



Spotlight Schools

Integrated wellbeing at Ipswich State High School

What the research says

It is widely understood that physical and mental wellbeing is the foundation for successful learning. Improving wellbeing can facilitate intellectual engagement, and improving intellectual engagement can also promote wellbeing.¹ Students who have higher levels of wellbeing tend to have better cognitive outcomes at school, and when there is a whole-school approach to wellbeing, the focus on the 'whole child' becomes part of the everyday culture and practice – communicated through the learning environment, curriculum and pedagogy, policies and procedures, and relationships across the broader school community.

Supportive teachers and positive peer relationships are key contributors to overall student wellbeing, with students' sense of belonging and perceptions of available learning support both positive indicators for higher life satisfaction.² When students access a curriculum that is compelling, challenging and inviting, and experience a strong sense of connection with their peers and teachers, they have greater social and academic outcomes.³

Integrated wellbeing in practice

At Ipswich State High School there is a whole-school focus on inclusion and student wellbeing. A well-established Wellbeing Faculty provides support to all students, and the school's expectations for social and emotional development are clearly communicated to the broader school community.

Though some students access intensive or targeted support and flexible arrangements, this support is accessed alongside the Australian Curriculum – with alternative education delivery hand-in-hand with the benefits of a mainstream context.

1. *What works best: Evidence-based practices to help improve NSW student performance*, Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2013.

2. *What contributes to students' well-being at school?*, Programme for International Student Assessment.

3. *Alternative Education Programs, Effective Practices Research Brief*, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

School profile

Ipswich State High School services Brassall and surrounding suburbs in the Queensland Metropolitan region's Ipswich West district. Ipswich State High School is home to approximately 2000 students in Years 7-12 and is reflective of the multicultural nature of its broader school community.

Though the school delivers a number of flexible and alternative programs that target individual needs, **all** school curriculum offerings are available to **every** student and **all** students benefit from the school-wide focus on wellbeing and engagement.

Principal insights

'The focus on wellbeing at Ipswich State High School is **built in — not bolted on**. This means all students at all times of day benefit from our whole-of-student education philosophy, where wellbeing goes hand-in-hand with a full and meaningful curriculum for all students.

Flexible and alternative arrangements and targeted interventions are available for students who need them, but this level of support is delivered within a mainstream context.

Our commitment to social and emotional development is communicated right through the school community and is key to our aim to hold on to every student.'

*Simon Riley - Executive Principal
Ipswich State High School*



What does good practice look like?

Checklist for a whole-school wellbeing approach	
School leaders	
	Create a whole-school approach that provides the right conditions to achieve excellence and lift learning outcomes
	Use wellbeing targets and robust measures to monitor progress
	Embed wellbeing into strategic planning, program development and school systems
Classroom teachers	
	Provide inclusive learning environments that support every student to manage their wellbeing and achieve success
	Respond to individual and group differences, promoting collaborative learning, connecting to the hearts and minds of every student, and teaching students how to manage their wellbeing
	Strengthen wellbeing everyday in the classroom by utilising the Australian Curriculum to develop students personal and social capabilities. This includes recognising and regulating emotions, developing empathy for others, establishing and building positive relationships, making responsible decisions, working effectively in teams, handling challenging situations constructively and developing leadership skills
School community	
	Strong connections with parents, support services and the wider community
	Students, staff and the community have a shared understanding of the school's commitment to wellbeing and can describe what is being done to support wellbeing

Positive indicators: Measuring success

Early identification of wellbeing issues, and timely and targeted intervention to support students

Strong collaboration with other agencies and professionals to provide intensive case management where required

Attendance rates, student retention data, learning days lost due to student disciplinary absences, School Opinion Surveys

Wellbeing ethos

- Differentiation and inclusion cannot be separated — we adopt a different approach for **every** student to ensure **every** student has the same opportunities.
- Our focus is not just about **hanging on** to every young person, but **getting results** for every young person.
- Lifting wellbeing works best when there is **repetition and consistency** across the whole school community. You can't teach it in a bolt-on program.
- We don't produce scripts or programs for teachers to follow. We simply model the behaviour we expect.