Primary Welfare Officer Initiative

GUIDELINES 2008

Student Wellbeing Branch
Office for Government School Education
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
November 2007
Contents

1. Purpose 3
   1.1 Primary Welfare Officer Initiative 3
   1.2 Revised Primary Welfare Officer Guidelines 4

2. Primary Welfare Officers in Effective Schools 5

3. Service delivery model 6
   3.1 Framework for Student Support Services in Victorian Schools 6

4. Roles and responsibilities 10
   4.1 Student Wellbeing Branch, Office for Government School Education 10
   4.2 Regions 10
   4.3 Schools 10
   4.4 Primary Welfare Officers 10

5. Accountability and performance measures 12

6. Privacy 13
   6.1 Duty of Care and Mandatory Reporting 13

7. Record keeping 14

8. Primary Welfare Officer Strategic Planning and Implementation Tool Box 15
   Tool One: Primary Welfare Officer Initiative Program Logic 17
   Tool Two: Primary Welfare Officer Initiative Action Strategy Templates 19
   Tool Three: Examples of Primary Welfare Officer Roles and Responsibilities Conceptual Chart Templates 26
   Tool Four: Confidential Primary Welfare Officer Case Management Planner 30

9. Resources 32
   9.1 Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Sources 32
   9.2 External Information Sources 34

11. Bibliography 44

Attachments
   Attachment 1: Qualities of Effective Intervention Programs: Summary of Research 46
   Attachment 2: Primary Welfare Officer Position Description Template 49
Primary Welfare Officer Initiative
Guidelines 2008

Introduction
The Primary Welfare Officer Initiative Guidelines were developed following extensive consultation with central, regional and school-based Student Wellbeing personnel. These Guidelines have been updated following the extension of the Initiative through to the 2010-2011 financial year.

1. Purpose

1.1 Overview of the Primary Welfare Officer Initiative
The purpose of the Primary Welfare Officer Initiative is to enhance the capacity of schools to support students who are at risk of disengagement from school and who are not achieving their educational potential. The Initiative complements and extends existing programs that enhance student engagement, retention, academic achievement and the acquisition of life skills.

The Primary Welfare Officer is an active member of the school’s student wellbeing team. Primary Welfare Officers assist schools in the implementation of the Framework for Student Support Services in Victorian Government Schools\(^1\) (the Framework) in order to promote the resilience of young people and their engagement in school.

Primary Welfare Officers support schools to strengthen their whole school approach to the wellbeing of students. The Framework guides the implementation of practice to reduce risk factors within the school context and to promote protective factors by strengthening learning relationships in a supportive, healthy environment.

The Primary Welfare Officer initiative has been the subject of three evaluations; two undertaken by the University of Melbourne, and the final evaluation undertaken by Success Works in September 2006.

The evaluations concluded that the initiative has increased the capacity of schools to support at-risk students and their families, and that immediate impacts are being realised at both the school-level, including improved links with families and external agencies, and for individual students, including improved self-esteem and lower incidences of aggressive behaviour.

Key impacts identified include, whole school approaches to wellbeing strengthened with school administration, classroom teachers and parents working together more effectively, improved links with community agencies and increased student attendance and connectedness.

1.2 Primary Welfare Officer Guidelines

These Primary Welfare Officer Initiative Guidelines will assist schools in the implementation of the Primary Welfare Officer Initiative and ensure a comprehensive, flexible integrated and accountable service within schools and across the state.
2. **Primary Welfare Officers in Effective Schools**

To achieve the vision of the *Blueprint for Government Schools*, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is working towards an excellent government school system, rather than a system with some excellent government schools.

An excellent school system is one that is made up of effective schools that are continuously improving.

The eight characteristics that help make a school effective are broadly outlined in the model adapted from the work of *Sammons, Hillman and Mortimore (1995)* ([www.le.ac.uk/education/ESI/doc1f.html](http://www.le.ac.uk/education/ESI/doc1f.html)):

Effective schools believe that all students can learn and, where necessary, ensure that appropriate supports and programs are in place for all students to succeed.

Primary Welfare Officers play an important role within effective schools. Their main leadership role is to enhance the capacity of schools to better support students who are at risk of disengagement and not achieving their educational potential.

Primary Welfare Officers inform the development of tailored programs to meet the individual needs, interests and abilities of at risk students.

Moreover, the work of Primary Welfare Officers is central to building and maintaining continuity of care for students and their families, by ensuring ongoing engagement with the school and school community and facilitating assistance with relevant services.
3. Service delivery model

3.1 Framework for Student Support Services in Victorian Schools

The Framework is the governing policy that informs the way in which Primary Welfare Officers work in school communities. The Framework describes principles, arrangements and the additional resources provided to enable a significant strengthening of student welfare and support services. It outlines how a continuum of services can be provided to students and their families within a comprehensive and integrated framework, with an increasing emphasis on preventive approaches and early intervention activities.

3.1.1 Levels of activity

The Framework outlines four interrelated levels to group together the wide range of activities currently being undertaken by schools and related support services:

- primary prevention
- early intervention
- intervention
- postvention (restoring wellbeing).

To an extent, these levels overlap and span the range of provision of care from the support needed for all children and young people to the support needed in crisis situations.\(^2\)

The levels of activity and major concepts described in the Framework are outlined below:

**Primary prevention**

*Build belonging and promote wellbeing*

Primary prevention refers to population-based strategies for whole groups, such as a school or a year level, that aim to strengthen protective factors and minimize the impact of risk factors in students.

Strategies include:
- build mutual respect and safety at school;
- implement comprehensive curriculum to engage all students;
- enhance school attendance;
- practice inclusive teaching and learning;
- encourage supportive relationships;
- involve parents/families and communities; and
- ease transitions.

**Early intervention**

*Strengthen coping skills and reduce risk factors*

Early intervention strategies are targeted at students displaying general disorganisation in coping skills and other personal and social vulnerabilities that place them at risk of not reaching their educational potential.
Strategies include the:

- assessment of risks and identification of needs;
- development of evidence-based programs to improve skills;
- provision of school-based support and information; and
- monitoring and evaluating of student support programs.

Early intervention strategies should be developed within the population-based approach.

**Intervention**

*Provide access to support information and treatment*

Intervention strategies are aimed at smaller numbers of students who experience serious or persistent difficulties, and who may need either short-term or ongoing access to additional professional intervention services and support. Intervention strategies are most effective when they are embedded in the school's existing wellbeing programs.

Strategies include:

- clarifying referral procedures;
- linking to counseling services;
- ensuring continuity of care; and
- monitoring and evaluating progress.

**Restoring wellbeing**

*Manage trauma and limit impact*

Restoring wellbeing strategies are aimed at students affected by critical incidences or potentially traumatic situations. These strategies also focus on re-connecting students who are disengaged from the school system.

Strategies include:

- increasing the awareness of trauma impact;
- planning for emergency response;
- providing counseling support; and
- monitoring recovery and evaluating plans.
3.1.2 Major Concepts

Continuity of care
Research has clearly identified the need for schools to assist students and families to adjust and negotiate periods of transitions in their lives. School related transitions include both entry to school and transition to a different school environment (such as primary to secondary school).

Continuity of care entails the negotiation and coordination of ongoing assistance with the student, the family, the school and relevant services.

Schools engage with relevant community agencies and develop local initiatives that provide a range of services for children and young people and their families during periods of transition. These initiatives aim to reduce parental isolation and to provide parents and students with new social networks, skills and opportunities.

The work of the Primary Welfare Officer is central to building and maintaining continuity of care for vulnerable students and their families.

Partnerships
Partnerships enhance and improve service delivery. Schools have a significant role in assisting students and families to utilise health and community wellbeing services. Together, schools and wellbeing agencies develop dynamic responses that strengthen protective factors for children and their families.

Schools play a critical and active role in assisting agencies to intervene with families in an appropriate and timely manner. Best Start research has defined principles of effective intervention programs with the early years age group (see Attachment 1).

Primary Welfare Officers can strengthen the responses of agencies to the needs of families. Agencies can deliver information and support to families in the non-stigmatising and family friendly environment that schools provide. Schools are uniquely placed to perform this vital role. With specialist wellbeing assistance, schools implement evidence-based, effective intervention programs and are able to assist community agencies and protective workers to actively engage parents and to build on their strengths.

Building Resilience
Primary Welfare Officers work within a whole school approach to focus on reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors. Research has identified a number of risk factors that increase the chances of young people developing health and
behaviour problems as well as a number of protective factors that contribute to the resilience of young people.\(^3\)

4. **Roles and responsibilities**

4.1 **Student Wellbeing Branch, Office for Government School Education**

Student Wellbeing Branch, Office for Government School Education is responsible for:
- setting strategic directions and developing policy and guidelines;
- facilitating the resourcing of regions and managing the program budget.

4.2 **Regions**

Regions will:
- support schools with the recruitment and induction of Primary Welfare Officers;
- ensure the delivery of professional learning to schools and Primary Welfare Officers;
- provide opportunities for Primary Welfare Officers to develop professional networks;
- develop partnerships and protocols with regionally-based services, agencies and other government departments; and
- report to the Student Wellbeing Branch on the level of professional development provided to Primary Welfare Officers, the number of Primary Welfare Officer that have attended the professional development sessions.

4.3 **Schools**

Schools will:
- ensure that there is an appropriate structure to deliver a coordinated whole school approach to student wellbeing;
- take responsibility for employment matters, school based induction, ongoing support and work planning (the principal will oversee this); and
- report on the work of the Primary Welfare Officers on an annual basis.

4.4 **Primary Welfare Officers**

Primary Welfare Officers will:
- contribute to the development of a whole school approach to encourage student engagement, learning and wellbeing;
- promote a positive and secure environment through evidence based learning and wellbeing programs;
- develop community partnerships to strengthen student wellbeing;
- work within the whole school community to support students and their families;

• promote greater student and family engagement within schools; and
• develop and support the school’s approach to effective student case coordination.
5. Accountability and performance measures

Schools are responsible for ensuring that there is a focus on continually improving outcomes for students – student learning, student engagement and wellbeing, and student pathways and transitions. A School Strategic Plan replaces the current School Charter and sets out what outcomes a school is striving to achieve, and in broad terms, how it is going to achieve them (School Improvement and Accountability Overview).

Key measures of school performance, including those listed below, are contained within a School Level Report and are collected by DEECD Central Office. These data sources will also assist schools and Primary Welfare Officers in the process of identifying and prioritizing key welfare issues for students and their families:

- attainment data (such as P-2 reading, AIM, teacher judgement against Victorian Essential Learning Standards\(^4\) literacy and numeracy outcomes);
- absence data;
- suspension and expulsion data
- staff, student and parent opinion;
- destination data; and
- retention data.

These key measures will provide a platform for the monitoring and evaluation of the Initiative’s effectiveness on student outcomes while minimising the administrative burden on schools.

It is anticipated that impact on student achievement and learning outcomes will occur as student attendance and engagement is improved over time.

Schools are required to report to DEECD Central Office on an annual basis. Reporting will be undertaken via a survey in Term 2 of each year.

There are also a number of ways in which Primary Welfare Officers can keep comprehensive qualitative records to assist with monitoring and reviewing whilst maintaining student confidentiality, such as:

- **Primary Welfare Officer Annual Report to School Council** that provides information concerning Primary Welfare Officer key roles and responsibilities; activities; expected outcomes as well as any anticipated changes to the Primary Welfare Officer role in the following year;

- **Primary Welfare Officer Action Strategy template** that allows for both strategic planning and the documenting of Primary Welfare Officer work; and

- **Primary Welfare Officer weekly diary** that records activities, outcomes and reflections in an action research type approach.

6. **Privacy**

All Department of Education and Early Childhood Development staff must comply with the *Information Privacy Act 2000* and the *Health Records Act 2001*, whenever personal information about students or staff is collected, stored, transmitted, shared, used or disclosed. The Department is committed to protecting the privacy of personal and health information. The Department’s Information Privacy Policy embodies this commitment and can be found on the following website:


At or before the time (or as soon as practicable after) of collecting personal information about an individual, all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that the individual is aware of the purpose for which their personal information is being collected. Privacy notices templates for adaptation by all student wellbeing staff, including primary welfare officers, are available on the following website: www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/privacy.

Different disclosure standards apply to information relating to students’ educational progress, and their health or personal information. This distinction is clarified and further information is available in the following DEECD documents:

a) A Guide to Privacy and Transfer of Student Information between Victorian Government Schools;

(www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/privacy/transferstuinfo.htm)

b) Checklist for Student Support Groups

(www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/Schools/Privacy/student_support_groups.pdf); and

c) Supporting Privacy Practice:

(www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/Schools/Privacy/how_to_write_a_privacy_notice.pdf)

Additional resources supporting privacy practice in student wellbeing are available by contacting the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development’s Privacy Officer at privacy.enquiries@edumail.vic.gov.au or by ringing the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development’s Information Privacy Line on 9637 3601. Regional privacy officers and Student Support Services staff can also be contacted for more information.

6.1 **Duty of Care and Mandatory Reporting**

Schools have a key responsibility in the prevention and reporting of child abuse and neglect. The duty of care owed by student wellbeing personnel in schools to a student requires that personnel take reasonable steps to protect students in their care from the risk of injury that they could have reasonably foreseen. This may involve disclosing personal or health information to others if this is necessary to fulfil the student wellbeing staff’s duty of care. Refer to Supporting Privacy Practice (www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/Schools/Privacy/how_to_write_a_privacy_notice.pdf) and Circular S275-2007 Release of Responding to Allegations of Student Sexual Assault – Procedures for Victorian Government Schools at
7. **Record keeping**

Staff must also adhere to requirements of the *Public Records Act 1973*. There are two standards relevant for school staff: *General Disposal Schedule for School Records*, Public Record Office Standard (PROS) 01/01, and *General Disposal Schedule for Common Administrative Records* PROS 96/13 Version 2000, available on EduLibrary at Schools/Archives & Records/Public Record Office Standards.

Files established by Primary Welfare Officers are Departmental Confidential Student (DCS) files and must be maintained and stored separately to school student files. There is a clear distinction between those student files that a school might ordinarily keep about each student enrolled at the school and those that are established as a result of intervention by the Primary Welfare Officer.

Informed parental consent to current services provided should be in writing and kept in the secure file. Principals are responsible for the secure management of Department Confidential Student files located in schools.

**Guidelines for Processing Department Confidential Student files** can also be found on EduLibrary at:

8. **Primary Welfare Officer Strategic Planning and Implementation Tool Box**

The following **four levels** of Primary Welfare Officer strategic planning and implementation tools will support schools in the development, implementation and evaluation of this Initiative:

a) **Level One: Primary Welfare Officer Program Logic** (Tool 1) demonstrates the dependent relationship between the Primary Welfare Officer role, school-level outcomes and student-level outcomes. This program logic will assist schools in identifying, clarifying and developing goals and outcomes for the Primary Welfare Officer Initiative at the individual school level.

b) **Level Two: Primary Welfare Officer Action Plan Templates** (Tool 2) provide schools with two examples of templates for determining a whole-school Primary Welfare Officer strategy. Suggested steps for developing the templates follow each example.

Example 1 is a simple matrix that details Primary Welfare Officer implementation across the key areas of curriculum, prevention/early intervention, policy and parents/community. Strategies that have been achieved are recorded at the end of the year as a means of indicating achievement. The final section allows the Primary Welfare Officer to reflect on aspects of the Action Plan that have not been achieved and possible focus areas for the following year.

Example 2 is a more comprehensive template that includes student wellbeing focus areas, target groups, implementation strategies, timelines and desired outcomes. This Primary Welfare Officer Action Plan demonstrates the links between program planning such as implementation strategies, resources and success indicators, as well as providing a means by which progress can be monitored and reviewed.

c) **Level Three: Primary Welfare Officer Roles and Responsibilities Conceptual Chart** (Tool 3 a and b) assists schools in defining and promoting the Primary Welfare Officer roles and responsibilities so that there is a greater understanding throughout the wider school community of how the various Primary Welfare Officer’s roles and responsibilities complement and strengthen a whole-school approach to student wellbeing. Examples (a) and (b) of the Primary Welfare Officer Roles and Responsibilities Conceptual Chart illustrate how two schools have looked at the Primary Welfare Officer Program

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Logic’s broader objectives and extracted key strategies that are being undertaken within their own school.

d) Level Four: Confidential Primary Welfare Officer Case Management Planner (Tool 4) supports Primary Welfare Officers in the planning and recording of individual case-managed responses to supporting high needs students.
Tool One:

Primary Welfare Officer Initiative Program Logic

Source: Student Wellbeing Branch, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2003

The Primary Welfare Officer program logic below, maps the activities of Primary Welfare Officers to a range of hypothesised school based outcomes.

Outcomes to which the Primary Welfare Officers should be striving include:

- Improved student engagement;
- Improved student attendance;
- Improved feelings of health, safety and happiness amongst students, and
- Increased positive attitudes and behaviours.

The fundamental range of activities that will lead to these outcomes include:

- Whole school approaches to the promotion of wellbeing
- Engagement of the school community
- Coordination of support for students and families
- Development of community partnerships.
Promote development and implementation of wellbeing in schools

Develop whole school approach to student attendance, transition and transience

Develop case coordination strategies for student support

Facilitate delivery of intervention programs for students and families

Coordinate access and timely service delivery to students and families

Participate in student wellbeing professional networks

Positive whole school approach to promotion of wellbeing

Engagement of school community

Coordination of support for students and families

Development of community partnerships (other schools and community providers)

Improvement in student engagement and attendance

Students are healthy, feel safe and are happy

Students develop positive attitudes and behaviours

Enhanced capacity of schools to support students who are at-risk of disengagement and not achieving their educational potential

Students learn more effectively

Improved likelihood of students remaining in school and achieving their educational potential

Student outcomes

Primary Welfare Officer outcomes

Primary Welfare Officer roles
Tool 2a:

Primary Welfare Officer Initiative Action Strategy Templates: Example 1

Developed in consultation with a number of Regional Office Student Wellbeing personnel and Primary Welfare Officers
Primary Welfare Officer Action Plan Template: Example 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>Prevention/Early Intervention</th>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Parents &amp; Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>eg</td>
<td>eg</td>
<td>eg</td>
<td>eg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Review curriculum against VELS (Physical, Personal &amp; Social Learning Strand)</td>
<td>• Implement ‘Seasons’ grief and loss program</td>
<td>• Develop /Review school Student Engagement Policy</td>
<td>• Develop &amp; implement ‘Kool Kids: Positive Parenting’ program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Update units of work as required</td>
<td>• Conduct bullying survey &amp; make recommendations</td>
<td>• Develop anti-bullying policy</td>
<td>• Provide ‘Seasons’ program parent information session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teach anti-bullying lessons p-6</td>
<td>• Undertake Welfare Coordinators’ regional training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Successful Targets (completed towards end of year): ‘Seasons’ implemented; Anti-bullying lessons implemented, survey completed & recommendations implemented; completed Welfare Coordinators’ training; parenting program completed.

Forward Planning (completed towards end of year): review Student Engagement Policy; review curriculum against VELS; introduce ‘You Can Do It’ across school.
Steps to Develop Primary Welfare Officer Action Strategy: Template Example 1

1. **Student Wellbeing Needs Analysis**
   Conduct analysis of student wellbeing needs by:
   - **Examining School Strategic Plan** and any other relevant documents (such as wellbeing policies) for identified school wellbeing priorities;
   - **Consulting** with Principal, staff, students, parents, relevant community welfare agencies and other schools to identify gaps in and/or possibilities for school wellbeing provision;
   - **SWOT analysis** (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) of current wellbeing structures/programs as part of a staff meeting; one-to-one discussions; regional Primary Welfare Officer discussions; and/or consulting School Council; and
   - **Prioritising** student wellbeing areas of need for the year.

2. **Implementation Strategies: Curriculum, Prevention/Early Intervention; Policy, Parents Community:**
   - What are the specific programs, activities and/or policies that will be addressed during the year?
   - Ensure that implementation strategies are achievable, realistic and measurable.

3. **Publicise and implement**

4. **Successful Targets (completed towards end of year)**
   - At the end of the year, what has been achieved?

5. **Forward Planning (completed towards end of year)**
   - What has not been achieved?
   - What are possible focus areas for the following year?

6. **Review draft Primary Welfare Officer School Action Strategy**
   **Ask the following questions:**
   - How can we improve the provision of school welfare/wellbeing?
   - Are the areas of need the same/changed?
   - Are the implementation strategies achievable, realistic and measurable?
   - Are there adequate resources? Additional resources needed?
Tool 2b:

Primary Welfare Officer Initiative Action Strategy Templates: Example 2

Developed in consultation with a number of Regional Office Student Wellbeing personnel and Primary Welfare Officers
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Wellbeing Focus Areas</th>
<th>Desired Outcomes</th>
<th>Implementation Strategies</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Success Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. Student engagement</td>
<td>Increased student attendance</td>
<td>Case-manage support for high needs students; Parenting programs</td>
<td>Student Support Services Officers; Koorie Educators; School Focused Youth Service; classroom teachers; school welfare group</td>
<td>Semester 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>% of students attending school regularly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Family engagement in school</td>
<td>Increased family engagement in school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Semester 2</td>
<td>% of parents attending parenting programs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Steps to Develop Primary Welfare Officer Action Strategy: Template Example 2

1. School Wellbeing Focus
Conduct analysis of student wellbeing needs by:
   a. Examining *School Strategic Plan* and any other relevant documents (such as Wellbeing/Welfare policies) for identified school wellbeing priorities;
   b. Consulting with Principal, staff, students, parents, relevant community welfare agencies and other schools to identify gaps in and/or possibilities for school wellbeing provision;
   c. **SWOT analysis** (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) of current welfare/wellbeing structures/programs as part of a staff meeting; one-to-one discussions; regional Primary Welfare Officer discussions; and/or consulting School Council;
   d. **Prioritising 2-3 focus areas** for the four year (immediate, intermediate, long term student wellbeing issues); and
   e. Ensuring that implementation strategies are achievable, realistic and measurable.

2. Desired Outcomes
   What are we trying to achieve?
   What is the rationale for choosing these focus areas?
   What are the aims/objectives? (Short term, intermediate and long term outcomes)

3. Implementation Strategies
   How will we do it?

4. Resources
   What do we need to do it? (budget, staffing, professional development, timetable changes, library/classroom materials, other?)

5. Timeline: When will it be implemented?

6. Success Criteria
   How will we measure progress/success? (such as % of staff attending professional development; number of incidents of poor behaviour reported in playground; or number of parents participating in parenting programs run by the school)
7. Publicise and implement

8. Review draft Primary Welfare Officer School Action Strategy
   Ask the following questions:
   - How can we improve the provision of school welfare/wellbeing?
   - Are the focus areas appropriate/what has changed?
   - Are the implementation strategies achievable, realistic and measurable?
   - Are there adequate resources? Additional resources needed?
   - Should the targets change?
   - Is the timeline realistic?
   - What are the success indicators telling us?
Tool 3:

Examples of Primary Welfare Officer Roles and Responsibilities
Conceptual Chart Templates

Developed in consultation with Regional Office Student Wellbeing personnel and Primary Welfare Officers

The following Primary Welfare Officer templates are two examples of the ways in which schools have looked at the Program Logic’s broader objectives and extracted some of the key strategies that are being undertaken in their individual schools.
How does your work as a Primary Welfare Officer contribute to the following? Please give specific examples of tasks/roles/work.

1. Contribute to the development of a whole school approach to encourage student engagement, learning and wellbeing:

   eg. Increase teacher capacity to support the diverse needs of students

2. Promote a positive and secure environment through evidence-based learning and wellbeing programs:

   eg. provide professional development for staff in aspects of student engagement; resilience and understanding poverty

3. Develop community partnerships to strengthen student wellbeing:

   eg. develop individual behaviour recovery programs for identified children by drawing upon internal and external welfare expertise as appropriate
4. Work within the whole school community to support students and their families:

eg. arrange counselling, pastoral care and/or referrals for students

5. Promote greater student and family engagement within schools:

eg. Publish parent newsletters that relate to wellbeing initiatives

6. Develop and support the school’s approach to effective student case co-ordination:

eg. contribute to regional and local network professional development activities

7. Other?

eg. provide a written report twice a year to School Council on role of Primary Welfare Officer; meet weekly with Welfare Group to discuss emerging welfare issues in school community.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linking Student Learning and Wellbeing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Please note this one example of a Primary Welfare Officer’s work; other Primary Welfare Officers may have a similar or quite different approach.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Whole-school Support**
   - Primary Prevention: co-ordinated school approach to supporting all students
   - Early Intervention: targeted individual and group support
   - Intervention: case-managed support with specialized services
   - Restoring Wellbeing: getting students and families back on track

2. **Working with Teachers & Students:**
   - Organise and promote wellbeing focused professional development for teachers
   - Plan and implement school-wide values and social competency programs
   - Provide individual support for at-risk children
   - Provide group support for at-risk children
   - Co-ordinate student support network
   - Manage student referrals

3. **Working with Parents:**
   - Communication
   - Family support
   - Parenting programs
   - Parent meetings
   - Newsletter articles
   - Referrals

4. **Working with Community:**
   - Liaise with external welfare providers such as Student Support Services Officers (DEECD); Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services; School Focused Youth Service; Department of Human Services; and Centre Against Sexual Assault.
**Tool 4:**

*Confidential Primary Welfare Officer Case Management Planner*

Developed in consultation with Regional Office Student Wellbeing personnel and Primary Welfare Officers
**Confidential Primary Welfare Officer Case Management Planner**

**Case Identification:** Name of Student

**School and Community Partners:** Carillon Primary School and DEECD Psychologist

**Prompting Questions:** How to support student who has been suspended for inappropriate interaction with peers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Date</th>
<th>Target Group</th>
<th>Implementation Strategy</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Resources Required</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 2/5/05</td>
<td>Student and family</td>
<td>i. Daily communication book; &amp; buddy partner \  ii. counselling</td>
<td>Review in 3 weeks</td>
<td>i set up communication book and buddy partner; ii. Arrange meeting with parents to discuss counselling option.</td>
<td>i. Psychologist \  ii. Primary Welfare Officer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Resources

9.1 Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

The Department’s website contains descriptions of wellbeing focused programs and services and links to information. Many publications and policies are available from the Department’s Student Wellbeing website www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing.

The following are examples of information and links described in the online resources:

9.1.1 Policy and Guidelines

- Safe Schools are Effective Schools
- Framework for Student Support Services in Victorian Schools
- Responding to Allegations of Student Sexual Assault – Procedures for Victorian Government Schools
- It’s Not OK to Be Away – Attendance Initiative
- Guidelines for Development of the Student Code of Conduct
- Student Attendance Guidelines
- Child Protection
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- Partnering Agreement: School Attendance and Engagement of Children and Young People in Out of Home Care (DEECD/DHS)
- Drugs, Legal Issues and Schools
- Managing School Emergencies

9.1.2 Reports and Research

- Keeping Kids at schools – issues in student attendance
- Mind of Youth – what young people have to say about family, school, peers and the community

9.1.3 Community and School Partnerships

- School Focused Youth Service is designed to support effective links between primary prevention work done by school-based support services within the education sector and the early intervention strategies provided by the community sector http://www.sfys.infoexchange.net.au/
- Best Start: a whole of government prevention and early intervention project that aims to improve the health, development, learning and wellbeing of all Victorian
children from pregnancy through transition to school (usually taken to be eight years of age) [http://www.beststart.vic.gov.au](http://www.beststart.vic.gov.au)

9.1.4 Resources

- Safe Schools are Effective Schools – A resource for developing safe and support school environments
- Responding to Allegations of Student Sexual Assault – Procedures for Victorian Government Schools
- It’s Not OK to Be Away – Attendance Initiative
- Partnering Agreement: Student Attendance and Engagement of Children and Young People in Out of Home Care
- Get Real: A harm-minimisation approach to Drug Education
- START: The School Transition and Resilience Training Project
- School retention. What does it takes? A guide to keeping young people under 15 connected to school
- Preventing Drug-Related Harm: A manual for Student Welfare Coordinators

9.1.5 Child Protection

- Protecting Children Protocol between Child Protection, Department of Human Services and Victorian Schools
- Safe From Harm: The Role of Professionals in Protecting Children and Young People

9.1.6 Regional Support

Student Wellbeing staff are located in all DEECD Regional Offices and provide support to schools in developing, implementing and reviewing student wellbeing programs, as well as facilitating professional development for school-based personnel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEECD Regional Office</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Internet Address</th>
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<tr>
<td>Barwon South Western</td>
<td>03 5225 1000</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bsw.vic.edu.au">www.bsw.vic.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grampians</td>
<td>03 5337 8444</td>
<td><a href="http://www.grampians.vic.edu.au/">www.grampians.vic.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Metropolitan</td>
<td>03 9881 0200</td>
<td><a href="http://www.emr.vic.edu.au">www.emr.vic.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gippsland</td>
<td>03 5127 0400</td>
<td><a href="http://www.gippsland.vic.edu.au">www.gippsland.vic.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loddon Mallee</td>
<td>03 5440 3111</td>
<td><a href="http://www.lcmdoe.vic.edu.au">www.lcmdoe.vic.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northern Metropolitan</td>
<td>03 9488 9488</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nmr.vic.edu.au">www.nmr.vic.edu.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern Metropolitan</td>
<td>03 9794 3555</td>
<td><a href="http://www.smr.vic.edu.au">www.smr.vic.edu.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Metropolitan</td>
<td>03 9291 6500</td>
<td><a href="http://www.wmr.vic.edu.au">www.wmr.vic.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.2 **External Information Sources**

Other student wellbeing resources and information are accessible on the following websites:

**Disclaimer**

*Note that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development provides these sources as information only. The Department does not necessarily endorse their content.*

- Reach Out ([http://www.cwav.asn.au/](http://www.cwav.asn.au/))
- beyond blue National Depression Institute ([http://www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au))

9.2.1 **Agencies and Organisations**


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6 URL addresses correct at date of publication.
9.3 Student Wellbeing Topics

9.3.1 Understanding Poverty

‘A Framework for Understanding Poverty’ explores the culture of poverty and the implications for professionals who work with children and families living in poverty. The book covers topics such as definitions of poverty, the role of language and story,
hidden rules among classes, characteristics of generational poverty, and support systems.

Reference:
http://www.ahaprocess.com  
Phone: (03) 6328 1174 Fax: (03) 6328 1287

9.3.2 Promoting School Engagement

Better Practice in School Attendance – Improving the School Attendance of Indigenous Students  
(http://www.dest.gov.au/archive/iae/analysis/learning/1/absenteeism.htm)  
A recent report commissioned by the Department of Education, Science and Training Affairs (DEST) that has found absenteeism among Indigenous students is markedly higher than among non-Indigenous students, and that Indigenous students have higher rates of suspension and lower retention rates than non-Indigenous students.

The report notes that, as well as ‘out of school’ factors, there is a growing body of opinion that ‘in school’ or school-based factors are of primary importance in relation to non-attendance of Indigenous students.

Managing School Attendance  
(http://www.audit.vic.gov.au/reports_par/agp100cv.html)  
Auditor-General's report: December 2004 - download the report or read the interactive summary.

National Center for School Engagement (USA) (http://www.truancyprevention.org/)  
This website contains examples of good practice in promoting school attendance, engagement and achievement as well as further research links.

UK Dept for Education & Skills: School Attendance website  
(http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance/)  
This is a comprehensive resource that provides information, case studies and opportunities for the sharing of good practice on school attendance in England.

Student disengagement from primary schooling: a review of research and practice  
(http://www.cassfoundation.org/images/smilies/CASS_Main_25_5_05.pdf)
The report, undertaken by Monash University and commissioned by the CASS Foundation identifies a matrix of characteristics of engaging schools and a series of educational principles contributing to positive engagement in schooling, based on the analysis of case studies from Australia, Canada and the UK.

9.3.3 Building Resilience

i) Websites

Mental Health Associations (all Australian states and territories)

Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand
http://www.mentalhealth.org.nz

National Resilience Resource Centre
http://www.cce.umn.edu/nrrc/

Project Resilience is a private organization in Washington DC that consults to schools, clinics and prevention agencies. This website has core concepts, links, publications and products for schools associated with resiliency.

http://www.projectresilience.com/framesproducts.htm

Resiliency in Action: American experts in resiliency provide an informative look into resiliency in action at school, links to school specific resources etc.

http://www.resiliency.com/

Resilience Net

http://resilnet.uiuc.edu/

Resilience. Australia: Child Youth Health


ii) Books


### iii) Journal Articles

Benard, Bonnie (n.d) Fostering resiliency in kids: protective factors in the family, school and community. Western Regional Centre for Drug-Free Schools and Communities vol. 2. p 11-39.


9.3.4 Promoting School and Community Partnerships


9.3.5 Bullying

i) Websites

Bullying. No way! (Australia)

National Coalition Against Bullying (Australia)

Bullying UK
http://www.bullying.co.uk/

Kidscape (UK)
http://www.kidscape.org.uk/

Stop Bullying Me (Canada)
http://www.stopbullyingme.ab.ca/

No Bully (NZ)
http://www.police.govt.nz/service/yes/nobully/

Stop Bullying Now (US)
http://www.stopbullyingnow.com/
ii) Books


Fuller, A. (1998), *From Surviving to Thriving: Promoting Mental Health in Young People*, ACER, Melbourne


iii) Journal Articles


Rigby, K. 2002 *A meta-evaluation of methods and approaches to reducing bullying in pre-schools and in early primary school in Australia*, Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, Canberra

(iv Video)

9.3.6 Staff Wellbeing

**Staff Matters Web Based Resource** provides information and professional development ideas for staff health and wellbeing.


9.3.7 Grief and Loss

**i) Organisations**

[Centre for Grief Education](http://www.grief.org.au/)
Largest provider of grief and bereavement education in Australia.

[The Compassionate Friends](http://www.compassionatefriendsvictoria.org.au/)
The Compassionate Friends Victoria Inc. is part of a world-wide organisation offering friendship and understanding to families following the death of a son or daughter, brother or sister. The Compassionate Friends Inc offers support in the grief and trauma which follows the death of a child at any age and from any cause.

[Skylight](http://www.skylight.org.nz/)
Skylight is a New Zealand based organisation that provides unique support to children, young people and their families through times of change, loss and grief.

cument&Section=Grief%20and%20Loss)
Grief: Community Information and Services links to bereavement support, advice, coping mechanisms and support groups.

[Kids Help Line](http://www.kidshelp.com.au/)
Kids Help Line is a national telephone counselling service for young people aged 5 – 18 years. It is free, anonymous and confidential.

This new website features online interactive tools that provide young people with their own counselling space and the ability to interact with counsellors visually. Icons help a young person visualise their feelings and rate the intensity and frequency of these emotions.

Beyond Indigo (http://www.beyondindigo.com/children/)
How to support young people through the process of grieving the loss of a loved one, family member, friend or pet.

ii) Teaching Materials

All Kids Grieve
(http://www.cnomy.com/?dn=allkidsgrieve.org&pid=1PONU28HS&prvtof=8b2VkJUqFXCaO1QRCsRxtLos84V71E%2B5jg%3D%3D)
A resource for teachers, parents and other caring adults.

Bushfires and Children
Information on the impact of bushfires on young people and how to deal with grief related to bushfires.

Death And Loss: Helping Children Manage
(http://teacher.scholastic.com/professional/bruceperry/death_and_loss.htm)
Tips for teachers talking about grief and loss with children.

Separation/divorce

Divorce And Children
(http://www.divorceinfo.com/challages.htm)
A child experiences a wide range of bewildering emotions when their parents separate or divorce and these websites gives practical tips to explain to young children what has happened.

Same Sex Attracted and Transgender Young People

Victorian Essential Learning Standards/Curriculum Planning Guidelines

Learn to include
(http://www.hotkey.net.au/~learn_to_include/)
Early childhood education material (readers) which include same sex parent families
Writing Themselves in Again
Australian Research Centre in Sex Health and Society research
(http://www.latrobe.edu.au/ssay)

Hormone Factory
(http://www.thehormonefactory.com/index.cfm)
An example of a website with content designed for Primary School-aged children

Rainbow Network:
(http://www.rainbownetwork.net.au)
Social and support groups for young same sex attracted and transgender people.
11. Bibliography


Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care 1997 Zubrick, S., et al. *Western Australian Child Health Survey: Developing Health and Wellbeing in the Nineties*. Cat. 4305.5, Institutes for Child Health Research and ABS, Western Australia


Fuller, A. 1998 *From Surviving to Thriving: Promoting Mental Health in Young People*. ACER Press, Melbourne


Attachment 1:

*Qualities of Effective Intervention Programs: Summary of Research*

Source: Best Start. *Effective Intervention Programs*
Department of Human Services
December 2001

Effective programs seek to empower families, enhancing their ability to solve problems for themselves. Programs that promote dependency are destructive. In many instances families have lesser needs for support over time.

Effective programs build on existing strengths of families, building on the existing competencies of family members. It is assumed that individuals are capable of becoming problem solvers, even though their previous attempts to resolve problems may not have been successful.

Effective programs are individualised and responsive to family needs and circumstances. Families are involved in determining what form services should take, and where and how they are delivered.

Effective programs are well coordinated with other programs and designed to make it easier for families to access them. The needs of families rather than the needs of professionals drive the ways in which services are delivered.

Effective programs start where families are at developmentally – what parents are capable of investing in and contributing into the helping relationship and in their own lives – and should begin with the parents own experience of their situation and their own perceptions.

Effective programs use a family-centred approach, based on building a therapeutic alliance or partnership with parents.

Effective programs are community based, and seek to strengthen community links and utilise community resources to meet the needs of families and young children.

Effective programs are sensitive and responsive to family, cultural, ethnic and socio-economic diversity.

Effective programs are based on clear, scientifically-validated theoretical frameworks.

Effective programs are comprehensive and address known risk variables.
Effective programs see the child in the **context of the family** and address the needs of all family members.

Effective programs are staffed by people who are **trained and supported** to provide high quality, responsive services. Staff need both technical training and training in establishing effective working relationships with parents.

The key principle underlying all these is that **how** programs are delivered is as important as **what** is delivered.
Attachment 2:

Primary Welfare Officer Position Description Template
Source: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

10 Intending applicants are strongly recommended to become familiar with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development policies as outlined in the Framework for Student Support Services in Victorian Government Schools, see reference next page.
## Position Description Template

### DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

### PRIMARY WELFARE OFFICER TEMPLATE

**CLASSIFICATION/REFERENCE NUMBER:**

**ONGOING OR FIXED TERM & LENGTH / TIME FRACTION:**

**SALARY RANGE:**

### SUMMARY OF DUTIES AND SELECTION CRITERIA FOR ADVERTISING PURPOSES

Provide a comprehensive and integrated framework to coordinate the school response to the wellbeing needs of students and their families, with an increasing emphasis on early intervention strategies and approaches through consultation and the development of programs, procedures and policy.

### FULL POSITION DESCRIPTION

#### 1. DUTIES

1.1. Provide high quality advice and support to whole school communities, in the development and implementation of programs, procedures and policies on the wellbeing of students, particularly those at risk of disengagement from school.

1.2. Collaborate with school staff, Student Support Services and support agencies to develop and implement a range of programs and interventions with students and the school community that foster resilience, improve attendance and respond to identified social, emotional and educational needs.

1.3. Increase awareness, understanding and skills of staff in the school community in the area of student wellbeing as outlined in the Framework for Student Support Services in Victorian Government Schools, particularly primary prevention and early intervention.

1.4. Establish and maintain links with Student Support Services, school networks and relevant support agencies with a view to optimising and coordinating service provision to students at risk of disengagement from school.

1.5. Provide leadership in the identification and analysis of emerging student wellbeing issues and coordinate specialist advice on the range of appropriate interventions.

#### 2. KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

2.1. Qualifications in teaching, social work, youth work, psychology or a relevant community health or welfare field an advantage.

2.2. Understanding of common approaches, policies, programs and research relating to student wellbeing.

2.3. Experience in the delivery of student and family wellbeing services in a relevant setting and, preferably, experience working with schools in the area of student wellbeing.

2.4. Demonstrated experience in the coordination of services and the provision of information, support and consultation.

2.5. Highly developed communication and interpersonal skills, including the ability to work collaboratively and network with the wide range of people within the education and wider community.

2.6. Demonstrated ability to design, deliver or coordinate professional development in the area of student, family or youth wellbeing.

#### 3. OTHER RELEVANT SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

3.1. A sound knowledge of current educational issues and the priorities of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.
CONTACT

Further information about the position(s) is available from ______________________________________
__________________________________________________

Phone: _____________________________________________

The position is located at ____________________________________________

Reporting to: __________________________________________

HOW TO APPLY

- Email applications send to
- Mail applications send to
- Applications addressing the key selection criteria will be accepted until ....... / ....... / ........

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

Conditions apply.

Successful applicants are subject to a satisfactory police records check.

If appointed from outside DEECD, successful applicants will be required to complete a statutory pre-employment health declaration.

A probationary period of up to three months may apply for a person appointed to an ongoing position from outside the Public Service or the Teaching Service.

CONTEXT STATEMENT

The School

Description

DEECD Vision and Mission

- An assured future for all Victorians and a prosperous society through learning.
- The Department will ensure the provision of high-quality education

DEECD goals and targets

- The proportion of Victorian primary students achieving the national benchmark levels for reading, writing and numeracy will be at or above the national average..
- Ninety per cent of young people in Victoria will complete Year 12, or its equivalent, by 2010.

Program accountability and performance measures including:

1. Attainment data (such as P-2 reading, AIM, teacher judgment against Victorian Essential Learning Standards literacy and numeracy outcomes);
2. Absence data;
3. Staff, student and parent opinion;
4. Student destination data; and
5. Student retention data


Key support documents for the Policy Framework include the Teacher Resource and Professional Development Support Materials.