



Whakatane Intermediate School Board

Mental Health, Inclusion, and Well-Being Policy

Purpose

To build a safe school environment that supports individual students and staff to care for their mental wellbeing. This will include continued efforts to reduce stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness.

Introduction

1. The Board understands all members of the school community are likely to experience challenges in their lives and go through periods of mental and emotional distress.
2. This policy has been developed to position the school to be responsive to those members experiencing mental health issues and develop a positive school culture that promotes mental health and wellbeing. (Appendix 1)
3. Educational inclusion is about equal opportunities for all learners, whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, impairment, attainment and background. We pay particular attention to the provision for and the achievement of different groups of learners. (Appendix 2)

Objectives

1. Whakatane Intermediate School will follow best practice guidelines set out by the NZ Mental Health Foundation (<https://mentalhealth.org.nz/workplaces/working-well-guide-and-resources>) to promote a mentally healthy, safe school community, through consideration of the following three elements:
 - The development of a positive, psychologically healthy school environment
 - A proactive, fair and empathetic approach to mental health concerns
 - Supporting members of the school community to engage in activities that boost mental health and wellbeing
2. The school will raise awareness in the school community through:
 - the provision of appropriate education programmes to promote mental health wellness and the identification of mental unwellness. In the latter situation will encourage people to seek appropriate help.
 - Assessing the needs of students experiencing mental health issues on a needs by needs basis
 - Treating students and staff who have mental health issues with fairness and empathy and taking steps to ensure they are not subjected to stigma or discrimination
 - Encouraging parent/whānau involvement in the assessment and treatment of mental health issues and any subsequent support
 - Ensuring that inclusion practices are implemented effectively across the school, ensuring equality of opportunity for all, and eliminating prejudice and discrimination.

Guidelines:

1. An individual's ethnicity, gender, support systems, and privacy will be taken into consideration before any actions or procedures are put into place for them if they are experiencing mental health difficulties.
2. Implement education programmes to empower individuals to have the knowledge and skills to understand mental illness and safely offer support.
3. Provide appropriate induction and training for new staff members.
4. Help students and staff who have been affected by mental health issues return to school with support and appropriate resourcing on a needs by needs basis.
5. Allow greater self-management of possible stressors eg: marking/workloads and deadlines through the careful scheduling of assessments

6. Have procedures in place to allow students to leave class when they need to take time out.
7. Ensure all Staff and Students have access to counselling and early intervention services.

Effectiveness Self-Review

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the board's triennial programme of self-review, and the review report will be available to members of the school community after it has been approved by the board.

August 17, 2022 version adopted

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Appendix 1

The range of mental and emotional experiences may include:

- People who are experiencing optimal or positive mental health. This group will be engaged, generally happy, sleeping and eating well, experiencing positive relationships and with a strong sense of meaning and purpose in life. This group is likely to experience better physical health and higher levels of engagement.
- People who are mentally unwell and/or have a diagnosed mental illness (eg: depression, anxiety) who are receiving treatment but still be able to attend school, (perhaps with a modified timetable).
- People who lack general mental wellbeing and a sense of being reasonably happy with life. These often show up as disengaged and unmotivated and lack meaning and purpose in their daily lives. (According to decades of mind/body research this group is likely to have higher rates of physical illness and accidents).
- People who don't meet the criteria for a diagnosable mental illness but who may be highly stressed or distressed due to their school or home life or perhaps a traumatic life event.

Appendix 2

Inclusion Procedures

- We support and welcome diversity amongst all learners and strive to ensure that every young person feels welcome, accepted, safe and valued within a common learning environment.
- We are committed to ensuring all students have equal opportunities and a quality education, ensuring success within a truly inclusive landscape of mutual respect and equity for all.
- We endeavour to promote, protect, and ensure the success of all students by providing relevant learning opportunities, pathways and challenges for all.
- We are proactive in identifying, managing and removing barriers that may limit achievement, participation and progress.
- We aim to meet the individual needs, promote social and emotional well-being and realise the potential of all learners in an environment that recognises their different gifts and talents, the different ways they learn, the different rates at which they learn, and their unique backgrounds and culture.

We strive to develop effective teaching, learning, and curriculum development processes that cater to all, irrespective of abilities or needs and work in partnership with parents, specialists, and other community members to devise strong, comprehensive, and sustainable systems of inclusion.

This will be achieved by:

- Enabling every teacher to play a key role in facilitating the educational inclusion of students of determination.
- Using flexible and responsive teaching and learning styles
- Providing appropriate and achievable learning targets for all students
- Supporting the learning and participation of all students
- Implementing systems for early identification of barriers to learning and participation

- Recognising, reflecting and celebrating the skills, talents, contributions and diversity of all our students
- Equipping students with the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to succeed as individuals and as responsible and valued members of society
- Ensuring systems of teacher professional monitoring and support are designed so that each teacher is fully empowered to remove obstacles which impose educational, and ultimately social exclusion
Providing high quality pastoral care, support and guidance • Safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of students

Measuring Success

Students demonstrate better developed learning skills, are more resilient in the face of challenge, have a determination to succeed and are better prepared for their future. They are encouraged and supported to become lifelong learners