



STRONGER SCHOOLS

An inclusive education plan for Victoria

MAKE SURE EVERY STUDENT IS HEALTHY, RESILIENT AND SUPPORTED TO PARTICIPATE FULLY IN SCHOOL

Students' academic success and social development are boosted through health, wellbeing and resilience initiatives.

Schools help build children and young people's social and emotional development and wellbeing. Students with strong wellbeing tend to have better learning outcomes, stronger social bonds and healthier relationships.

Prevention and early intervention for children and young people experiencing difficulties is critical to helping them achieve better educational and employment outcomes.

Qualified youth workers, Student Support Services Officers, and wrap-around support services provided in partnership with community sector organisations, help ensure that students receive timely access to support and interventions that address their needs and supports their learning.



Build student resilience to improve their health and wellbeing through investing in universal and targeted initiatives.

- Keep investing in programs that promote students' good mental health, positive, respectful relationships and social and emotional wellbeing. For example, the Respectful Relationships program supports schools and early childhood settings to promote and model respectful relationships and gender equality.³⁴
- Keep supporting new student health and wellbeing initiatives, including 2018-19 Victorian budget funding for access to speech pathology, physiotherapy and occupational therapy, additional mental health support for students, a suicide prevention pilot and a positive behaviour support program.³⁵

2

Provide early identification and intervention for children and young people experiencing difficulties

- Support schools to continue to deepen relationships with students and families, community service organisations and the local community. This includes proactively engaging with families experiencing disadvantage and who may be harder to reach.
- Support in-school early identification, prevention and treatment of problematic alcohol and other drug use. Providing drug and alcohol treatment and support services in schools is an effective way of identifying, engaging and treating young people experiencing problematic substance misuse as well as identifying and supporting their families.
- Ensure all schools and teachers know about supports available to help students, such as the Languages and Learning Disabilities Support Program,³⁶ Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)³⁷ and Headspace.³⁸

3

Increase students' access to qualified youth workers and wrap-around support services

- Increase investment in youth workers, Koorie Engagement Support Officers, and Student Support Services Officers (such as psychologists and speech therapists) which are closely connected to schools. This will help provide students with early diagnosis, intervention and referral, and reduce waiting lists.
- Invest in a school lawyer program in secondary schools to improve young people's access to legal education and confidential advice. This will help improve access to justice to assist young people with public transport fines, fair pay, and family violence at home, and ensure young people leave school with a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities.

4

Work with partners to give children and young people holistic, coordinated support

- Invest in school-as-community-hubs and other integrated services models to provide children and young people with more holistic support, particularly in areas of socioeconomic disadvantage. This includes resourcing a full-time dedicated coordinator to help coordinate services.
- Develop a framework for positive interaction and support from community service organisations.

34. Victorian Government, Department of Education and Training, Respectful Relationships, accessed at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/respectfulrelationships.aspx>

35. Victorian Government, Victorian Budget 18/19, Getting things done, Budget Paper No. 3, p.47, accessed at <https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/budgetfiles201819.budget.vic.gov.au/2018-19+State+Budget+-+Service+Delivery.pdf>

36. Victorian Government, Finance - Language and Learning Disabilities Support Program, accessed at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/management/finance/Pages/srpref010.aspx>

37. Victorian Government, health.vic, accessed at <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/mental-health/mental-health-services/services-by-population-group/services-for-children-and-adolescents/child-and-adolescent-mental-health-services>

38. Headspace, accessed at https://headspace.org.au/?gclid=CjwKCAjwopTYBRazEiwAnU4kbwgGeKOb8Lk-zMxB7QTpQyl6xXZiXPhosZTtctM4yLV9AvcOp0ggHBoCNo8QAvD_BwE