

Big Life/Connect



Brauer College

Led by Michael Barling and Kerri Morey

Submission written by Delia Jenkins

All staff and students across the College were involved



The Context

- School - Brauer College
- All Year Levels – 7 to 12
- In conjunction with Warrnambool College and the Warrnambool Student Wellbeing Association (Chaplains)
- Learning Focus - Character
- Skills targeted – Social and Emotional Learning, Grit, Tenacity, Mindfulness, Resilience

Background:

- A big life grew out of the recognition that a whole school approach, based on building students strengths, could act as a preparatory and preventative measure for developing and maintaining student well being.

THE BIG LIFE PROJECT: 2015 PROSPECTUS. (DRAFT ONLY)

Situation.

The Big Life Project has developed out of the observations of chaplains working in Warrnambool schools over a long period of time. These observations suggest that while individual interventions to assist young people and families during a crisis are critical in supporting individuals in crisis, dealing with the broader social context from which these crises are generated may be an effective way of preparing/protecting individuals as they engage with life's challenges.

Historical/Global:

There is clear evidence, particularly amongst Western Cultures, that material prosperity on aggregate, has increased significantly since The Second World War. There is less quantitative evidence, but a prevailing qualitative awareness, that levels of emotional well-being and happiness have been stagnant/slightly falling over the same period.

Contemporary/Local:

If we look for indicators of the effect outlined above, indicators are varied indeed. Measures like the OECD Better Life Index rate Australia's performance very highly across a range of economic and social measures and indicate that, comparatively, Australia is a thriving and engaging nation. Yet there are indicators such as the Australian Psychological Society's (APS) Stress and Well-being Survey Australia, 2013 that indicate that individual emotional well-being is less robust. The APS Survey indicates that there has been an almost 20% increase in the number of Australians experiencing moderate to severe levels of distress since 2011. The two biggest stressors are Financial Stress and Family Issues. At a local level the Warrnambool Health and Well-being Profile, 2013 indicates that 51% of workers in Warrnambool have "adequate" Work/Life Balance compared to a state average of 57.3%. There are 12.2 incidents of Family Violence per 1000 people in Warrnambool compared to the 9.1 incidents state average. Warrnambool has 29.5 Registered Mental Health Clients per 1000 people compared to a state average of 10.9 clients.

A Schools Context:

Evidence of the challenges in sustaining healthy levels of Non-Material Wellbeing can be picked up in data relating to Attitudes to School Survey results. This survey focuses on: STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS, WELL BEING and TEACHING AND LEARNING factors. These factors are further refined into dimensions of CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR, CONNECTEDNESS TO PEERS, STUDENT SAFETY, STUDENT DISTRESS, STUDENT MORALE, LEARNING CONFIDENCE, SCHOOL CONNECTEDNESS, STIMULATING LEARNING, STUDENT MOTIVATION, TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS and TEACHER EMPATHY.

Data from this survey for 2014 has been consolidated into a single score to give a basic insight into the attitude to school across year levels for our region and the state.

CONSOLIDATED SCORE: Attitudes to School Survey.

2014	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Trend
Region	3.97	3.87	3.83	3.85	3.92	Downward
State	3.94	3.84	3.81	3.84	3.94	Steady

BigLife
prospectus

Joint campaign to tackle youth issues in Warrnambool schools

By KATE ZWAGERMAN March 10, 2015, 4 a.m.

A COMMUNITY-DRIVEN approach to tackling youth issues will be launched at a Warrnambool forum next week.

Sean Kenny, president of the Warrnambool Chaplaincy Committee and the newly-formed Warrnambool Student Wellbeing Association, said the March 18 forum at South West TAFE was the first step in a more concerted effort to improve young people's mental health.

"Just the nature of life, community, family, education and people and those sorts of things have meant the more we can embed positive attributes that can lead to greater resilience through education, and everything that goes on with education, the better off people will be."

The event will also help introduce a new well-being project — **the Big Life** program.

Michael Barling, one of the teachers developing the program, said it took a different approach to student welfare.

"The chaplaincy group and Warrnambool and Brauer colleges came up with the idea of a Big Life project," he said. Mr Barling said the program would operate across both schools to help students overcome challenges. "We're not so much interested in getting kids to solve problems, but actually getting kids to outgrow them. What we mean by that is kids develop their capacities and their strengths to be able to outgrow the challenges that they come up against," he said.

"That's a bit different from some of the programs that are out there.

"The model is a little more adaptable and it creates more resilient kids."

Mr Kenny said the forum aimed to build close links between south-west mentoring and well-being programs.

"We were conscious of not forging out on our own but rather providing a forum where we can at least start by sharing what's going on and creating some connections around that with a view that together we are going to be more effective than we are on our own, given that we're going to constantly need to raise funds and volunteers and support," he said.

The forum will include presentations from program leaders, including Mr Barling and Standing Tall in Warrnambool co-ordinator Gary Parsons, as well as the chance for open discussion.

"We want to create community interest around it, so whilst there's no formal commitment by anyone that we're all going to work together, by providing a forum like this you can build momentum around these sorts of things," Mr Kenny said.

"It's just an opportunity for people to come and share and realise some opportunities."



Joining forces: Big Life Project teacher and Warrnambool Chaplaincy Committee president Michael Barling (left) and Warrnambool Student Wellbeing Association president Sean Kenny. 150305LP27 Picture: LEANNE PICKETT

Fusion dinner fund-raiser a feast of local flavours

By KATE ZWAGERMAN July 20, 2015, 1:30 p.m.

A FUSION of local flavours and Celtic sounds will provide a welcome boost to south-west student well-being.

Crossley's St Brigid's hall will host the fourth annual Winter Fusion Dinner on Saturday with chef Christopher Grace providing a mouth-watering three-course menu full of local produce.

"The theme is from the land and from the area around here, so it's about getting as much stuff from the locals as we can," Mr Grace said.

The event is a fund-raiser for the Warrnambool Chaplaincy Committee, which provides chaplaincy services in four Warrnambool schools, and the [fledgling Big Life](#) program.

Chaplaincy committee president Sean Kenny said more than 160 people were expected to attend.

"The dinner is a fund-raiser and we have an auction as well, which is a lot of donated items from local businesses," he said.

"It's quite a team effort to pull it together and it's always a good, fun night."

Mr Kenny said the [Big Life](#) project was continuing to gain momentum since it was launched earlier this year.

"I think generally speaking it's definitely creating interest, we've done some surveying of staff, they're certainly engaged," he said.

"The school principals are really supportive of it and I'm getting feedback from outside the schools from parents saying how good it is, we've had kids say they would like to do [mindfulness exercises](#) before exams and that sort of thing."

Big Life teacher Michael Barling said the unique project was working across Brauer and Warrnambool colleges to help students overcome challenges.

"In terms of take-up from staff and kids it's something that's happening every day with different levels of experience for teachers and kids it teaches them to modify the program to suit the classroom and we're finding that's working pretty well," he said.

"We're rolling out a new set of resources this term of some other materials to help teachers."

The program is hosting a parents' forum tonight with about 25 parents from the two schools attending.

Mr Barling said this was the perfect opportunity to get feedback on the program.

"This is the point where we now take it to the community and take it to the parents to say this is what we're trying to achieve, have you got any ideas? We need your input," he said.

"We will share with them what we've been doing so far and hope they might be able to give us some input as well in what they would want from it."



WINTER FUSION: Big Life project's Michael Barling, chef Christopher Grace and Warrnambool chaplaincy's Sean Kenny. Picture: Vicky Hughson

Forum first step to better wellbeing support for Warrnambool youth

By KATE ZWAGERMAN March 23, 2015, 4 a.m.

SOUTH-WEST schools, mentoring groups and community members met last week to begin a united approach to tackling youth issues.

Attendees at the Warrnambool Student Wellbeing Forum, held at South West TAFE, heard sobering statistics about the region's comparatively high rate of mental health issues and domestic violence. One of the forum organisers, Michael Barling, said while Warrnambool was leading the way in many areas, a more collaborative approach would help prevent young people falling through the cracks. "That clearly pointed out that there were things that we could be doing to help turn that around," he said.

Representatives from all the city's secondary schools, its special developmental school, many primary schools, Moyne and Warrnambool councils and members of the public attended.

"We were pretty happy with the turnout, there were between 60 and 70 people there that represented a really broad cross-section of the community," Mr Barling said.

The forum also heard from Gary Parsons, of the Standing Tall mentoring program, and Mr Barling, who spoke about his involvement in the fledgling **Big Life program**, a collaboration between Warrnambool and Brauer colleges and the Warrnambool Chaplaincy Committee.

"It was terrific as an awareness-raising thing that Brauer and Warrnambool colleges and Warrnambool chaplaincy have a plan for what wellbeing should look like," he said.

Mr Barling said **Big Life focused on developing young people's strengths** to help them outgrow the challenges they face.

He said the forum had succeeded in its aim to begin building stronger links between south-west mentoring and wellbeing programs and developing interest in becoming more involvement with the programs already on offer.

"A lot of people were interested in community mentoring programs and ways they could help," he said.



Michael Barling said while Warrnambool was leading the way in many areas, a more collaborative approach would help prevent young people falling through the cracks.

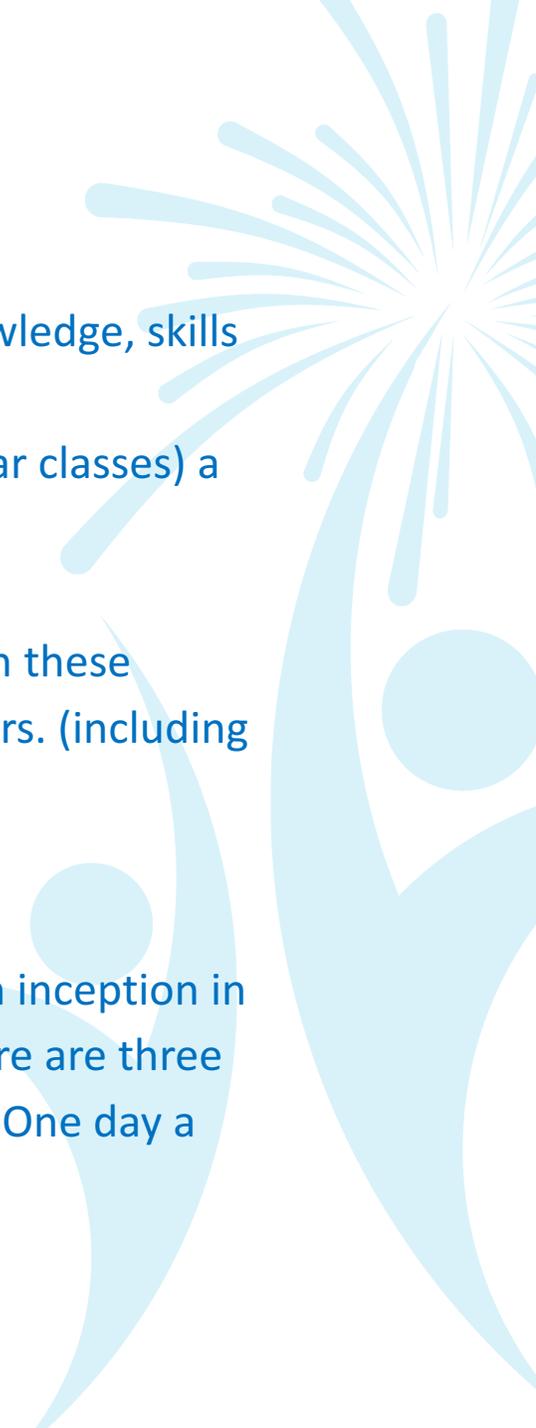
The Task

What was done:

- The task initially involved Professional Learning for all teachers to equip them with the knowledge, skills and resources needed to facilitate the sessions.
- During extended Pastoral Care time (and at any other time that a teacher saw fit – eg regular classes) a range of activities were carried out that supported students depending on their year level.
- Focus was on resilience, perseverance, building relationships, mindfulness and SEL.
- Recognising individual student strengths and providing opportunities for student to build on these strengths, with a focus on connection, resilience, clear thinking and an appreciation of others. (including kindness and gratitude)

Length:

- The Big Life project is an ongoing project however for this report we have considered it from inception in Feb 2015 to Oct 2015. It was run in Pastoral Care time at the start of the day. Each week there are three Pastoral Care sessions of 12 minutes and one Extended Pastoral Care session of 24 minutes. One day a week there is either a Whole School assembly or Year Level assembly.



Professional Learning Plan

Term 1

Wk	Date	Topic	Facilitator/s
1	3/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mindfulness exercise - Review of mindfulness (purpose, practise) - Overview of 7-12 Pastoral Care/ CONNECT program 	Mick Kerri
3	17/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reflection on Mindfulness & BigLife implementation in PCL groups so far - Year level groups discuss 'red cape' & 'green cape' thoughts on experiences so far. Ideas documented & handed in. 	Mick
5	3/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tracking progress of student skills in resilience, self-esteem etc as a result of BigLife/ CONNECT program using New Pedagogies framework (set up for pre-assessment & then do post-assessment later in year) 	Delia
7	17/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction to SEL for Term 2 Pastoral Care activities (Yr7-10) 	Cindy, Mick Kerri

Term 2

Week	Date	3.45 – 4.15pm	4.15 – 4.45pm
1	14/4	Yr 7–12 Mindfulness refresher workshop <i>Kerri & Mick</i>	Yr7-10 – YLC/ PCL session (can identify activities from SEL Manual & discuss process for resources) Yr11 - SEL workshop Yr12 –YLC/ PCL meetings
3	28/4	Yr7 – 10 SEL workshop 2 (Topics: <i>Life Problem Solving & Support Networks</i>) <i>Cindy/ Kerri/ Mick</i> Yr11 & 12 – YLC/ PCL (1 hour)	Yr7-10 – YLC/ PCL Yr11 – YLC/ PCL (cont) Yr12 – discuss ideas for PCL program!
5	19/5	Yr11/ 12 SEL workshop 2 <i>Kerri/ Mick</i> Yr7 – 10 YLC/ PCL (1 hour)	Yr11&12 – YLC/ PCL Yr7-10 – YLC/ PCL (cont)
7	26/5	Yr7 – 10 SEL workshop (Topics: <i>Keeping Well & Positive Mental Health</i>) - <i>Cindy/ Kerri/ Mick</i> Yr11 & 12 – YLC/ PCL (1 hour)	Yr7-10 – YLC/ PCL Yr11&12 – YLC/ PCL (cont)
9	9/6	CURRICULUM DAY	

Professional Learning Plan continued

Term 3

Term 3 was more focused on assisting individual year levels with SEL activities & study skills sessions – based upon need of the year level.

Term 4 also included a full day PD on Positive Psychology.

Term 4

Date	Meeting	Facilitators
6/10	YLC/ PCL	YLC
20/10	<i>No meeting (due to 2 hr presentation at staff meeting Monday 19/10)</i>	-
3/11	<i>Positive Psychology (Activities for pastoral care) (or Mental Health week activities) (20-30min) YLC/ PCL (30-40 min)</i>	Michael/ Kerri or Laura/ Wellbeing team YLC
17/11	<i>Positive Psychology (Activities for pastoral care) (or Mental Health week activities) (20-30min) YLC/ PCL (30-40 min)</i>	Michael/ Kerri or Laura/ Wellbeing team YLC
1/12	YLC/ PCL	YLC

Positive Psychology/Big Life Professional Development Day: FRI 30 OCT

Session One: 9 – 10:30pm

5 Minute Mindfulness

What is Positive Psychology?

Studies that support the case for Positive Psychology.

Some of the people who are leading the charge in Pos Psych. (Kim Cameron on positive organisations)

Fredrickson – Broaden and Build theory. (structures and process of building positive emotions)

Brain Break Activity

Basic Emotion Theory:

Intellectual Resources

Effects of emotions on our brain.

Emotions – physiology change and vice versa.

Walk towards/Run away with theory

Moods v Emotions:

Happiness Set Point and Happiness Pie (focus on incremental and elemental changes to mood)

Sue Langley – Emotional Intelligence Theory

Session Two: 11:00 – 12:30pm

Welcome back to the room activity that demonstrates teacher influence.

Growth Mindsets: Carol Dweck

Neuroscience that supports

Set Up to Fail: Pygmalion Effect

Learned Optimism:

Permanence – Pervasiveness – Personalisation

A + B = C

D + E

Brain Break Activity

Have to v Want to leading to Flow

Strength Spotting and Iceberg Model

Savouring

LUNCH

Session Three: 1:15 – 2:00pm

5 Minute Mindfulness.

Appreciative Inquiry

Exercise to practice

Non Judgemental feedback

Communication 55/38/7

Active Responding – Horizon lifting questions.

Session Four: 2:15 – 3:00pm

Brain Break Activity.

Positivity Ratio 3:1, 5:1, 6:1

Positive Communication

Expand or Contract

Positive or Negative

Tell or Ask

Respond v React

Relationship Wheel

Plenary/Conclusion: 3.00 – 3.15pm

The task continued ...

Content goals (AusVELS):

The content goals span across all areas of the curriculum and involve the two Domains of Civics and Citizenship and Personal Learning.

Civics and Citizenship

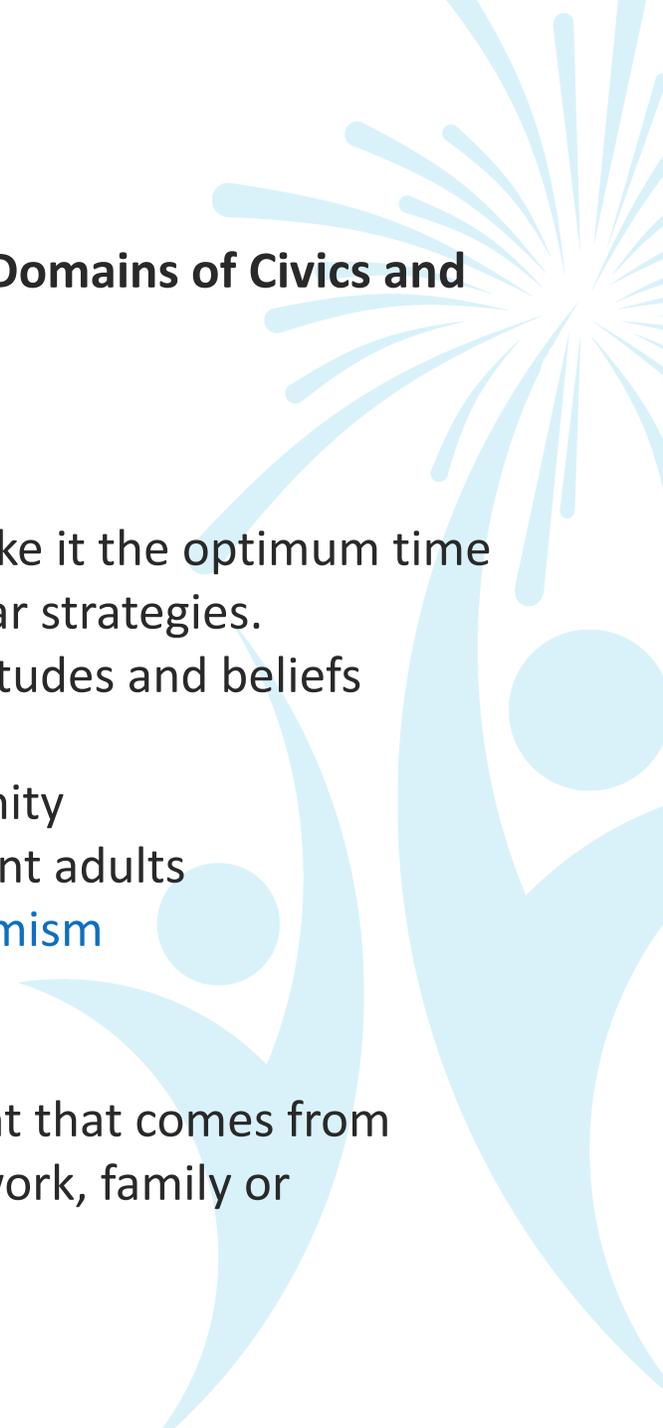
Some of the relevant components includes:

The greatest shift in coping occurs between 14 and 16 years, which make it the optimum time for students to reflect on their coping behaviours and develop particular strategies.

Coping skills are often seen in the context of a broader set of skills, attitudes and beliefs related to **resilience**. Resilient young people:

- form attachments to pro-social groups at school and in the community
- form relationships with a diverse range of people including significant adults
- have a **positive attitude, protective coping skills and a sense of optimism**
- are **developing a sense of purpose in life**
- have stable domestic or living arrangements.

A common factor in each of the above is the sense of belonging and involvement that comes from being a meaningful and useful contributor to the group, whether this be peer, work, family or community.



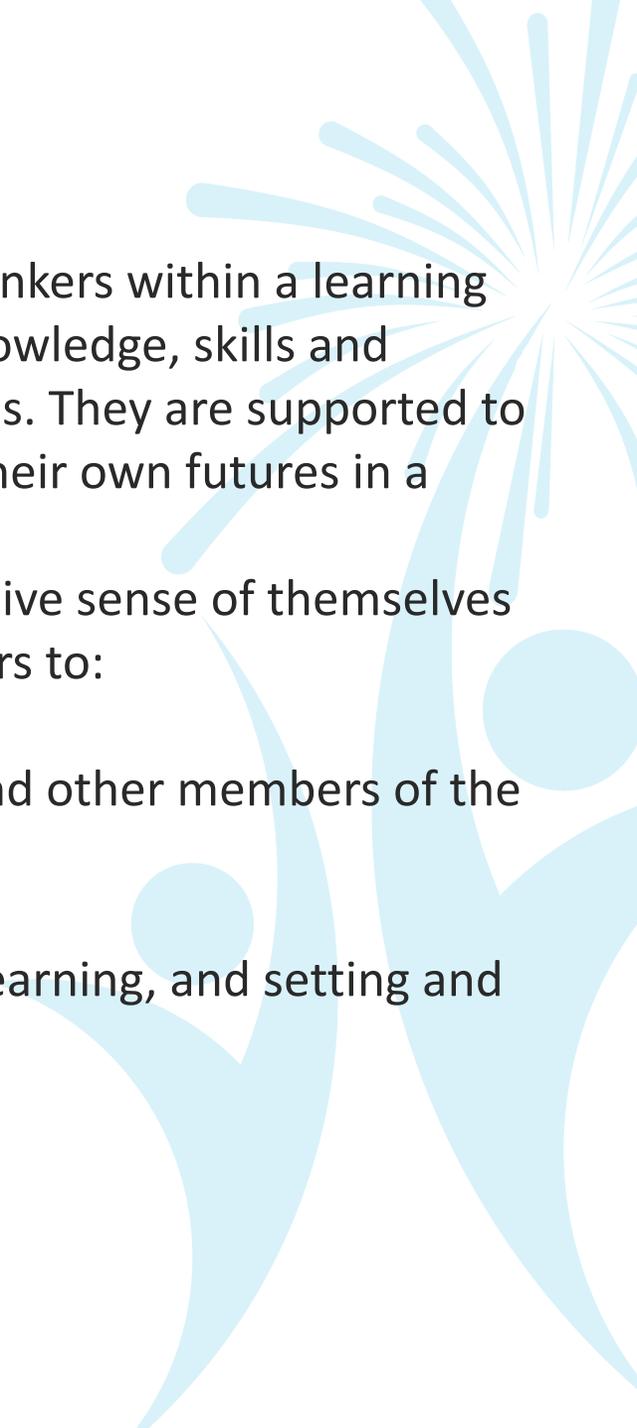
Content goals (AusVELS):

Personal Learning

Learners are most successful when they are mindful of themselves as learners and thinkers within a learning community. The Personal Learning domain focuses on providing students with the knowledge, skills and behaviours to be successful, positive learners both at school and throughout their lives. They are supported to develop the confidence and ability to be adaptive and take an active role in shaping their own futures in a world of constant change.

This domain supports the development of autonomous learners, with a positive sense of themselves as learners, by providing all learners with the knowledge, skills and behaviours to:

- develop an understanding of their **strengths and potential**
- seek and respond appropriately to feedback from their teachers, peers and other members of the community
- develop skills of goal setting and time and resource management
- increasingly manage their own learning and growth by monitoring their learning, and setting and reflecting on their learning goals
- learn to understand and to **manage their own emotions**
- **develop resilience** and dispositions which support learning
- recognise and enact learning principles within and beyond the school
- **prepare for lifelong learning.**



The task continued ... Victorian Curriculum

The Victorian Curriculum Foundation-10 curriculum emphasises the value and place of character across all learning areas, and particularly within the *Personal and Social Capability Curriculum*.

The Personal and Social Capability Curriculum: *Is organised into two interrelated strands:*

Self-Awareness and Management - Recognition and expression of **emotions and Development of resilience**.

Social Awareness and Management - Appreciation of diversity and understanding of **relationships and working collaboratively**.

Self-Awareness and Management

Learning involves students developing the skills to work independently, showing initiative, identifying and describing the factors that influence their emotional responses as well as their own personal characteristics. Students develop the knowledge and skills to regulate, manage and monitor their emotions. They develop a realistic sense of their personal strengths and have a realistic assessment of their own achievements and a sense of self-knowledge and self-confidence.

Social Awareness and Management

Students learn to recognise others' feelings and knowing how and when to assist others. Students learn to show respect for and understand others' perspectives, emotional states and needs. They learn to participate in positive, safe and respectful relationships, defining and accepting individual and group roles and responsibilities. This strand involves students interacting effectively and respectfully with a range of adults and peers. Students learn to negotiate with others; work in teams, positively contribute to groups and collaboratively make decisions; develop leadership skills, resolve conflict and reach positive outcomes. Students develop the ability to initiate and manage successful personal relationships.

Pastoral Care BigLife and Social Emotional Learning Activities

Mindfulness

Pay it forward

Random acts of kindness

Breathing exercises

Self Esteem

Study skills

Careers

Colouring

Revision techniques

Stress Managements

Positive psychology

Videos

Learning types

Motivation

Intelligences

Gratitude

Goal setting

Organisation

Group building activities

Strengths focused



Learning Activities – Samples

THE BAT AND BALL ACTIVITY.
What part of your brain are you using?



RePAY.
RELAX: Find a way to switch your thinking. Breathe, be mindful not mind full.

PAUSE: Take a minute to think about the question.

ASK YOURSELF: Does my response make sense? Test your response.

CRICKET ANYONE?

A cricket bat and a cricket ball cost \$1.10.

The bat costs one dollar more than the ball.

How much does the ball cost?

LET'S TRY IT.

"TEN DEEP BREATHS" Mindfulness exercise.

REMEMBER: When you read this question pause, stop, think.

ASK YOURSELF: Does my response make sense? Test your response.

THE BALL COSTS .5c

In a survey 80% of university graduates got this brain teaser wrong and answered: ".10c."

We know the bat is \$1 more than the ball.

If the ball was .10c that would make the bat \$1.10.

Making the bat and ball \$1.20. The wrong answer.

If you go through possible combinations that equal \$1.10,

i.e ball =.1c, bat =\$.09 or ball =.2c, bat =\$.10 etc, we get to a combination where total is \$1.10 and the bat is \$1.00 more than the ball.

BALL IS .5c + BAT IS \$1.05 = \$1.10

THE SINGING BUTLER.

The clever butler needed some extra cash, so he tells his master: "I know almost every song that has ever been written"

The master laughs at this, but the butler says "I am willing to bet you a months pay that I can sing a song that you have heard of with the lady's name of your choice in it."

"Deal", says the master. "How about my mother's name, Felicity Jane Ashley?"

And so the butler sang and earned himself an extra months pay.

What song did he sing?

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

This is a logically minded, analytical question. Logic and analysis relies upon our brain's PREFRONTAL CORTEX. Our Prefrontal Cortex takes more effort and time to get going. When we see questions like this, we "default" to another response.

Part of our brain, the AMYGDALA, has evolved to see problems and quickly formulate intuitive/instinctive answers. It's an efficient way to solve problems and save time. We use it every day. It's the type of thinking we use when we react to uncertain or rapidly developing situations. Unfortunately, it's not great for analytical, logical thinking.

It also tends to be our "default" thinking position. How can we recognise when to switch from our "default"?

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Mindfulness Meditations



Stress Busters

<p>Heart, Head, Sky, Land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In a seated position place your hands in prayer position on your heart area. Then keeping your hands in prayer position, move them to your forehead and then above your head 'sky' Separate hands and sweep them out and downwards to the floor to touch the 'land'. Continue for a few cycles. 	<p>Noticing your breath</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close your eyes. Place a hand on your tummy or chest. Notice your breath in and then your breath out. Notice how your tummy or chest rises and falls. Notice the sensations of the breath. Don't change your breath, just focus on it.
<p>JAM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> JAM – Take 'just a minute' to stop, close your eyes and pay attention what you are feeling in your body and notice as many sensations as you can. Then return attention to your breath. 	<p>Long out breath</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on breath. Make your out breath twice as long as in breath. Do this for 2 minutes.
<p>Watch your thoughts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin by focusing on your breath. Take a few moments to just notice your breath and while you do, notice if any thoughts come into your mind. Just 'notice' your thoughts like a friendly scientist observing what you are thinking. No need to judge the thoughts or change them, just notice what you are thinking. 	<p>Ahhhhhhhhh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Big breathe in – when breathing out say "ahhhhhh" or just a big sigh out. Do this 5 times and do it slowly. Make the Ahhh sound louder each time and swing up arms when breathing in.



Mindful Movements

10 mindful movements

- Follow Thích Nhất Hạnh's mindful movements.
- Use each movement as a separate quick stress buster or combine 5 or 10 in sequence as a longer movement meditation.

<p>Tree Pose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In a standing fixed position lift one leg and place foot on upper thigh by bending leg. Repeat on other leg. Hold hands in prayer position or above head. 	<p>Swings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slowly swing your body from side to side. Hold your arms out slightly from your body. Continually get slower. Finish by gently shaking tightness out.
<p>Mindful Circles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In a standing fixed position move around in circular motion from balls of feet to heels (making circles with feet) Move in opposite direction after 1 minute. 	<p>Slow walking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take a 5 minute walk around the classroom very slowly. Notice each step you take. Notice your breathing. Notice as many sounds as you can.

Long Meditations

<p>Body Scan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on each area of your body starting from your toes gradually moving up your body to your head. Notice as many sensations as you can. Just notice what is there. Notice how your body / skin feels against your clothes, floor, chair, cushion. Be the 'observer of your body.' 	<p>Counting to 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close your eyes. Each time you breathe out count up a number starting from 1. Count up to 5. Then start again at 1. If your mind wanders, start again at 1.
<p>Counting to 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close your eyes. Each time you breathe out count up a number starting from 1. Count up to 5. Then start again at 1. If your mind wanders, start again at 1. 	<p>Tense & Relax</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tense each part of the body from your toes to head. Scrunch each part up as tight as you can then let go. Do this twice for each area of the body. Be aware of each muscle tighten and then loosen. Allow yourself to just relax on the floor and notice any sensations in your body.

