

## What Works Best 2025

Illustration of practice

# Wellbeing at Temora Public School

Temora Public School has implemented several strategies to promote wellbeing for all students. The school prioritises strong staff–student relationships through structured opportunities throughout the day to build these connections. Temora Public School adopts a collaborative wraparound approach to support students with targeted wellbeing support at the cohort and classroom level. Tailored wellbeing programs and strategies are also adopted to equip students with healthy coping strategies to help them check in with, and regulate, their feelings and emotions.

Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation



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## How to use this resource

This resource is part of the illustrations of practice series for What Works Best 2025. It provides teachers and school leaders with descriptions of some of the key strategies used at Temora Public School to support student wellbeing. It is not intended to capture all aspects of student wellbeing support at the school, and it is important for readers of this resource to consider how strategies and practices should be responsive to the learning needs and goals of students in their own school.

Teachers and school leaders can read, consider, discuss and implement strategies highlighted in this illustration of practice and its accompanying resources as part of school-developed High Impact Professional Learning (HIPL). The appropriate time to use this resource may differ for each school, leader and teacher.

## Other What Works Best 2025 resources on wellbeing



- What Works Best 2025 evidence guide for excellent schools – Chapter 7: Wellbeing
- What Works Best 2025 practical guide – Wellbeing



## School context

- Temora Public School is a primary school situated in the Riverina region on Wiradjuri Country, catering to students from Kindergarten to Year 6.
- The school has 230 students, with 5% of students identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and 4% of students coming from language backgrounds other than English.
- The school has a FOEI of 97.2.<sup>1</sup>
- There are 17 teaching staff and 11 non-teaching staff who work on a full-time to part-time basis.
- The core values of Temora Public School are community connection, a strong sense of belonging and collaboration.
- The school serves as a central hub in Temora, fostering supportive relationships with families and the broader community.
- Temora Public School is proud of its dedicated staff, supportive parents and a shared commitment to student wellbeing.

1 Family Occupation and Education Index (FOEI) is a school-level index of educational disadvantage related to socioeconomic background. The average FOEI value is 100. A higher FOEI value indicates a higher level of disadvantage.



## Strategy 1: Creating structured opportunities to build supportive relationships

At Temora Public School, consistently building relationships between staff and students is a key focus to support student wellbeing. One way the school achieves this is by carefully structuring the playground duty roster to provide opportunities for staff teaching across all year levels to engage with students in a less formal setting outside the classroom. For many students, the playground is the place where they feel the most at ease and connected with teachers. As such, enabling staff from across year levels to be present in the playground provides a good opportunity to facilitate relationship building with students. School learning support officers (SLSOs) also work closely with students with disability and/or additional support needs on the playground. For example, SLSOs will walk alongside students as they transition from the classroom to the playground, asking them what they are going to play and who they are going to play with. To create opportunities for structured routines and friendships for all students, some SLSOs run interest groups during recess or lunch. Activities offered include yoga, Mobilo blocks, Lego and chalk drawing.

“We’re not set on [playground] duties, so I’m not just stuck to my area where other kids don’t see me. It’s the same with primary teachers – they get to do infants duties. So all of the kids become aware of all of the teachers in the school.”

**Gabi Menzies, Classroom Teacher**

Executive staff also take on key playground duties. For example, the principal is scheduled on morning duty to greet students and families at the school gates each day. She will intentionally check in with students who have been identified as having wellbeing concerns. The playground duties for other executive staff include bus duty or gate duty at the end of the school day to greet families and students during pick-up time.

“We’ve strategically placed executives on key playground duties. I’m on morning duty, and we now have a pre-morning session for the kids who arrive early, just to do that check-in. I do the morning duty with a meet-and-greet as they come in. We target the kids we know might not be having a great time, so we’re out there strategically placed. Then we’ve got our other executives on bus duty or gate duty, making sure students are transitioning out smoothly as well. It’s that really welcoming in-and-out approach, catching up with parents at the gate. We’re out there. We’re known.”

**Erin Pike, Principal**

The school also structures its release from face-to-face (RFF) timetable to ensure consistency in the classroom for students. For example, during the executive staff’s RFF time, the same relief teacher is rostered to cover the same class each week where possible. This fosters a predictable routine and allows the relief teacher and students to build positive rapport over the school year, providing students with another familiar adult in the school who they can connect with in addition to their classroom teacher.

## Practice point: Building positive peer relationships to support transition to Kindergarten

“ We look at transitions. It’s something as a school we really look at – building a relationship prior to the beginning of the year. So, looking at having a transitional approach to your classrooms, looking at the individual child, particularly for students that do require extra support.”

**Claire Reid, Assistant Principal, Learning and Support**

Staff at Temora Public School recognise the importance of establishing and maintaining peer relationships to support student wellbeing. For students transitioning between preschool and Kindergarten, the building of peer relationships starts before they arrive at school. For example, the principal and rotating small groups of Year 5 students regularly visit the local preschool and 2 early childhood centres.

The visits begin halfway through Term 2 and conclude one week before the Kindergarten orientation in Term 4. Students visit the early childhood settings once a fortnight, with every student having

the opportunity to visit each setting. The aim of these visits is to build relationships between the students and the preschool children through activities that align with the settings’ daily schedules. For example, the Year 5 students read stories to small groups of children, look at picture books in pairs and engage in play-based learning such as painting, building with blocks, drawing, practising writing alphabet letters and fine motor skill activities.

During orientation days at the school, the children transitioning into Kindergarten are each paired with a Year 5 ‘buddy’. Connecting with the local early childhood community gives Year 5 students opportunities to foster a sense of responsibility. The visits also support strong transitions for children transitioning into Kindergarten by establishing relationships with older peers before they start attending the school. Children from early childhood settings also establish familiarity with the principal, helping to build a positive relationship with her prior to starting Kindergarten.



## Strategy 2: Using a collaborative wraparound approach to provide holistic wellbeing support

Temora Public School uses a collaborative approach to provide targeted wellbeing support for students. Approximately 15% of students receive specific support through the school's learning and support referrals. This includes collaboration between the school's learning and support team and child, youth and family support officer from Temora Community Centre. Referrals are made by classroom teachers, parents or members of leadership staff, particularly after periods of crisis in students' lives when they need additional assistance. Depending on the needs of individual students, the focus of the support could be on areas such as forming friendships, improving self-esteem or navigating family situations. Wraparound support could take the form of one-on-one or small-group sessions with SLSOs and creating individual student plans. The individual plans include literacy and numeracy goals, as well as a wellbeing or personal goal specific to the student (for example, developing social skills or developing skills for a special interest). Temora Public School draws on resources from external providers, local programs and opportunities to develop high-potential and gifted learners and build their confidence and sense of belonging based on their interests.

The school draws upon the expertise of the child, youth and family support officer from Temora Community Centre, who provides support to children and their families across a variety of areas to help them thrive. They are part of Temora Public School's Targeted Earlier Intervention Program, which works in partnership with the NSW Department of Communities and Justice to provide local and targeted wellbeing support to families and the wider community. Although the officer works externally to the school at the Temora Community Centre, they are available onsite to offer wellbeing programs for identified students.

“ I think a sense of belonging and wellbeing go hand in hand ... we're not siloed within the bounds of our school. For sense of belonging, we're reaching out to our community members. The gates are open, and I believe that if you want something to be successful, if you want wellbeing programs, sense of belonging, whatever it is ... it means the whole community needs to evolve.

[There are] stakeholders within, and experts around the school, and [we] welcome that into the school and make those connections. ... We're really reaching out and calling our community members in, saying 'Come in, support our students, support our staff, and we'll do the same.' I think that's probably a real strength of our school.”

**Erin Pike, Principal**

High expectations

Explicit teaching

Effective feedback

Using data to inform practice

Assessment

Classroom management

Wellbeing

Collaboration



Temora Public School also collaborates with Temora High School to ensure that students transitioning to secondary school receive the appropriate wellbeing support they need. The whole-school tracking system was established to share learning and support needs with secondary school staff before students leave primary school. The system outlines services that students have accessed, learning and support programs that students have participated in, and adjustments made in the classroom. It also outlines whether any school counsellors or wellbeing services were accessed, as well as any other information that may assist in the transition. The information is completed for all students from Kindergarten to Year 6 and is updated throughout the year. The executive staff from Temora Public School meet with Stage 4 supervisors and year advisors from Temora High School in Term 3 to help pass on knowledge about the students who will be transitioning to secondary school, with a particular focus on those who may find the transition challenging and what support could help with this process. The executive staff at both schools then work together to find the best ways to support the identified students.

These collaborative relationships build understanding of students' needs as they share wellbeing strategies and student profiles ahead of the transition period. The goal is for students to experience a continuum of support from primary to secondary education, reinforcing the wraparound approach across school communities.

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## Strategy 3: Implementing specific wellbeing programs and strategies to equip students with healthy coping techniques and find belonging in the community

At Temora Public School, staff carefully select mentoring programs and strategies in response to students' wellbeing needs. One way they achieve this is by drawing on members of the wider community to offer voluntary mentoring programs. For example, recently the wellbeing support officer organised drumming lessons known as 'Drumbeats' for a group of Year 5 and 6 students. The lessons are led by the principal, an assistant principal or the child, youth and family support officer from Temora Community Centre. Community members such as football coaches, teachers from Temora High School and local council members are also invited to join these lessons to facilitate positive connections with students. The participants include a varied mix of students identified by teachers as being great role models and/or those who might need a confidence boost. Lessons speak to topics specific to the year group, including healthy friendships and resilience. The students drum about their feelings, play games and engage in reflective conversations about the topic using roleplay.

“The Drumbeats program actually has focused areas each week. It's a recognised program that looks at feelings, teamwork, community, those sorts of things. And we stick to that, but also it has to be student-led, so if there's another issue that comes up then we deal with that because they've brought it up.”

**Anne Macauley,**  
Child, Youth and Family Support Officer,  
Temora Community Centre

Mentors from the Temora community are also invited to visit the school each week to discuss key wellbeing topics to support students. This has included a local farmhand from the community visiting the school to mentor a small group of students who were interested in this area as a potential post-school pathway. These mentoring programs can support students' sense of belonging by providing opportunities for students to connect with peers and mentors who share their interests.

In the classroom, teachers focus on implementing key strategies to equip students with healthy coping techniques. For example, each classroom has a 'calm down' corner which is open for all students to use. In this corner, students are encouraged to identify and express their emotions using characters from the movie *Inside Out*. These spaces were introduced to provide students with an opportunity to reset and practise self-regulation strategies. Each space includes visual reminders of strategies and activities that support emotional regulation, such as breathing exercises and fidget toys. Students seek permission before using the spaces and have been explicitly taught how to engage with them appropriately. Before setting up this dedicated space, teachers received professional learning on emotional regulation, led by the assistant principal, wellbeing during a staff development day. The session focused on embedding strategies to support student wellbeing across the whole school.

“In my classroom [in the calm down corner], it's a table and I've got a sheet over it because the students that tend to use it like to be covered. ... It's got some signs around it – so some questions about 'how are you feeling?' – and some regulation charts near them, so they're identifying where their feelings are. And then I just have some cushions in there to make it comfortable for them.”

**Gabi Menzies, Classroom Teacher**

Classroom teachers also initiate a ‘check-in circle’ in the morning, which involves teachers facilitating a time for students to share how they are feeling. In some classes, students sit in a circle and take turns talking, while other classes use a ‘talking stick’ to help with turn-taking. The process typically runs for 5 to 10 minutes before lessons begin. If a student shares that they have experienced difficult feelings, the teacher or SLSO initiates a private conversation after the check-in circle. Teachers report that the check-in circles are helpful for understanding how their students are feeling and addressing peer conflicts in a calm, structured setting. The process can help students feel heard by their teacher and contributes to a stronger sense of belonging over time.



## Resources

### Strategy 1:

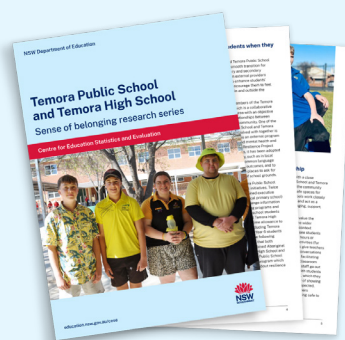
- Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) (2024) [Making sense of belonging](#)
- CESE (2024) [What Works Best to increase students’ sense of belonging](#)

### Strategy 2:

- NSW Department of Education (2025) [Team Around a School](#) (🔒 staff only)

### Strategy 3:

- NSW Department of Education (2025) [Student wellbeing external programs catalogue](#) (🔒 staff only)
- NSW Department of Education (2020) [Student mentoring](#)



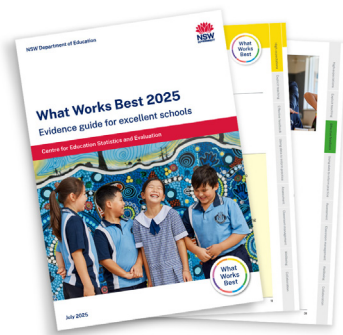
Learn more about how Temora Public School supports students’ wellbeing by facilitating students’ sense of belonging in CESE’s (2024) [Temora Public School and Temora High School – sense of belonging research series](#).

# Access the full suite of What Works Best resources

What Works Best 2025 is a suite of resources for teachers and school leaders that outlines 8 effective practices that are known to improve student learning and wellbeing:

- high expectations
- explicit teaching
- effective feedback
- using data to inform practice
- assessment
- classroom management
- wellbeing
- collaboration.

The resources can be used individually or in conjunction with one another to implement evidence-based, quality teaching and learning practices and inform school excellence planning.



The What Works Best 2025 – Evidence guide for excellent schools provides an overview of the evidence that underpins each of the 8 themes.



The What Works Best practical guides translate evidence into practice by providing teachers and school leaders with practical ideas for implementing each of the themes in their classrooms and schools. The guides unpack not only ‘what’ should be done to successfully implement a theme, but also the ‘how’ and ‘why’.



The What Works Best illustrations of practice provide teachers and school leaders with examples of how some of our great schools from across NSW have implemented the themes.

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