



Building Relationships: Wellbeing at St Bernadette's

Reviewed: July 2019

At St Bernadette's we strive to nurture the intellectual, physical, spiritual, social and emotional development of our students. We recognise that students can achieve more in their learning when they feel safe and supported at school.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process through which we learn to recognise and manage emotions, care about ourselves and others, make good decisions, behave ethically and responsibly, develop positive relationships, and avoid negative behaviours.

Social and Emotional Learning at St Bernadette's comprises the 5 following areas:

1. Self-awareness
2. Self-management
3. Social Awareness
4. Relationship Skills
5. Responsible Decision-making

The explicit teaching of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) as part of the Wellbeing strategy of the school is focused around these five core competencies. The General Capabilities of the Victorian Curriculum (Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Responsibility, Ethical Understanding and Intercultural Understanding) also provide a framework and resource for teachers to draw on when planning for teaching in Social and Emotional Learning and Wellbeing.

Teachers in consultation with the Student Wellbeing leader, are responsible for planning and assessing the explicitly taught sessions in SEL. We have a range of resources and strategies to help develop SEL competencies in our students some of which come from the Berry Street Educational model and the Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships curriculum.

Of particular importance is the use of a common language to help students identify their thoughts and feelings, and consider appropriate solutions when problems arise. Some of our key concepts and strategies are:

Morning Meetings

In each learning space the day is started with a Morning Meeting, where students gather in a circle, greet each other and say prayer. The purpose of Morning Meetings is to:

1. Set a tone for respectful and engaged learning in a climate of trust
2. Build and enhance connections among students and between students and teachers
3. Merge academic, social, and emotional learning
4. Motivate students by addressing the human need to feel a sense of significance and belonging (Horizons of Hope), and to have fun

Through the repetition of many ordinary moments of respectful interaction, some extraordinary moments can occur

Mindfulness

Mindfulness restores a sense of calm in the learning space and provides students with an opportunity to reset. Benefits of mindfulness include; decreasing stress and anxiety, improving self-esteem and self-regulation, increasing calm and contributing to a positive culture. Mindfulness is practiced throughout the school in many different ways, including journaling, mindful drawing or colouring, brain breaks, meditation and finding our centre.

De-escalation and Self-regulation

We all experience heightened emotions at various times, for example feeling extremely excited or extremely angry. While experiencing heightened emotions it can be difficult to regulate our behaviour. We teach and implement de-escalation strategies to centre heightened students, to prepare them to connect with others and themselves and to enable successful learning. It is important for adults in learning spaces to model these strategies and for students to practice them so that they can begin to self-regulate.

Growth Mindset

Mindsets are beliefs about yourself and your qualities: your intelligence, your strengths, your talents, your personality, your social skills. A growth mindset is the belief that a person's skills and qualities can be improved through dedication and hard work. At St Bernadette's we encourage students to take risks in their learning, strive for improvement, learn from their mistakes and reach their full potential, by demonstrating a growth mindset.

Buddy Program

An important feature of St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School is our well established and successful transition programs. We provide our Prep students with a Year 5 Buddy to help familiarise themselves with our school and to settle in. This continues for these children until the completion of Year 1.

Peer Mediators

Each year students in Year 5 volunteer to be part of the Peer Mediation training and program. Peer Mediators are trained in dealing with minor conflicts and disagreements between two students. Peer mediators are rostered in pairs to roam the school yard during lunch and recess and are recognisable by their fluoro vests.

Change comes about through compassionate healing relationships, patience, high expectations and inclusion. All issues will be dealt with in accordance with the values of the school. We recognise that all students, regardless of any learning, behavioural, physical, emotional or social difficulties, have the right to be treated with equity, empathy, and respect. This is done in a spirit of inclusion, with the uncompromising belief that all students are capable of changing their behaviour to become citizens who contribute to society, through the example and message of Jesus Christ.

To be reviewed in 2021

Resources:

Catholic Education Melbourne, Horizons of Hope – Wellbeing in a Catholic School

Berry Street Educational Model