

Whole-school Wellbeing

2026 Information for Schools



Richard Johnson Anglican College



Whole-school
Wellbeing



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Overview

The Association of Independent Schools of NSW (AISNSW) has developed *Whole-school Wellbeing*, an 18 month, multi-component initiative focused on strengthening approaches to student wellbeing.

The initiative aims to work collaboratively with schools through professional learning and consultancy support to select evidence-based strategies and implement a whole-school vision and approach to wellbeing.

Throughout the initiative, participating schools will be supported in achieving the following key outcomes:

- Establish or strengthen whole-school wellbeing actions – monitor and support student wellbeing, mental health, social-emotional development, and behaviour, tailored to community needs in a safe, inclusive environment.
- Build staff capability – provide ongoing, research-informed professional learning to enhance staff knowledge and skills in supporting student wellbeing and behaviour.
- Use evidence to guide priorities – map current wellbeing practices, identify strengths and gaps, and focus on targeted, evidence-based improvements.
- Plan for consistency – develop a whole-school wellbeing scope and sequence aligned to a multi-tiered systems of support, ensuring developmentally appropriate opportunities across all year levels.
- Strengthen professional connection – establish networks and collegial connections with AISNSW consultants, external wellbeing specialists, and staff from other independent schools to share expertise and build a community of practice.



Charlton Christian College

Whole-school Approach to Wellbeing

School wellbeing approaches, including processes, practices and pedagogy, are the actions taken by a school to support school community members to build their capability and capacity to feel well, function well, and feel connected now and into the future (Cross & Lester, 2023). These actions include universal approaches to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for all students, as well as early intervention and targeted supports.

“A whole-school approach is about embedding wellbeing into the school's vision, mission, ethos and school improvement planning process to ensure it permeates the school culture and all levels of school activity – it is everyone's business.”

(Cross & Lester, 2023. p. 196)

Key Components

The following are key components of a whole-school approach to wellbeing that may be used by wellbeing teams when reviewing and planning a school's implementation process:

- **Leadership**
Establishing a dedicated wellbeing team who understand the needs of their school community and promote a vision for wellbeing.
- **School Processes and Practices**
Implementing processes and practices, informed by quality evidence of effectiveness, that are well understood and consistently actioned across the school.
- **School Climate**
Valuing diversity and fostering positive and respectful relationships within a safe and inclusive environment that includes wellbeing practices that value student voice and foster a sense of belonging.
- **Wellbeing Education**
Embedding and integrating the explicit teaching of social and emotional skills using quality evidence-based pedagogy.
- **Community Partnerships**
Enabling meaningful opportunities for families to be active participants in enhancing whole-school wellbeing.

Reference: Cross, D. & Lester, L. (2023). Leading Improvements in School Community Wellbeing. ACER Press.

Implementation Process

As part of the school's involvement in the Whole-school Wellbeing initiative, the following actions are considered alongside the components. The actions form part of an implementation process for a whole-school approach to wellbeing that is defined by a comprehensive school-wide vision:

- Leadership Commitment**
 Review the implementation of the key components of a whole-school approach to wellbeing across a continuum from implementing to sustaining.
- Review Wellbeing Outcomes**
 Review student wellbeing outcomes against student data.
- Map and Assess Processes and Practices**
 Map the school's approaches to wellbeing focused on prevention and responses to student needs and use data collected to undertake a wellbeing status check to reflect on the effectiveness of current processes and practices.
- Implement Actions**
 Refine documentation related to processes and practices, including planning the implementation of wellbeing approaches with realistic timeframes.
- Embed and Sustain**
 Identify goals and actions to enable successful achievement of wellbeing priorities.



Key Components and Implementation Process: Diagram representing the components and process of the Whole-school Wellbeing initiative.

Components

The Whole-school Wellbeing initiative consists of the following components:



Masterclasses

Developed for members of the school's *Whole-school Wellbeing Team*, these sessions include keynote presentations, facilitated discussions and networking opportunities to share practices between schools.

Masterclasses will be held each term with the final Masterclass providing an opportunity for schools to highlight and share sustainable practices.



Consultancy Support

Provided throughout the duration of the initiative, the school's *Whole-school Wellbeing Team* work in collaboration with AISNSW consultants to identify wellbeing priority areas, review and refine processes as well as support the implementation of evidence-based practices within a whole-school framework.



Professional Learning

School-based professional learning sessions will be provided throughout the year. The learning is tailored to each school's context and combines core content and optional pathways chosen in collaboration with the school's AISNSW Consultant.

Implementation of the components will be responsive to the size and context of each school.

Target Audience: All K-12 staff including specialist and support staff.

A *Whole-school Wellbeing Team (team)* is established to lead the implementation of the initiative. This will ensure that leadership of the initiative is robust to changes in staffing if required.

The team may consist of staff with various roles and responsibilities across the school. However, the team should include at least one member of the school's leadership who is able to progress discussions and planning that require decisions and is also able to keep the school's executive informed.

As this is a whole-school initiative, representation from across K-12 is recommended for primary and secondary school settings.

The size of the group will vary depending on the school's context. To facilitate decision-making processes, it is suggested the team include no more than eight members.

A member of the school's executive who is part of the team is to be nominated as the 'Lead' who the AISNSW consultant will liaise with and be the key point of contact throughout the initiative. For K-12 settings, it is suggested that a primary and secondary 'Lead' be nominated.

Timeline: Components are distributed over an 18 month period with each component scaffolded to support the school's progress, maintain momentum and build on prior learning with the aim to embed and sustain processes and practices.

Costs: Participation in the Whole-school Wellbeing initiative is based on a co-contribution model. Each school will be allocated an AISNSW consultant who works in collaboration with the team throughout the duration of the initiative. The participating school will contribute towards teacher release, as well as a financial contribution towards the professional learning components of the initiative.



Masterclasses: Whole-school Wellbeing Team

Professional learning is specifically designed for members of the school's team and involves four Masterclasses distributed throughout the year. Each Masterclass will include the sharing of key content by highly regarded presenters and provide an opportunity to network with schools and share practices.

► **Term 1 Masterclasses: Leading Wellbeing** **Thursday 12 and Friday 13 February**

A whole-school approach reflects a broad, school-wide commitment to embedding wellbeing within the school's context, mission, values, processes, and practices. This two-day introductory Masterclass will guide school teams through the foundational components of a whole-school approach to wellbeing. It will support participants to build a shared understanding of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) as a foundation for implementing evidence-informed wellbeing practices. Teams will explore how Social, Emotional and Behavioural supports can be embedded across universal, targeted, and individualised practices to promote positive student outcomes. Schools will also consider the processes and tools available to collect, review, and respond to wellbeing data in ways that are meaningful, strategic, and sustainable.

► **Term 2 Masterclass: High Impact, Evidence-based Wellbeing Practices** **Friday 8 May**

This Masterclass provides the school teams with the opportunity to assess and map processes and practices to establish new, or strengthen existing, whole-school wellbeing delivery for monitoring and supporting student wellbeing outcomes. Evidence-based, high-impact actions and interventions that are shown to be effective in improving student wellbeing outcomes will be shared. Clear referral and decision-making pathways in schools will also be highlighted.

► **Term 3 Masterclass: Whole-school Wellbeing Delivery** **Friday 7 August**

Schools will review the components that contribute towards building a cohesive coordinated whole school approach, in preparation for the development of a whole-school wellbeing scope and sequence.

► **Term 4 Masterclass: Sharing Schools' Wellbeing Narratives** **Friday 30 October**

This concluding Masterclass will afford leaders the opportunity to formalise the professional learning communities established as part of the Whole-school Wellbeing initiative. Presentations of case studies will illustrate schools' accomplishments, the challenges they have met along the way and their plans for sustaining and embedding a whole-school approach to wellbeing.



Consultancy Support: Whole-school Wellbeing Team

The consultancy support component of the initiative involves the Whole-school Wellbeing Team working collaboratively to establish new, or strengthen existing, whole-school processes and practices for developing and monitoring student mental health and wellbeing.

The sessions are designed to provide school-based support following the input at the Masterclass. This will also provide the opportunity for the team to consider and contextualise the content shared for their school setting and circumstances.

The consultancy support will be facilitated by the AISNSW consultant throughout the year. Each term there will be at least two half day sessions with the Whole-school wellbeing team. As part of the school's co-contribution, schools are asked to provide members of the school team with release time to be part of these sessions.



Mode:
Face-to-face
(school)



Duration:
Two sessions per
Term. At least half a
day per session



Target Audience:
Whole-school
Wellbeing Team

Regular check-ins will also occur between the scheduled school visits to enable opportunities for clarifying and reflecting. This could include informal, online check-ins, or further school visits. The school team may also use this time to communicate progress with staff and seek their input.

Term 1

Creating a Whole-school Vision and Approach to Wellbeing

During the initial two sessions, the team will work towards creating a shared understanding of wellbeing that will provide the focus for the actions undertaken throughout the initiative. As part of this implementation process the team will be supported to review existing practices and draw upon wellbeing data as well as additional sources of information to strategically identify priority areas and set directions.

Term 2

Assessing and Mapping Wellbeing Processes and Practices

The team will engage in mapping the school's identified processes, practices and approaches to assess strengths, areas of alignment, gaps and opportunities. This includes drawing on evidence to assess strengths, alignments and gaps. A three-tiered framework includes approaches that are universally focused and form the foundation of whole-school wellbeing promotion and prevention; targeted interventions for those at risk of developing mental health difficulties, including challenges related to academic progress, behaviour, or social-emotional development; and individualised and intensive supports for those experiencing significant or ongoing mental health difficulties. Utilising this framework, the school's team will work in collaboration with the AISNSW consultant to identify and determine the universal processes and practices that can support whole-school wellbeing as well as assist with the identification of those students who may require more tailored supports and adjustments. The school's team will clarify and detail the processes in place, as well as roles and responsibilities of staff, to identify students who are experiencing early indicators of possible mental health difficulties and the referral pathways and options for appropriate interventions.

Term 3

Implementing Wellbeing Actions within the School's Structures

The team will focus on the development of a whole-school wellbeing scope and sequence drawing upon their identified sources of data and wellbeing directions, key curriculum content, events and initiatives. Consideration will be given to the integration of existing frameworks and programs and how these complement the structure of the whole-school approach. From this, the school's cohesive and coordinated wellbeing scope and sequence will reflect their whole-school approach to wellbeing across all stages and year levels.

Term 4

Embedding and Sustaining a Whole-school Approach to Wellbeing

Drawing on the progress of the previous term's consultancy, teams will continue to refine their scope and sequence.

To continue to build the momentum of the implementation of the school's wellbeing priority actions, teams will identify strategies for monitoring the progress of the recommended actions and opportunities for ongoing communication and other engagement with the school community to demonstrate impact.

2027 Terms 1 and 2

Ongoing Support

During the first half of the following year, schools will have the opportunity to continue reviewing progress with their school's consultant, to support ongoing action planning and strengthen the processes for embedding and sustaining a whole-school approach to wellbeing.



St Luke's Grammar School



Professional Learning in the Whole-school Wellbeing Initiative

A strong whole-school approach to wellbeing is underpinned by the ongoing growth and confidence of all staff, including teachers, specialist educators, and support staff. The Whole-school Wellbeing Initiative offers professional learning opportunities that are flexible, evidence-informed, and tailored to the unique context of each school. Our approach combines a balance of **core professional learning**, which provides a shared foundation across all participating schools, and **optional pathways** that allow schools to focus on areas most relevant to their needs, priorities, and student community.

Core Professional Learning

Core themes focus on building a common understanding of key concepts and practices that strengthen wellbeing across the whole school. These include content related to belonging, connectedness, protective factors, social and emotional learning, student voice and engagement, linking wellbeing to positive behaviour practices, supporting students with challenging behaviour, and promoting, preventing and responding to student mental health and wellbeing. These shared focus areas provide the groundwork for consistent language, aligned practices and a collaborative school-wide approach.

Optional Pathways

Optional pathways provide schools with the opportunity to explore areas of wellbeing that are most relevant to their context, priorities and emerging needs. The focus, format and audience for these sessions are determined in collaboration with the school's AISNSW Consultant, ensuring the learning is practical, relevant and aligned with whole-school priorities. Sessions can be adapted in length, delivered to whole staff or targeted groups, and may draw on real examples from the school's context.

Examples of potential focus areas include empowering wellbeing leaders, staff wellbeing, optimising social and emotional learning, strengthening positive online behaviour, applying positive practices for classroom management, and responding to individual student matters. Some pathways may be complemented by prior online learning, and in certain cases, accredited training such as **Mental Health First Aid®** can be included as part of the professional learning plan.

Professional learning within the Whole-School Wellbeing Initiative is a collaborative and evolving process. By combining shared foundations with flexible, school-specific pathways, each learning experience is designed to build staff capability, align practices, and strengthen a culture of care across the school community. The focus is always on practical, evidence-informed strategies that can be embedded into everyday practice to enhance student wellbeing and engagement.

Agreement

Schools will be asked to sign an agreement that details the undertakings involved in the implementation of the Whole-school Wellbeing initiative. It will include a commitment to staff being nominated as part of the school's dedicated Whole-school Wellbeing Team to engage in the Masterclasses and staff to participate in the professional learning opportunities.

In addition, schools will facilitate the consultancy support component of the initiative through the provision of teacher release. The release time will enable the school team time to meet with each other and the visiting consultant. This will provide time to progress the priorities associated with the initiative focused on the development of whole-school processes and practices related to mental health and wellbeing.

Monitoring Progress

AISNSW appreciates the support of participating schools to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the Whole-school Wellbeing initiative. To this end the following measures will be used and information collected:

- ▶ **Survey Tool:** The survey will gather qualitative data focused on whole school mental health and wellbeing processes as well as teacher practices. Members of the school team and staff will be asked to complete the survey at the commencement of the project and again at the conclusion.

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- ▶ **Evaluations:** An evaluation will be completed following each Masterclass and professional learning session. The questions included in the evaluation will be tailored according to the particular focus area.

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- ▶ **Case Study:** Schools will be asked to develop a case study to be shared at the final masterclass and used for future presentations of the Whole-school Wellbeing initiative. A template for the content of the case study will be provided along with appropriate consent forms for staff and/or parents of students to complete granting the authority to photograph, film and record teachers and students for the purposes of the initiative.



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