

Ensuring boys' education is fit for purpose

Placing wellbeing at the core of school life helps students flourish over their education journey.

Brighton Grammar School has linked with world-class authorities on boys' education to launch a range of academic and wellbeing initiatives that empower students in their studies and their lives.

The school's innovative wellbeing program is a comprehensive and integrated school-wide approach to self-care and wellbeing.

"Studies reveal that if boys have a strong sense of wellbeing, they have greater levels of contentment, concentration, productivity and vitality, and achieve better academic results," says headmaster Ross Featherston.

Wellbeing practice has grown to become an integral part of the culture at Brighton – one of Australia's leading independent boys' schools – so much so that the school has a purpose-built Wellbeing Centre.

The school's wellbeing program is embedded in the curriculum from its Early Learning Centre to VCE to develop and nurture a positive school culture that empowers students.

"In partnership with renowned wellbeing experts, Brighton Grammar offers students innovative and evidence-informed initiatives in positive masculinity, stress-management, personal development and self-health practices such as mindfulness," says Featherston.

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At Brighton Grammar School, wellbeing initiatives are embedded in the curriculum.

"At Brighton Grammar, students practise daily mindfulness and wellness training."

Another key initiative is the program's Positive Masculinity project, developed in conjunction with Orygen, The National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health.

The project, the first of its kind in the world, creates a framework for students, teachers and parents to develop positive masculinity and help young men and boys develop into respectful men.

"All Brighton Grammar staff have received extensive training in mindfulness practice, positive psychology and positive education," explains Featherston.

"They are backed by a team of psychologists, student counsellors, chaplain,

career counsellors, Indigenous mentors and other expert staff who guide and support students every step of the way."

Improved wellbeing outcomes have led to greater student engagement and stronger academic performance, according to Featherston.

"As a result of this project and other initiatives, Brighton Grammar recorded its best academic VCE results in the school's history in 2020," he says. "The improved academic results occurred concurrently with improving wellbeing outcomes."

Brighton Grammar's wellbeing program has proven so successful the school has been named a finalist for the Australian Education Awards in both 2020 and 2021.

"Through significant and ongoing investment in facilities, staff and new teaching techniques, Brighton Grammar has been able to constantly adapt to an ever-changing world to ensure students have the skills and self-belief to thrive," says Featherston.

"The core values at Brighton Grammar have changed very little since it was founded in 1882 – the school prides itself on instilling a sense of belonging and providing an all-round education.

"We want our boys to feel good, function well, and contribute to society in a positive way. We believe it is critical to equip our boys with the skills and mindsets that prepare them for a 'life well lived'."

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