

## Wellbeing in Catholic school communities

(from Catholic Education Document, *eXcel*)

***“Wellbeing is critical to children and young people’s learning and life outcomes. It is embedded in all facets of life within a Catholic school community and is lived in the everyday as a reflection of the Christian faith.”***

Archbishop Denis Hart 2015, To Serve and Lead: Catholic Education Melbourne Strategic Plan 2015–2019, p. 1

Wellbeing is enacted through the school’s vision and mission and its policies, practices and procedures, which are grounded in Catholic teaching and tradition. Underpinning pedagogical practice and curriculum design, wellbeing is brought to life through the actions, interactions and attitudes of all school community members.

School leaders, teachers and families are pivotal in fostering the wellbeing of children and young people. Together they strengthen the students’ ability to navigate the breadth of experiences they will face in their environment and relationships.

As a complex and multidimensional construct, wellbeing comprises and is influenced by a range of interrelated factors. It encompasses our sense of self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life and positive relations with others and the environment. Learning to identify the connections between people, ideas and their surrounds enables children and young people to better understand how to regulate emotions and behaviour from within.

*When children learn to self-regulate they have stronger friendships and relationships with others, are more able to pay attention and learn new things and deal better with the normal stresses and disappointments of daily life.*

In Catholic school settings, ‘wellbeing’ is understood to be ‘realising one’s unique potential through physical, mental, emotional and spiritual development’. Wellbeing incorporates ‘the degree to which a student is functioning effectively’ and their capacity to cope, learn and thrive.

Wellbeing and learning are inextricably linked. Supported by an extensive evidence base it is understood that children and young people who have a ‘sustainable state of positive mood, attitude, resilience and satisfaction with self’ are more engaged and successful learners.

Teaching wellbeing in schools **enables** safe and respectful school communities; **connects** children, young people, families and staff through collaborative and caring relationships; **engages** students through experiences that motivate, empower, and inspire; and reframes the **learning** of wellbeing as an integral component of broader academic learning. ‘The mission, and privilege, of the Catholic school is to build a community where authentic relationships based on love provide the means and the support for all students to flourish and grow into the fullness of life’.