

Checklist and guidelines - tailoring health and wellbeing approaches at your school



- The Checklist and Guidelines is a tool to support the planning and review of your school's health and wellbeing approach/es
- 10 key principles that underpin successful health and wellbeing approaches are unpacked into their components for your easy reference
- The guiding information outlines the basis of each principle and brings together relevant department policies and resources into one place

Principle 1

Student Voice



Checklist

Factors to consider:

- Diversity is respected, valued and welcomed within a safe and supportive environment
- Perspectives and opinions of students shape health and wellbeing approaches
- Students with disability are supported to express their views where required
- Strategies are age, developmentally and culturally appropriate
- Students participate in decision-making around professionals they prefer to access for support
- Where needed, students are supported to build relationships with health and wellbeing professionals
- Students contribute to decision making for the design of spaces and assets
- Students provide valuable feedback through evaluation processes

Guiding Information

CESE identified in the [What works best: 2020 update](#) that, 'Wellbeing is one of the eight themes identified as likely to make the biggest difference to students in NSW public schools'.

[Student Voice](#) is students actively participating in decision-making at school on things which shape their educational experiences.

Student voice is more than just students 'having a say' and 'being heard'. To be successful, schools must value the perspectives and opinions of students and act on them in a way that genuinely shapes learning and decision-making at the school.

When students are in a true partnership with adults, they can influence health and wellbeing responses, ensuring they meet their needs and are age and culturally appropriate. This partnership enables the development of students' health seeking behaviours and increases health literacy (the ability to access, understand and apply health information); supporting engagement in learning.

What students are saying:

“I feel like I'm listened to and they get me”

“It was hard to trust at first, but I feel safe now”

Principle 2

Whole school approach



Checklist

Factors to consider:

- All students' health and wellbeing is supported through a planned and coordinated approach
- Linked to school planning and strategic improvement processes
- Diversity is embraced and reflected in inclusive responses
- Students' health literacy is promoted through the curriculum
- Professional learning is made available for all staff, promoting a shared understanding and collective vision
- Staff roles are complementary within a continuum of care
- Students, families and community are recognised as partners in educating the 'whole child'
- Culture of trust is built and sustained through leading by example
- Approach is evidence-based with flexibility for local context, creativity and future learnings

Guiding Information

Successful health and wellbeing approaches form part of a whole school prevention and early intervention strategy that is inclusive of all students, regardless of disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, nationality, language, gender, sexual orientation or faith.

Led by effective and supportive school leaders, approaches are linked to strategic planning for school improvement: [School Excellence in Action](#).

The capacity of all school staff to recognise and respond early to students' health and wellbeing needs is strengthened through prioritising professional learning including; [Supporting our students' mental health](#) and [Trauma Informed Practice - professional development pilot](#).

Community consultation is respected and highly valued. The department has renewed its commitment to respectfully listen and learn from the AECG and its network of regional and local [Aboriginal Education Consultative Group \(AECG\)](#) through the 2020-2030 Partnership Agreement, [Working Together, Walking Together](#).

Students' health literacy and help seeking behaviours are enhanced through engagement with the whole community.

What staff are saying:

"The most important resource is the teaching staff"

"Embedded within the school"

Principle 3

Linked to school planning



Checklist

Factors to consider:

- Strategic planning describes the connection between students' health and wellbeing and learning outcomes
- The targeted student cohort and approach is communicated and understood across the community
- Approach meets Department policy requirements
- Connections with other school programs are demonstrated
- Sustainable in the local context
- Continuity of support is in place, including at key transition points
- Access to quality, culturally appropriate and safe health care is understood across the school community as an equity issue (having access to the health care that a student needs, when needed)
- Where required, leaders advocate for service access and equity for target groups

Guiding Information

Schools engage in all aspects of the School Excellence cycle comprising of the [Situational Analysis, Strategic Improvement Plan \(SIP\)](#), implementation and progress monitoring of the plan, and an annual reflection of progress and impact.

The [School Excellence Framework \(SEF\)](#) and [The Wellbeing Framework for Schools](#) are key supporting documents. Schools that excel in the Learning Domain of the SEF develop whole school wellbeing approaches that support students to enhance their learning, health and wellbeing and life outcomes.

Other relevant documents include:

[School Excellence Policy](#)

[Student Health in NSW Public Schools: A summary and consolidation of policy](#)

[Nutrition in Schools Policy](#)

[Student Welfare Policy](#)

[Child Protection Policy: Responding to and reporting students at risk of harm](#)

[Working with Children Check Policy](#)

[Inclusive Education for students with disability](#)

[School Attendance Policy](#)

What staff are saying:

"Ensuring the mental health and wellbeing of our kids is catered for and flexible enough to change over time as needed"

Principle 4

Acknowledges & respects local context



Checklist

Factors to consider:

- Approach reflects the unique context, strengths, challenges and needs of the school community
- School community, including the local [Aboriginal Education Consultative Group \(AECG\)](#) is respectfully listened to, learnt from and involved early in decision making processes
- Issues being addressed are identified and clearly communicated
- Programs and resources already in place, and what is readily available to strengthen an existing response, are incorporated in the approach
- Service gaps are identified and consideration given to upskilling department staff to meet the need
- Digital health care solutions, such as telehealth and telepsychology are put in place where appropriate
- If required, external partnerships are developed and sustained to meet an identified health and wellbeing service need
- An inclusive, equitable and sustainable approach is developed
- Administrative burden is not created for the school staff

Guiding Information

Health and wellbeing approaches reflect the school's unique features. This includes educational, geographical and social characteristics, as well as resources and the known and/or emerging student needs.

In rural and remote communities issues around isolation and access to services can be significant barriers in addressing students' health and wellbeing needs. Aim 3.2 of the [Rural and Remote Education Strategy \(2021-2024\)](#) is: All students in rural and remote communities have early access to and engage with wellbeing support services.

Enhancing the availability of digital technologies can facilitate increased access to health and wellbeing services for students and their families.

Partnering with local health services may support schools to address a service gap:

Other relevant documents include:

- The [Local Health District \(LHD\)](#) can act as a touchpoint for schools to navigate the health system and map local service delivery
- [Primary Health Network \(PHN\)](#) and the [NSW Rural Doctors Network](#) are key links into the health system
- Establishing connections with local GPs can support continuity of service

What staff are saying:

“Deep understanding of community needs, not just perception”

“Supports tailored specifically to the school need”

“Isolation and remoteness amplifies the same issues that may be experienced in communities”

Principle 5

Effective learning & support teams (LST)



Checklist

Factors to consider:

- Capacity in the LST to play a key role in personalising student support is valued and developed by school leadership
- Composition of the LST is made up of members that reflect the needs of the school community
- Flexibility in the LST structure allows for temporary members to contribute to a student's continuum of care where required
- Professional learning opportunities are in place for the LST
- The LST successfully coordinate planning processes and resources for students with disability and additional learning and support needs
- The LST designs and implements the supports required to build teacher capacity so that all students access quality learning
- Families are respected as partners in learning support processes
- Positive and ongoing relationships are built with services providing wrap-around supports for students

Guiding Information

A school's Learning and Support Team (LST) is a vital resource that contributes to effective health and wellbeing approaches. The team play a key role in ensuring that the specific needs of students with disability and additional learning and support needs, which may include health and wellbeing, are met.

Effective LST support a whole school approach, building the capacity of all staff to personalise learning and support.

There is a range of department specialist staff that support schools who may participate in the LST processes at different times, dependent on student need, including department Service Delivery staff such as Networked Specialist Facilitators and Learning and Wellbeing Advisors.

Government initiated and funded roles such as Student Support Officers (SSOs), School Chaplains/Student wellbeing Officer and Wellbeing and Health In-reach Nurse (WHIN) Coordinators may be members of a school's LST.

It is important that all roles contributing to the work of the LST are well understood and are complimentary within a continuum of care for students.

A new School Learning Support Officer classification has been introduced in 2019, School Learning Support Officer (Student Health Support). Responsibilities of this role include supporting students who require health care support at school.

For School-led multiagency responses or School-initiated health and wellbeing alliances (hubs), the LST acts as a key coordination point for referrals and on-going monitoring and recording of outcomes for students.

What staff are saying:

"Start [supports] as close as you can to the kids and then move out"

"... works for the school as an integrated, embedded service - not an add on/bolt on"

Principle 6

Capacity Building



Checklist

Factors to consider:

- Inclusive and respectful practices are in place that support a shared understanding of purpose and desired outcomes
- Opportunities for staff to strengthen their cultural competencies are in place
- Staff roles are well understood within a continuum of care
- Building the capacity all of stakeholders is considered and acted upon:
 - students
 - families
 - school staff, including induction for new staff members
 - other school community members
 - external service providers
- Approach supports students and their families to develop their health literacy and help seeking behaviours
- Students can access health and wellbeing learning at their point of need
- The [PDHPE](#) and [Life Ready](#) curriculum is effectively used to reinforce age appropriate health messaging
- The department's teaching and learning team is engaged to explore how health messaging can most effectively be embedded across the curriculum

Guiding Information

Students' health and wellbeing outcomes are optimised when all stakeholders' capabilities are developed.

Improving the health literacy of students and their families is key to maximising longer term outcomes. Accessing health and wellbeing learning at point of need is especially important for students with disability or additional needs, and those students for whom English is an additional language or dialect.

All staff have a role to play in enhancing students' health and wellbeing, learning and life outcomes. Linking professional learning to the related standards within the [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers - evidence requirements](#) is key to supporting all teachers to become an exemplary classroom teacher or leader.

The [Standards and focus capabilities map](#) supports schools in planning for the knowledge, skills and abilities that teaching staff, or other internal or external staff, require to successfully support students' health and wellbeing.

For external service providers working in schools, a focus on understanding how to operate within the school context is an important element of capacity building; policies and practices need to be well understood. Values of respect, safe practices and responsible behaviour underpin shared understandings.

What staff are saying:

“Improve department capacity, not shift”

“Schools such as ours really need productive partnerships to support the social, emotional and educational needs of our students”

Principle 7

Fit for purpose & culturally safe spaces



Checklist

Factors to consider:

- Health and wellbeing spaces are accessible for all students
- Families are listened to and welcomed as partners
- Students' rich cultural identity, languages and histories are celebrated and respected
- Students contribute to decision making for the design of spaces and assets
- Aboriginal languages, cultures and histories are recognised as a unique component of Australia's heritage and reflected in the design of health and wellbeing spaces through consultation with students and their families, and more formally through the AECG
- A dedicated space is available for health and wellbeing initiatives where required
- Health and safety issues have been considered and acted on
- Consideration is given to designing spaces that connect with nature, such as sensory and other gardens

Guiding Information

Students and staff come from a diverse range of cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds. Recognising and valuing cultural diversity within a school community supports the design of fit for purpose and culturally safe spaces.

There is wide variation in the health and wellbeing spaces that schools utilise. Culturally inclusive spaces that have been collaboratively designed enhance relationships between the school, parents, and community.

Aboriginal staff can be a key contributor to establishing culturally safe spaces for Aboriginal students and can support the development of cultural competencies amongst non-Aboriginal students and staff.

Fit for purpose and culturally safe spaces can also reduce stigma for seeking help with issues that can be highly sensitive such as mental ill-health and sexual health.

Department resources to support consultation:

[Community Consultation](#): best-practice examples and practical strategies

[Cultural Inclusion](#): information around whole school, curriculum and classroom practice

[Working in partnership with the NSW AECG Inc](#): information about working in all stages of planning and decision making

What staff are saying:

“We really created an even playing field, making health and wellbeing accessible to everyone”

Principle 8

Clear roles, responsibilities & documented agreements



Checklist

Clear roles and responsibilities:

- Staff roles are complementary within a continuum of care
- Role descriptions provide well-defined tasks to be carried out by staff
- Role descriptions provide clear reference points against which performance can be measured and learning and development activities identified
- For new roles, pay and grading systems are structured logically and fairly
- New staff are inducted to the school site, including external staff
- Expectations and boundaries are well understood by staff

Documented agreements

- When required contact has been made with Legal Services and/or Procurement to ensure that the necessary legal agreements are in place

Guiding Information

It is important to consider the roles already in place within a school, and whether they can be strengthened to meet an identified or emerging need. Department specialist staff that support schools may also be able to provide the required support for the school and/or provide linkages to external services.

Any new role statements need to be identified early in design processes to clarify expectations and boundaries and give well-defined descriptions of the tasks to be carried out by staff.

It is essential that all staff are aware of the department's [Child Protection Policy](#) and associated procedures, have undertaken mandatory child protection training and understand and know how to act on their obligations as mandatory reporters.

As part of an induction to a school site, external providers will require information on how to work together with school staff to prioritise the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the students they are supporting. [Working With Children Check procedures](#) must be in place.

An information package is available to support schools with the key legislative and policy requirements they need to consider when making decisions regarding school access for [Externally funded service providers](#).

[Frequently Asked Questions](#) (staff only) provide information on the legal requirements when schools are considering bringing external providers on site and/or the [Community use of school facilities](#). Contact can also be made with the department's [Legal Services](#) (staff only).

Where a school is considering purchasing health and wellbeing services, advice can be sought from the Procurement Solutions team. Schools may also engage with the [Student Wellbeing external programs catalogue](#) which provides an online register of externally produced programs, available either free of charge or to purchase.

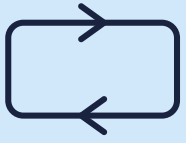
What staff are saying:

"It's a locally developed solution to the complex issues facing our school"

"Trust relationships are super critical"

Principle 9

Continuity of support



Checklist

Factors to consider:

- Shared vision and understanding of the connection between students' health and wellbeing and learning outcomes exists across the school community
- Whole school planned and coordinated universal strategies are in place
- Approach includes planned school transitions
- All staff are supported in their role within a care continuum
- Funding and staffing commitments are sustainable
- Approach is not creating unnecessary burden on staff, including the leadership team
- Capability is in place for digital services where required
- Any external partnerships are sustainable, with a shared understanding of purpose, desired outcomes and boundaries

Guiding Information

Students' health and wellbeing benefits from a student-centred, family focussed approach that is coherent and interconnected over time, including at school transition points.

Health and wellbeing approaches need to be sustainable in the context of individual school communities or supported through communities of practice.

Inclusive and equitable health and wellbeing responses are built on whole school approaches where there is a shared understanding of purpose and staff professional learning is prioritised. This leads to longer term outcomes for students and their families.

Continuity of support requires resources such as funding and staffing to be sustainable. Timeframes for developing and implementing new health and wellbeing approaches need to be realistic, with prioritisation of need. Many schools start small and build.

Where external providers are delivering a service, legal agreements need to be in place that include a schedule of service delivery so on-going commitments are known and planned for upfront.

What staff are saying:

".... students cannot learn unless their wellbeing needs are being met"

Principle 10

Evidence-based approach embedded



Checklist

Factors to consider:

- Planned and robust evaluation is embedded into approaches up front, linking with school planning and strategic improvement
- Relevant department and publically available data sets are overlaid to establish a picture of need, impacts and potential improvements
- Assumptions are challenged
- Only the information needed for evaluation, including baseline data is gathered
- The best possible ways for gathering the required information are identified
- A clear and reasonable timeline for evaluation is in place
- Ethics of involving children and young people in research are understood
- Clear protocols are in place to ensure follow-up of support for students where required
- Where external services are also collecting data, legal agreements are in place to share data with confidential protocols in place

Guiding Information

When planning health and wellbeing approaches, it is important that schools think about evaluation early; evaluation is part of the development phase of any initiative.

Planned evaluation supports a cycle of continuous school improvement. It helps schools analyse whether their approach is making a real difference to students' learning, health and wellbeing and life outcomes.

Students provide valuable feedback through evaluation processes. It is important that clear protocols are in place to ensure student safety.

Departmental resources available to support schools with evaluation include:

- [Evaluation Resource Hub](#)
- [SCOUT](#)
- [Achieving Excellence in Wellbeing and Inclusion](#)

Publically available data sets commonly used by schools include:

- [Australian Early Development Census \(AEDC\)](#)
- [Australian Bureau of Statistics - Community Profiles](#)
- [HealthStats NSW](#)

Other resources:

- [Mental Health and Wellbeing Program Planning Template](#)
- [School-based prevention and early intervention for student mental health and wellbeing](#)
- [CESE Student Wellbeing Literature Review](#)

What staff are saying:

“Engagement is more than just turning up”