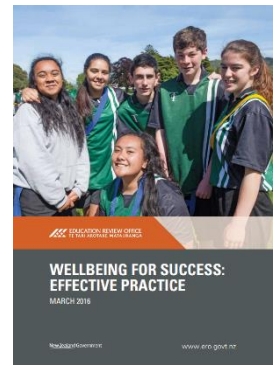


Wellbeing for success: effective practice (March 2016)

In 2014, the Education Review Office (ERO) undertook an evaluation of the extent to which schools were promoting and responding to student wellbeing. The findings were published in the following reports:

- > Wellbeing for Children's Success at Primary School (February 2015)
- > Wellbeing for Young People's Success at Secondary School (February 2015)



The examples of effective practice in this report have been drawn from information ERO gathered as part of 2014 evaluations into how well schools promoted and responded to student wellbeing.

ERO identified 13 primary schools and three secondary schools as having features that clearly promoted wellbeing for all students. ERO undertook follow-up visits and gathered more information about practices that promote wellbeing for all students. ERO was also interested in the systems schools had in place to identify and respond when concerns, issues or events required more targeted support.

The effective practice report provides further detail about practices in some schools that promote wellbeing for all students, and describes how these schools respond when concerns, issues or events require more targeted support.

This report complements an ERO resource developed for schools to help them improve student wellbeing. *Wellbeing for success: a resource for schools* describes the practices in schools that effectively promote and respond to student wellbeing. Developing a positive school culture is vital for achieving the desired outcomes for student wellbeing. Schools promote a culture of wellbeing by making their vision, values, goals and priorities part of their curriculum and associated learning and teaching practices. The capability to respond well to a particular event is often determined by the way in which the school's culture of wellbeing enables and supports leaders and teachers to respond.

The schools with effective practices had common themes in their approach to promoting wellbeing for all students and responding to specific concerns and issues. The motivation to do better was underpinned by the desire for school to be a good place for students. All of the schools focused on improvement for wellbeing.

The following themes were clearly evident in the talk, actions and approaches to wellbeing in the schools with effective practice:

- > We can do better.
- > Improvement focus.
- > Recognising the need for a balanced focus on wellbeing and achievement.
- > Providing layers of support.
- > Systems, people and initiatives wrap around students.
- > Making implicit school values explicit.
- > Using restorative practices.
- > "We want the best for all of our students."

Examples of effective practice to promote student wellbeing

Wrap-around support for students

The hub of the school's wrap-around support was a 'one-stop-shop' where guidance counsellors were located. There was also the careers advisor/Gateway coordinator; a nurse; Resource Teacher - Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) and a physiotherapist. The building was well located so that students could access services discreetly. There was a focus on normalising seeking help.

What it feels like to be a student in this school

- > *It feels like a family.*
- > *There's trust here – we know each other.*
- > *If they hear something's wrong in your family they will go to you.*

Establishing a supportive environment conducive to student learning and wellbeing

A well-coordinated pastoral care and guidance network at this secondary school effectively monitored student wellbeing. This network gave students ongoing contact with one or more significant adults through a grouping structure that includes Roopu groups of 12 to 15 students for two years.

What it feels like to be a student in this school

- > *I feel like a person here. At my other school they welcomed my parents not me.*
- > *Everyone's an individual here.*
- > *At this school peer support is not patronising – they're not better than you – power stuff.*

Examples of practices to respond to student wellbeing concerns or issues

Daily check in

Vulnerable students in this school were tracked to monitor changes in their engagement and achievement levels.

Each morning the Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO) took time to 'check in' with these students....to say hello, find out what had been happening and make sure they were okay for the day.

These conversations were often enough for the student to get on with their day, or a signal that some more support was needed. The aim was to make students aware that people cared, and they were important. Having someone free to do this each morning was key.

Establishing a supportive environment conducive to learning and wellbeing

The school's special character underpinned its approach to student wellbeing. A strong commitment to student wellbeing was reflected in the school's vision.

The 'Connect 2 Succeed' (C2S) pastoral groups were the lynchpins of the school's approach to student wellbeing. These were vertical groups of 15 Years 7 to 10 and Years 11 to 13 students. A learning coach led each group. All staff had a role as a learning coach. The groups met with their coaches for two sessions per week.

A feature of each session was the way in which the coach meets individually with one or two students to discuss their progress with learning. Part of each session also involved deliberate acts of group teaching about topics and activities such as goal setting, revision techniques, career planning and subject choices.