



CATHOLIC  
EDUCATION  
MELBOURNE

Horizons  
of Hope

FOUNDATION STATEMENT:

# Wellbeing

in a Catholic School



## What is Wellbeing?

'Wellbeing' is both practice and perception; action and awareness. It is a state of being well in body, mind and spirit. Drawing from the wellsprings of our values, sense of purpose and meaning, wellbeing enlivens what matters in our lives.

While all educators are focused on the wellbeing of their students, those in Catholic schools have a particular orientation to wellbeing. Illuminated by faith and the words of Jesus who said, 'I have come that you may have life, and have it to the full'

(John 10:10), Catholic educators nurture young people's spiritual and religious dimensions to enable them to truly understand what it means to be alive and well as a human person.

Wellbeing is integral to learning excellence and ultimately to overall health and life success.

Wellbeing is integral to learning excellence and ultimately to overall health and life success. It is described as 'a sustainable state of positive mood and attitude, resilience and satisfaction with self, relationships and experiences' (ACU & Erebus International 2008). Wellbeing enables us to give expression to our authentic selves to realise our unique potential.

A positive sense of wellbeing supports a base for rich learning that enables young people to flourish. This holistic view recognises that the sacredness, dignity and giftedness of each person is grounded in the belief that each person is made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27).



**The Tree of Life; a Journey of Colour**  
*Mixed media – paint, wood and buttons on canvas. (Grace, Year 3)*

# How is Wellbeing enacted in a Catholic school?

Wellbeing encompasses all dimensions of life within a Catholic school community. It is lived in the everyday as a reflection of the Christian faith and commitment to the Gospel. Wellbeing underpins pedagogical practice and curriculum design. It is brought to life through the actions, interactions and attitudes of all community members.

Wellbeing is enacted through the school's vision and mission and its policies and procedures, which are grounded in Catholic teaching and tradition. It is fostered and sustained in environments that are safe, supportive and inclusive, where the common good is honoured and authentic partnerships with families, parish and the broader community are nurtured.

## A sense of belonging enables all to thrive

The experience of belonging and connectedness is essential for wellbeing to thrive. Catholic school communities recognise that all encounters provide the basis for deepening a relationship and interdependence with God who is manifest within and among every individual and the community. It is in relationship

with God and others in the school community that young people are enabled to discover who they are, where they come from and what their destiny can be.

Catholic schools support the experience of belonging by creating welcoming, inviting, consistent and predictable environments. Belonging is enhanced through respectful and thoughtful relationships.



**I love my family and my family loves me**  
*Permanent Yoken black pen drawing  
on cartridge paper painted with coloured  
food dye. (Yani, Foundation)*

When people feel acknowledged that their community genuinely understands their values, hopes and dreams, their sense of belonging is strengthened and they are more open to collaboration, sharing information and participating in decision-making. Being in relationships with others enhances wellbeing and enables young people to better understand and manage their emotions, to develop their sense of self, agency and resiliency.

### **Wellbeing is strongest when learners are engaged within a community**

Young people's wellbeing is enhanced when their hearts and minds are engaged. In a Catholic school young people are empowered to develop as optimistic global citizens capable of articulating their beliefs and worldview in light of the Catholic faith and tradition.

Engaged learners have a positive sense of identity, connection with their peers and community. They are invested in learning in and beyond the classroom. This enables them to flourish and grow in confidence as curious, optimistic and inspired knowledge-builders, problem-solvers, conceptual thinkers and self-motivated learners.

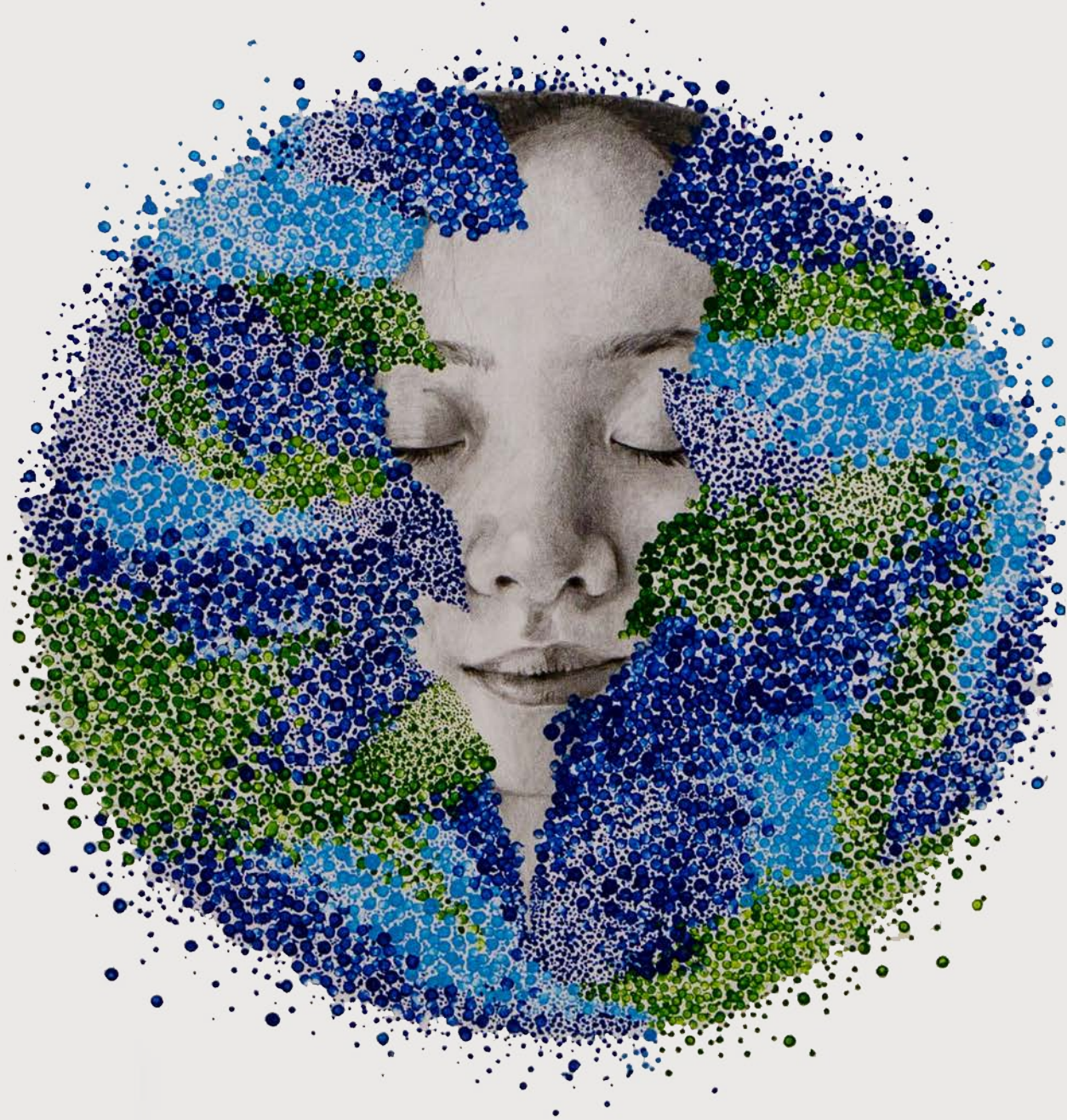
When learning experiences are explicitly designed to promote resilience, build self-esteem and improve social and emotional competencies, students are better placed to develop a deep understanding of their giftedness and unique potential.

**Wellbeing is brought to life through the actions, interactions and attitudes of all community members.**

#### **Sunrise in the Desert**

*To make this abstract piece I used a mixture of very basic home ingredients. I diluted food dye for a background wash and blew ink with a straw to give an abstract tree/undergrowth effect.*

(Finn, Year 6)



# Why is Wellbeing in a Catholic school important given the Vision and Context?

## Honour sacred dignity of each person

A fundamental belief for Catholic schools is that each person is enfolded in God's love and is made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). The values and teachings of Jesus show all people 'the way, the truth and the life' (John 14:6). In working with young people in Catholic schools, God's presence and spirit are shown through words and actions. To nurture wellbeing,

the unique story, giftedness and temperament of every child must be understood and valued in a way that enables love, respect, compassion, forgiveness and hope to thrive.

This reflects the belief that every child is sacred and encompassed in God's love and as such their inherent dignity must be preserved so that they may come into the fullness of life.

## Embrace difference and diversity

Catholic schools value, celebrate and serve diverse communities by honouring the histories, cultures, traditions and unique learning and support needs of each child. They draw on the teachings of the Gospel to embrace the richness of human difference to foster a deep understanding of citizenship, justice, integrity and

inclusion. In a Catholic school all members of the community are welcomed and treated with dignity in an environment free from discrimination, harassment and intimidation. School policies and practices that are grounded in faith and informed by current research and data, further support the development of inclusive communities.

Catholic schools value, celebrate and serve diverse communities by honouring the histories, cultures, traditions and unique learning and support needs of each child.



### Inner Realm

*In my artwork I have expressed the concept of 'escapism' and the potential beauty and serenity that lies within it. (Thao Mi, Year 12)*

**Honour equitable access and opportunity for all**

Just as a sense of wellbeing supports optimal learning, the experience of mastery and achievement supports the growth of one's sense of wellbeing. An equitable education is one in which all students are empowered, supported and inspired to succeed in a culture of high expectations for learning.

To provide the best opportunities for all students to achieve their full potential, Catholic school communities seek to provide a comprehensive curriculum with strong pedagogical understandings and evidence-informed practices to personalise learning and engage young people at a level appropriate to their knowledge, skill and ability.

**Build a culture of learning together**

Catholic schools recognise their place within a wider community including parish, and draw on this resource to form partnerships that support rich, authentic learning and service opportunities to improve community connectedness and student wellbeing outcomes.

Every family has aspirations for their child. Catholic schools honour the role of parents as the first and ongoing nurturers and educators of their children. In partnering with families, this life-giving relationship transforms the possibilities for each child and promotes optimal engagement, achievement and wellbeing.

**Circles #2**

*Acrylic and watercolour on paper. Students used various sized round lids to print black circles, which they then filled in using watercolour paints. Inspired by the work of artist Sonia Delaunay. [Foundation and Year 1]*





Catholic schools seek to instil in students the values and knowledge to act as compassionate, contributing, life-giving members of society.

### Make a difference in the world

Inspired by faith, young people in Catholic schools strive to make a difference in the lives of others and the community by developing in students communal obligations and aspirations to promote social justice. Catholic schools seek to instil in students

the values and knowledge to act as compassionate, contributing, life-giving members of society. This enables them to confidently question and challenge injustice, affect pro-social change and understand how they as Christians make a difference to society by living the Gospel in their daily lives.



I love my family and my family loves me  
Permanent Yoken black pen drawing  
on cartridge paper painted with coloured  
food dye. (Yani, Foundation)

## Resources

### What resources are available to support Wellbeing in a Catholic school?

#### Catholic Education Melbourne and CECV Resources

- *Horizons of Hope: An Education Framework for the Archdiocese of Melbourne* (Catholic Education Melbourne 2016)
- *eXcel: Wellbeing for learning in Catholic school communities* (2017)
- *Parent Engagement in Action* (Catholic Education Melbourne 2013)
- *Out-of-Home Care Commitment* (State of Victoria 2011)
- *Anti-bullying Guide and Checklist* (CECV 2014)
- *CECV Whole-School Approaches to Supporting Positive Student Behaviour* (CECV 2015)

#### CEVN website (<https://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au>)

Under *Curriculum & Student Support / Student Wellbeing*:

- Restorative Practices in Catholic School Communities page
- School Attendance: Every Day Counts page
- Social and Emotional Learning in Catholic School Communities section
- Social Inclusion in Catholic Schools (Catholic Education Melbourne 2011)

Under *Finance, Legal, Operations / VRQA Registration for Schools*:

- Complaints Management: Practical Guide for Schools (CECV 2017)

Under *Child Safety*:

- Child Safety resources.

### Catholic Education Melbourne Policies

- Policy 2.4 Enrolment for Schools
- Policy 2.13 Drug Issues in Catholic Schools
- Policy 2.19 Child Protection – Reporting obligations
- Policy 2.19a Police and Department of Health and Human Services Interview Protocols
- Policy 2.20 Complaints Policy
- Policy 2.21 Privacy Policy
- Policy 2.25 Parents as Partners
- Policy 2.26 Pastoral Care of Students in Catholic Schools.

### External

- National Safe Schools Framework [studentwellbeinghub.edu.au](http://studentwellbeinghub.edu.au)
- *Student Voice & the Education State: A resource for Victorian schools* (VicSRC 2016)
- The Victorian Curriculum F–10 [victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au)
- Victorian Department of Education and Training School Policy & Advisory Guide (SPAG) [www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/pages/spag.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/pages/spag.aspx)
- Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority website [www.vrqa.vic.gov.au](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au).

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State of Victoria 2011, *Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment: A partnering agreement between the Department of Human Service, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd and Independent Schools Victoria*, Student Wellbeing Division Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Children, Youth and Families Division Department of Human Services, Melbourne.

VicSRC 2016, *Student Voice & the Education State: A resource for Victorian schools*, VicSRC, Melbourne, available from [www.vicsrc.org.au/uploads/files/VicSRC\\_Student\\_Voice\\_and\\_EduState\\_Final\\_compressed.pdf](http://www.vicsrc.org.au/uploads/files/VicSRC_Student_Voice_and_EduState_Final_compressed.pdf).

# Acknowledgments

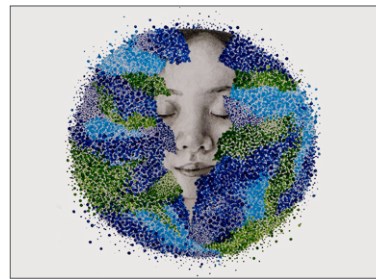
This document has been developed as part of the *Horizons of Hope, Education Framework* publication series. Catholic Education Melbourne wishes to acknowledge the following schools and students who have contributed artwork to support the development of this *Horizons of Hope Foundation Statement: Wellbeing in a Catholic School* publication.



*The Tree of Life; a Journey of Colour*  
**Grace, Year 3**  
St Joachim's School, Carrum Downs



*Sunrise in the Desert*  
**Finn, Year 6**  
St John Vianney's School,  
Parkdale East



*Inner Realm*  
**Thao Mi, Year 12**  
St Aloysius College, North Melbourne



*Circles #2*  
**Foundation and Year 1**  
St Bridget's School, Greythorn



*I love my family and my family loves me*  
**Yani, Foundation**  
St Pius X School, Heidelberg



*Waddles Playground*  
**Lucy, Year 3**  
St John the Baptist School,  
Ferntree Gully

First published September 2017

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