

Implementing wellbeing

CCAS Wellbeing Team

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Introduction

Early in the naughties (90s) we asked the question “How do our clients see us?” the answer was clear - as a school that prioritised care and nurture.

That gave us an opportunity to buy into that intentionally or try to change that. We decided to buy into that deeply.

Wellbeing has been an intentional focus for us since 2005. The wellbeing program is guided by our wellbeing team, all allocated timetable time to implement and manage the initiatives at CCAS.

Over the years we have developed multiple wellbeing programs that span from Kindy right through to Gap year programs post year 12.

Wellbeing framework:

CCAS recently adopted the NEST framework for wellbeing, developed by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, to specifically measure elements of student wellbeing and coordinate the numerous programs offered at CCAS. It also helps us to be intentional when evaluating the success of our Wellbeing efforts.

Wellbeing at CCAS is seen as involving the following key elements as essential considerations:

- **Valued, loved & safe**
Involves a child or young person feeling valued by teachers and other adults in their life and knowing that they are important to others. It also encompasses feeling safe at home, in the community and online.
- **Material basics**
Children and young people who have material basics have the things they need. They live in suitable, secure, stable housing, with appropriate clothing,

nutritious food, clean water and clean air.

- **Healthy**
Healthy children and young people have their physical, mental, and emotional health needs met. They receive appropriate preventative measures to address potential or emerging physical, emotional and mental health concerns.
- **Learning**
Individual learning needs are addressed to allow children to realise their full learning potential. They have opportunities to participate in a breadth of experiences where their learning is valued and supported by their family and in the wider community.
- **Participation, inclusion & belonging**
Participation and inclusion encourages young people to use their skills and strengths to meet challenges together. Working with others to achieve a shared vision contributes to our sense of belonging.
- **Meaning, identity & culture**
Meaning identity & culture can be derived from belonging to and serving something bigger than the self. At CCAS we believe ultimate meaning is found in God. A safe and supportive culture helps us explore life's big questions and develop our own personal identity and belief system.

Ei Pulse is a wellbeing survey provided by an external company that gives us an anonymous general wellbeing perception of the cohort and also gives a portal for students to reach out for help and send others gratitude each week. Pulse uses the NEST framework, which enables us to gather real time data on student wellbeing. We pay for this as an add-on to own data, as a way of being clearly data informed in wellbeing decision making .

Covid taught us some lessons

We learned pretty quickly during lock down that there are two types of students. Those who can work on their own and those that really find that difficult. Most of the “passive dissengagers” rose

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in anxiety levels as their connections and sense of belonging reduced. As a wellbeing team we intentionally created opportunities to connect on zoom and also to connect individually. We found opportunities to send home care packages that reminded students they were cared for and belonged to a community. This is just one example of how you need to remain cognisant of current student wellbeing. So having some kind of data informed mode of operation is great, and for this we use Ei Pulse.

Wellbeing leader roles

CCAS has grown as a school, and now has more intention within wellbeing roles across each stage level. These leaders work closely with teachers, parents, students, counsellors to provide a holistic support network to best cater to the students' needs. That wellbeing team, across all stages, meet regularly and collaborate on strategies for continuous growth in the area of wellbeing.

Additional programs

CCAS also outsource and use various specialists and professionals to address and educate our students in areas such as:

- Safe technology use
- Drugs, alcohol and safe practices
- Social awareness and mental health
- Communication skills
- Study and organisation skills
- Money skills

Other focus areas include:

- Student- teacher relationship
- Student voice (Wellbeing Wednesday's EiPulse)
- Staff wellbeing (Ei Pulse as well)
- Student Representative Council

Wellbeing classes

Here at CCAS we offer specific wellbeing classes from kindergarten to year 8. This has been developing and growing for quite some time.

Students regularly participate in activities that support their mental health and wellbeing with the aim of building their 'toolbox' of ideas to self soothe and cope with situations or emotions that challenge their wellbeing in everyday life. Our wellbeing framework helps to identify areas of growth and supports awareness of effect.

As students move through to stages 5 and 6, they engage in wellbeing programs such as

i-Link in year 10 and SDL in 11 & 12 (Spiritual development and leadership).

i-Link is a program that is attached to the Bible program in stage 5. It encourages students to be involved in caring for others and the community at large, both inside and outside of the classroom. Requirements include 40 hrs of community service, through individually chosen activities or organised programs like Storm Co.

SDL is our stage 6 wellbeing program that focuses on 'rite of passage' and 'legacy'. For year 11 the staff realised a lack in student development at school, was supporting 'the official' transitioning from childhood to adulthood and our "Rite of Passage" is aimed at inviting each student into taking on the responsibility of being an adult..

Year 12 draws all the prior learning and experience together. Our year 12's implement community wellbeing programs that are aimed at increasing student connectedness and a sense of belonging across all the years. This is the student legacy on which each year builds upon the strengths of the previous years initiatives .

Our Student Leadership program is also build on the same legacy of belonging. Students are taught to find ways of implementing the servant leadership model, by serving others and facilitating opportunities to discover "your place" at CCAS and the community of the Central Coast.

The final part of our program is the MAD trip (Make a Difference). This trip is after school is finished and like many of our other schools in Australia, heads overseas to demonstrate to the international community that same sense of belonging, through service to a sister school in Vanuatu.

Finally

While there are people with the title of "wellbeing" in their role, we recognise that the true care of our students happens via all of our individual employees, from cleaners and maintenance workers to teachers and administrators. It is the sense that belonging only happens when it is felt from multiple areas, within multiple settings and from multiple people. With the support of peers, significant adults and systems, students grow towards the desired sense of belonging.

It was when we sat down and mapped what we do as a school, accepted why the community was coming 'through our doors' and intentionally worked towards that 'caring' goal, we fully understood our role on the Central Coast.

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power of the gospel and the agency of the Holy Spirit in character formation.

As respective leaders in their faith communities, Rick Warren and Ellen White in writing about aspects of character development have offered teachers, as well as educators and parents, some valuable insights about a 'project' that ultimately has eternal consequences. **TEACH**

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* Indicates a posthumous compilation sourced from the author's articles, tracts and letters

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Wilfred Rieger is an Honorary Senior Research Fellow at Avondale University. His research interests include educational administration, pastoral care and chaplaincy, action research, and Delphi studies, particularly as related to Christian education.

“Through modelling of an authentic Christian lifestyle, teachers also bear witness to the power of the gospel and the agency of the Holy Spirit in character formation.”

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Wellbeing needs to take into account client expectations of 'who we are', and then build a program that supports that. We have tried many things and spent lots of money and time,, but one thing stands out to us. There are no quick fixes or copy/paste programs that will do what you want. There are no end of people and programs out there that are willing to take your money with the promise of creating a wellbeing space in your school. To be honest - nothing works better that looking at what your community needs and responding to that with intention, care and compassion.

Our theme, one that guides all of our Student Leadership, Chaplaincy, Counselling, Bible and all our general teaching, wellbeing and campus church is an adaptation of Micah 6:8

“Love God, Love Others, Love Yourself and Always Be Kind. **TEACH**