



# Black Hill Primary School

## Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

achievement  
program



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Black Hill Primary School.

### Purpose

Leadership, staff and community members acknowledge the importance of promoting positive mental health, resilience and wellbeing.

This policy confirms our commitment to:

- providing a safe, welcoming and supportive environment
- promoting a culture of respect, fairness and equality
- embedding social and emotional learning and intervention into the curriculum
- ensuring families, students and staff are key partners in mental health and wellbeing initiatives
- engaging and working collaboratively with local health professionals.

As a health promoting school, we will promote the mental health and wellbeing of students, staff and families through teaching and learning, policies, creating a safe and healthy physical and social environment, and developing community links and partnerships.

### Policy statement

#### Background

Schools can play a key role in promoting mental health in all children and young people, recognising that children and young people's learning and development is supported by environments that promote and support mental health.<sup>1</sup>

Mental health promotion in schools is about creating positive, safe and supportive environments, and providing opportunities to build and practise relationship skills, resilience and social and emotional competencies. All staff can be involved in mental health promotion as it relates to every area of the school – the culture, policies, curriculum and activities.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> DET Promoting Healthy Minds for Living and Learning <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/health/healthyminds.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> DET 'Building Mental Health Promotion Capacity' <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/health/Pages/building.aspx> (last updated 28 September 2013)

## Whole school engagement

It is recognised that every member of Black Hill Primary School has an impact on students' health and can contribute to creating an environment that promotes positive mental health, resilience and wellbeing.

### Definitions

**Mental health:** For children, this means “the capacity to enjoy and benefit from satisfying family life and relationships and educational opportunities, and to contribute to society in a number of age-appropriate ways. It also includes freedom from problems with emotions, behaviours or social relationships that are sufficiently marked or prolonged enough to lead to suffering or risk to optimal development in the child, or to distress or disturbance in the family.”<sup>3</sup>

**Resilience:** The ability to bounce back from adversity in order to lead a healthy and fulfilling life.<sup>4</sup>

**Social and emotional competence:** The ability to recognise and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, make responsible decisions, establish positive relationships and handle challenging situations capably.<sup>5</sup>

## Procedures and Responsibilities

### Leadership and commitment

- This policy is shared with the whole school community with opportunities for ongoing feedback and input.
- This policy is ratified by School Council leadership and reviewed at least every 3 years.

### Healthy physical environment

- Our outdoor and indoor spaces, furniture, play equipment, resources and access to the natural environment are welcoming and reflect the diversity and interests of the school community.
- Our buildings and grounds are inclusive, safe and accessible for every student, and encourage healthy social interactions.
- Our school provides quiet passive and reflective spaces for students, staff and families.
- Our school provides lunchtime clubs and spaces to support student wellbeing.
- Our school provides spaces to meet to discuss private matters and for families to meet each other for social networking.

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<sup>3</sup> Raphael B. 2000, Promoting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. Discussion paper: key principles and directions. Canberra: Department of Health and Aged Care, National Mental Health Working Group retrieved from KidsMatter Early Childhood: A framework for improving children's mental health and wellbeing. 2012 page 91

<sup>4</sup> School Drug Education and Road Aware. Challenges and Choices. Early Childhood Resource for resilience, drug and road safety education. Government of Western Australia, 2005

<sup>5</sup> Zins J E and Elias M J. Social and Emotional Learning in Safe and Sound: An educational leader's guide to evidence-based social and emotional learning programs. Developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, USA, 2003.

## Healthy culture

- Our school is welcoming and inclusive of all community members and aims to create a sense of belonging and connectedness.
- We promote a culture of respect, fairness and equity.
- We consider diversity and cultural practices when planning and implementing mental health and wellbeing initiatives.
- We encourage and support students, staff and families to have conversations about mental health.
- We implement strategies to promote positive and responsible behaviour, and to prevent and respond to bullying, discrimination and harassment.
- We actively develop and maintain warm, responsive and trusting relationships between students, staff and families.
- Our staff model respectful interactions with each other and to students and families.
- We provide programs to support students' wellbeing and mental health.

## Student teaching and learning

- We support students to learn about and care for their own mental health, resilience and wellbeing.
- Through the use of the wellbeing diaries, we model, practise and guide students to develop and practise social and emotional skills including:
  - Self-awareness
  - Self-management
  - Emotional regulation
  - Social awareness
  - Relationship skills
  - Responsible decision making and problem solving skills
  - Embracing diversity
  - Resilience
- We ensure staff have access to professional development and teaching resources about mental health and wellbeing education, including social and emotional learning.
- We ensure staff can recognise and respond appropriately when students or others need help with their mental health.
- We involve students in the design and implementation of mental health and wellbeing initiatives and policy development and encourage students to contribute ideas about student-led learning opportunities.

## Supported staff

- We support staff to learn about and care for their own mental health and wellbeing.
- We include mental health and wellbeing information and policy requirements in staff induction/ orientation.
- We include staff wellbeing, physical movement breaks and mediation activities during professional learning days and during some staff meetings.

- We create an environment that minimises stress and promotes mental health and wellbeing for our staff.
- We implement strategies to promote positive conflict resolution and restorative conversations to prevent and respond to bullying, discrimination and harassment.

### Families and community partnerships

- We actively include families and the wider community in mental health and wellbeing initiatives.
- We provide families and the wider community with information and strategies to promote and support mental health and wellbeing at the school and at home.
- We share resources about social and emotional learning with families, to encourage a common language and strategies.
- Information we provide is evidence based and accessible to the whole school community.
- We partner with relevant organisations and cultural groups to support our mental health and wellbeing practices and have identified agencies to support families as appropriate.
- Our school has clear referral options and pathways for students, staff and families to access support services for mental health and wellbeing.
- Our school has developed partnerships that enable positive transitions for students within and between schools and early childhood services.

### Relevant legislation accountability documents

[DET School Policy and Advisory Guide – Health Education Approaches](#)

[DET Promoting Healthy Minds for Living and Learning](#)

### Related school policies

- Safe Environments policy
- Staff Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Health and Physical Education Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Duty of care Policy
- Statement of Values
- Community Code of Conduct

### EVALUATION:

This policy is to be reviewed as part of the school's **three-year** review cycle.

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| <b>Created date</b>     | <b>November 2019</b>                                   |
| <b>Consultation</b>     | Staff, Parents, School Council Policy Sub-Committee    |
| <b>Endorsed by</b>      | Black Hill Primary School Council and school principal |
| <b>Endorsed on</b>      | September 2023   |
| <b>Next review date</b> | September 2026   |