsh, 2008). Supports include access to professional learning, school-wide policies for behaviour support and a collaborative teaching environment.

Teacher adaptability is a valuable capacity for effectively managing the changing and novel situations that occur in the teaching profession (Collie & Martin, 2016). Teachers at [INSERT name of school] are supported to be adaptable in their work (e.g., by providing them with workload support during busy times; Collie et al., 2020).

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] are supported to take time off on weekends to recharge and nurture their own wellbeing (e.g., no emails are sent from school leadership between 6pm Fridays and 4pm Sundays; e.g., Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015).

Authorship

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[INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Student wellbeing policy

Anti-bullying and discrimination policy

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Rating of evidence base



Figure 23.1. Teacher Wellbeing Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. This policy is built from a solid body of work spanning many countries across the globe. It is also important to note that much of the research cited in this policy is correlational in nature and so impact cannot be ascertained. However, a growing number of intervention studies are showing that teacher wellbeing can be positively impacted and these studies indicate moderate levels of impact (Jennings et al., 2017; Klingbeil & Renshaw, 2018).

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24 The use of digital devices in the classroom

*Tracii Ryan, Michael Henderson, and
Jesper Aagaard*

How to use this policy

The use of digital devices in the classroom can have various benefits for students. However, when used at inopportune times or in inappropriate ways, devices may be counterproductive to learning. As digital devices are now an integral part of life, it is critical that students develop the skills needed to responsibly manage the use of these tools. This policy highlights how schools can harness the potential learning benefits of digital devices in the classroom, while also supporting students to responsibly self-regulate their usage. This policy example is intentionally broad and school policy creators are encouraged to delete and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] The use of digital devices in the classroom

Rationale

The introduction of digital devices into the classroom can have various benefits for students, such as improving organisation, engagement and collaboration (Zheng, Warschauer, Lin & Chang, 2016). When appropriately built into the curriculum, device use may also foster 21st-century and digital citizenship skills (Hollandsworth, Dowdy & Donovan, 2011; Kaufman, 2013). However, certain types of device use may also reduce student wellbeing and learning. For example, students may post risky or inappropriate content online (de Zwart, Lindsay, Henderson & Phillips, 2011) or use social media to ostracise or bully their peers (Allen, Ryan, Gray, McInerney & Waters, 2014). Devices in the classroom may also be distracting, particularly when students use them for off-task activities (Aagaard, 2015). This behaviour is known to reduce attention (Risko, Buchanan, Medimorec & Kingstone, 2013), knowledge retention (Flanigan & Babchuk, 2015) and academic performance (Junco & Cotten, 2012). While some schools have responded to these challenges by banning the use of digital devices (Selwyn, 2019), such

responses avoid the issues rather than resolving them (Elliott-Dorans, 2018). Instead, it is critical that the school community works together to ensure that there are clear expectations around appropriate device use and that these tools are embedded into the curriculum in productive and engaging ways.

Purpose

Digital devices are powerful educational tools when used appropriately but, under certain circumstances, they can also detract from learning. Banning the use of devices at school is one way to tackle the problem, but it does not help students learn how, when and why to effectively manage their use of digital devices for learning. The policy position offered here is one in which the school works together to maximize educational outcomes and wellbeing, and safely and responsibly supports students to self-regulate the appropriate use of their digital devices.

Scope

This policy covers student use of digital devices, software and online services in school-related settings. Students' safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services is the shared responsibility of students, parents, carers and school staff. Therefore, the development and enactment of this policy and related procedures should take into consideration the needs of the whole school community. This may require some reasonable adjustments and exemptions for individual students or specific teaching and learning contexts.

[INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams who have particular roles in managing digital device usage]

Policy statement

Policy governance

The following policy and related procedures implemented at **[INSERT name of school]** will be reviewed on a regular basis, in consultation with experts in the field, regulatory frameworks and the entire school community.

Parents, carers, and, if appropriate, students at **[INSERT name of school]** may request that the principal consider specific needs and approve individual adjustments and exemptions to the following policy (Evans, 2019).

[INSERT name of school] uses social contracts to ensure that all key stakeholders' expectations are aligned around the appropriate use of digital devices in the classroom, along with the consequences for misuse (Engel & Green, 2011; Keengwe, Schnellert & Jonas, 2014).

Digital citizenship

[INSERT name of school] is a place where students are supported to develop the skills they need to be successful in the 21st century, by using the digital devices they have access to and feel comfortable using in the classroom (Engel & Green, 2011).

At [INSERT name of school], the use of digital devices in the classroom will occur in ways that add to the learning experience rather than detracting from it (Evans, 2019).

[INSERT name of school] will help students and teachers reject the myth of “digital natives” as adept multitaskers and raise awareness about the negative consequences of digital distraction (Kirschner & De Bruyckere, 2017).

[INSERT name of school] will help students delay gratification from digital devices and teach them to self-regulate and design distraction-free work environments (Flanigan & Kiewra, 2018).

Student agency around digital device use

[INSERT name of school] recognises that digital devices can be more distracting for some students (Parry, le Roux & Cornelissen, 2019) and will work with each student to identify personalised approaches. Where appropriate, this may include options that do not use devices.

Students at [INSERT name of school] will be given the opportunity to contribute to the development of policy for the appropriate use of digital devices, as well as the consequences for misuse (Engel & Green, 2011; Thomas & Muñoz, 2016).

Accessibility of digital devices and technology

At [INSERT name of school], the integration of technology into learning activities occurs in fair and equitable ways for all students (Engel & Green, 2011; Evans, 2019). Alternative activities and/or spare devices will be made available for student(s) where required.

[INSERT name of school] will have in place filtering systems that help manage, control and limit access to non-desirable sites or technology protocols. The entire school community will be involved in decision making about the kinds of sites and protocols that should be limited.

[INSERT name of school] will ensure that students have access to the services and facilities they need to use digital devices in the classroom, including internet bandwidth, power outlets, etc. (Evans, 2019; Selwyn, Nemorin, Bulfin & Johnson, 2017).

Adequate support and training for teachers and students

Students at [INSERT name of school] will be provided with a list of applications, programs and websites that are approved for use in the classroom

(Erickson-Guy & Gullen, 2013) and will receive instructions and training about how to use digital devices effectively for learning (Ott, Magnusson, Weilenmann & af Segerstad, 2018).

Teachers and students at **[INSERT name of school]** will have access to appropriate technical support (Thomas & Muñoz, 2016).

Teachers and students at **[INSERT name of school]** will have a clear understanding of how digital devices work, any potential issues relating to safety and security, and the purpose and role of the device in their classroom (Engel & Green, 2011).

[INSERT name of school] will provide teachers with professional development opportunities and encourage the formation of professional learning communities to build capacity and understandings around how to integrate digital devices into the curriculum (Ott et al., 2018; Thomas & Muñoz, 2016).

Appropriate usage of digital devices

Students at **[INSERT name of school]** will not use digital devices inappropriately in the classroom. Inappropriate use involves using devices in ways that are not relevant to the learning activity (Erickson-Guy & Gullen, 2013).

Students at **[INSERT name of school]** will use digital devices in a manner that does disturb or disrespect anyone, including teachers and peers (Erickson-Guy & Gullen, 2013; Ott et al., 2018). For example, audible noises from devices should be limited using mute features.

Digital devices that are allowed in the classroom at **[INSERT name of school]** must be kept visible at all times during use (Erickson-Guy & Gullen, 2013). During designated device-free times, students must turn off, put away or hand over devices as directed by their teachers (Engel & Green, 2011; Keengwe et al., 2014).

[INSERT name of school] will have processes in place for students, parents, carers and teachers to discuss any concerns around inappropriate or problematic use of digital devices.

Managing misuse of digital devices

The misuse of digital devices will be treated in the same way as other misconduct at **[INSERT name of school]**. School actions as a consequence of the misuse will be appropriate and proportionate as per school behaviour policy.

It is the responsibility of staff, students, volunteers and families at **[INSERT name of school]** to report incidents of inappropriate use of digital devices and online services in accordance with school procedure, departmental policy and any statutory and regulatory obligations to help prevent any further incidents and provide support where required.

Teachers at **[INSERT name of school]** will apply consequences for misuse of digital devices fairly and consistently (Engel & Green, 2011; Ott et al., 2018).

Rating of evidence base



Figure 24.1. The Use of Digital Devices in the Classroom Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. There has been a substantial amount of well-designed empirical evidence supporting some aspects of this policy (e.g., digital distraction, supporting teachers), but other areas (e.g., student agency, digital citizenship) would benefit from further research. There is a need for additional longitudinal research to confirm the impact of the policy statements provided here. Further empirical research focused on secondary school contexts would improve generalisability of findings. In general, the policy could be implemented without extensive cost to schools. Minor to moderate expenditure may be required to ensure networks are adequate and all students have equitable access to digital devices. Digital devices are an integral part of personal and professional life, and teaching students how to self-regulate their use is not only an essential 21st-century skill but could improve learning outcomes.

Authorship

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 [INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

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25 Transgender and non-binary students, staff, and family members in schools

Clare Bartholomaeus and Damien W. Riggs

How to use this policy

Research shows that schools best meet the needs of transgender and non-binary students, staff, and family members by proactively developing policies that are implemented before the arrival or disclosure of a transgender or non-binary person (Baldwin, 2015). Such policies should be both driven and implemented by school leadership and developed in consultation with community members and leaders outside the school who specialise in the needs of transgender and non-binary people. This policy example is intentionally broad, and school policy creators are encouraged to adapt suggestions below to create a policy that best meets the needs of the school context.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] The inclusion of transgender and non-binary students, staff, and family members in schools

Rationale

Growing numbers of young people are disclosing that they are transgender or non-binary (Clark et al., 2014; Conron et al., 2012). Additionally, other school community members are increasingly disclosing that they are transgender or non-binary, including both staff and parents (Bartholomaeus & Riggs, 2017). For these diverse populations, inclusion within educational spaces is vital to wellbeing. Historically, educational spaces have either reactively engaged with transgender and non-binary people or have actively sought to exclude this diverse group of people (Baldwin, 2015). Research suggests that inclusion is best facilitated through the proactive development of policies. Such policies should be implemented, updated, and monitored by school staff: it should not be the job of transgender and non-binary people to advocate for their own inclusion. However, transgender and non-binary people should be actively consulted about their needs, including in terms of updating existing guidelines.

Purpose

This policy outlines best practice approaches to affirming transgender and non-binary students, educators, and family members. Central to the policy is the view that transgender and non-binary people have the right to inclusive education and access to inclusive educational spaces.

Scope

This policy applies to all students, staff, and family members of [INSERT name of school]. It is not relevant whether a transgender or non-binary person is a part of our school community: we believe that all schools should be inclusive of transgender and non-binary people.

[INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

At birth, most people are assigned one of two sexes (female or male). It is normatively expected that gender will be determined by assigned sex, such that those assigned female will identify as such, and those assigned male will identify as such. The term transgender is generally used to refer to people whose gender differs from that normatively expected of their assigned sex at birth. Further, the assumption that there are only two sexes and two genders fails to recognise people with non-binary genders.

The needs of transgender and non-binary people are best met through whole-of-school approaches (Bartholomaeus & Riggs, 2017). These should not be contingent on transgender or non-binary people being visible or involved with the school. Schools cannot know in advance who may later disclose that they are transgender or non-binary or who may join the school community. More broadly, it is incumbent upon schools to prepare all school community members for engagement with a diverse society. As such, the work of inclusion in regard to transgender and non-binary people is the work of the entire school community.

[INSERT name of school] aims to create spaces where transgender and non-binary people are not simply seen and responded to but are proactively welcomed, included, and respected. [INSERT name of school] ensures the inclusion of transgender and non-binary people through nine key considerations outlined in this policy (Bartholomaeus & Riggs, 2017).

1 Philosophy and ethos

- Our mission-and-values statement specifically names gender diversity
- Signs and posters are displayed in our school that celebrate gender diversity

2 Policies, procedures, and guidelines

- Bullying, harassment, physical safety, and discrimination:

- a Our policies name gender, gender diversity, and transphobia (including mention of transphobic bullying and language, such as deliberate ongoing use of incorrect names and pronouns)
 - b Our policies outline consequences for transphobic actions
 - c Our procedures address dealing with complaints relating to discrimination and harassment
 - d Our procedures address how to record incidents of transphobic bullying, harassment, and discrimination
- Dress codes:
 - a Students and staff are free to wear clothes (including uniforms) that reflect their gender, not assigned sex
 - Toilets/bathrooms and change rooms:
 - a Access to toilet/bathroom facilities and change rooms is based on affirmed gender (or individual student or staff preferences)
 - b Where possible, we endeavour to create *all*-gender bathrooms
 - School camps:
 - a Transgender and non-binary students are consulted about their preferences for sleeping arrangements when attending school camps. When dividing students by gender is unavoidable, students are placed with other students of their affirmed gender, unless they have concerns and then a suitable arrangement is agreed upon (e.g., placing with friends)
 - Physical education and sport:
 - a Students participating in physical education classes and school sport are not divided by gender. When this is unavoidable students should be grouped according to affirmed gender (or individual student preferences)
 - b Broader policies may need to be adhered to for interschool sports (although requests may be made to change these)
 - Supporting individual transgender and non-binary people:
 - a Guidelines about how to respond and be affirming when a student, staff member, or parent discloses that they are transgender or non-binary to a staff member are available to staff and parents
 - b Leeway is provided for students to attend gender-affirming appointments and processes (if relevant) or are required to support family members including siblings (if relevant)
 - c Procedures for supporting students who have not disclosed to their family or do not have the support of their family, including how to assist students in talking with their families (if desired) are provided to staff

- d Guidelines for disclosing to others in school (if desired by individual) are available and can be modified by the individual student, staff member, or parent
- e Guidelines for supporting transgender and non-binary parents and their children are provided to staff
- f Guidelines for developing individual support plans for transgender and non-binary students, staff members, and parents are provided to staff
- g Guidelines to address possible hostility from community members and media, including the requirement to maintain the privacy of individual students, staff members, and parents, are available
- h There is a process for monitoring, evaluating, implementing, and updating policies
- i **[INSERT name of school]** ensures that the entire school community is aware of policies and has access to them

3 *Leadership*

- The leadership team supports transgender and non-binary students and families, transgender and non-binary staff, and transgender and non-binary parents and families
- The leadership team supports and grants time off for staff training in gender diversity and inclusion, and allocates adequate funding to this professional development
- The leadership team supports educators in teaching about gender diversity and supports transgender and non-binary people both in school and outside of it
- The leadership team seeks support from education departments and unions
- The leadership team is fully aware of education department and other policies and ensures all staff are aware of (new) policies
- There are plans available to the leadership team to provide support in the case of any possible hostility (e.g., from parents, media)

4 *Record keeping*

- Records/enrolment forms remain confidential, with affirmed names and gender used in all other places (depending on student wishes)
- Guidelines for who can access confidential records, with staff having access only to as much information as they need to know, and consequences for privacy breaches is documented
- Modifications to the student database allows for change of gender and records non-binary gender (where this is externally controlled, e.g., by education departments, there may be guidelines for how to do this, otherwise requests for changes to the system to allow this should be made)

- All identification cards, library cards, and so forth, reflect affirmed names
- All forms are gender-inclusive (e.g., including open-ended response options for gender)

5 *Practices and language use*

- Inclusive language is used generally
- Staff do not divide students by gender for class activities, sports, subjects, lining up, etc.
- Staff do not address students as “girls and boys”
- All school community members use people’s affirmed names and pronouns
- Staff intervene in bullying and keep a record of incidents
- Staff directly challenge transphobic language
- School formals/proms [insert specific social events] are inclusive of all students

6 *Resources and training*

- Training is available to all staff and people who work or volunteer within our school
- Training is available for administrators and office staff for dealing with media inquiries
- Professional development for educators and school counsellors/psychologists is made available
- Students have access to affirming, supportive, and informed school counsellors/psychologists
- Library resources that reflect gender diversity are available for all to access
- Our school has ongoing contact with relevant support organisations (e.g., Safe Schools programs)

7 *Support for school community*

- Families and school boards/governing councils have an opportunity to attend information sessions about gender diversity and school changes relating to inclusion through the school year
- Staff have appropriate referral information that allows them to direct cisgender parents of transgender and non-binary children to additional resources and support (or direct them to other staff who have this information)

8 *Curriculum/teaching and learning*

- All areas of our curriculum are open to including gender diversity content (e.g., literature and language arts, sexuality education, history, civics, mathematics, visual arts)

- Students have an opportunity to learn about the social construction of gender
- We endeavour to remove all teaching and library sources that are transphobic

9 *Transgender-specific initiatives*

- Alliance groups (or similar initiatives) that are transgender and non-binary inclusive are available to students and supported by staff
- Celebration of events such as International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Interphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), Transgender Day of Visibility, Transgender Day of Remembrance occur within our school
- Materials and resources celebrating gender diversity and/or particular events sought from education departments and support organisations are available to staff and students
- All students and staff at [INSERT name of school] are encouraged to be involved in transgender-specific initiatives, where appropriate
- Students are supported in leading transgender-specific initiatives

Authorship

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Professor Damien W. Riggs, Flinders University
[INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

American Psychological Association [APA]. (2015). *Supporting transgender and gender diverse students in schools: Key recommendations for school administrators*. APA. <https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/programs/safe-supportive/lgbt/school-administrators.pdf>

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Australian Education Union [AEU]. (2015). *Sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex policy*. Melbourne: AEU. <http://www.aeufederal.org.au/application/files/1414/5852/4558/Policy-SOGII2015.pdf>

Rating of evidence base



Figure 25.1. Transgender and Non-binary Students, Staff, and Family Members in Schools Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. The literature clearly shows the negative effect of a lack of support upon the wellbeing of transgender and non-binary people in schools. Research has found that the implementation of proactive policies positively impacts transgender and non-binary people. Research has clearly found that educators who are provided with training can better meet the needs of transgender and non-binary students. Historically, research focused more on transgender people with a binary gender; however, increased attention has been paid to people with non-binary genders, allowing for better inclusion based on the evidence. To achieve success in all 9 areas outlined, considerable time and resources are required. Importantly, many resources already exist that can be modified for use in individual schools. Further, it must be acknowledged that implementing the 9 areas may create emotional labour for educational staff (i.e., in terms of educating families and responding to potential negativity). Educational staff will likely require support when implementing the areas, based on the existing evidence base to warrant action. Implementing the 9 areas is highly likely to have a positive impact on transgender and non-binary people.

Cannon, S., & Best, T. (Eds.). (2015). *Schools transgender guidance*. The Intercom Trust & Devon and Cornwall Police. https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/13620644/schools-transgender_guidance_booklet-2015.pdf

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Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Further reading

An extended reading list is available at: <http://www.therainbowowl.com>

Expert consultation

It is recommended that schools engage with transgender and non-binary community leaders and young people so as to ensure the currency and relevancy of materials developed. Schools will likely need to engage with their relevant government or private sector organisation to access necessary funding to support implementation and to confirm that guidelines developed are in line with exiting expectations.

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26 Family engagement

Andrea Reupert and Kathleen Minke

How to use this policy

Schools and families are the two most powerful determinants on children's developmental and academic outcomes. Thus, it is critical that schools and families work together, in a partnership where each partner is seen as making unique but equally valuable contributions to a child's learning and experience of school. This policy demonstrates how schools and families might work together, in culturally respectful ways. This policy example is intentionally broad and school policy creators are encouraged to delete and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] Family engagement

Rationale

A large body of evidence has established that, across age groups and population types, the involvement of families in children's education is positively associated with children's academic success (i.e., Wilder, 2013). Positive school-family partnerships can also impact students' school engagement, intrinsic motivation, perceived competence and control (Weihua & Williams, 2010), social development and sense of wellbeing (Willemse et al., 2018). Furthermore, schools may serve as effective conduit points to holistically address students' needs, bringing together parents/carers, schools and community and health services (Reupert et al., 2014). Effective school-family partnerships are therefore critical to high-quality education.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1992) provides the theoretical basis for acknowledging home and school environments as collective determinants of children's academic, behavioural, social and emotional outcomes. The basic assumption of the theory is that students are continually influenced by reciprocal interactions with their environments, including classrooms and families. This means that family problems will influence a child's learning at school and conversely, that problems at school will impact a child's behaviour

at home (Christenson, 2004). Another principle of this theory is the notion of synergy, whereby it is acknowledged that schools and families together can achieve more together than either could alone (Christenson, 2004). Moreover, the influence of culture, socioeconomic status and language is emphasised in ecological systems theory, which means that schools will need to utilise different engagement strategies for different families, as there is no one standard way of involving all family types. Overall, congruence in shared goals and messages between schools and families is needed to promote a positive trajectory for children's learning (Christenson & Reschly, 2010).

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to acknowledge the importance of family engagement as an essential contributor to students' learning. The policy aims to promote family participation in schools in various ways and provide a framework for effective school-family partnerships at the class and school level.

Scope

Families include any type of home arrangement that cares for and brings up children. As applies particularly for indigenous families but also others, the term family often includes extended family members, potentially including parents, several children, aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents. This policy defines parents as those who assume parental responsibility for a child and may include biological parents, carers or guardians. Children include pre-school, primary and secondary students. There are different ways that families might be engaged in school life and their child's learning, and these vary in intensity, duration and focus (Reupert, 2020).

[INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

[INSERT name of school] recognises parents/carers as equal partners in a student's learning journey. We value the diversity that our families bring to the school and respect their traditions and values. This policy draws on research evidence about school-family partnerships, including that from various cultural groups (e.g. Francis, et al., 2016). The following policy and related procedures developed for [INSERT name of school] will be reviewed regularly, in consultation with parents/carers and other family members, experts in the field and the school community, including relevant health and community leaders and services.

School leaders at [INSERT name of school] will

- Establish a school environment that is welcoming of parents/carers and other family members (Auerbach, 2010).

- Emphasise and acknowledge to parents/carers, teachers and the community, the important contributions that families make to a child's learning (Christenson & Reschly, 2010).
- Develop and promote relevant, timely and accessible information between school and families, in multiple formats (hard copy, electronic, telephone, face-to-face) about school initiatives and programs. To ensure communication is two-way, communication procedures are needed from (i) school/teacher to family and (ii) family to school/teacher (Reupert, 2020).
- Actively elicit parent/carer views about school policies, school programs and initiatives and when addressing school issues (Epstein, 1990).
- Establish a problem-solving process for families who are experiencing problems with the school that includes, as a last resort, a grievance procedure for parents/carers.
- Clarify and limit the expectations of learning at home and homework, allowing also for some children whose parents are not always able to assist in homework activities (Cooper, 2015).
- Include parent/carer representatives on school boards and other governance committees, recognizing that only some families are positioned to participate in these ways (Auerbach, 2010).
- Develop and disseminate procedures for family members and community members to visit the school, including sign in/out procedures.
- Provide accessible and ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers and parents to further develop skills in effective school-family partnerships. Provide specific training to school staff about cultural awareness and communicating with families from diverse communities. Develop educators' skills in learning from families about their children's strengths, approaches to learning, and relationships with adults. Further skill building is provided to families about supporting their children's learning at school and home (Epstein, 1990).
- Ensure systems are in place to link family members to appropriate community and health services. These procedures clarify referral pathways for different children and families; the type of information that is provided from the school to the external service/s; the information provided from the service to the school; and how services, the school and family might work together in the best interest of the student (Reupert et al., 2014).
- Develop strategies to monitor and evaluate school and teacher procedures for engaging, communicating and problem solving with families, including how satisfied parents/caregivers are with these procedures (Reupert, 2020).

Teachers at [INSERT name of school] will:

- Acknowledge and respect family strengths that contribute to student learning at school (Christenson & Reschly, 2010).

- Incorporate families' cultural traditions and values as teaching resources (Christenson & Reschly, 2010).
- Communicate respectfully with families and with the assumption that parents/carers are doing the best that they can to support their children's education (Minke & Woodford, in press).
- Invite parent/carers participation in the school and classroom in ways that are responsive to families' needs. Recognise that not all parents/carers are able to take up various volunteer roles. When parents/carers volunteer, this assistance is in addition to, and not instead of, paid support (Auerbach, 2010).
- Collaborate with parents/carers about the teaching and learning strategies that they might use in the classroom and at home to support children's learning (Vickers & Minke, 1995).
- Ensure that parents/carers are given opportunities to ask questions about their child's learning and progress and are provided with timely and regular information about the progress of their children (Anderson & Minke, 2010).
- Seek information from parents/carers regarding family needs and preferred methods of communication (Minke & Woodford, in press).

Family members at [INSERT name of school] will:

- Understand and comply with the relevant policies and procedures related to visiting the school.
- Value quality teaching and respect the professionalism of teachers, school leaders and other school staff.
- Use the school's problem-solving processes, including grievance procedures, if they have a problem with the school.

Authorship

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Kathleen Minke, PhD, NCSP, Executive Director, National Association of School Psychologists

[INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Rating of evidence base



Figure 26.1. Family Engagement Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. There has been a substantial amount of well-designed empirical evidence supporting strong school-family relationships and their impact on student outcomes. These have predominately focused on students' learning skills and academic achievement, with relatively less focused on other student outcomes. More research is needed on the impact of partnerships on teachers and schools. There is a need for further longitudinal studies to confirm the impact of school-family partnerships on students (not only focusing on achievement), families and schools. Most research has focused on families in anglophilic societies. It takes considerable time and resources to build authentic school-family partnerships, and for some, a significant attitude shift. Authentic school-family partnerships have the potential to positively transform the students' experiences.

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

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27 A whole school approach to preventing and managing bullying

Gerald Wurf

How to use this policy

Four decades of research have demonstrated that whole school anti-bullying programs are effective in reducing school bullying and the negative health and wellbeing outcomes associated with victimisation (Farrington & Ttofi, 2009; Gaffney et al., 2019; Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017). Effective whole school programs are long-lasting and intensive. They incorporate multilevel strategies to address bullying at the individual student level, as well as preventative strategies targeted at the teacher/classroom level and at the broad level of parents/school community (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011, Wurf, 2012).

Whole school anti-bullying interventions are underpinned by strong school policies that ensure bullying incidents are managed by restorative approaches (Gregory et al., 2016; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012) and proportional, authoritative disciplinary consequences (Gaffney et al., 2019; Gerlinger & Wo, 2016; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). Meta-analyses have highlighted that the fair, consistent enforcement of school rules and use of sanctions are key to school safety (Gregory et al., 2010). However, support that incorporates the teaching and reinforcement of pro-social behaviour and the promotion of respectful relationships has been found to be of equal value (Gerlinger & Wo, 2016). We therefore encourage school leaders and teachers to embrace strategies that have an empirical evidence base and to work with the wider parent body/school community in order to customise and sustain these interventions.

Strong policy represents an ideal starting point for addressing bullying in a systematic and evidence-informed manner. Broad policy consultation is vital to ensure all stakeholders have a voice in framing specific strategies and the restorative and disciplinary actions that address bullying (Smith et al., 2012). Consultation also raises awareness of bullying and informs curriculum and other routine and whole school-based preventative strategies. Transitions, including those at the beginning of the school year, are a time when bullying is known to increase (Espelage et al., 2015). Therefore, times of transition present an ideal opportunity to ensure the school community is informed

about the school's bullying policy and the preventative and disciplinary approaches that are used to address reports of bullying.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] Whole school anti-bullying policy

Rationale

Definitions of bullying commonly refer to repetitive actions (i.e., occurring more than once) that cause harm to others and involve a power imbalance such that a victim has difficulty defending themselves (Smith, 2016). Internationally, prevalence rates of bullying vary depending on the measures and definitions that are used. However, large scale self-report survey data continues to suggest that approximately 15 to 30% of school students report being bullied every few weeks or more often (Jadambaa et al., 2019; Thomas et al., 2017; Skrzypiec et al., 2018). Of note, individual characteristics that set a student apart from the prevailing group are likely to increase the risk of bullying. However, social factors including minority cultural status, sexual/gender diversity, disability and religious diversity are strongly linked with increased bullying and warrant attention in school anti-bullying interventions (Smith et al., 2012).

School bullying has been found to emerge in the early years of primary school and tends to peak around 11–14 years. Whereas physical bullying declines as students' progress through school, relational, indirect and cyberbullying continues into the final years. Numerous studies have found that boys more often engage in physical bullying; however, gender differences in relational and indirect forms of bullying, such as exclusion, are more difficult to interpret. Females report cyberbullying during early to mid-adolescence, whereas males are more likely to experience higher levels of cyberbullying during late adolescence (Barlett & Coyne, 2014).

Adverse consequences of bullying have been widely reported in the literature. High-quality data from an Australian population-based study, for example, linked being bullied with markedly increased negative mental health outcomes including higher anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicidal behaviour (Ford et al., 2017). Given this, the need for systematic evidence-based interventions across school populations is imperative.

Purpose

This policy outlines how a whole school policy requires close collaboration between school leaders, teachers, other school staff, students and parents in order to monitor and prevent bullying. As outlined, extensive empirical evidence now supports the use of whole school approaches to manage bullying.

Scope

This policy applies to school leaders, teachers and students of **[INSERT name of school]**.

[INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

School management

[INSERT name of school] has adopted a positive behaviour program and has a clear mechanism for quickly advising parents of alleged instances of bullying that affect their child. The school's disciplinary policy specifies a proportionate range of sanctions for bullying including opportunities for restorative practices (Gregory et al., 2016; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). Because peers and parents are more likely to be aware of bullying, and students are traditionally reluctant to inform their teachers/school authorities (Novick & Isaacs, 2010; Rigby & Bagshaw, 2003), we actively facilitate reporting by students and parents of alleged bullying occurring at **[INSERT name of school]**. Accordingly, we take action to investigate allegations of bullying.

Our school management ensures data to capture overall levels of self-reported bullying is collected via school surveys and is shared with the school community. In addition, professional learning opportunities that promote student engagement and wellbeing are supported by school administrators. School counsellors/psychologists are available at the school to support students and their families to peruse interventions to stop bullying.

[INSERT name of school] implements a whole school approach to build an inclusive, positive and supportive school culture.

Teachers

Teachers at **[INSERT name of school]** build positive relationships with students and their families. Together with the school leadership team, teachers communicate with families in a timely manner when their child is subject to the school's disciplinary procedures.

Teachers at **[INSERT name of school]** access published curriculum material and resources (including video material) that is designed to explicitly prevent school bullying from authoritative sources, and they deliver anti-bullying lessons in our classrooms (Farrington & Ttofi, 2010; Wurf, 2012). We use opportunities such as school assemblies and parent information evenings to raise awareness of bullying and to promote the school's initiatives to prevent and manage bullying.

Out of classroom supervision and the monitoring of playgrounds and hallways by teachers is undertaken at **[INSERT name of school]** because these are known places where bullying occurs and adult supervision is associated with

lower rates of bullying (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). An “on-duty” teacher is always available during school hours.

Students

Classroom behavioural expectations are negotiated with students and expectations make it clear that bullying is not permitted. Students are encouraged and taught to participate in cooperative, group work exercises. A peer support program is active at [INSERT name of school]. Students who provide peer support receive training in the school’s anti-bullying policy and the importance of bystander intervention to stop bullying (Polanin et al., 2012). This training includes role plays and opportunities to rehearse bystander pro-social behaviour.

Rating of evidence base



Figure 27.1. A Whole School Approach to Preventing and Managing Bullying Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. Olweus’ (1978) seminal work has inspired 40 years of empirical research into programs to prevent school bullying. Recently, Gaffney et al. (2019) synthesised results from robust studies including 45 randomised control trials (RCTs). Whole school anti-bullying programs significantly reduced prevalence rates when compared to control schools ($OR = 1.309$; 95% CI: 1.24–1.38; $z = 9.88$; $p < 0.001$). Significant RCT results have been reported from multiple jurisdictions including Asia, Australia, Europe and North America. Effective programs are long-term, intensive, address multiple levels of intervention and were implemented with a high degree of fidelity across all school years. Although whole school programs are easily embedded, sustained effort is required to ensure practices become routine. School bullying, on average, is reduced by 20–23% when whole school programs have been evaluated (e.g., Farrington & Ttofi, 2010; Salmivalli et al., 2011).

Authorship

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[INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

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28 Policy framework for the use of therapy dogs in educational settings

Christine Grove, Linda Henderson, and Felicia Lee

How to use this policy

There is increased interest in the use of therapy dogs in schools. The research is showing increases in wellbeing for those involved in such programs. Currently, there are a small number of schools with therapy dog programs. With the increasing interest in such programs, there is a need for strong policy frameworks to ensure success. This policy example is attending to this need and is based on the preliminary evidence of a survey of schools that either had a therapy dog program or were seeking to have one. Analysis of the survey has informed the development of this policy framework.

This policy provides guidelines for assessing a school's readiness for a therapy dog program, key factors for consideration for implementation, and principles to manage common challenges associated with using therapy dogs in educational settings. The policy serves as a set of recommendations that were developed based on two studies conducted with schools in Victoria, Australia and informed by existing research on the use of therapy dogs in educational settings in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. As such, this policy example is intentionally broad and school policy creators are encouraged to customise strategies outlined in this policy to fit within their unique school context.

The implementation of a therapy dog program in a school involves several considerations ranging from consent and liability, hygiene, safety, and cultural and personal factors to considerations for student learning and wellbeing outcomes. As such, leadership and whole-school support and commitment are essential in its successful implementation (Lane & Zavada, 2013). A school team including school leaders, key staff overseeing students' learning and wellbeing, as well as potential therapy dog handler(s), should be involved in developing this policy. This policy example is intentionally broad and school policy creators are encouraged to delete and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] Therapy dog implementation policy**Rationale**

Therapy dogs are increasingly used in educational contexts such as in primary schools, secondary schools, and universities across Australia. There is preliminary evidence indicating that therapy dogs can promote wellbeing, reduce physiological signs of stress, provide social support, encourage pro-social behaviour, motivate participation and engagement in activities, act as a social catalyst to facilitate positive social interactions in children and complement professional therapies (Jalongo & Petro, 2018). Despite the potential benefits of therapy dogs, there are several concerns and challenges that might arise from successfully introducing a therapy dog into a school context. Primary concerns by schools include legal implications and liability, allergy concerns, hygiene and sanitation concerns, safety concerns (e.g., dog's aggression towards students), cultural differences, fear of dogs, animal welfare, and funding associated with animal maintenance and program implementation (Anderson, 2007; Friesen, 2010; Henderson et al., 2020; Jalongo, 2005; Jalongo, Astorino, & Bomboy, 2004; Jalongo & Petro, 2018; Lane & Zavada, 2013; Scheckler, 2017)

Presently there are limited policies or guidelines on implementing a therapy dog program within educational settings, and they are often not based on evidence. While there are a number of guidelines on animal-assisted interventions in other settings such as healthcare facilities (American Veterinary Medical Association, 2014; Freeman et al., 2016; Lefebvre et al., 2008; Lenihan et al., 2016; Linder et al., 2017; Murthy et al., 2015), these tend to focus heavily on the reduction of allergies and measures to improve hygiene as well as sanitation. Some therapy dog organisations have guidelines on the administrative structure, standards of practice, training of dog and handler teams, documentation, and sample forms on the use of therapy dogs. While these are important and applicable to some extent in the school context, they do not cover the full range of issues stated above that are faced by schools implementing therapy dog programs. In addition, policy developed by National Departments of Education across Australia's states and territories focus on the use of animals for teaching (e.g., during science lessons) with brief information emphasising the importance of animal welfare, safety, hygiene, and sanitation procedures when interacting with animals in other contexts (e.g., school excursions, classroom pets). As such, a customised policy unique to the school context should be developed to navigate the processes involved in therapy dog program implementation.

What is a therapy dog?

A therapy dog refers to a dog trained to provide therapeutic benefit mainly through Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT), Animal-Assisted Intervention (AAI), or Animal-Assisted Education (AAE) (Jalongo & Petro, 2018). Therapy dogs are first selected for their temperament and subsequently trained together with

their handler, usually by therapy dog organizations, to be calm and obedient such that they are able to provide emotional support, comfort and companionship to different individuals in various educational, health care, and community settings (Jalongo & Petro, 2018). It is also worth noting that therapy dogs are distinctively different from service or guide dogs, with the latter trained for the purpose of meeting the specific needs of one individual in the long term. Overall, there is much variability in how a “therapy dog” is involved, and this is largely dependent on their handler (e.g., their professional practice/expertise), the setting they are involved in (e.g., education, hospitals, courtrooms), and the goals (e.g., support learning and education, promote mental health, encourage positive social interactions, facilitate specific therapeutic outcomes) (Jalongo & Petro, 2018).

Purpose

This policy framework aims to help schools assess their own readiness for a therapy dog program and be cognisant of key factors for consideration for implementations, as well as to provide schools with recommendations to manage common challenges and concerns associated with using therapy dogs in educational settings. The framework can be incorporated within an existing school’s overall wellbeing policy where therapy dogs are not a program that occurs on the side but rather as part of a whole school approach. The policy framework can be adapted to suit the specific needs of the context it will be used.

Scope

The policy framework for the use of therapy dogs applies to current students, teachers, staff, school leaders, and parents of **[INSERT name of school]**.

[INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

[INSERT name of school] policy outlines the following:

- Factors of consideration of key stakeholders involved in a therapy dog program – therapy dog handlers, school leaders and staff, students, and parents;
- Common concerns and challenges associated with implementing a therapy dog program.

Key Stakeholders include:

Therapy dog handlers

[INSERT name of school] therapy dog handlers will ensure that their dogs receive appropriate certified training where they are rigorously trained and

evaluated to be reliably non-aggressive to both people and other dogs regardless of circumstances, highly adaptable, and able to interact easily with people.

During the therapy dog training, [INSERT name of school] handlers are also trained to meet welfare, safety, and hygiene requirements for both the dog and students, and to use the dog effectively.

[INSERT name of school] handlers will be prepared to:

- a be personally and financially responsible for the dog's welfare and maintenance including safety, feeding, grooming, cleaning, and vaccination. In the event that the dog is involved in school programs regularly or in the long term, it is recommended for the handler to request financial support from the school since the dog is part of an intervention employed for meeting the students' needs (Anderson, 2007). In such cases, it is important to put the financial plans into a written budget outlining a list of all expenses required in order to deliver the program and share them with all responsible parties (Jalongo, 2005).
- b be vigilant in identifying signs and triggers of injury, distress, or exhaustion for their dogs and be able to respond accordingly. Regular breaks should be given to the dog. Suspension of the program may be required if the dog shows a negative behavioural change, fearful behaviour during interactions, or has medical concerns.
- c (c)trouble-shoot if an incident occurs (e.g., when a student has a negative response to a dog), and adopt appropriate measures when needed (e.g., removal of the dog, medical care, debrief with student).

Efforts are made at [INSERT name of school] to facilitate successful implementation of therapy dog programs in schools. Handlers should be proactive in researching on the current evidence base of the use of therapy dogs and communicating with others who have had experience implementing such a program (Jalongo, 2005).

Handlers at [INSERT name of school] will have a good understanding of how therapy dogs are incorporated/included in their educational context as well as their impact.

[INSERT name of school] establishes a clear goal/purpose of the inclusion of a therapy dog in different school activities – e.g., desired outcomes, who might benefit, and how (Anderson, 2007; Freeman et al., 2016; Lane & Zavada, 2013).

[INSERT name of school] facilitates planning of therapy dog activities with key school personnel (e.g., frequency and duration of activities, how the dog may be incorporated safely and appropriately, anticipated risks and concerns) as well as the evaluation of outcomes.

School leaders and staff

Leadership and whole-school support at [INSERT name of school] are essential in the successful implementation of a therapy dog program (Lane & Zavada, 2013).

Efforts are made at **[INSERT name of school]** to support school staff's acceptance of the therapy dog. Inviting the therapy dog into a school should not be a unilateral decision.

[INSERT name of school], endeavours to consider and discuss the thoughts, concerns, and ideas of all stakeholders, and these should be informally solicited by conducting preliminary meetings with administrators, parents, teachers, paraprofessionals, and students early on to:

- a Briefly explain the idea of involving a therapy dog in school and goals;
- b Obtain initial support;
- c Learn of any dog-related allergies or phobias;
- d Discuss and address any other concerns.

[INSERT name of school] therapy dog program develops a therapy dog implementation user guide that identifies and explains how the dog will be included in the classroom and school activities (Anderson, 2007)

Stakeholders **[INSERT name of school]** are likely to have varied questions. Our **[INSERT name of school]** endeavours to hold an information session or send out a newsletter introducing the therapy dog program by preparing information ahead of time (e.g., benefits of therapy dogs, their inclusion in schools), providing opportunities to ask questions, and preparing to respond to any potential concerns (Linder et al., 2017).

Our **[INSERT name of school]** endeavours to obtain support from most of the school community ahead of time and presenting collaboratively to school staff is recommended (Anderson, 2007)

[INSERT name of school] has the presence of 1 or 2 other school staff who are involved in the therapy dog program to ensure that the handler is not the sole person managing the program.

[INSERT name of school] has considerations such as appropriate indoor and outdoor areas for the dog and scheduling of activities and breaks for the dog.

[INSERT name of school] has school-wide protocols to address sanitation and safety of the program and has provided training of school staff and students on appropriate ways to interact with the dog and the training of emergency protocols (e.g., in the event of dog scratch or bite, students' adverse reactions).

[INSERT name of school] has made efforts to establish communication plans for engaging parents and students about the program, to address questions about the therapy dog program (e.g., cultural differences, fear of dogs, allergies, or medical concerns), and to obtain consent and assent.

Efforts are made at **[INSERT name of school]** to provide adequate planning and preparation for introducing the therapy dog to school staff so that they are educated on appropriate animal care and behavioural expectations and are able to step in when necessary in times of emergencies (e.g., negative dog reactions in students, emergency protocols).

Students

[INSERT name of school] regularly assesses the needs and suitability of students who the therapy dog program will be working with. This is critical to ensure that the program goals are met and student welfare is considered. At [INSERT name of school] we will:

- Determine which students are to participate in the therapy dog program (e.g., which students would benefit the most from this program? How should the program be structured to best meet their needs [e.g., whole class, groups, or individually]? How does a therapy dog program add value to existing programs in meeting the needs of these students? How would the program fit into or complement the usual curriculum and schedule?);
- Provide suitable alternatives for children who are unable to participate (e.g., for cultural or religious reasons, allergies, fear of dogs) (Jalongo, 2005);
- Encourage families to participate (Jalongo, 2005);
- Provide adequate planning and preparation for introducing the therapy dog to students so that they are educated on appropriate animal care and behavioural expectations.

Parents/primary caregivers

At [INSERT name of school] early engagement with parents/primary caregivers is essential once there is clear direction that a therapy dog program may be introduced in school (Anderson, 2007; Friesen, 2010; Jalongo, 2005).

At [INSERT name of school] we endeavour to inform parents/primary caregivers of procedures and processes and to provide them with the opportunity to ask questions and voice concerns. We ask that parents/primary caregivers provide written consent signifying they understand and support the dog's inclusion (Anderson, 2007).

At [INSERT name of school] we will ensure that there is ample time to engage parents before the commencement of a therapy dog program. Parents who provide consent to their child's participation will be provided with additional information about the program and have opportunities to have any concerns addressed. Parents who do not consent will be provided with information on how their child will be engaged in alternative ways (Jalongo, 2005).

[INSERT name of school] has assessed our own readiness for a therapy dog program by considering program indicators (i.e., the characteristics of a therapy dog program) and implementation site indicators (i.e., characteristics of the school, students, and families/communities involved) (National Implementation Research Network, 2018).

Rating of evidence base



Figure 28.1. The Use of Therapy Dogs in Educational Settings Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. The evidence base on the impact and implementation of therapy dog programs in educational settings is still evolving. The current policy framework was developed based on preliminary findings based on research conducted with schools and therapy dog organisations from Victoria (Australia), as well as informed by researchers in the field who are studying the impact of therapy dogs in educational settings. There has not been any formal evaluation of these recommendations outlined in the policy framework. Recommendations outlined in the policy framework are informed by evidence and research, schools, therapy dog organisations, and researchers who have implemented therapy dog programs in various ways in schools and within different school contexts. Implementation of the policy may require additional resourcing or funding. For example, decisions will need to be made about the ownership of the therapy dog and therefore responsibility for costs involved in this ownership. Other resourcing decisions might include designated space for the dog to rest and relieve itself and hygiene facilities such as hand sanitiser for students post involvement with the dog. From our own research, potential impact that may arise from the implantation of the policy is strong with significant improvements in wellbeing noted across a wide age range of research participants.

Authorship

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Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Wellbeing policies

Emergency, safety, and hygiene policies

Animal welfare policies

Victoria State government school policy: Teaching with animals: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/curriculum/Pages/animals.aspx>

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Further reading

Henderson, L., Grové, C., Lee, F., Trainer, L., Schena, H., & Prentice, M. (2020). *The impact of the Story Dogs reading program on student wellbeing: Report for Story Dogs (Version 1)*. Monash University. <https://doi.org/10.26180/5e48f4427390d>

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National Implementation Research Network. (2018). *The hexagon: An exploration tool*. <https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/sites/nirn.fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/HeadStart-HexagonDiscussionandAnalysisTool.pdf>

Expert consultation

Schools may consider consultations with local therapy dog organisations who work closely with educational settings, consultations with schools who have already implemented therapy dog programs, as well as consultations with academics researching the implementation of therapy dog programs in schools for further support.

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29 Establishing effective school and community collaborations to prevent student homelessness

Monica Thielking

How to use this policy

This policy is designed to provide schools with evidence-based strategies to establish school and community collaborations to prevent youth homelessness. This policy example is intentionally broad and school policy creators are encouraged to delete and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] Prevention of student homelessness policy

Rationale

The conditions that ensure the wellbeing of children and young people around the world are reinforced by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [UNHCR], 1989) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations General Assembly, 1948). Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that secure housing, health and wellbeing are intertwined.

The prevalence of children and young people who experience homelessness around the world is difficult to estimate due to the multifaceted nature of youth homelessness and a lack of universal data collection methods. What we do know is that youth homelessness is a global issue, is rising and is becoming more apparent in the form of family homelessness (OECD, 2020). According to the Institute for Children, Poverty and Homelessness ([ICPH], 2020) in 2019, 1.35 million children in American public schools were estimated to be homeless. In Australia, children aged 0–14 make up 17% of the homeless population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016) and are defined as being homeless.

When students are living in supported accommodation designed for people in a state of homelessness (including women's refuges or youth refuges), then schools are usually informed of this. However, there is a hidden form of student homelessness, which schools may either be unaware of or be the first to notice. This form of homelessness is common to youth and involves staying at friends'

houses or moving between other untenured temporary forms of accommodation. It is informally referred to as *couch-surfing* or *doubling-up* in the international literature (McLoughlin, 2013). Research reveals that some children and young people begin running away as early as age 10 and may even have short or prolonged periods of rough sleeping (Flatau et al., 2015). This means that efforts to prevent student homelessness should begin as early as possible in the child's development, with some suggesting as early as preschool (e.g., Gultekin et al., 2020).

Irregular school attendance (e.g., Moore & McArthur, 2011), under-achievement and learning difficulties (e.g., ICPH, 2019), risk-taking behaviours (e.g., binge drinking, Cutuli, 2018), behavioural issues (e.g., Cutuli, 2018) and early school leaving (e.g., Low, Hallett, & Mo, 2017) are common presentations among homeless students. Furthermore, homelessness in children and adolescents is associated with multiple negative physical health, mental health and behavioural outcomes (Gultekin et al., 2020).

A troubled home life is the most common precursor to youth homelessness (National Youth Commission, 2008). Two risk factors include being in out-of-home care and experiencing family violence, and high rates of psychological distress and suicidal ideation or attempts are reported among such youth (Flatau et al., 2015). A history of abuse is common within this cohort (Tyler & Schmitz, 2020), as well as high involvement with the child protection system (Hong & Piescher, 2012). It is therefore critical that teachers and other school staff are competent in trauma-informed practices when supporting students who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness (Luthar & Mendes, 2020).

Schools play a vital role in the detection and prevention of student homelessness; however, research shows that many young people who are facing extreme family issues that lead to homelessness do not seek help, and the majority will still attend school whilst being in the "in and out of home" stage, often without the knowledge of teachers or peers (Thielking et al., 2015). School may represent a safe and consistent place for students living in difficult situations (Bernard, 1997) and a positive school climate is associated with better outcomes for school-attending homeless youth (Moore, Benbenishty, Astor, & Rice, 2018). Unfortunately, for many students in this situation, conditions at school can also serve to increase negative outcomes, as homeless students are more likely to experience school violence and victimisation (Moore et al., 2019).

Early intervention is a key preventative factor for student homelessness, and due to the complexity of factors that lead up to students running away from home and the impact of homelessness on students, schools cannot deal with this issue alone. In addition to integrated within-school inter-professional relationships to support homeless students (Stone & Charles, 2018), it is vital that schools also have strong partnerships with community-based youth services when supporting students (Sanders & Brown, 2015). The key ingredients of effective inter-service collaborations involve a combination of leadership and resourcing to support such partnerships in service delivery

(Williams & Sullivan, 2009). A study of school wellbeing and staff collaboration in and between schools and community agencies revealed that drivers to collaboration included:

- Open communication practices and resource sharing
- Common values, respect and putting students' needs at the centre of collaboration
- Regular, structured team meetings to support collaborative practice

Barriers to collaboration in and between schools and community agencies included:

- Time restrictions and a sense of being too busy to collaborate
- Practical barriers that stopped school staff from accessing local agencies
- Collaboration not being valued by one or more parties
- Lack of understanding of roles
- Differing professional and ethical practices (Thielking et al., 2018)

Financial and mobility barriers for families and/or students may also prevent service access. The external provision of services should be delivered in an easily accessible location, and for some communities, this may be the school (Sulkowski & Michael, 2014). Furthermore, while teachers play a significant role in providing support to students, they may be unsure about what to do or who to turn to when responding to student homelessness, including whether to notify child protection services (Thielking et al., 2017). There is a need for school policies that promote formalised collaborations with relevant service providers in order to facilitate professional development and support of teachers, seamless school-community partnerships and the linking in of families and students to appropriate services.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate that **[INSERT name of school]** is committed to establishing effective school and community collaborations to provide early intervention and prevent student homelessness.

Scope

This policy applies to school leadership, student wellbeing and teaching staff of **[INSERT name of school]**.

[INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

When students are identified as experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness, **[INSERT name of school]** is committed to ensuring students are

safe, that they receive the specialist and professional support they require to remain at home or in supportive housing and that they remain at school and achieve educational success. [INSERT name of school] understands its statutory obligations in relation to protecting children and young people from neglect, maltreatment and abuse and will notify and work with authorities to ensure all students are safe from harm. Where possible, families and/or students will be involved in these processes.

Early identification of students experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness

Teachers play a significant role in the early identification of student homelessness and recognise that children as young as 10 have been shown to run away from home, especially when there is a high level of family conflict (Flatau et al., 2015). However, students who are running away from home or couch-surfing/doubling-up may actively conceal their situation due to stigma and/or face systemic and institutional barriers to service access (McLoughlin, 2013). Research with teachers reveals that the following warning signs may identify students who are homeless or at risk of homelessness (i.e., Thielking, La Sala & Flatau, 2017). Based on the evidence, [INSERT name of school] will ensure that, in addition to student or family disclosure of homelessness, the following indicators will serve to act as a warning sign for possible intervention:

- 1 **Uniform:** students may not be wearing the right uniform, or they may be wearing the same uniform repeatedly and/or wearing a uniform that is noticeably unwashed or dishevelled
- 2 **Attendance:** students may be consistently arriving late to school or arriving very early to school and may have frequent non-attendance
- 3 **Schoolwork:** students may not be doing homework consistently or at all or are not able to keep up in class because of tiredness or distraction, and they may fall behind in classes
- 4 **Hunger:** students may not have lunch and other school snacks and no money for the school canteen
- 5 **Mental health:** students may display a severe decline in psychological wellbeing and/or an increase in behavioural issues or rule-breaking.

Thielking et al. (2017) p. 103

Teachers and other school staff may require professional development and training to competently and confidently respond to students with a history of trauma (Luthar & Mendes, 2020). [INSERT name of school] continually ensures school staff have the knowledge and skills to provide a safe learning environment for all students, including those with a history of trauma and those who may be experiencing or be at risk of experiencing homelessness. [INSERT name of school] will collaborate with local specialist homelessness and mental health services to undergo such training.

Establishment of effective school and community collaborations with the aim of keeping students safe at home or in supportive housing and at school

A school's role in the promotion of self-worth and belonging and in providing important reparative relationships for students facing difficult home circumstances cannot be underestimated (e.g., Moore & McArthur, 2011). Schools must actively promote interprofessional collaboration, both within the school and with outside agencies, to ensure students have their needs met so they can experience educational success (Markward & Biros, 2001).

[INSERT name of school] is committed to establishing formal collaborations with specialist homeless and other services in our community to assist in early intervention and access to appropriate services when students are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness.

Formal collaborations will be developed through the establishment of Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with the following agencies/services:

[INSERT name of school] to list here (preferably) local services and agencies to ensure students who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness are safe, remain at home or are placed in supportive housing so as to enable them to continue their education.

[INSERT name of school] will support collaborations by ensuring teachers and student wellbeing staff are provided with school leadership support and appropriate practical resources to participate in collaborations within the school and between the school and relevant agencies with the aim of keeping students safe at home or in supportive housing and/or at school (Thielking et al., 2017).

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[INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Rating of evidence base



Figure 29.1. School and Community Collaborations to Prevent Student Homelessness Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. There is a need for more high-quality experimental research that trials the effectiveness of school collaborations on student outcomes. Most research on youth homelessness occurs in UK, US and Australian contexts and may not be generalisable to other cultures. The policy requires leadership via a school and community working group to support the establishment of formal partnerships and ongoing collaborations. By schools recognising that student homelessness exists, working in collaboration with community agencies, equipping teachers and school staff with the resources and connections to intervene effectively, and aiming to keep students safe at home or in supportive housing and at school, there is a high likelihood of impact.

Expert consultation

Consultation with academic, cultural and content experts may be required to enact the policy. Community, student or family stakeholder input and specific school-level requirements would ensure the policy is relevant and appropriate to the school setting and community. Consultation with teachers, the school psychologist and other wellbeing teams is required. As this policy deals with student issues where there may be a high risk of possible neglect, maltreatment or abuse, always ensure that statutory mandatory reporting requirements are adhered to.

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30 Responding to students living with domestic and family violence

Larissa Fogden and Cathy Humphreys

How to use this policy

Students of all ages experience domestic and family violence (DFV), regardless of gender, class, race or religion. Working with children and young people every day, school staff are ideally placed to identify and respond to students living with DFV. However, schools can only respond effectively to students when staff hold the knowledge and confidence to not only identify DFV but to implement ongoing support strategies and refer on to appropriate external services. As such, this policy focuses on building staff knowledge by outlining clear evidence-based processes for responding to students who are suspected of or have disclosed living with DFV. This policy also encourages collaboration with local community support services in order to build referral pathways and create future opportunities for collaboration with services outside of the education sector. This policy is intentionally broad and school policy creators are encouraged to delete and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] Responding to domestic and family violence policy

Rationale

The adverse effects of domestic and family violence (DFV) upon the health, development and wellbeing outcomes of children and young people is well established (Carpenter & Stacks, 2009; Holt, Buckley & Whelan, 2008; Kimball, 2016). In relation to educational outcomes, exposure to DFV has the potential to negatively impact a wide range of educational outcomes, including mathematical, verbal and reading abilities, as well as levels of school engagement and attendance (Huth-Bocks et al., 2001; Kiesel et al., 2016; Schnurr & Lohman, 2013; Thompson & Whimper, 2010). However, when children and young people feel supported at school, schools can be protective against the impacts of DFV and contribute to building student resilience, self-esteem

and healthy coping skills (Campo et al., 2014; Sterne & Poole, 2010; Thompson & Trice-Black, 2012).

Child and young person victim/survivors commonly describe two specific needs: to have someone to talk to about their experiences and to feel safe (Mullender et al., 2002). Often, children and young people identify teachers and other education professionals as people outside of their families who they would turn to when seeking support for DFV (Howarth et al., 2016). When school staff have the knowledge and skills to provide support to these students, children and young people are more likely to view school as a safe and neutral place where they can take a break from what is happening at home (Bracewell et al., 2020; Buckley et al., 2007).

When responding to DFV, educational staff are not expected to take on extra roles as social workers or other welfare staff. Instead, as Mullender and colleagues (2002) describe, effective school responses should create a “channel for children to gain access to welfare services outside of school, by opening up an early opportunity for them to confide that something is wrong” (p. 219). When disclosing to school staff, students may be speaking about their experiences of violence for the first time. They need to be responded to skilfully to ensure their experiences are validated and provided with appropriate follow-up actions (Sterne & Poole, 2010).

However, staff within schools often lack the knowledge and training to confidently identify and appropriately respond to student victim/survivors (Peckover & Trotter, 2015). Some teachers feel they do not know what to say or do when students disclose DFV or what the scope of their role in responding should involve (Davies & Berger, 2019). School staff want clear guidelines on what to do next when DFV is identified, as well as up-to-date information about appropriate external support services (Lloyd, 2018; Sterne & Poole, 2010).

This policy provides schools with guidance on how to fulfil these staff needs, in order to respond effectively to students living with DFV. However, it is important to emphasise that any school policy related to DFV must sit within a wider whole-of-school response to family violence, which builds gender equity and respectful attitudes, behaviours, structures and practices into the overall culture of the school (Gleeson, Kearney, Leung & Brislane, 2015). DFV school policies must also be aligned with location and context-specific mandatory reporting and information-sharing requirements. Schools should consider creating additional policies to guide responses to dating violence within adolescent relationships, as well as responses to students who perpetrate family violence.

Beyond this policy, schools should also consider ways of partnering with local family violence agencies to deliver interventions for student victim/survivors at school, through the co-location of family violence workers or provision of group programs on site (Stanley et al., 2015). Evidence suggests that being able to access support at schools can greatly benefit students living with family violence (Mullender et al., 2002; Thompson et al., 2012).

Throughout this policy, *domestic and family violence* is used, as this is the preferred terminology used within Australia. However, each country has its preferred terminology, and as such, this policy should be customised to reflect the school's geographical context. *Living with or experiencing* family violence is defined as directly experiencing physical violence, sexual violence, emotional abuse and coercive control, as well as exposure to family violence within the home, such as witnessing intimate partner violence between parents or caregivers. *Non-offending caregiver* refers to a student's caregiver (e.g., mother) who has not perpetrated family violence.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the roles and actions undertaken by all educational staff to identify and respond to students living with family violence. It is essential that all staff working within a school have the knowledge and skills to respond appropriately to children and young people experiencing family violence.

Scope

This policy applies to all [INSERT name of school] staff.

[INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

Maintaining awareness and increasing knowledge

[INSERT name of school] provides training to all school employees related to

- 1) Identifying signs of domestic and family violence in children, young people and parents/caregivers;
- 2) How and where to document concerns about children (including observations) within the school's welfare system;
- 3) [INSERT name of school]'s process for responding to disclosures of domestic and family violence and providing ongoing support for affected students, including appropriate referral pathways into local support services;
- 4) Maintaining and upholding confidentiality related to student disclosures and circumstances;
- 5) Specific issues relating to risk and barriers to support experienced by diverse cohorts (Ellis, 2012; Sterne & Poole, 2010; Young et al., 2008).

Newly employed staff complete this training as part of their employee induction process.

All staff members at [INSERT name of school] are provided with regular (e.g., once a school term) opportunities to participate in professional

development sessions run by local family violence support services or other support services related to child abuse and neglect. These professional development sessions provide practical information to staff about what these services offer and how to refer children, young people and families to these services (Campo et al., 2014).

[INSERT name of school] displays information about local domestic and family violence support services (e.g., posters, brochures) in public and well-frequented areas, such as reception areas and staffrooms (Sterne & Poole, 2010).

Students are informed at regular intervals about the [INSERT name of school] confidentiality and information-sharing policies (e.g. at school assemblies), so that they know who they can talk to and under what circumstances the information they share with staff will be released to their parent/caregiver, child protection services, law enforcement or anyone else (Sterne & Poole, 2010).

Responding to students who are suspected to be or identified as living with family violence

[INSERT name of school] has a designated team of staff members (inclusive of teachers, counsellors, psychologists, executive members, etc.)¹ who hold responsibility for child welfare, specifically, issues related to domestic and family violence (Holt, 2015). This team, henceforth referred to as the *FV Response Team*, meets regularly and is responsible for planning and implementing [INSERT name of school]'s responses to both newly and previously identified students living with domestic and family violence. The *FV Response Team* also provides secondary consultation to staff and collaborates with external support services, as required (Davies & Berger, 2019).

All information concerning a student's status as a victim/survivor of family violence is retained in the strictest confidence and only shared with other school staff as necessary to protect the student's safety and dignity (Bracewell et al., 2020).

When staff suspect that a student is experiencing family violence, as soon as possible, they:

- 1 Document evidence (e.g., observations) using the [INSERT name of school]'s internal welfare system;
- 2 Consult with the *FV Response Team* to plan an appropriate response.

When a student discloses to [INSERT name of school] staff that they are living with domestic and family violence, the responding staff member:

- 1 Listens closely and non-judgmentally to what the student is saying, reinforcing that the violence or abuse is not their fault. This may be the first time a student has disclosed their experiences;

- 2 Informs the student that the responding staff member has a responsibility to inform specific other people about what the student has said;
- 3 Clearly outlines who the responding staff member will share the student's disclosure with:
 - a The student's non-offending caregiver (e.g., their mother);
 - b The *FV Response Team*, letting the student know who is on this team so that the student knows exactly who their disclosure will be shared with;
 - c When appropriate, child protection agencies, depending on the nature of the student's disclosure and the responding staff member's mandatory reporting requirements;
- 4 Provides the student with opportunities to participate in decision-making related to what will happen next (Noble-Carr et al., 2020). For example, if appropriate:
 - a Ask the student if they are comfortable with any other staff members knowing about their disclosure. If there are, and the student consents, these staff members may be invited to join *FV Response Team* meetings in relation to the student;
 - b Ask the student if they would like to be present when their non-offending caregiver is contacted;
- 5 Outlines clear steps to the students as to what will happen next (e.g. "I am going to speak to [INSERT name of teacher] or [FV Response Team] then talk to you tomorrow"), without making promises to the student that they cannot keep (e.g., "I'll keep you safe").

All [INSERT name of school] staff involved in responding to family violence disclosures are offered the opportunity to debrief and access support either internally from supervisory staff or externally (e.g., accessing Employee Assistance Programs) (Ellis, 2012).

All [INSERT name of school] staff members document any concerns about, or disclosures from, students living with domestic and family violence within the [INSERT name of school]'s internal welfare system. Student disclosures and/or staff observations must be documented as soon as possible after the event, with staff members including as much detail as possible. This documentation may be used later in legal proceedings related to family violence (Cooper et al., 2012).

Support for students living with family violence

The *FV Response Team* collaborates with [INSERT name of school] student victim/survivors (and/or non-offending caregivers, when appropriate) to create an Individual Support Plan. Through this Plan, students can access provisions, such as (Bracewell et al., 2020; Lloyd, 2018):

- Adjustments to class schedules;
- Extensions on homework or assignment due dates;
- A safe and quiet space with access to a computer and internet that can be accessed as needed outside of school hours (e.g., before or after school) to complete homework. This is particularly helpful for students living in crisis or refuge accommodation who may not have access to computers or the internet;
- Additional learning support in the form of lunchtime or outside of school hours sessions.

Individual Support Plans are living documents and are modified as students' circumstances and needs change over time.

Maintaining safety for students living with family violence

[INSERT name of school] adheres to the following guidelines (see Cooper et al., 2012; Sterne & Poole, 2010) to maintain safety and confidentiality, dependent on the student's circumstances:

- Copies of legal orders related to parenting arrangements and intervention orders are obtained and kept with the student's file;
- Information about students is never given out over the phone. If someone contacts the school to ask whether children attend the school, this information is neither confirmed nor denied until consent is provided by the non-offending caregiver;
- Photographs of students experiencing DFV are not published in local newspapers or on websites, unless the non-offending caregiver has provided consent.

The *FV Response Team* works with the non-offending caregiver (and the student, when appropriate) to create a clear plan (see Cooper et al., 2012; Sterne & Poole, 2010) for:

- How a student travels to and from school. Options are provided for families. For example, non-offending caregivers can collect students from the front office (indoors and out of sight) rather than the playground;
- How to respond if a parent who has perpetrated violence arrives at the school to see the child;
- How to respond if a parent who has perpetrated violence contacts the school asking for information.

This plan is documented and kept within the student's file.

Rating of evidence base



Figure 30.1. Students Living with Domestic and Family Violence Rating of Evidence.

Authorship

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 [INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]
 Mandatory reporting policies
 Information sharing policies

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Note

- 1 Wellbeing staff teams, panels or groups may already exist within schools who are able to incorporate these activities into their overall roles.

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31 Promoting educational equity for students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds

Monica Thielking

How to use this policy

This policy is designed to provide schools with evidence-based strategies to promote educational equity for students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds. This policy example is intentionally broad and school policy creators are encouraged to build upon and/or delete suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school]: Promoting educational equity for students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds

Rationale

All children have the right to go to school and learn, regardless of who they are, where they live or how much money their family has.

(UNICEF, n.d.)

Schools play a critical role in promoting educational equity for all students, including those from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds. Establishing equity in education is a global challenge and will be achieved when children and young people's participation and performance in education is not reliant on or impacted by their socioeconomic background. An example of this, in the Australian context, is The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (Barr et al., 2008), which articulates nationally consistent future directions and aspirations for Australian students and sets two educational goals for Australian schools:

Goal 1: Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence.

Goal 2: All young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens.

Across the globe, it is estimated that 663 million children live in poverty and 617 million children and adolescents around the world are unable to reach minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics (UNICEF, n.d.). Unfortunately, in Australia and elsewhere in the world (e.g., Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2018a) students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds continue to underperform against students from more advantaged backgrounds in reading, mathematics and science, and they tend to hold lower ambitions in relation to completing tertiary education (OECD, 2019a; 2019b; 2019c). Moreover, the gap in performance between disadvantaged and advantaged students in Australia is said to represent at least three full years of schooling (OECD, 2018b).

Families facing poverty may struggle to pay for essential school items, and students may experience shame and embarrassment about their lack of uniforms, educational materials and technology, as well as their ability to participate in extracurricular activities. Saunders et al. (2018) propose a consensual approach to understanding deprivation in this context, that is, “children and young people are defined as deprived if they do not have but want items regarded as essential by a majority of their peers” and “for young people, the items include material (‘things’) like adequate food, appropriate clothing and a quiet place to study, and activities (‘doings’) like going out with family and friends and on school excursions” (p. 2). Not having things or not being able to do what peers can do can result in students not participating in certain educational activities as they are deprived of certain items due to cost. Poverty and disadvantage have been found to be a key driving factor for why some students disengage from school (Hancock & Zubrick, 2015) or experience loneliness and psychological distress (Creed & Reynolds, 2001).

A host of welfare and charitable organisations have also highlighted the high number of students who come to school without the required resources for a full and uncompromised educational experience (e.g., The Smith Family, 2018). Prior to COVID-19, the latest estimates revealed that 13.6% of Australians were living in poverty (Davidson et al., 2020). The Salvation Army’s 2018 Economic and Social Impact Survey (ESIS) of 1,267 people who access their services revealed that more than two out of five households with children are experiencing food insecurity (The Salvation Army, 2018).

Not having access to nutritional food and being hungry at school have a range of psychological, behavioural and learning impacts (Brown, Beardslee & Prothrow-Stith, 2008). Across Australia, many schools have implemented programs that attempt to mitigate the detrimental impact of hunger on children’s outcomes, such as providing breakfast to students before school (Foodbank, 2015). Furthermore, The Smith Family’s Learning for Life program has provided over 50,000 students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds with emotional, practical and financial support to help with their education (The Smith Family, 2018). These and other programs are important, as promoting educational equity for all students is a

goal that all schools should be aiming for, but one that requires a whole of community effort.

High student attendance has a direct positive effect on student outcomes (ACARA, 2019). However, there is a scarcity of peer-reviewed studies that have evaluated the impact of school-level initiatives aimed to improve the attendance, academic performance, social and emotional wellbeing, and post-secondary educational attainment of students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds. One systematic review and meta-analysis of the international literature revealed that providing structured supplementary tutoring to students, customising learning to suit a student's learning needs, and employing cooperative peer-assisted learning activities have a significant impact on improving performance in mathematics and reading in disadvantaged student populations (Dietrichson et al., 2017).

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the strategies schools can implement to promote educational equity for socioeconomically disadvantaged students.

Scope

This policy applies to school leadership and teaching staff of **[INSERT name of school]**.

Policy statement

All students at **[INSERT name of school]** have an equal right to a full education.

[INSERT name of school] is committed to upholding the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child by recognising "the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity" (Article 28). Opportunity to participate in a full education at **[INSERT name of school]** refers to all school activities, including classroom learning activities, co-curricular activities, camps, excursions, incursions and school events.

Resourcing teaching staff to effectively teach students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds

[INSERT name of school] will invest in specialised teaching skills and inter-teacher collaborative practices that promote educational equity for all students (Blaise, 2019). Furthermore, school leadership will invest in opportunities for continuous development of teachers to effectively and confidently teach students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and ensure equitable access to digital technologies and instructional materials (Thomson & Hillman, 2019).

Improving educational performance of socioeconomically disadvantaged students

[INSERT name of school] does not only believe that all students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds are able to achieve but is committed to adopting practices and policies to ensure all students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds are able to achieve (Burnett & Lampert, 2016).

[INSERT name of school] will employ a “targeted teaching approach” (Goss, Hunter, Romanes & Parsonage, 2015), whereby student-centred pedagogy, which adapts to the individual learning needs of students, will be employed. Furthermore, student learning data and student feedback will be continuously monitored to inform teaching, as per the targeted teaching approach described by Goss, Hunter, Romanes and Parsonage (2015).

[INSERT name of school] will ensure supplementary tutoring is available to students who require it and encourage and promote peer-assisted learning (Dietrichson et al., 2017).

Engaging families who are experiencing financial hardship

[INSERT name of school] is a safe and welcoming school that has an open-door policy for all families in our school community. Students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds do better when their parents are more involved in and connected to their child’s education (Rubie-Davies et al., 2010). Dedicated staff members are in place to support families who are experiencing financial hardship in a discrete and respectful manner. The school can discuss each family’s needs, link families to appropriate resources and services and work together to ensure educational equity for all socioeconomically disadvantaged students is achieved.

[INSERT name of school] will document school-specific strategies to:

- (1) Communicate to families that your school is a safe and welcoming school that has an open-door policy for all families to discuss the impact of financial hardship on their child’s education and their ability to afford school costs (see strategies in Chapter 26).
- (2) Support families to obtain the required resources to mitigate the impacts of poverty and financial stress on their child’s education.
- (3) Ensure families from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds are connected to the school, actively participate in their child’s education and feel a sense of belonging at school.

Access and participation

Socioeconomically disadvantaged students who participate in extracurricular activities have been shown to report higher levels of self-worth than those who

do not participate in such activities (Blomfield & Barber, 2011). [INSERT name of school] continuously monitors all aspects of student access and participation in school activities and supplementary instruction and ensures that access and participation are not dependent on a student's ability to afford these activities. [INSERT name of school] supports students' participation in a full education in a respectful and private manner. Where supplementary materials or instruction are provided, it is done so discretely with the informed consent of the student.

The following strategies will be employed to ensure all students are not disadvantaged or cannot partake in an activity or school expectation due to an inability to pay:

Camps, incursions and excursions

[INSERT name of school] to document school-specific strategies here to promote all students' right to full access and participation in camps, incursions and excursions.

Access to all required learning materials, including information technologies

[INSERT name of school] to document school-specific strategies here to promote full access to all required learning materials and information technologies.

School uniform

[INSERT name of school] to document school-specific strategies here to support socioeconomically disadvantaged students' access to a full school uniform.

School fundraisers

[INSERT name of school] to document school-specific strategies here to limit the (1) number and/or (2) impact of school fundraising activities on families who are experiencing financial hardship.

Links with national charitable organisations that support educational equity for socioeconomically disadvantaged students*

Australia:

- Australian Indigenous Education Foundation: <http://www.aief.com.au>
- Clontarf Foundation: <https://clontarf.org.au>
- Foodbank: <https://www.foodbank.org.au>
- Stars Foundation: <https://starsfoundation.org.au>
- The Smith Family: <https://www.thesmithfamily.com.au>

International:

- Global Coalition to End Child Poverty: <http://www.endchildhoodpoverty.org/>
- UNICEF and Sustainable Development Goals: <https://www.unicef.org/sdgs>

*This list is not exhaustive, and many other foundations and charities exist that may support the unique needs of socioeconomically disadvantaged students in your school.

Links with local charitable organisations that support educational equity for socioeconomically disadvantaged students in your community

[INSERT name of school] to list local resources here. Useful local resources may be found through your local council's youth services, community hubs or information centres and local voluntary organisations, ensuring that the appropriate Working With Children checks have been completed.

Rating of evidence base



Figure 31.1. Educational Equity for Students from Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Backgrounds Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. The evidence base is mostly Government and Non-Government Organisations' (NGO) reports. Whilst useful, there is a need to increase the quality of the evidence base through more independent, peer-reviewed studies. To implement the policy requires time and commitment from all members of the school community. There is good potential for impact; however, this is reliant on leadership, shared vision and a whole school approach to enact this policy. The creation of collaborative school and community partnerships with a shared aim to improve student outcomes is needed.

Authorship

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[INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Further reading

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Expert consultation

Consultation with academic, cultural and content experts may be required to enact the policy. A scoping review of student data, particularly an evaluation of the extent to which student performance is impacted by levels of advantage and disadvantage would be useful in informing the need for this policy. Similarly, student or family input and specific school-level requirements would ensure the policy is relevant and appropriate to the school setting and community. Consultation with teachers, the school psychologist and other wellbeing teams, and the school bursar and “front office” staff in the school would assist in the development of the policy to suit the school’s individual needs and context.

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32 Using research evidence to improve practice

*Mark Rickinson, Lucas Walsh, Mandy Salisbury,
Joanne Gleeson, and Connie Cirkony*

How to use this policy

There are growing expectations internationally that schools and school systems will use research evidence to underpin and inform their improvement efforts (Australian Productivity Commission, 2016; British Educational Research Association [BERA], 2014; Cain, 2019; Nelson & Campbell, 2019; Tripney et al., 2018). However, using research evidence in practice is neither simple nor straightforward, and it can be unclear what using research involves and how to do it well.

This *using research evidence* policy example aims to clarify the meaning, explain the rationale, and describe the practical implementation of research use in schools. It can be used:

- to articulate your overall approach to developing as a research-engaged school;
- to signal your current priorities, practices, and principles around using research;
- to show how research use connects with other areas of your work such as teaching, learning, and staff development; and
- to review progress towards, and identify future options for, strengthening research use within your school.

This policy example is intentionally broad and school policy creators are encouraged to delete and build upon the suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] Using research evidence to improve practice

Rationale

A *research-engaged school* has been characterised as one that places research “at the heart of the school, its outlook, systems and activity”

(Handscomb & MacBeath, 2003, p. 4). Central to this concept is the idea of teachers and leaders using research to make genuine and long-lasting improvements (Cain, 2019). This is about educational practice being *informed* by (not based on) research evidence and so involves educators combining their “professional expertise with the best external evidence from research to improve the quality of practice” (Sharples, 2013, p. 7).

The promotion of research use in schools reflects increased awareness internationally that “research-rich school and college environments are the hallmark of high performing education systems” (BERA, 2014, p. 6). Within Australian education, as in other countries, there have been growing calls for the development of an evidence-based approach and a research-rich teaching profession (Australian Productivity Commission, 2016; White et al., 2018).

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline our approach to using research evidence to drive improvement across the school. It seeks to foster *thoughtful* engagement with and implementation of *appropriate* research evidence (Rickinson et al., 2020).

Scope

This policy applies to all school staff – teachers, middle leaders, senior leaders, support staff – particularly those with responsibilities relating to issues such as teaching and learning, staff development, research, and data. It is whole school in scope and applies to all aspects of the school as a learning organisation.

[INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

The use of research evidence at [INSERT name of school] is reflected in the commitments we make, the practices we follow, and the supports we provide.

By *research evidence*, we mean evidence generated through systematic studies undertaken by universities or research organisations and reported in books, reports, articles, research summaries, training courses, or events (Nelson, et al., 2017). By *research-informed practice*, we mean practice that is informed by research evidence alongside other forms of evidence such as educators’ professional knowledge (Brown, 2018). By *use*, we mean the process of actively engaging with and drawing on research evidence to inform, change, and improve practice (Coldwell et al., 2017). By *thoughtful use*, we mean use that involves critical engagement with the evidence, shared deliberation about its meaning, and careful integration of aspects of the evidence within practice (Rickinson et al., 2020).

Commitments

[INSERT name of school] is committed to using research evidence and research-informed practice to improve outcomes for all students, especially those who are socially disadvantaged (Education Endowment Foundation [EEF], 2019).

[INSERT name of school] is committed to the use of research evidence and research-informed practice being a feature of decision-making across all levels of the school (Brown & Greany, 2018; Cain, 2019).

[INSERT name of school] is committed to developing and promoting research-informed teaching throughout all areas and levels of the school (Cain, 2019; Stoll et al., 2018).

[INSERT name of school] is committed to engaging with and implementing research evidence thoughtfully and to using research evidence that is rigorous and appropriate for our context (Cain, 2019; Rickinson et al., 2020).

[INSERT name of school] is committed to supporting and developing not only staff skillsets to understand research but also staff mindsets to be open to its meaning (Earl & Timperley, 2009; Rickinson et al., 2020).

[INSERT name of school] is committed to supporting and enabling staff to work collaboratively to make sense of research and determine how to use it in context (Earl, 2015; Stoll et al., 2018).

[INSERT name of school] is committed to supporting and developing research use through its leadership and vision, culture and ethos, and structures and resources (Cain, 2019; Stoll et al., 2018).

Practices

At [INSERT name of school], we take seriously the need to identify research evidence that is rigorous and appropriate for our context and to engage with and implement that evidence thoughtfully (Cain, 2019; Rickinson et al., 2020).

At [INSERT name of school], we use research evidence and research-informed practice to better understand our students and our community and how we can meet their needs (Cain, 2019; Penuel et al., 2016).

At [INSERT name of school], we draw on and use research evidence and research-informed practice as part of planning, delivering, and evaluating our teaching, learning, and assessment (Cain, 2019; Stoll et al., 2018).

At [INSERT name of school], we consider research evidence and research-informed practice when we are planning new initiatives, scaling up pilot initiatives, and assessing existing initiatives (Cain, 2019; Penuel et al., 2016).

At [INSERT name of school], we seek out research evidence and research-informed practice when we are faced with a significant new challenge or a significant new opportunity (Cain, 2019; Penuel et al., 2016).

At [INSERT name of school], we engage with and discuss research evidence and research-informed practice within our senior leadership team and school council/governing body (EEF, 2019; Stoll et al., 2018).

At [INSERT name of school], we engage with and discuss research evidence and research-informed practice within our staff teams and professional learning communities (Cain, 2019; Stoll et al., 2018).

At [INSERT name of school], we consider research evidence and research-informed practice when we are designing and providing professional learning opportunities within the school (Penuel et al., 2016; Stoll et al., 2018).

At [INSERT name of school], we discuss and develop research evidence and research-informed practice in collaboration with external research organisations and networks and other schools (Cain, 2019; Stoll et al., 2018).

At [INSERT name of school], we draw on and refer to relevant research evidence in our communications and interactions with parents and the wider community (EEF, 2019; Stoll et al., 2018).

Supports

Senior leaders at [INSERT name of school] promote and model the use of research evidence through the strategic vision of the school and their own actions formally and informally (Cain, 2019; Stoll et al., 2018).

The leadership team at [INSERT name of school] ensures that there are dedicated resources (time, funding, space, etc.) to support research engagement within and across the school (Cain, 2019; Stoll et al., 2018).

Middle leaders at [INSERT name of school] support other staff in being able to access, evaluate, understand, and use research evidence and research-informed practice (Cain, 2019; Stoll et al., 2018).

The staff of [INSERT name of school] includes a designated research champion to coordinate efforts and support engagement with and use of research across the school (Cain, 2019; Stoll et al., 2018).

Staff at [INSERT name of school] are supported to be able to access research evidence through provisions such as database access, publication subscription, newsletter summaries, and invited speakers (Cain, 2019; Stoll et al., 2018).

Staff at [INSERT name of school] are encouraged to develop as research-informed practitioners through professional learning, performance development, postgraduate study, and recruitment, induction, and promotion (Cain, 2019; Stoll et al., 2018).

The leadership team at [INSERT name of school] supports connections and partnerships with external research organisations, brokers and networks, and other research-engaged schools (Cain, 2019; Stoll et al., 2018).

Rating of evidence base



Figure 32.1. Using Research Evidence to Improve Practice Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. The evidence base on the use of research evidence in education is still developing. Empirical understandings are well developed for some topics but still emerging for others. There have been numerous studies on whether and how teachers and leaders access and use research and what enables and impedes them to do so. Studies of the impact of research use, however, have been fewer in number. The evidence base on the impact of research use on classroom practice and student learning outcomes is not well developed. As others have described: there is “limited but growing evidence” (Cain, 2019, p. 6) and “little evaluation of the impact” (Tripney et al., 2018, p. 9). Work that has been done, though, suggests benefits in terms of teacher skills and confidence (Bell et al., 2010), school and system performance (Mincu, 2015), and student attainment (Rose et al., 2017). The developing nature of the evidence base on research use in schools means that the evidence for generalisability is moderate. While studies of the nature and extent of research use and enablers and barriers have been undertaken with samples including different kinds of schools and educators, the efficacy of evidence use interventions across different school contexts is not yet well established. Increasing and improving the use of research evidence in schools takes commitment, time, and support. Research use is not a quick add on but rather needs to be integral to the culture and the core work of the school. It is about professional learning, not information transfer. Its implementation, therefore, needs to be taken seriously.

Authorship

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 Dr Joanne Gleeson, Faculty of Education, Monash University
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 [INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

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Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Further reading

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Expert consultation

Studies of research-engaged schools have shown that promoting the use of research within the school can be helped by developing meaningful links with researchers, research organisations, research brokers and research networks

beyond the school (e.g., Stoll et al., 2018; Tripney et al., 2018). Exploring opportunities for input from, and partnerships with, universities, professional associations, research brokers (e.g., Evidence for Learning) and professional learning providers may well be helpful for the development and implementation of a school-level policy on research use.

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33 Declaring a climate emergency

Alan Reid

How to use this policy

In October 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published a landmark *Special Report on Climate Change*. The report warns that 2030 is humanity's deadline to limit catastrophic climate change around the planet. During the 2020s, teachers and learners are expected to play their part in responding to this global declaration of a *climate emergency*, with schools being tasked with accelerating the adoption of “wide-scale behaviour changes consistent with adapting to and limiting global warming” (IPCC, 2018, §D5.6).

Declaring a climate emergency is a concrete indication of a school’s willingness to commit to telling the truth about the reality of climate breakdown. An associated policy should be used to bring the school community together, drawing on the energy, ideas, and capacities of the school community, even though the policy is likely to be demanding and far-reaching.

A school’s policy on the climate emergency can be easily informed by international, publicly available scientific data, and political and civic initiatives around climate breakdown. School policy creators are encouraged to edit, delete, and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school’s capacity and commitment to respond to the climate emergency and to use the recommended sources and readings to develop action plans and processes that align with their policy.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] Climate emergency policy

Rationale

Declaring a climate emergency is a concrete step for the school and its community to contribute to ongoing local, national, and international work undertaken since 1992, addressing the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 1992).

Progress is reviewed each year at the Conference of the Parties (COP) Climate Change meetings. However, the lack of significant political leadership and coordinated international progress aligned to the Paris Accord (UNESCO, 2015; UNFCCC, 2015) coupled with frustration at societal inaction (Drews & van den Bergh, 2016; Drummond et al., 2018; Gifford, 2011; Hamilton & Kasser, 2009) has led to civil society level responses such as school strikes for climate (e.g. Thunberg, 2019; UNICEF, 2012) and wider calls for action in communities, particularly when national political leadership is found wanting (Reid, 2019; UNESCO, 2019).

For schools and other educational institutions, refocusing education policy and practice to address this shortfall is both a popular and effective response (Dillon, 2019; Feinstein & Mach, 2020; Hestres, 2018; Monroe et al., 2019; Ogunbode et al., 2020). Their calls to action reiterate the charge that K-12, further/vocational, and higher education systems, government, media, civil society, business, and public sectors have direct responsibilities for mitigating climate disruption through climate-related education, training, public awareness, communication, and behaviour change (Armstrong et al., 2018; IPCC, 2018; Kagawa & Selby, 2010; Ma et al., 2019; NRC, 2010; UNESCO & UNFCCC, 2016; Whitmarsh et al., 2010).

Declaring a climate emergency contributes to the UN's Sustainable Development Goal [SDG] 13, "Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts" (UN, 2020). If it is to be achieved by 2030, it requires policy that commits schools to help address SDG Target 13.3: "Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning" (UN, 2020).

Those preparing for and declaring a climate emergency policy network with other schools and education leaders and providers addressing these goals and targets can learn from them. Research and evaluation have also helped identify and share good practices and tackle challenges, with the policy drawing on high-quality studies and evidence (for example, Otto et al., 2020; UNESCO, 2016; Wibeck, 2014).

Simple actions aligned with this policy include following #schoolCED on social media and completing *Climate Change Certification as a Lead Teacher for Climate Change Education*, via <https://unccelearn.org/educcate/>.

Purpose

A meaningful climate emergency declaration is a serious policy commitment. It entails undertaking responsible and responsive climate action and measurable systemic change in the school and its community. The purpose of committing to these changes is to contribute to wider and deeper initiatives designed to ensure a sustainable future for all, be that within the current school community, the next generation, or for those who have left the school.

Scope

This policy applies to present students, teachers, staff, school leaders, and parents of [INSERT name of school]. A *whole-of-institution* approach to the climate emergency is overseen by all members of the school community and is headed by a member of the senior leadership team in collaboration with key stakeholders (e.g., representatives of the student body, the budget team, and the local community).

This policy statement includes a timescale for measurable goals and commits a member of the senior leadership team to lead on auditing. It also commits the school to working towards building a climate emergency-related brief into all leadership roles in management, subjects, community, business decisions, and building stock, so the policy remains at the heart of priorities and decision-making at [INSERT name of school].

Policy statement

[INSERT name of school]

- Acknowledges the rigour and seriousness of the scientific data (e.g., IPCC reports on global warming and UN reports on loss of biodiversity and the consequences of economic growth associated with the climate crisis).
- Accepts the urgency of addressing climate breakdown in civil society, including in schools and their communities.
- Recognises that our purpose as educators, of building bright futures for our children, is severely threatened, unless the climate emergency is tackled.

In declaring a climate emergency at [INSERT name of school], we will:

- a Create a Citizen's Assembly from all sectors of the school and its community to generate ideas and create broad-based momentum for acting on the declaration.
- b Call on local, state, and/or national government, and/or regulatory or accreditation bodies to provide the necessary policy changes and funding available.
- c Mobilise more resources for action-oriented climate change education and skills creation in the school (e.g. by changing budget priorities, working with local and indigenous knowledge holders).
- d Commit to being carbon neutral by 2030 and carbon safe by 2050 at the very latest (e.g., by replacing fossil fuels and being accountable for this to the local community).
- e Increase the delivery of environmental and sustainability education across curriculum, campus, and community outreach programs (e.g., by undertaking a curriculum audit to ensure its alignment with the declaration,

operating with an ethical procurement framework to ensure suppliers reduce their carbon footprint, and building partnerships with community groups and stakeholders also on this journey).

At [INSERT name of school], we will:

- 1 Set up a climate emergency committee reporting to the governing body by [INSERT date].
- 2 Task the climate emergency committee with revisiting our core vision and values to ensure the wellbeing of people and planet are at the heart of what the school is seeking to achieve by [INSERT date].
- 3 Require the climate emergency committee to audit our commitments in energy, physical resources and waste streams, transport, biodiversity, food and packaging, sustainable living, and protecting wildlife and the living planet by [INSERT date].
- 4 Ensure our curriculum, extracurricular activities, and student support foster the skills, knowledge, and attitudes to help create resilient individuals and communities and a more environmentally sustainable world by [INSERT date].
- 5 Align our policies to prioritise working towards a zero-carbon future by [INSERT date].
- 6 Inspire change in our community and the wider world to create resilient, hopeful communities in the face of the climate emergency by [INSERT date].

Authorship

Associate Professor Alan Reid, Monash University
[INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Rating of evidence base



Figure 33.1. Declaring a Climate Emergency Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. The key body of evidence for the topic is the consensus established by the experts at the IPCC (2018), reviewing international data on the climate emergency (Ogunbode et al., 2020; UNFCCC, 1992; 2015). Ignoring the evidence for the climate emergency and the international consensus is untenable in the school sector; doing so can contribute to eco-anxiety (American Psychological Association Task Force on the Interface Between Psychology and Global Climate Change, 2009a; 2009b; Feinstein & Mach, 2020). The climate emergency affects everyone and can be addressed by all schools (Anderson, 2010; European Parliament, 2019). Preparing to vote on the initial declaration should be relatively easy to achieve. Follow-up on the declaration typically requires systemic changes, relying on strategic action, and additional resources and funds to embed the declaration in the common practices of a school (CRED, 2009; CEE, UNFCCC & UNESCO, 2017). At a school level, this policy route is a concrete way of signalling commitment to taking action about the climate emergency. It can and should trigger profound changes to curriculum, campus, and community (Anderson, 2010; Monroe et al., 2019; Reid, 2019).

Further reading

- Armstrong, A., Krasny, M., & Schuldt, J. (2018). *Communicating climate change: A guide for educators*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctv941wjn>
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- Maslin, M. (2014). *Climate change: A very short introduction*. 3rd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
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United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] & United Nations Framework Committee on Climate Change [UNFCCC]. (2016). Action for Climate Empowerment: Guidelines for accelerating solutions through education, training and public awareness. Paris: UNESCO and UNFCCC. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/action_for_climate_empowerment_guidelines.pdf

Recommended reading

The following organisations and resources provide examples of policy, templates, and documents to support you in declaring a climate emergency:

B Lab UK. (2020). *How to declare a climate emergency & take climate action: A playbook for business*. London: B Lab UK. <https://pardot.bcorporation.net/l/39792/2RUI3Wr/99qrgv>

Climate Change Teacher Academy. (2020). *It starts with you: Better climate education = more climate action*. *eduCCAtGlobal*. <https://www.educcateglobal.org>

Climate Emergency Declaration and Mobilisation. (2020). *Call to declare a climate emergency*. Climate Emergency Declaration. <https://climateemergencydeclaration.org/>

Council Action in the Climate Emergency. (2020). *Council and community action in the climate emergency*. CACE. <https://www.caceonline.org>

Darebin Council. (2018). Darebin climate emergency plan: Darebin climate emergency plan 2017–2022 summary. City of Darebin. <http://www.darebin.vic.gov.au/-/media/cityofdarebin/Files/Darebin-Living/CaringfortheEnvironment/EnergyandClimate/ClimateChange/DarebinClimateEmergencyPlanSummary-Dec-2018.ashx?la=en>

Declare a Climate Emergency. (2019). Campaign guide for a climate emergency declaration. Declare a Climate Emergency. <https://www.climateemergency.uk/blog/campaign-guide-for-a-climate-emergency-declaration/>

Extinction Rebellion. (2020). *XR educators*. Learning Rebellion. <https://learningrebellion.earth>

Global Action Plan. (2019). *Climate chaos response toolkit*. Global Action Plan. <https://www.globalactionplan.org.uk/news/climate-chaos-response-toolkit-for-schools-is-launched>

National Education Union. (2019). *How to declare a climate emergency at your school or college*. National Education Union. <https://neu.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-12/Declare%20a%20Climate%20Emergency%20At%20Your%20School.pdf>

Sutton, P. (2017). Local-first implementation: Why a strong climate declaration is needed – At the local government level – And what it can do. RSTI. http://www.green-innovations.asn.au/RSTI/Local-first-implementation_local-govt.pdf

The SDG Accord. (2020). *Global universities and colleges climate letter*. The SDG Accord. <https://www.sdgaccord.org/climateletter>

Teach the Future. (2020). *Climate emergency education act*. Teach the Future. <https://www.teachthefuture.uk>

Expert consultation

Depending on your circumstances, you may need to consult with key personnel from the following in developing and enacting the policy: your school's leadership team, site staff, student council, local council, education authorities, department/ministry, governing body, funder, network, union, bursar, local environmental bodies, etc.

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- Centre for Environment Education [CEE], United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC], & United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO]. (2017). *Good practice in action for climate empowerment: A compilation and analysis of case studies*. <http://www.ceeindia.org/cee/Good-Practice-in-Action-for-Climate-Empowerment-A-compilation-and-analysis-of-case-studies.htm>
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34 Entrepreneurial learning

Bronwyn Hinz

How to use this policy

This entrepreneurial learning policy can be used by schools, and groups within schools such as student councils, to guide, support and communicate their entrepreneurial learning approach. This policy can complement or extend policies on student voice and agency, which underpin entrepreneurial learning. The policy provides a broad and flexible framework to guide the actions of all staff and students involved and communicates the rationale and expectations of entrepreneurial learning to participants, their families and the broader school community.

Best practice entrepreneurial learning involves students and teachers co-designing teaching and learning approaches, ideally *led* by students who identify problems or opportunities in their school or community (global or local) and then develop, prototype, test and refine solutions, products or services that respond to these gaps in a way that creates authentic value (real benefit) for others. In doing so, they develop skills and capabilities, apply knowledge and form connections, which together prepares them to pursue and achieve success in school and especially in the world beyond school.

Examples of entrepreneurial learning approaches used in schools include:

- Redesigning and leading the end of year activity week with more meaningful activities that support local and global communities and develop students' skills
- Redesigning the elective program, using evidence from student proposals and surveys
- Reimagining the school's image by researching, hosting events and making a showcase video
- Creating sculpture parks, community markets and outdoor learning spaces
- Building a website to showcase and sell students' art and design
- Starting small businesses and inventing new products

This policy example is intentionally broad and school policy creators are encouraged to delete and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] Entrepreneurial learning policy

Rationale

Entrepreneurial learning, sometimes referred to as entrepreneurial education, is an emerging way of responding to the growing need to enhance student capabilities to cultivate and apply knowledge in sophisticated ways, to deepen student engagement and to cultivate the mindsets and critical capabilities – such as critical thinking, creativity and collaboration – needed to succeed in school and the dynamic and uncertain future that awaits students (Lackéus, 2015; Zhao, 2012). It has been used in primary and secondary schools, technical colleges and universities around the world in a dizzying array of contexts and forms (Department of Education, 2018; Van Dijk & Mensch, 2015; European Commission, EACEA & Eurydice 2016; Hass, 2016; Lackéus, 2015). In schools, it has been used to engage at-risk students and to extend high-performing students. It has also been used across the school as a strategy to personalise education and enable students to find or pursue their passions and talents, to build confidence and resilience, to strengthen learning and social engagement and to make connections between *schoolwork* and the *real world* and apply this to solve real issues and/or create a positive difference (create value) for others (Anderson et al., 2017).

Entrepreneurial learning is a promising strategy for responding to the dual challenges of

- 1 Cultivating the capabilities and mindsets students need to succeed in school and especially beyond school
- 2 Deepening student agency and engagement in their learning (Anderson et al., 2017; Lackéus, 2015)

Such an approach is important, with research suggesting that up to 40 percent of students are disengaged from their learning and not reaching their full educational potential (Angus et al., 2013). It is also important as growing research indicates that mastery of content knowledge and test-taking skills are no longer enough to succeed in the world of work (Zhao, 2012).

The need for advanced problem-solving skills, creative and critical thinking and collaboration and communication skills is high and continues to grow (Foundation for Young Australians, 2016; OECD, 2019; World Economic Forum, 2016).

The evidence base

The variety of ways in which entrepreneurial learning has been developed and implemented in different educational settings and the accompanying diversity in research on these initiatives (e.g., study size, scope, questions, methods, measurements, subject area, student age, duration, etc.) makes it difficult to generalise or speak with authority on its impacts. The latest research on entrepreneurship education, which has many parallels with entrepreneurial learning, emphasises that assessment “cannot take a one size fits all approach” (Morselli, 2019, p. 17). However, there is a growing evidence base, largely captured in a review of the literature by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (Lackeus, 2015), indicating multiple educational benefits:

- Improved enjoyment of school and stronger connections to peers and teachers (Anderson et al., 2017; Huber et al., 2012)
- Improved capabilities, such as creativity, critical thinking, collaboration and communication (Anderson et al., 2017; Kruger, 2015)
- Improved skills in managing and adapting to change, including persisting in the face of challenges (Anderson et al., 2017; Mobert & Vestergard, 2013)
- Deeper student voice and agency, contributing to stronger learning engagement (Anderson et al., 2017).

Purpose

[INSERT name of school] is committed to providing all students with meaningful opportunities to identify and develop their passions and talents and to deepen and apply knowledge and skills, so that they can flourish in school, in their chosen careers and as full members of society. In doing so, we seek to grow entrepreneurial mindsets, in which our students “are characterised by a curiosity to seek out and identify or solve problems, which they see as opportunities to apply their talents, creativity and collaborative skills, rather than dead-ends” (Anderson et al., 2017, p.7). The purpose of this policy is to enable students to be *creators, innovators and doers* of things that bring tangible benefits to others, locally and globally.

Scope

The policy applies to students, teachers, leaders and school community members engaged in entrepreneurial learning initiatives at [INSERT name of school].

Policy statement

Entrepreneurial learning extends [INSERT name of school]’s strong commitment to student voice and student voice and agency, which have been found to contribute to a positive cycle of learning and enhanced learning outcomes

(Australian Department of Education and Training, 2018; Johnston, 2004; Victorian Department of Education and Training, 2018).

Roles and responsibilities

- School leaders and teachers will:
 - a Extend student voice and agency by creating opportunities for students to provide meaningful feedback on their learning, school governance and culture and by taking students' feedback onboard
 - b Create multiple and diverse opportunities for students and teachers to learn with each other. This may include allowing student and teachers time together and provide funding to facilitate activities and professional development to effectively plan and collaborate
 - c Provide a supporting role in which they encourage and prompt the students to identify, apply, persist, test or refine their entrepreneurial actions
 - d Seek or support strategic partnerships and collaborations with other schools and local organisations, businesses and individuals in pursuit of students' entrepreneurial learning actions
 - e Cultivate buy-in from families and the wider school community by promoting the benefits of entrepreneurial learning, supported risk-taking and innovation as opportunities to apply and extend knowledge, skills and talents
- Students will:
 - a Seek out opportunities to make a real, positive difference in their communities – such as re-inventing a work-experience program, addressing local pollution or improving student wellbeing
 - b Model an entrepreneurial mindset, including perseverance in new or challenging situations
 - c Reach out to peers, teachers, family and community for encouragement and feedback as they go
- Everyone will:
 - a Model mutual respect and the values/philosophy of **[INSERT name of school]**

Rating of evidence base



Figure 34.1. Entrepreneurial Learning and Student-driven Learning Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. The various ways that entrepreneurial learning has been developed and implemented in different educational settings and the accompanying diversity in research on these initiatives (study size, scope, questions, methods, measurements, subject area, student age, duration etc) makes it difficult to generalise or speak with authority on its impacts. As argued by Morselli (2019, p. 17), this means that a “one size fits all” approach to the assessment of entrepreneurial learning is inappropriate. A mixed-methods study by Anderson et al. (2017) involving 19 schools and 106 secondary school students indicates multiple positive impacts (from high to weak) on learning engagement, learning outcomes, connectedness with peers and teachers, capabilities (creativity, critical thinking, collaboration and communication skills) and mindsets (persistence, openness), and even school culture and inclusion. The variety of forms that entrepreneurial learning may assume in different subjects (learning areas), contexts and student groups and the variety of methods and study sizes means that the evidence base is too small and mixed to generalise about the impact in different settings and for different student cohorts. Nonetheless, it appears promising, with studies in tertiary education and industry also finding entrepreneurial education contributes to innovation and perseverance (e.g., Deakins & Bensemann, 2018). Moreover, students as young as 11 years of age have been found to have the necessary self-efficacy for entrepreneurial education (Hass, 2016), and it has been reported to have been used successfully at all levels of school and post-school education (European Commission, EACEA and Eurydice (2016); Lackéus, 2015; Ndou et al., 2018). Entrepreneurial learning is co-created by students and teachers within their context to respond to identified needs and opportunities and is highly adaptable and flexible to different contexts, settings, timeframes and starting points. It can progressively be introduced and embedded into a school’s existing practices and policies. Entrepreneurial learning has been found to contribute to:

- Improved enjoyment of school and stronger connections to peers and teachers, including influencing students decisions to remain in school instead of discontinuing their education (Anderson et al., 2017; Huber et al., 2012)
- Improved capabilities, such as creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, including overcoming profound shyness (Anderson et al., 2017; Kruger, 2015)
- Improved skills in managing and adapting to change, including persisting in the face of challenges such as persisting with difficult mathematics exercises (Anderson et al., 2017; Moberg & Vestergaard, 2013)
- Deeper student voice and agency, contributing to stronger learning engagement (Anderson et al., 2017)

Authorship

Dr Bronwyn Hinz

[INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

Lackéus, M. (2015). *Entrepreneurship in education: What, why, when and how? Entrepreneurship background paper*. Paris: Local Economic and Employment Development Division of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Victorian Department of Education and Training. (2018) *Amplify: Student voice practice guide*. Melbourne: Government of Victoria.

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Further reading and viewing

Hinz, B. (2019). *From voice to agency to entrepreneurial learning: The international evidence base and the local “coal face”*. Webinar commissioned and hosted by the Australian Curriculum Studies Association. <http://www.acsa.edu.au>

MacMillan, J. (2015). *Social enterprise in education program: Formal evaluation*. Scotland: Social Enterprise Academy.

Moberg, K., Vestergaard, L., Redford, D., Cooney, T., Singer, S., Sailer, K., & Filip, D. (2014). *How to assess and evaluate the influence of entrepreneurship*

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- Victorian Department of Education and Training. (2018). *Amplify: Student voice practice guide.* Melbourne: Government of Victoria.

Expert consultation

We suggest you consult with your students, asking them what opportunities or challenges in the school or their communities they would like to address and allowing them to lead the way with appropriate support from the school.

We also suggest you reach out to staff and students to identify opportunities to tap into local expertise within the school and the local community that can be brought into or used to support student-led entrepreneurial actions and developments. Examples include local indigenous elders, local artists and craftspeople, park rangers, galleries and businesses.

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35 Screening and assessment of learning policy

Kate Jacobs and Karen Starkiss

How to use this policy

Screening and assessment of student learning enables data-driven decisions regarding teaching and learning practices, allocation of resources, and referral of students for further assessment and intervention. This policy is intended to sit within a response to intervention (RTI) framework and should be created through consultation with general and specialist teaching staff, as well as relevant specialist support staff, such as speech-language pathologists and educational and developmental psychologists. Screening and assessment practices should be embedded school-wide and conducted multiple times throughout the school year. This policy is intentionally broad and school policy creators are encouraged to delete and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] Screening and assessment of learning policy

Rationale

All students are entitled to have access to a broad, balanced, and relevant curriculum that is differentiated to meet their individual needs and that affords them the opportunity to achieve their personal potential. Screening and assessment practices enable teachers and students to find out what the student knows and can do and how they can take their next steps in learning (Hattie, 2009). Assessment is inextricable from teaching; the quality of one is dependent on the quality of the other.

Systematic screening and assessment of learning aids teaching and learning practices, enables schools to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum, and acknowledges that individual students can have unique learning needs that, when met, enable them to reach their full potential and be included in the school community. This includes students with additional needs and disorders who require adjustments and additional support, as well as students who require extension and advancement. Further, systematic screening and assessment

allows for early identification of students at risk of below-expected achievement who require access to early intervention programs with strong evidence for producing reliable gains in academic attainment (e.g., Wanzek et al., 2018).

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the shared responsibility of the school community including school leadership, teaching staff, specialist support staff, and students in the systematic and regular process of screening and assessment of learning in order to drive teaching and learning practices, student progress, allocation of resources, and decisions regarding referrals for further assessment and intervention.

Scope

This policy applies to school leadership, teaching staff, and specialist staff at [INSERT name of school]. In addition, it encompasses students and parents in the process of assessment and outcomes.

[INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

Universal screening and assessment practices are a component of response to intervention (RTI), which involves a strategic approach to providing tiered evidence-based strategies for all students (Fletcher & Vaughn, 2009; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). Research supports the use of intensified academic interventions for students screened as at-risk for academic difficulties in reading (e.g., Gersten, et al., 2020; Wanzek et al., 2016), writing (e.g., Graham & Perin, 2007), and maths (e.g., Fuchs et al., 2005).

The screening and assessment practices at [INSERT name of school] sit within an RTI framework and therefore are closely linked to whole-class interventions (Tier 1) and highlight students who require small group intervention (Tier 2) and those who need more specialist diagnostic assessments and intensive individualised educational support (Tier 3).

School management

Appropriate training and development of school staff provides the foundation for the implementation of systematic and effective screening and assessment practices that lead to improved student outcomes (Harlen, 2004). [INSERT name of school] provides school staff with appropriate professional development that assists staff to understand what they are screening or assessing; why they are screening or assessing; how to administer, score, and interpret the screening and/or assessment test; and how to make data-driven instructional

decisions. [INSERT name of school] provides this professional development in the following ways: [adapt and adjust the following as needed]

- Identifies staff members to lead professional development activities and support individual staff
- Provides teachers and educational support staff with regular training and development in screening and assessment practices, new assessment tests, and interpretation and use of screening and assessment data
- Plans a yearly cycle of professional development to include training on assessment and interpretation of data
- Allocates additional staff members to support classrooms to carry out individual assessments as required
- Allocates time within the school timetable for staff to conduct moderation within year levels or subject areas

[INSERT name of school] employs a coaching approach to screening and assessment within an RTI framework (March et al., 2016; Glover, 2017) and identifies school staff who can act as coaches to support staff in a number of ways including: [adapt and adjust the following as needed]

- Interpreting screening and assessment data
- Using data to plan teaching and learning activities
- Understanding the triggers for additional intervention and/or assessment of individual students

[INSERT name of school] ensures space within the professional development program for teachers and leaders to develop and regularly revisit assessment policy and practice.

Selection of screening and assessment tools

[INSERT name of school] uses a range of assessment practices throughout the school year in order to support teaching and learning and to promote student achievement. These are highlighted on the *Whole-School Screening and Assessment Schedule* and include:

- **Universal screening** is introduced at the start of the school year to identify students who are at risk of learning difficulties despite having been provided with a scientific, evidence-based general education. Screening measures are easily implemented, scored, and interpreted by class teachers or subject/year leaders and are used on a wide scale (Boardman & Vaughn, 2007; Jenkins et al., 2007). It establishes a baseline for student learning at both the group and individual level; however, it should be formative so as to inform teaching.

- **Assessment for learning (Formative)** assesses knowledge, skills, and understanding and identifies gaps and misconceptions. It identifies if students are struggling, have consolidated learning, are ready to progress, or are working at greater depth. It is ongoing, allowing teachers to understand student performance on a continuing basis, and it actively informs pedagogy by directly impacting planning, strategies employed, teaching materials, feedback to students on progress towards targets, and the setting of class and individual student targets going forward (Clark, 2012; Lee et al., 2020).
- **Assessment of learning (Summative)** occurs at set times during the school year. It allows for evaluation of learning and the impact of teaching at the end of a period of time, as well as providing evidence of achievement against the objectives of the curriculum (Kennedy et al., 2008).
- **Assessment as learning (Diagnostic)** develops and supports students' metacognitive skills. It supports students becoming lifelong learners by enabling them to make sense of information, relate it to prior knowledge, and use it for new learning. Students develop a sense of ownership and efficacy when they use teacher, peer, and self-assessment feedback to make adjustments, improvements, and changes to what they understand (Schunk, 1996).
- **Teacher diagnostic assessment** is carried out by appropriately qualified professionals when screening and assessment practices identify a student with additional needs that requires an in-depth diagnostic assessment to inform intervention (generally occurs at Tier 2).
- **Specialist diagnostic assessment** is carried out by appropriately qualified professionals (such as speech-language pathologists and/or educational and developmental psychologists) when screening and assessment practices identify a student with additional needs that requires an in-depth diagnostic assessment to determine appropriate intervention and diagnostic categories if applicable (generally occurs at Tier 3).

[INSERT name of school] selects screening and assessment tools on the basis of research evidence regarding the predictive ability of future academic outcomes (e.g., Gersten et al., 2012; National Reading Panel et al., 2000; Rose, 2006; Rowe, 2005).

[INSERT name of school] uses selected screening measures consistently for at least a full school year so that school staff can act on the data collected and avoid the consequences associated with changing screening measures during the school year, such as loss of baseline data, the need to retrain school staff, and confusion for staff and students (Hall, 2008).

Recording and reporting of screening and assessment data

[INSERT name of school] has a process for formally recording screening and assessment data so that it can be quickly and easily accessed by relevant staff.

[INSERT name of school] encourages the use of both formal and informal screening and assessment data in teacher plans, feedback, and target setting in students' workbooks, reports to parents, and in individual learning plans.

[INSERT name of school] provides staff with set times within the school calendar to administer, score, and record screening and assessment data.

[INSERT name of school] uses reporting to communicate comprehensive information about student learning and achievement in different forms to a range of audiences for a variety of purposes. Accurate reporting of formative and summative assessment information provides feedback to students, parents, and teachers about what students know and can do, together with recommendations for their future learning. The information is also valuable for school and system-wide decision making and planning. [INSERT name of school] reports information in the following ways: [adapt and adjust the following as needed]

- Twice-yearly reports to parents regarding student progress
- Parent-teacher interviews
- Student-teacher interviews
- Student support group meetings for students identified with additional needs
- Reports to educational authorities, school governance, or councils

Equal opportunities

[INSERT name of school] uses screening and assessment to effectively and systematically identify the individual needs of all students. It supports equal opportunity for all students by enabling students with additional needs and disabilities, students who excel, and students for whom English is an additional language to be provided with a curriculum which meets their needs.

Students with additional needs

When there is an indication that a student's difficulties are impacting on their learning and demonstration of achievement, [INSERT name of school] employs adjusted assessment procedures. We consult with parents and students, as well as internal and external specialists as necessary, to determine the appropriate forms that assessment may take, such as: [adapt and adjust the following as needed]

- Verbal as opposed to written tests
- Provision of a reader or scribe
- Provision of assistive technology
- Additional time
- Reduced output

Assessment moderation

Moderation involves teachers sharing and developing their understanding of what learning looks like by examining examples of different types and quality of students' work and comparing these with formal standards and success criteria. [INSERT name of school] recognises that for moderation to be effective in positively impacting teaching, learning, and student progress, it requires collaborative discussion of student work based on predetermined assessment criteria (Maxwell, 2010). Moderation strengthens other assessment practices by providing a structure and process for teaching teams, teachers, classes, and individual students to develop a shared and deep understanding of learning intentions, success criteria, and the curriculum standards on which assessment is based (Meiers et al., 2007).

[INSERT name of school] allocates time within the school timetable for staff and students to conduct moderations that can occur within the class, within year levels, or within subject areas.

Monitoring and evaluation

[INSERT name of school] will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the screening and assessment policy annually and make changes as necessary from evidence of student progress, discussions within the school community, and new research evidence.

Authorship

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[INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Rating of evidence base



Figure 35.1. Screening and Assessment of Learning Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. The policy is built from a large and established body of work that spans many countries. When the policy is applied as part of a whole-school adoption of RTI, then the impact is strong as students requiring additional intervention, as well as those requiring advancement, are identified early and their needs met. Screening and assessment practices are used with all students, in all types of schools regardless of individual differences such as language, culture, and socioeconomic status. In a whole-school approach to screening and assessment, time and funds are required for training and resourcing. Strong leadership and consistency are also integral to the success of this policy. This policy can promote significant gains in student achievement, behaviour, and wellbeing as it enables the individual learning needs of all students to be identified and met.

Further reading

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36 Strengths-based approaches for assessing student wellbeing

Jennica Paz, Katina Lambros, and Shameeka Lewis

How to use this policy

“Strengths-based approaches for assessing student wellbeing” is a best practice policy that highlights how schools can focus on the assessment of student strengths and assets to build upon core social-emotional competencies that are foundational for educational success. Following a public health perspective for assessing wellbeing, a comprehensive, team-oriented, strengths-based approach should be considered. Ideally, this approach is implemented collaboratively, with input from stakeholders committed to incorporating comprehensive wellbeing indicators in the assessment process. Outcome data should be linked with tiered levels of supports related to positive psychological interventions that boost well-being of all students. The inclusion of standardized assessments of youth strengths provides critical information regarding assets and resiliency factors that should be intentionally incorporated into service planning. This is important, especially for students with or at risk for disabilities or diagnoses stemming from traditional deficit-based approaches assessing risks and symptoms. A strengths-based approach to assessment is necessary for use with Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and youth with long-standing histories of discriminatory referral and assessment practices. Schools can use this policy in conjunction with others, to begin dismantling unjust assessment practices leading to disproportionate representation of BIPOC youth in exclusionary settings and underrepresentation in gifted and accelerated programs. This policy is intentionally broad and school policy creators are encouraged to delete and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school.

Multitiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and population-based models offer ideal frameworks for applying strength-based assessment and linking it to practices that emphasize strengths and wellbeing (Doll et al., 2014; Nickerson & Fishman, 2013). Assessing mental health from multidimensional perspectives aligns well with public health and population-based frameworks of school-based mental health screenings (Dowdy et al., 2010). Strengths-Based Assessment (SBA) has benefits and scientific rationale when grounded in a sound conceptual framework that offers an understanding of the process and factors associated with quality of life outcomes among children and adolescents.

SBA has broad benefits when used to monitor the psychosocial strengths of *all* students (universal services or Tier 1). The future of positive psychology assessment with children in schools – when used as part of a universal assessment model – has the potential to benefit the largest number of students (Paz et al., *in press*). Strengths-focused measures have the greatest utility when used to provide comprehensive information about the optimal psychosocial development of all students. SBA also promotes positive family-school collaboration. Parents have higher rates of meeting attendance and positive satisfaction with services when SBA protocols are utilized within educational programs (Cox, 2006).

The adoption of SBA should be based on: (a) a conceptual framework of positive psychosocial strengths; (b) feasibility and utility as a school-based universal screening measure (reasonable length and availability of self-report); and (c) evidence of compelling psychometric properties, including replicated validity and reliability.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] Strengths-based approaches for assessing student wellbeing

Rationale

For decades, standardized assessments have been traditionally static and focused on a unidimensional understanding of pathology and eligibility. Strengths-Based Assessment (SBA) is a paradigm shift that aims to transform the way we think about and use assessment tools in schools. Educators encounter a range of school problems including academic difficulties, disruptive behavior, peer conflicts, mental health, and school climate challenges, so the need for culturally responsive and SBA is critical for remediation in these areas. Schools are more familiar with academic/achievement assessment and identifying patterns of strengths and weaknesses in performance; assessing strengths in relation to student wellbeing may be less familiar as best practice. An alarming 66% of all students report one or more adverse experiences during their time in school (Gonzalez et al., 2016). Given that nearly 20% of students experience mental health challenges that are identified and treated within school settings (SAMHSA, 2016), the need for early identification and intervention is critical to mitigating escalation and crises.

Broadly, SBA is defined as, “the measurement of internal and external emotional and behavioral competencies that enhance one’s ability to develop relationships, deal with stress, and promote optimal development” (Nickerson, 2007). Positive psychological researchers propel the paradigm shift away from deficit-based assessment by emphasizing the need for integrated mental health classification systems, such as Dual Factor Models (DFM) and Complete Mental Health assessments. Assessing adaptive and deficit indicators, especially with respect to the importance of integrating both spectrums, assists

with early identification of psychological and behavioral strengths and difficulties (Greenspoon & Saklofske, 2001; Suldo & Shaffer, 2008). The need to simultaneously attend to the dialectical and integrative effects of distress and personal strengths has been readily established in recent literature (Moore et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2020). Attending to both positive and negative indicators of mental health and wellbeing show additive value in predicting students' attendance and achievement over time (Dougherty & Sharkey, 2017). Youth thrive and flourish when they develop psychosocial strengths that promote positive, supportive day-to-day interactions with family, teachers, and peers (Furlong et al., 2020). We advocate for a holistic approach that examines strengths in combination rather than in isolation; that is, assessment of the integrative effects of the core components of positive psychosocial development (Lenzi et al., 2015).

Per United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children, it is fundamental that positive developmental frameworks based on the capacity for self-determination and decision-making are used to ensure worldwide human rights for children (Miller et al., 2014). As an ongoing chief public health concern, echoed frequently in the media, systematic procedures for capturing the multifaceted needs and associated strengths of students and families are critical to ensuring positive youth development.

Purpose

School personnel can follow a process for SBA advocacy and implementation to ensure that the recognition and enhancement of strengths are incorporated systematically into school services.

Scope

This policy concerns all school staff as a general procedure and school teams (e.g., problem-solving teams, multidisciplinary teams) that examine climate, behavioral, and academic performance data involved in decision making about school services. Ideally, this policy will apply in all tiers of assessment intervention as an intentional practice that informs resource allocation.

Policy statement

[INSERT name of school] employs the use of Universal Level: Comprehensive Well-Being Screeners.

At [INSERT name of school], our staff:

- (A) Engage in initial and ongoing training to ensure the conceptual framework of positive educational paradigms is understood and utilized school-wide.

- (B) Conduct regular (i.e., biannual) and systematic monitoring of wellbeing to provide appropriately matched MTSS supports and interventions. Screening efforts should be conducted at the start of the academic year and again halfway through the year.
- (C) Use assessment tools with psychometric properties that are generalizable with diverse, cross-national samples of children and adolescents (see further reading section for strengths-focused exemplar assessment models; Paz et al., in press).

[INSERT name of school] uses a strengths-based approach for assessment and measurement models at the targeted and intensive levels to identify individualized assessments of strengths.

Our school incorporates strength-focused measures as part of a targeted assessment (secondary – Tier 2) or individual psychoeducational assessment (tertiary level – Tier 3), which allows students with special needs to have their strengths identified and described in their Individualized Educational Plans (IEP). At our school, we incorporate SBA across a continuum of levels (e.g., parent-student conferences, student success team meetings, psychoeducational evaluations, etc.) to promote a positive preventative model that includes improved affect, attitudes, and beliefs expressed by parents and team members.

Our school recognizes that there are over 150 tools with acceptable psychometric properties that may be incorporated into SBA practices to assess an array of positive attributes (e.g., optimism, resilience, grit, hope, emotional intelligence; Simmons & Lehmann, 2013). Within our school, we measure strength-focused constructs related to psychosocial wellbeing in order to highlight the value of student voice (Halliday, et al., 2019) and gain deeper understanding of life circumstances. In our school, the results yielded from SBA inform intervention recommendations and identify areas of strength to expand upon (Rashid & Ostermann, 2009).

Our school makes decisions as to which measure to use depending on the purpose of assessment. We consider whether measures have established validity for our culturally and linguistically diverse population. In our school we reference best practice guides to support us with navigating measures that serve to enhance the social emotional learning competencies of youth, including the RAND Education Assessment Finder: Measuring Social, Emotional, and Academic Competencies Guide and the Center for Social Emotional Learning (CASEL) Assessment Guide (see links included in the *Further Reading* section at the end of this document).

At [INSERT name of school] we track the assessment-intervention process to assess the longitudinal impact with respect to referrals, tiered levels of support, progress monitoring, eligibility, and disciplinary outcomes. We disaggregate data for various groups (e.g., Dual Language Learners, BIPOC, foster youth, LGBTQIA+ youth) to shed light on patterns of inequities and allow for curricula tailoring and/or resource re-allocation. We continue to

utilize and refine, as necessary, the interventions that produce positive outcomes for students.

At [INSERT name of school] we acknowledge the need for culturally affirming pedagogies and practices, which are essential when highlighting diverse student strengths and resiliency. In our school we understand that it is imperative to maximize the potential of our youth to thrive given the surges of moral and sociopolitical upheaval, publicized school shootings, global pandemics, and unapologetic activism among BIPOC voices. At our school we include correlates of psychosocial strengths specifically informed by cultural and linguistic differences as a way to give voice and agency to historically marginalized students (e.g., Brendtro et al. [2002] provides a culturally-affirming assessment-intervention framework based on Indigenous knowledge of a student's sense of belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity).

For students in our school navigating language fluency and traditional assessment (e.g., determination of how *limited* they are in English), we recognize that this perpetuates a deficit-based stigma regarding youth potential. Instead, our school seeks to transform the rhetoric we use and adopt affirming terminology, such as Dual Language Learners (DLL), which "recognizes learning the heritage language alongside or in sequence with English and validates the heritage language as an asset" (Robinson-Zañartu et al., 2019). At our school we celebrate cultural assets and expertise among students. In our school we aim to understand how different cultural assets contribute to student wellbeing by making conscious, intentional efforts to understand and affirm a family's cultural values and assets so that our student's strengths become clear and central.

At [INSERT name of school] we will follow specific suggestions for using SBA measures and frameworks at the school-wide, group, and individual levels to identify strengths, target areas for development, monitor progress towards goals, and review guidelines delineated in Nickerson and Fishman (2013). Additionally, we will utilize the following checklist to support with implementing this new SBA policy:

- Advocate with administrators and instructional leaders about why SBA is important
- Research and select tools for various assessment purposes (universal screening pre-assessment, diagnostic, etc.)
- Research and select tools and interventions for various cultural and linguistic groups to ensure culturally responsive pedagogies
- Develop implementation plans in conjunction with school decision-making teams
- Communicate action steps with key community stakeholders
- Develop data collection and evaluation methods
- Offer ongoing professional development for school professionals

Further, at our school, we will reference detailed descriptions on how to conduct universal complete mental health screening within a school system utilizing the Social Emotional Health System (SEHS) and utilize the step-by-step implementation guide found in Moore et al. (2016).

Finally, as change agents at [INSERT name of school], we acknowledge that it is our responsibility to engage in meaningful policy change so that our youth can thrive. We will begin to shed layers of privileged ways of thinking and shift from biased views of assessing deficits and risks towards a commitment to honoring and cultivating positive psychological wellbeing and complete mental health for truly *all* generations to come.

Rating of evidence base



Figure 36.1 Strengths-Based Approaches for Assessing Student Well-Being Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. To our knowledge, we have not found studies with evidence of harmful or limited benefits of using SBA practices. Simply more research is needed across a variety of cultural groups and disability statuses. This policy has the potential to have high levels of positive impact, and this is demonstrated by case studies in articles cited. More work is needed to assess benefits at all MTSS levels. Much of the research supports generalizability across diverse groups of students around the globe. Depending on the selected SBA measures, there is more or less data available to support its applicability for certain groups of students. The ease of implementation will depend on several factors and will vary across schools. If schools already have an MTSS or school-wide surveillance/screening procedures in place, this will make the process smoother. Cost accrued would depend on measures selected and the feasibility of reports. The potential positive impact that may result from using SBA practices school-wide is very strong. Please review criteria discussed in the rationale section for outcomes and benefits of implementing SBA.

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Author Comments</i>
Nature and quality of evidence base	The policy is built from a large and established body of work that is characterized by good quality evidence. Studies have a low risk of bias and have a high degree of consistency in findings.	The policy is built from a body of work with substantial evidence base with a low risk of bias that could be considered to be of adequate quality. There are some studies that report contrary findings.	The policy is built from a moderate evidence base where the research used is of moderate to low quality. Findings in the research base are mixed.	The policy is built from a body of work with little or no evidence base with a high level of potential bias. Studies included are considered to be of low quality in terms of research integrity. There is a large degree of inconsistency in findings. The body of work may show potential or call for further research to be conducted in the area.	The policy is built from a moderate evidence base with a high level of potential bias. Studies included are considered to be of low quality in terms of research integrity. There is a large degree of inconsistency in findings. The body of work may show potential or call for further research to be conducted in the area.
Evidence of impact		The research evidence used in the policy demonstrates high levels of impact.	The research evidence used in the policy demonstrates moderate levels of impact.	The research evidence used in the policy demonstrates weak levels of impact.	The research evidence used in the policy demonstrates levels of impact that are not known.

Generalizability	The research used within the policy demonstrates strong evidence for generalizability to the broader population, representing a range of different subgroups, as well as efficacy in different school contexts (including international).	No generalizability has been reported in the literature from which this policy was designed.
Implementation ease: Please rate the perceived ease with which you think the policy could be implemented. A high rating will reflect a policy that does not require additional resources or funds to implement. That is, practices can be routinely and easily embedded into the daily, common practices of a school.	<p>The research used within the policy provides substantial evidence for generalizability to the broader population and some evidence for representing a range of different subgroups, as well as examples of efficacy in different school contexts.</p> <p>1. Excellent 2. Good 3. Satisfactory 4. Neutral</p>	<p>The research used within the policy shows moderate evidence for generalizability to the broader population or different contexts with no evidence of efficacy for different school contexts.</p> <p>1. Excellent 2. Good 3. Satisfactory 4. Neutral</p>

(Continued)

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Author Com- ments</i>
Potential for impact: Please rate the <i>potential</i> impact that may arise from the implementation of your policy. Your reason for this rating may be also reflected by your rationale. Please note that this is different from your “evidence of impact” rating as evidence is not required. This response draws from your unique perspective as an expert.	1. Excellent	2. Good	3. Satisfactory	4. Neutral	

Authorship

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Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

School trauma-informed practice

Mental health promotion

Data-based assessment of psychological well-being in whole school environments)

Included in this text are highly relevant and related information that would enhance and support the implementation of the SBA policies outlined in this Chapter.

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Further reading

Strengths-focused exemplar models include:

- (a) Kern, Benson, Steinberg, and Steinberg's (2016) Engagement, Perseverance, Optimism, Connectedness, and Happiness (EPOCH) framework
- (b) Furlong et al.'s (2014) Social-Emotional Health Survey System (Covitality framework)
- (c) Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets Framework
- (d) Lerner et al.'s (2005) Five Cs framework of Positive Youth Development

International Center for School-Based Youth Development. (2020). *Project covitality: Access to social emotional health survey system*. <https://www.covitalityucsb.info/index.html>

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Expert consultation

Ongoing consultation with a variety of key school stakeholders and community mental health partners is recommended to ensure efficacy and full benefits of an SBA practice.

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37 Data-based assessment of psychological wellbeing in whole school environments

Beth Doll

How to use this policy

The social and academic success of students is stronger when they learn in schools with learning environments that support the psychological wellbeing and resilience of students. However, even as schools work to strengthen their social and psychological climate, they typically evaluate their effectiveness by examining data describing behaviour problems. In contrast, this policy describes optimal practices for assessing positive psychological wellbeing in whole school environments, yielding useful data for making decisions about school improvement practices and monitoring the impact of these efforts over time. This allows schools to prioritize the aspects of their learning environments that are most in need of improvement and to efficiently focus on improvement strategies that are working. This policy example is intentionally broad, and school policy creators are encouraged to delete and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school.

[To adapt and use this policy, delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] Data-based assessment of psychological wellbeing in whole school environments

Rationale

This policy addresses the use of school-wide assessment to facilitate and maintain school environments that foster students' psychological wellbeing and resilience. The importance of schools' social and psychological environments was demonstrated as early as the 1960s, with evidence linking positive school or classroom climates to higher achievement, better attendance, fewer behaviour problems, and stronger mental health (Fraser, 1998; Thapa et al., 2013; Zullig et al., 2010). A recurring and related finding of developmental risk and resilience research is that wellbeing can be prompted, even in the face of exceptional risk, when children develop in settings with strong and caring

relationships, support for their developing autonomy and self-regulation, and support for their emotional regulation and joy (Masten, 2014; Theron, 2016). Educational and psychological scholars have emphasized the responsibility that schools hold for integrating these social and psychological supports into the infrastructure of schools, where children will spend 15,000 hours over the course of their lifetime (Cohen et al., 2015; Masten, 2014; Rutter, 2002; Werner, 2013).

Implementing social and psychological supports into school environments requires that schools recognize the social and psychological supports that are important to student success and, (1) determine the degree to which these supports are or are not already present in the school, and (2) monitor the impact of school improvement efforts on students' experience of the school climate. This policy focuses on these tasks by detailing the assessment practices required for a defensible, data-based examination of the school's social and psychological environment. Options for data-based assessments of school environments are numerous, but only a very few have evidence attached to them (Cohen et al., 2009; Fraser, 1998; Zullig et al., 2010). Optional assessments of school learning environments that are both technically sound and pragmatically feasible can be found in the National Center for Safe and Supportive Learning Environments (<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov>); the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (<https://measuringcasel.casel.org/assessment-guide>); and Doll (in press).

Purpose

This policy details practices for accurate and useful assessment of students' psychological wellbeing in a school, so that these assessments support focused, data-based planning for school improvement efforts and enable monitoring the progress of these efforts over time.

Scope

This policy applies to school leadership, teaching staff, students, and families.
[INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

[INSERT name of school] assesses the collective wellbeing of students by classroom, grade level, school, and district.

Long-standing evidence has demonstrated that when social and psychological environments of classrooms and schools are positive and promote wellbeing, the academic and behavioural success of students is stronger, and students' mental health is strengthened (Bear, 2011; Thapa et al., 2013; Zullig et al., 2010).

Our school asks students to complete brief, anonymous assessments of their experience of their school learning environment. Results are used by teachers, administrators, and students to systematically promote a psychologically healthy school climate (Cohen et al., 2015; Doll et al., 2014). We will use regular assessment of the school's psychological health to focus our school improvement efforts towards the most important goals and to track the progress of our school improvement efforts over time (Doll, 2021).

Our school has selected an assessment that examines aspects of the learning environment that are most important for students' collective school success: relationships with teachers and with peers, confident expectations that they can succeed, belief in their capacity to manage their own behaviour, and commitment to the meaningfulness of schooling (Furlong et al., 2014; Masten, 2014; Thapa et al., 2013).

To minimize the resources required for assessment, our school has selected a practical assessment that is brief (requiring less than 15 minutes of student time), easy to administer, directly related to our school and classroom practices, available at low or no cost, and easily translated into results (Christ & Nelson, 2014; Dart et al., 2019). Examples of whole school assessments that are practical, with evidence of appropriate technical soundness include: the Social and Emotional Health Survey (Furlong et al., 2014), the Delaware School Climate Survey (Bear et al., 2011), the US Department of Education School Climate Survey (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015), and the ClassMaps Survey (Doll et al., 2014).

To ensure the accuracy and usefulness of our assessment results, we have selected an assessment that has evidence of reliability and validity that has been published in professional journals and reviewed by qualified peers (Christ & Nelson, 2014).

Our school notifies parents each time an assessment is collected at least two weeks in advance (Eklund et al., 2021). Copies of the assessment questions are available for parents to review, and parents can ask that their student not be included in the assessment by contacting the school office at [INSERT contact information here]. Students are encouraged to participate but may elect to not participate in the assessment. Results of the assessment will be aggregated by class, grade, or school so that no single student's response can be identified.

Our school collects the assessment of students' collective wellbeing at least twice annually, and results are reported in a form that is easily understood by teachers, students, and parents (Dart et al., 2019; Doll et al., 2014). Teachers and administrators will reflect on and discuss the results and plan modifications of school and classroom practices in response to these results. Parents may review the results upon request.

Students in our school participate in reviewing and discussing results of the assessment and have the opportunity to recommend modified school practices in response to these. Including students as partners in the ongoing assessment and modification of school learning environments contributes to the impact

of environmental interventions, builds student competence as self-directed learners, and strengthens student engagement in the assessment and intervention actions (Cohen et al., 2014; Doll, in press).

Rating of evidence base



Figure 37.1. Data-based assessment of psychological well-being in whole school environments Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. Assessment of the positive psychological attributes of school environments is relatively recent, but results have consistently supported the importance of these (Bear et al., 2011; Furlong et al., 2014). School climate research since the 1960s has established repeatedly that stronger school climates result in more student success. The research that has been done on school climates and positive school learning environments has principally been in diverse schools and districts, nationally and internationally. Implementing this assessment policy is not difficult, but it is outside the range of tasks that most schools typically provide. Assessment of psychological well-being in school environments has the potential to re-engage students more fully in schooling by focusing on school improvement efforts and quickly identifying when efforts are working.

Authorship

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Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

School improvement plan
School discipline policy
Parent and family engagement policy

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

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Promising options for whole school assessments

- Social and Emotional Health Survey (Furlong et al., 2014). <https://www.covitalityucsb.info/sehs-measures/>
- Delaware School Climate Survey (Bear et al., 2011). <http://wh1.oet.udel.edu/pbs/school-climate/de-school-climate-survey/>
- U. S. Department of Education School Climate Survey (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015). <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/edscls>
- ClassMaps Survey (Doll et al., 2014). <https://k12engagement.unl.edu/Nudata/DB1/ClassMaps%20Survey%20Template.pdf>

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38 School-based empathy policy

A holistic approach

Aileen Fullchange, Méroudjie Denis, and Leann V. Smith

How to use this policy

Empathy is a far-reaching skill with deep evolutionary roots that has allowed us to survive and thrive (De Waal, 2008). Those with more empathy tend to have better life outcomes. Of particular significance during this time in history when racial tensions are becoming more publicized and social issues related to public health and universal humanity are at the forefront of policy issues, empathy may play a more important role. In fact, empathy can help reduce prejudice and bias, perhaps contributing to dismantling centuries-old racist systems in our societies, and in helping us to evolve into a more just and meaningfully connected society.

This policy example is intentionally broad and school policy creators are encouraged to delete and build upon suggestions below to create a policy that best represents their school. Additionally, implementing a policy successfully requires involvement of all relevant stakeholders and individuals who might be impacted by the policy. Hence, this policy should be reviewed not just by school leadership but also by students and their caregivers, teachers, and school support staff, such as mental health personnel, front office staff, and all others who might be affected by such a policy. Empathy is a skill developed by experiencing it; hence, a policy that aims to cultivate empathy should be developed via processes that allow for demonstration of empathy and inclusion.

[To adapt and use this policy delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] School-based empathy policy: A holistic approach

Rationale

In this policy empathy is defined as “the ability to understand and share in another’s emotional state or context” (Cohen & Strayer, 1996, p. 988). Empathy is perhaps the single most important contributor to social functioning and is highly correlated with positive mental health outcomes (Riess,

2017) and higher levels of self-esteem (Laible et al., 2004). Empathy is also correlated with prosocial behaviors across the lifespan (Knafo et al., 2008; Masten et al., 2011; Trommsdorff et al., 2007; Van der Graaff et al., 2018; Yoo et al., 2013) and supports academic outcomes and resiliency (Leontopoulou, 2010; Zorza et al., 2013). Most noteworthy during this era, empathy is perhaps even more vital now, as hate crimes have risen in some countries (Edwards & Rushin, 2018), with the largest portion of such incidents in schools (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2017). Empathy training can result in reduced implicit biases (Herrera et al., 2018). Youth who exhibit higher empathy levels, especially perspective taking, tend to be less prejudiced (Miklikowska, 2018), and interventions that specifically target empathy seem to be effective at reducing prejudice (Beelmann & Heinemann, 2014). Furthermore, evidence suggests that deficits in empathy have detrimental consequences, including psychopathology, bullying perpetration (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006), aggression (Lovett & Sheffield, 2007), anger (Day et al., 2012), and being a victim of bullying (Wood et al., 2009).

Empathy training is not needed solely for students. It is crucial for school staff too. One study showed that empathy training for teachers resulted in reduced biases, especially toward minority students (Whitford & Emerson, 2019). This has implications for addressing implicit bias and racial biases in schools, which perhaps contribute to some of the disproportionate representation of children of color in disciplinary referrals and special education (Losen et al., 2014) and the phenomenon of the school-to-prison pipeline (Togut, 2011). Such findings give hope to the possibility of combatting the current wave of anti-immigrant and xenophobic sentiments, dismantling long-entrenched systems biased against youth of color, and addressing racial trauma.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to enable – leadership, staff, and students – to co-create environments that maximize the possibility of healthy empathy development in youth. Guiding principles as well as specific structures and strategies are provided.

Scope

This policy applies to school leadership, teaching staff, and students of [INSERT name of school].

[INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

Any policy that aims to develop the empathy of students must be rooted in research findings indicating that children develop empathy from receiving

empathy themselves (Teymoori & Shahrazad, 2012). Hence, the foundation of this policy is in primarily ensuring that the school-based caregivers (e.g., teachers, school staff, school leaders, etc.) in a child's life are equipped with intact empathy. This foundation will be termed *Tier 0*. Additionally, we acknowledge that effective school-based policies must be comprehensive and, hence, a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) that addresses the three tiers of intervention must be utilized; these will be termed *Tiers 1, 2, and 3*. Finally, we acknowledge that empathy-promoting policies must both prevent those factors that decrease empathy from occurring as well as intervene when there is already a lack of empathy. Hence, both prevention and intervention strategies must be part of this policy.

Tier 0 support: School-based caregivers as the foundation

We at [INSERT name of school] must provide school-based caregivers, including but not limited to teachers, counselors, front office staff, cafeteria workers, and all other personnel who provide care for children, with ways to assess for their own empathic capacities and to assess distress, a barrier to empathy (Hoffman, 2000), using research-validated measures (e.g., Interpersonal Reactivity Index; Davis, 1994). Additionally, school leadership will provide school-based caregivers with dedicated space and time to individually and collectively self-assess empathy and distress levels. Other forms of school-based self-assessment for empathy will be utilized including, but not limited to, assessing patterns and trends of negative interactions with students as evidenced by office referrals, disciplinary actions, and student/parent-report as well as patterns of teaching styles that lead to suboptimal relationship building between students and teachers.

We at [INSERT name of school] will create an environment that aims to prevent school-based caregivers' distress. The rates of trauma in students continues to increase and research shows that over half of individuals who work with traumatized youth will display symptoms of compassion fatigue, which can lead to unintended negative emotional states, such as burnout, depression, and anxiety. Thus, school leadership supports the following research-based strategies:

- Regularly assess for staff's *internal* factors that contribute to burnout, such as workload, years of experience, and social support (Abraham-Cook, 2012), and assess for *external* factors, including ambiguous role expectations, excessive time demands, classes that are too large, poor staff culture, inadequate facilities, resources, or supplies, and salaries that are inadequate (Haberman, 2005).
- Encourage work/life balance.
- Introduce school-based caregivers to self-management and stress-management skills (Bartlett et al., 2019).

- Increase school staff's social support and sense of connectedness (Halbesleben, 2006).
- Increase teacher and staff motivation by increasing teacher and staff support (Betoret, 2006).
- Promote a democratic school environment that promotes school-based caregivers' decision-making abilities, autonomy, and direct input on policies and procedures that directly affect them (Dworkin et al., 2003).

We at [INSERT name of school] will provide frontline staff who report experiencing distress or who demonstrate difficulties with empathic skills with:

- Easy access to mental health support services (Whitaker et al., 2009), such as individual counseling and group support services that are confidential.
- Individualized training and support to increase staff's ability to connect with students (Haberman, 2005) in areas such as cultural competence, racial identity development awareness, and trauma-informed care.

We at [INSERT name of school] will provide school-based caregivers with knowledge and skills to demonstrate empathy toward students, including:

- Scientifically-based information about empathy development (e.g. Fullchange, 2016a; 2016b; Fullchange, in press).
- Individual coaching to support teachers in developing a self-reflective teaching practice.
- Opportunities for school-based caregivers to take on the perspective of students, such as following a student for a day (Strauss, 2014) or visiting students' communities and home contexts (Peck et al., 2015), to promote more pluralistic attitudes towards student diversity (Smith et al., 2020).

Tier I: All students

We at [INSERT name of school] will provide whole-school approaches to fostering empathy. At the foundation of this tier is data gathering in the form of universal social-emotional screening. It is especially important to assess for complex trauma, as this often correlates with difficulties in expressing empathy (Pears & Fisher, 2005).

Because the research has demonstrated that children develop empathy from receiving empathy themselves, the school environment must promote their experiences of empathy and, thus, must be safe and stable, and have clear expectations, and supports to meet those expectations. Hence, the following school-wide practices will be established:

- Clearly communicated behavioral, academic, and social-emotional student and staff expectations that are collaboratively and equitably developed and reviewed with students and families throughout the academic year and are communicated in multiple modalities, such as verbally and visually (Bradshaw et al., 2012).
- Eliminate racially disproportionately exclusionary policies, like office referrals, suspensions, expulsions, etc. that create ruptures in relationships and hinder empathy and use alternatives, such as Restorative Justice practices, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and peer mediation.
- Cultivate school connectedness, using a variety of strategies to include students and their families (see Centers for Disease Control, 2009, p. 15 for further reading).

The following universal interventions for students will also be implemented by school-based caregivers at [INSERT name of school]. These interventions will be implemented within the context of school-based caregivers' empathic relationships with students:

- When others appear distressed, acknowledge the distress, help students see their own contributions to others' distress (Hoffman, 2000), and/or question and expand their viewpoints about others' perspectives (Peterson & Skevington, 1988).
- Incorporate role playing via acting classes into existing curricula (Goldstein & Winner, 2012) (e.g., have students role-play various historical figures in a social study class).
- Incorporate regular gratitude (McCullough et al., 2002) and mindfulness practices (Mascaro et al., 2013).
- Create opportunities for students from differing backgrounds to participate in group activities together, such as creating music (Rabinowitch et al., 2012), and create opportunities for students to engage in cooperative learning structures that promote interdependence, such as jigsaws (Aronson, 2002).
- Provide regular verbal and visual reminders of safety (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005) – both safe people (e.g., pictures of safe caregivers) and safe situations (e.g., stories in which a fictional character experiences safety).
- Consider structured social-emotional learning (SEL) programs that include empathy as a targeted component, such as Incredible Years School Dinosaur Program (Webster-Stratton et al., 2008), PATHS (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2010), RULER (Brackett et al., 2012), Second Step (Holsen et al., 2008). Consider SEL programs that target empathy specifically, such as Roots of Empathy (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2012) and HEROES (Fullchange, 2017).

Tier II: Small groups

For students who do not respond to Tier I interventions, [INSERT name of school] will consider increasing the depth and/or frequency of the aforementioned interventions, especially focusing on students having opportunities to develop safe relationships with adult caregivers and peers in small groups. Examples of such interventions might include small group pullouts for targeted support using any of the above strategies or programs. The HEROES program in particular is designed for small group intervention (Fullchange, 2017).

Tier III: Individual interventions

At this level of intervention, [INSERT name of school] will consider individualized services, such as supporting students' experiences of empathy in the context of a one-on-one relationship with a safe school-based caregiver, as is done in a check-in/check-out system (Swoszowski, 2014) with an individual counselor or mental health provider.

Authorship

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Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

Expert consultation

It is recommended that schools work closely with their mental health team, such as school counselors and school psychologists, in order to implement Tier II and III interventions. School mental health staff should also be contacted to provide trauma-informed care training to all school staff. Schools should also work closely with their local community mental health agencies to help connect students and caregivers in the school (teachers, administrators, etc.) to mental health services.

Rating of evidence base



Figure 38.1. School-Based Empathy Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. Empathy is a well-researched area with large support for positive impacts on social-emotional development of all children. Nonetheless, there continues to be a need for more research in school-based settings with diverse populations. Further, empathy policies have not yet been well-established in schools for researchers to examine. Hopefully, the nature/quality of the evidence base will improve over time as more studies are done. Nonetheless, empathy is perhaps the single most important contributor to social-emotional functioning. There are a myriad of studies linking empathy with positive outcomes such as prosocial behaviors, academic success, social relationships, wellbeing, resilience, moral development, and reduced racial bias. There are also many studies showing that lack of empathy can lead to negative outcomes. These policies are highly generalizable, as is a universal human experience and a construct that has arguably been vital in the existence of humans as social, interconnected, and interdependent beings. Yet, schools often fail to explicitly teach students these important skills. While this policy can be embedded into daily, common practices of a school, to fully and effectively implement it, staff should receive training and coaching in trauma-informed care, racial bias, and cultural awareness. Implementing this policy will require schools to partner with local community mental health agencies and to work closely with school counselors, school psychologists and social workers to ensure students receive appropriate interventions across all tiers of support. Despite the potentially complex nature of implementing this policy, there is excellent potential for positive impact. Building empathy builds positive classroom and school culture and strengthens communities. This policy will ensure that schools are intentionally creating safer and social-emotionally healthier environments for all students and staff. Given the heightened awareness of race relations in many countries, the momentum for dismantling racist systems, and the role that empathy plays in reducing prejudices, this policy may come at an especially crucial time for many schools.

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39 Raising awareness and understanding of superdiversity in the classroom

Nicholas Gamble, David Bright and Ruth Fielding

How to use this policy

Schools in most jurisdictions are required to adhere to a range of policies that promote inclusion and preclude discrimination. These policies usually focus on areas such as disability, cognitive skills, gender/sexuality, culture/race, religious affiliation, and protections for vulnerable populations. These legislative requirements are important for protecting children and families in school contexts. However, the next step in building inclusive schools is to build an understanding of the importance of superdiversity in the classroom.

Superdiversity is a relatively new idea that describes the changes in patterns of diversity that have recently taken place in many contemporary societies. These changes mean that many schools now have a level of diversity in the student body never seen before. Superdiversity, requires considering the vast array of individual differences that make up each student and how aspects of their diversity interact with each other. It also focuses on how patterns of diversity may evolve from demographic changes in the families that the school serves, government policies, and school policies. This field is in its infancy, and there is not yet a firm empirical basis for tools and practices that comprehensively encompass superdiversity in a school setting. However, this policy aims to set out the core practices that schools can implement to begin to meet the challenges and opportunities that exist in superdiverse classrooms.

[To adapt and use this policy delete or modify the text as indicated]

[INSERT name of school] Raising awareness and understanding of superdiversity in the classroom

Rationale

In his seminal work, Vertovec (2007) highlighted new patterns of migration in London in the early twenty-first century that had not been seen before. These complex patterns of migration resulted in a *diversification of diversity* that could no longer be easily categorized according to stable categories of race, ethnicity, or religion. For example, people from the same national/ethnic

background may practice different religions, speak different languages, and enjoy different legal statuses in their host nations (Vertovec, 2007). He described these new patterns as *superdiverse*. This is not a situation that is unique to London; similar trends can be seen in many countries, including Australia, where the reasons for family migration are varied, with large movements of skilled migrants, family reunifications, and those fleeing conflict or oppression (Ng & Metz, 2015). This migration has a direct relationship to the diversity seen in Australian schools. The shared experience of these migrations, considered together with religion, language, and other cultural practices, can form the basis of individual and group identity beyond simplistic notions of national background or ethnicity (Vertovec, 2007). However, a slightly different pattern of these factors may alter those identities, which is why gaining an understanding of superdiversity in a school context is essential.

Superdiversity has been considered in areas such as linguistics (e.g., Blommaert & Rampton, 2016) and public health (e.g., Phillimore et al., 2019) but has only been recently considered in educational settings (e.g., Bardwell, 2016; Blackledge et al., 2013). In a school context, superdiversity entails raising awareness of a multitude of complex and layered diversities rather than focusing on just one prominent aspect of individual diversity, such as ethnic background. For example, knowing that a student has arrived from Syria may provide some insights into their needs and strengths in a school setting. However, understanding their previous experiences as a refugee, their exposure to languages and literacy practices, their position within the family, their underlying cognitive ability, religious affiliation, recreational preferences, and so on will lead to a more accurate understanding of the individual and their strengths and needs.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to raise awareness of the superdiversity in [INSERT name of school] community. In practical terms, this means acknowledging and considering, where possible, that each child has a range of personal characteristics that need to be considered in all aspects of school life. These aspects include commonly considered diversity aspects such as ability, culture/race, gender/sexuality, and religion. However, given different contexts, diversity may also include personality, interests, socioeconomic status, individual needs, and a wide range of other variables. This is not an easy task; however [INSERT name of school] is committed to considering the scope of diversity existing in the school and how some of these aspects of diversity interact at an individual and group level.

Scope

Given that the construct of superdiversity is still developing in educational settings, this is an aspirational policy for the teachers, staff, and school leaders

of [INSERT name of school]. It should be viewed as the next step in supporting the diverse needs of students. Given this, the legislative and policy obligations related to diversity must be adhered to before considering the additional complexities of superdiversity.

[INSERT specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

[INSERT name of school] will endeavour to understand the complex diversity of the school community. We will strive to understand the school community as individuals but also as members of many diverse groups. We will seek to understand how these interactions of group membership impact on the academic and social experience of our students.

All staff at [INSERT name of school] commit to looking beyond specific individual aspects of each child to consider how other characteristics may be relevant (e.g., to consider gender and culture in addition to a diagnosed psychological condition) (Richie, 2016).

All staff at [INSERT name of school] are encouraged to consider the family structure, living arrangements, and socioeconomic status of students in the school's catchment area, as these may provide valuable insights into needs and opportunities in the classroom (Vertovec, 2007).

Staff at [INSERT name of school] will consider how their social circumstances and cultural background may impact on their teaching practices and their perceptions of students (Acquah, Tandon, & Lempinen, 2016).

Staff at [INSERT name of school] should continue to reflect on, and seek to develop, their beliefs about how culturally diverse and multilingual students learn and how other aspects of diversity may impact on this (Zheng, 2009).

Staff at [INSERT name of school] will actively work towards ways of teaching that position multilingual practice as the norm (rather than monolingual) and will avoid using terms which place students' knowledge in a deficit manner. The term "emergent bilingual" will be used in preference to terms such as "EAL/ESL student" (Fielding, 2015; Garcia, 2009).

[INSERT name of school] will consider the complex diversity of the school community in developing curriculum for all students. The teaching and learning tools used at the school will consider the experiences and preferences of our students.

[INSERT name of school] will consider the complex diversity of the school community in developing the extracurricular activities for all students. The mix of activities, sports, and social events at the school will consider the experiences and preferences of our students.

Teachers and staff at [INSERT name of school] know or actively seek an understanding of the diversity of the school community. This includes understanding the "historical, structural, and political contexts that lead to prejudice and discrimination in education" (Forghani-Arani, Cerna, & Bannon, 2019, p. 14).

[INSERT name of school] will actively embrace diversity and will specifically focus on discouraging unhelpful social concepts such as “normal” and “other”.

[INSERT name of school] will engage with organisations and support groups that meet the needs of diverse populations in the local area. Through this process the school community will develop a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities that exist in the community.

[INSERT name of school] will seek to embrace a range of cultural and religious days and periods of significance, not just those from dominant groups (Niemi, Kuusisto, & Kallionniemi, 2014).

School leadership at [INSERT name of school] will promote and support teachers in developing positive attitudes towards inclusion (Sharma & Sokal, 2016).

When the opportunity presents itself, the school leadership of [INSERT name of school] will consider the design and fit-out of school spaces to meet specific learning needs with a broader awareness of how learning spaces impact on a students’ connection with the school (Barrett, Zhang, Moffat & Kobbacy, 2013; McAllister & Maguire, 2012).

Rating of evidence base



Figure 39.1. Superdiversity in the classroom Rating of Evidence.

Author Note. Given this is an aspirational policy in an area that is still developing, there is adequate evidence to suggest this is a topic of relevance. There is good evidence from related fields that this is a valid area for consideration. However, there is little evidence to support any specific tools or techniques at this point. This aspirational policy has the potential to improve the school experience for all students. At this point the focus is on building awareness and increasing understanding so it should be easy to implement. Accounting for superdiversity in school settings has the potential to greatly improve each child’s learning and sense of belonging. Through understanding a range of diversities and their potential to interact with each other, school staff can provide an inclusive experience.

Authorship

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[INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS]

Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

For example:

Inclusion policy

Wellbeing policy

Safety policy

Counselling policy

Anti-bullying and discrimination policy

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

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40 School policy development and creation

Kelly-Ann Allen, Andrea Reupert, Alan Reid, Ian Hardy, and Lindsay Oades

As can be seen throughout the book, educational research as a discipline, is on the whole extensive, and accordingly it is well-positioned to guide schools towards evidence-based practices. Rigorous, empirically sound research is only one part of the puzzle. The development of policy is collaborative. This book has provided a foundation for school policy, but the intention is that each policy only comes to life once it has been adapted and agreed upon. It is imperative that each policy is tailored to suit the unique needs and contexts of each school.

We hope that this book paves a strong collaborative partnership between researchers and practitioners, which will ultimately lead to a stronger connection between research and practice.

Although the policies in the book cover an extensive array of topics, we acknowledge that not every possible policy could be included. As such, we encourage schools to create their own policy as needed. Below is a policy template consistent with the other templates in this book that school policy-makers may use to create their own policies.

Insert policy name here.

How to use this policy

Insert a paragraph about why your policy is important and how your policy could be used in meaningful ways.

[INSERT name of school] Name of policy

Rationale

Definition of your area and rationale for the importance of this policy in schools. Please link briefly to theory or research here, and throughout your policy to demonstrate the evidence basis of your work.

Purpose

Insert a brief statement that summarises the key objective of the policy.

Scope

Who does this policy apply to and how is it applied?

[Insert specific roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams]

Policy statement

Outline policy statements in this section based on theory, research, and best practice. This section should be the core body of your policy. Policy statements should be brief and straight to the point. Consider the use of subheadings, if necessary. Subheadings should be italicised and flushed left. Consider keeping policy statements brief and related to practices. Dot points are okay, if required.

Authorship

Insert your name and contributors to this policy, plus their institutional affiliation [INSERT RELEVANT STAFF MEMBERS].

Related policy and documents

[INSERT RELEVANT POLICY AND DOCUMENTS]

List some examples of related policy or documents.

Date of ratification

This policy was ratified on the [INSERT DATE].

Date of review

This policy will be reviewed by [INSERT DATE].

References

Insert references here.

Expert consultation

Insert suggestions for possible consultation that may be required to enact the policy. For example, do some policies require legal advice prior to implementation? Or consultation with particular teams/professionals in the school?

Additional ideas for creating policy

1. Link to vision and mission statements

Does the policy fit with your priorities as a school?

If not, you may need to recalibrate the policy to ensure it fits with the school climate you have or the one you strive to create. Initiate conversations with teachers, students, parents, and locals to create a consensus around what policies are needed; identify those that are urgent and important; and consider how these policies are aligned with the purpose and priorities of the school.

2. Ensure a complementary curriculum

Does the curriculum support the policy proposed and vice versa?

For example, a complementary curriculum will foster the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that ensure the policy is authentically enacted.

3. Challenge systemic/institutionalised biases and prejudices

Does the policy seek to “make for a better world”?

Think about whether the policy promotes ‘business as usual’ in relation to the chosen focus area or whether it helps challenge systemic/institutional biases which may be long-standing or which may have ‘crept into’ a particular organisation. These considerations may relate to a variety of inclusive practices within the school, including, but not limited to, recognition of various abilities, cultural capacities, and strengths and provision of adequate resourcing for priority areas. Such policy stances can serve as proactive ways of addressing various injustices, including in relation to race, religion, socio-economic status, and sexual orientation.

4. Harness the skills and expertise that exist beyond the school

What information can be used to create and craft a policy that reflects best practice?

You will need to connect with research and the broader knowledge base available to ensure the policy is informed and factual. Schools will need to consider what academics, local businesses, and government representatives are doing with policy, especially when creating or updating policy. You might want to share policies with others so that schools can learn from each other.

5. Create an action plan

Do people within your school (staff, students) have a say over decisions that affect them?

A sense of agency and ownership will increase the likelihood that a policy is enacted well. Develop an action plan that recruits segments of the school community to help build your policy so that it is representative and reflective of the collective interest.

6. Create a communication tool

Does the policy send a message to the school community? Is it an engaging message?

School policies offer an opportunity to articulate a message in a formal manner that demonstrates a school's drive and commitment to a particular issue or area. You may like to consider using policy updates as a communication tool. Another approach is to invite students to discuss policies with family and friends, present a school policy at a school assembly, create policy-related "homework", use parent and caregiver information evenings to highlight a topic raised in a school policy; and deliver an open community forum on a particular policy. Each of these approaches aim to embed the dissemination of policy in events that already occur within the day-to-day running of school. Remember, it is crucial to avoid tokenistic or inauthentic attempts to create and disseminate policy.

7. Recognise the need for professional development and capacity building.

Is the school and staff equipped to enact the policy

Professional development and capacity building should be a consideration in policy development and delivery. School leaders should avoid asking staff to create policy without sufficient training or expertise in policy development and enactment. Ways of achieving the successful uptake of a policy may also entail a school creating opportunities for learning and teaching about a particular policy topic.

Concluding remarks

This book provides a critical resource for schools and at the same time serves as an important opportunity for research translation. With over 70 + contributors representing a vast number of countries and disciplinary areas, this book provides a practical and novel contribution to school policy and practice worldwide. The effective implementation of evidence-based policy is a hallmark of effective education, and we anticipate this book will provide impactful change in schools for years to come.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Validation of understanding

We suggest that schools consider requesting that key stakeholders for each policy, whether they are parents, students, teachers, or school leaders demonstrate validation that they have read the policy or exhibit a commitment to enacting the policy. The following templates have been kindly provided by Jessica Clark.

Option A

Acknowledgement of reading the **Name of Policy**, _____,
have received and read the School's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.
Signature: _____
Date: _____

Option B

I agree to adhere to this **Name of Policy**.
Signature: _____
Date: _____

Option C

I, **name of person**, confirm that I have been provided with the following documents and acknowledge my understanding that I am required to comply with its terms.

- Insert relevant policy or commitment #1
- Insert relevant policy or commitment #2
- Insert relevant policy or commitment #3

Signature:

Name:

Date:

Appendix B: Rating of evidence base

The matrix below represents the Rating of Evidence images contained in each chapter. These images aim to summarise the body of evidence base used to support/inform each policy. All contributors to the book were asked to rate the evidence used in terms of impact, generalizability, and implementation ease that informed their policy. The potential impact rating required a degree of professional discretion and judgement based on the contributor's expertise.

The Rating of Evidence provides additional information that may signal a discrepancy between existing research and potential for practice and impact and be of use to research funding bodies in designing priorities for funding research based in schools.

The matrix was used as a self-assessment tool in the book that allowed contributors to make a general judgement about the body of evidence available that informed their policy. It did not require a judgement on individual studies; rather, it involved consideration of the body of literature as whole. Table a.2 represents the Rating of Evidence Matrix that authors completed to create their policy.

Table a.2 Rating of Evidence

	<i>Excellent (4 Stars)</i>	<i>Good (3 Stars)</i>	<i>Satisfactory (2 Stars)</i>	<i>Neutral (1 Star)</i>	<i>Author Comments</i>
Nature and quality of evidence base	The policy is built from a large and established body of work that is characterised by good quality evidence. Studies have a low risk of bias and have a high degree of consistency in findings.	The policy is built from a body of work with a substantial evidence base with a low risk of bias that could be considered to be of adequate quality. There are some studies that report contrary findings.	The policy is built from a moderate evidence base where the research used is of moderate to low quality. Findings in the research base are mixed.	The policy is built from a body of work with little or no evidence base with a high level of potential bias. Studies included are considered to be of low quality in terms of research integrity. There is a large degree of inconsistency in findings. The body of work may show potential or call for further research to be conducted in the area.	The policy is built from a body of work with little or no evidence base with a high level of potential bias. Studies included are considered to be of low quality in terms of research integrity. There is a large degree of inconsistency in findings. The body of work may show potential or call for further research to be conducted in the area.
Evidence of impact	The research evidence used in the policy demonstrates high levels of impact.	The research evidence used in the policy demonstrates moderate levels of impact.	The research evidence used in the policy demonstrates weak levels of impact.	The research evidence used in the policy demonstrates weak levels of impact.	The research evidence used in the policy demonstrates weak levels of impact.

	<i>Excellent (4 Stars)</i>	<i>Good (3 Stars)</i>	<i>Satisfactory (2 Stars)</i>	<i>Neutral (1 Star)</i>	<i>Author Comments</i>
Generalisability	The research used within the policy demonstrates strong evidence for generalisability to the broader population, representing a range of different sub-groups as well as efficacy in different school contexts (including international).	The research used within the policy provides substantial evidence for generalisability to the broader population, some evidence for representing a range of different sub-groups as well as examples of efficacy in different school contexts.	The research used within the policy shows moderate evidence for generalisability to the broader population or different contexts with no evidence of efficacy for different school contexts.	No generalisability has been reported in the literature from which this policy was designed.	
Implementation ease: Please rate the perceived ease with which you think the policy could be implemented. A high rating will reflect a policy that does not require additional resources or funds to implement. That is, practices can be routinely and easily embedded into the daily, common practices of a school.	1. Excellent	2. Good	3. Satisfactory	4. Neutral	

	<i>Excellent (4 Stars)</i>	<i>Good (3 Stars)</i>	<i>Satisfactory (2 Stars)</i>	<i>Neutral (1 Star)</i>	<i>Author Comments</i>
Potential for impact: Please rate the <i>potential</i> impact that may arise from the implementation of your policy. Your reason for this rating may be also reflected by your rationale. Please note that this is different from your “evidence of impact” rating as evidence is not required. This response draws from your unique perspective as an expert.	1. Excellent	2. Good	3. Satisfactory	4. Neutral	



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