SCHOOLS
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Introduction to the Schools Mental Health Fund and Menu – for schools

2024

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VICTORIA State Government | Department of Education

Acknowledgement of Country

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Goals of the session

By the end of this session, we aim for you to:
- become **clear** on how the Fund and Menu fits with the department's broader mental health reforms
- feel **confident** in your knowledge about the Fund and Menu and who to contact for support
- feel **ready** to take action for your next steps

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The big picture of wellbeing for students

Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System	Redesign of FISO2.0	Prioritising wellbeing across Australia
Recommendation 17: Supporting social and emotional wellbeing in schools	Learning **and wellbeing** at the centre of student outcomes	Wellbeing recommended as an **additional outcome** for the next National School Reform Agreement

Mental health reforms in Victoria

Framework for Improving Student Outcomes 2.0

- **Wellbeing** sits alongside **Learning** in the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes
- FISO was revised to become FISO2.0 in response to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System

Mental Health in Primary Schools	Mental Health Practitioners in Secondary Schools	Schools Mental Health Fund and Menu
• The Mental Health in Primary Schools program was piloted from 2020 and is being expanded to every government and low-fee non-government primary school in Victoria by 2026 • Schools will be funded to hire a teacher-qualified **Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader** to take a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing, supported by training and communities of practice	• The Mental Health Practitioners initiative funds all government secondary and specialist schools to employ a qualified **Mental Health Practitioner** (MHP). MHPs are qualified **occupational therapists, psychologists, social workers and nurses** with MH specialisations • MHPs support schools to address student mental health and builds capability to identify issues	• The Mental Health Fund was rolled out to all government **rural and regional schools** in **Term 3 2022.** It has rolled out to **half of metro schools in Term 1, 2023** and **the other half in Term 1, 2024** • The Fund supports schools to select programs, training, staff and services from an **evidence-based Menu** that best meets their students' mental health and wellbeing needs

Resources

| Mental Health and Wellbeing Toolkit	High Impact Wellbeing Strategies	Funding Acquittals Guide
• The Mental Health and Wellbeing Toolkit contains easy-to-find, practical and accessible content for **schools, parents/carers and students** • The Toolkit provides advice to help **promote and support** student mental health and wellbeing	• The High Impact Wellbeing Strategies are **7 evidence-informed strategies** that have a significant **effect on student wellbeing** • HIWS are a **companion to HITS**, developed for use by teachers in the classroom when used as part of **FISO2.0**	• The Mental health reforms funding acquittals quick guide provides an overview of reporting and acquitting the funding schools receive under mental health reform programs. • It assists schools in navigating the multiple new funding streams related to mental health.

What is the Fund?
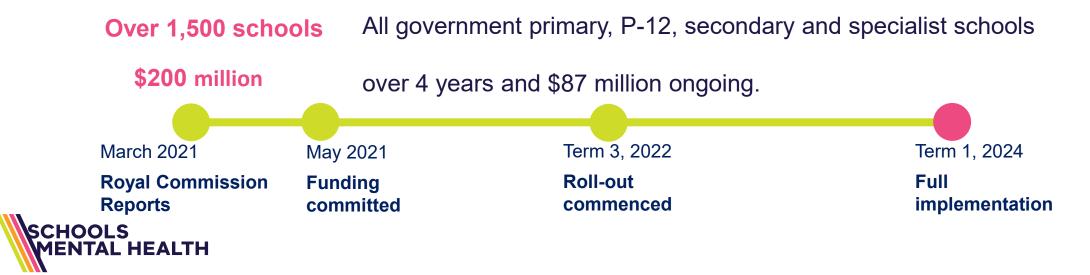
The Schools Mental Health Fund provides an annual funding allocation to government schools to spend on student mental health and wellbeing support, chosen from an evidence-based Menu of programs, training and staff.

The Fund and Menu was a recommendation of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, which recognised the importance of schools in supporting mental health and wellbeing.

Schools receive a minimum of **$25,000** annually. Additional funding for:
- Rural and regional schools
- Schools with more than 201enrolments
- Primary Schools.

The Fund must be spent in the calendar year it is received.

The Department of Education developed the Menu through a comprehensive process for providers that assessed: evidence; useability by schools; capacity to scale and value for money.

Over 1,500 schools

$200 million

All government primary, P-12, secondary and specialist schools over 4 years and $87 million ongoing.

March 2021	May 2021	Term 3, 2022	Term 1, 2024
Royal Commission Reports	**Funding committed**	**Roll-out commenced**	**Full implementation**

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What is the Menu?

56 programs were selected for the Full Menu:

37 Tier 1 programs across **9 categories,** including:
- 5 Whole school approach to mental health programs
- 4 Social and emotional learning programs
- 4 Wellbeing animal programs
- 2 Eating disorders programs
- 2 Alcohol and drug education programs
- 8 Mental health literacy programs
- 3 Bullying prevention programs
- 4 Local community-led mental health interventions
- 5 Peer support programs

19 Tier 2 programs across **4 categories,** including:
- 3 Therapeutic programs
- 4 Trauma informed programs
- 5 Disaster, grief and loss programs
- 7 Support for diverse cohorts

Tier 3 spending is through employment of staff or referrals to external professionals within the scope of the Menu's Skills Checklist

Evidence rating
- 20 programs have an evidence rating of 4
- 25 programs have an evidence rating of 3
- 11 programs have an evidence rating of 2

Geographic coverage
- 49 programs are available statewide
- 7 programs are offered in specific DE Areas, including Gippsland and Wimmera South West

Target audience
- 22 programs target primary school students
- 31 programs target secondary school students
- 24 programs are targeted at building the capacity of primary school teachers
- 28 programs are targeted at building the capacity of secondary school teachers

Structure of the Menu - Tiers

- Schools can purchase items from the Menu across all 3 tiers

- Tier 1 interventions should be prioritized to provide whole-school wellbeing for all students

Tier 3
Targeted support

Interventions targeted to individuals or small groups who are identified as requiring intensive tailored mental health support to engage positively in education

Tier 2
Early intervention
Cohort specific support

Early interventions and interventions targeted to specific cohorts of students; complement universal interventions and provide essential additional supports for cohorts of students who may have specific needs or vulnerabilities

Tier 1
Universal interventions

Positive Mental Health Promotion to help schools create a positive, inclusive and supportive school climate, building the preconditions for optimal school learning, development and wellbeing

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Structure of the Menu - Categories

Category	Description	Key relevant Tiers
Whole-school approach to positive mental health	Programs that target the whole school (leaders, teachers, staff, students, parents and carers) to embed safe, positive school cultures and learning environments.	1
Social and emotional learning	Programs designed to support delivery of the Victorian Curriculum F–10 and to assist students to gain the knowledge and skills needed to understand and regulate their emotions, behaviour and relationships with others and build resilience effectively.	1
Wellbeing animal programs	Programs that use wellbeing animals to improve student mental health and wellbeing.	1
Mental health literacy	Programs focused on: understanding mental health and associated risk/protective factors; recognising, managing and preventing mental ill-health; encouraging help seeking behaviours; and building staff capability in noticing when students may be showing signs of mental health issues.	1
Eating disorders support	Programs that support students to develop a positive body image, healthy attitude and behaviours towards the body, eating and physical activity and encourage help seeking.	1
Alcohol and drug education	Programs to support schools to provide students with effective alcohol and drug education.	1
Bullying prevention	Programs designed to identify, address and prevent all forms of bullying.	1
Local community-led mental health interventions	Place-based initiatives and partnerships with local organisations designed to support positive mental health.	1
Peer support	Programs focused on equipping students with strategies, skills and tools to provide safe and appropriate support to peers. These programs increase students understanding of mental health, destigmatise mental health and promote help seeking.	1
Therapeutic programs*	Programs delivered by professionals for groups of students that reduce the impact of mild mental health problems. Therapeutic professionals do not need to apply to be on the Menu. Schools can engage them under the Skills Checklist (see note below).	2
Trauma informed programs	Programs designed to raise awareness, provide management tools or tailored support for students who have experienced trauma or adverse life experiences.	2
Disaster, grief and loss programs	Programs designed to raise awareness, provide management tools or tailored support for students who have adverse life experiences including natural disasters, grief and loss.	2
Support for diverse cohorts	Programs designed to improve cultural safety and inclusion, and address racism and discrimination for students, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) students, students from refugee backgrounds and students with disability.	2
Targeted support*	Interventions for individuals or small groups of students with emerging or diagnosed mental health needs or students experiencing mental ill health. These must be delivered by a trained mental health and wellbeing professional, such as a psychologist, social worker or occupational therapist in a school or community setting. Interventions can be offered in person, online, by phone or hybrid (a combination of virtual and in-person modes). A full list of mental health and wellbeing professionals that schools can purchase are in the Skills Checklist.	3

How schools are using the Fund and Menu

In 2023

1,116 schools received the Fund

440 metro schools received $25.44 million and 676 rural and regional schools received $28.83 million

388,008 students and 43,182 staff

1,940 people attended professional learning on implementing the Fund and Menu

Spending

- 808 schools intend to engage one or more of the 56 Menu providers in 2023

- Schools have engaged, or plan to engage, providers across **all** Menu categories

- By the end of Term 2 2023, almost 400 schools had engaged Menu providers, reaching approximately 40,000 students and more than 6,500 school staff.

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The Menu – summary version

Includes:
- Category of intervention
- Relevant department-funded programs
- Program provider
- Brief program description
- Cost range

Evidence scale:
1. Requires further research
2. Supported by expert opinion
3. Foundation and emerging evidence
4. Established evidence

Schools Mental Health Menu Summary

Category/ type of intervention	DE and other govt funded programs	Programs available for purchase	Program provider	Description of program offering	Evidence strength	Cost range
Tier 1: Positive Mental Health Promotion						
Whole school approach to mental health	DE-funded initiatives • Mental Health in Primary Schools • Respectful Relationships • Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships teaching resources • Schoolwide Positive Behaviour Support • Active Schools	Healthy Minds Program	Healthy Minds	Teaches specific psychological skills associated with emotional wellness and resilience.		
		Understand, notice, improve	University of Melbourne	Provides strategies to improve wellbeing and mental health in schools through an online platform.		
		Smiling Mind Primary Schools Program	Smiling Mind	Supports primary school students to develop social and emotional skills to support good mental health and wellbeing.		
		Berry Street Education Model (BSEM)	Berry Street	Provides teaching and learning strategies to improve student wellbeing and academic achievement.		
		All-School Visible Wellbeing Program	Visible Wellbeing	Enables teachers to flexibly embed Positive Education as part of their practice.		
		Certificate in Visible Wellbeing for teachers	Visible Wellbeing	Trains teachers in a wellbeing framework, language and set of practices that can be embedded in primary and secondary classrooms and co-curricular activities.		
Social and emotional learning	Other free resources • Be You Initiative for Educators • Community Understanding and Safety Training • Achievement Program	The Resilience Project	The Resilience Project	Supports positive mental health and builds resilience, social and emotional skills and happiness in primary and secondary students.		
		Improving SEL Outcomes in the Classroom	Pearson Australia	Supports students to better understand and regulate their emotions and improve relationships with peers.		
		Growing with Gratitude	Growing with Gratitude	Supports primary school students to build their social and emotional wellbeing, resiliency, hope and happiness.		
		Social and Emotional Learning through the Arts	The Song Room	Explicitly teaches social and emotional skills through the arts.		
Wellbeing animal programs		Canine Comprehension School Programs	Canine Comprehension	Dog assisted learning to build connections, develop confidence, increase attendance and reduce problematic behaviour.		
		Dogs Connect Program	Dogs Connect	Designs long term, sustainable programs to introduce and integrate wellbeing dogs into schools.		
		Lead the Way Therapy Dogs	Lead The Way Australia	Supports positive mental health through the use of therapy dogs and canine assisted interventions.		
		P.A.W.S in Schools	Therapy Animals Australia	Provides a framework for use of animals in schools to improve student wellbeing.		
Eating disorder programs		Butterfly Body Bright	Butterfly Foundation	Develops positive body image, healthy attitudes and behaviours towards the body, eating and physical activity for students in years F-6.		FREE
		Body Kind Education	Butterfly Foundation	Promotes healthy attitudes and behaviours reduces stigma and encourages help seeking for students in years 5-12.		

Evidence Strength
- Requires further research
- Supported by expert opinion
- Foundation and emerging evidence
- Established evidence

Cost Range
- $1 – $200
- $201 – $2000
- $2001 - $5000
- $5000+

Menu pdf

Cost indicator

The Menu website

Main page view

Expand refine search button

Menu on department's website

Home > Schools Mental Health Menu

Schools Mental Health Menu

Browse these programs and supports to develop your mental health funding plan. Click on Refine search to add filters, such as cost, audience and location.

Enter keyword(s)   Search

Refine search ⌄

Displaying 1-12 of 84 results

Mental Health Practitioners (MHPs) – increase MHP's time fraction
www.schools.vic.gov.au/mental-health-practitioners-mhps-increase-mhps-time-fraction
This initiative provides mental health and wellbeing support in Victorian government secondary and specialist schools.
Updated: 30 January 2024

Mental Health in Primary Schools – increase mental health and wellbeing leader time fraction
www.schools.vic.gov.au/mental-health-primary-schools-increase-mental-health-and-wellbeing-leader-time-fraction
This program provides government and low fee non-government Victorian

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Home > Schools Mental Health Menu

Schools Mental Health Menu

Browse these programs and supports to develop your mental health funding plan. Click on Refine search to add filters, such as cost, audience and location.

Enter keyword(s)   Search

Refine search ⌃

Audience
Select audience

Category
Select category

Cost
Select cost

Delivery mode
Select delivery mode

Location
Select location

Strength of evidence
Select strength of evidence option

Tier
Select tier

Apply search filters   ✖ Clear search filters

Scroll down main page

1 2 3 4 5

Next →

About the Schools Mental Health Menu

The Victorian government has invested $217.8 million over four years to support student mental health and wellbeing, including $200 million over four years and $87 million ongoing to create a Schools Mental Health Fund. Underpinning the Fund is the evidence-based menu.

The Menu provides schools with opportunities to purchase evidence-based programs and initiatives across the three tiers of intervention. This includes initiatives that:

- promote student mental health and wellbeing
- enable schools to intervene early to support students
- provide targeted and more individualised support for students who need it.

Menu items have been externally assessed for how well they support student mental health and wellbeing, ensuring schools have access to a range of evidence-based supports to meet their needs.

Further information for schools on the Fund and Menu is available on the schools' Policy and Advisory Library (PAL).

How to be included on the Menu in the future

Information for evidence-based student mental health and wellbeing program providers on how to be included on the Menu.

How schools can engage a Menu provider

Schools are expected to follow the Schools Mental Health Fund and Menu

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Individual page view

Home > Canine Comprehension

Canine Comprehension

Canine Comprehension is an 8-week dog-assisted therapy program that supports students struggling with connection at school.

On this page
Program description
Intended outcomes
Program details
Implementation considerations
Cost

Schools Vic
Learning and support
Working with us

- **Tier:**
  - Tier 1: Positive Mental Health Promotion
  - Tier 2: Early Intervention Cohort Specific Support
- **Type of intervention:** Animal wellbeing programs
- **Strength of evidence:** Level 3: Foundational and emerging evidence for program
- **Geographic location:** State-wide, rural/regional

Related links
Schools Mental Health Menu
Policy and Advisory Library: Mental Health Fund and Menu

Contact provider
Canine Comprehension
📞 0421 490 188
✉ admin@caninecomprehension.com.au
Canine Comprehension

Program description

The Canine Comprehension School Program is an 8

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Who to have around the table

School leadership

- **Principals, Assistant Principals**
- **School Improvement Teams**
- **Middle leadership**: Leading Teachers, Year Level Coordinators, Learning Specialists, Professional Learning Communities

Health and Wellbeing staff

- **Mental Health and Wellbeing Leaders** (for primary schools with MHiPS funding)
- **Mental Health Practitioners** (for secondary and specialist schools)
- **Mental health professionals** engaged at the school e.g. psychologists, social workers, speech therapists, school nurse
- **Wellbeing Coordinators and Teams**
- **Area/Regional staff** supporting student wellbeing e.g. Koorie Engagement Support Officer, SSS key contact
- **Other staff** with knowledge about students' mental health and wellbeing – Multicultural Education Aides, Teaching Assistants

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Key resources

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Bank of resources

General Menu resources

- Online Menu
- PDF Menu
- Menu on the Policy Advisory Library
- Menu Factsheet (includes information rollout of Fund)
- Frequently Asked Questions

Strategic planning

- Planning Tool

Procuring programs/services from the Menu

- Rules of Use
- Amplify Student Voice
- Inclusive Student Voice Toolkit

Recruitment and workforce

- Skills Checklist
- Recruitment in Schools

Reporting and acquitting the Fund

- Instructions for reporting expenditure

Ongoing learning

- Professional learning on Arc

Click **'follow'** on our Arc page to be notified of new sessions

Resource 1: The Planning Tool

Why is the Planning Tool so useful?

- Takes a strategic approach to forward planning
- Helps embed a whole-school approach to wellbeing and mental health
- Identifies student data to understand needs and prompts schools to use student voice
- Helps make decisions on how to spend the Fund
- Based on the FISO 2.0 Improvement Cycle

Evaluate and diagnose → Prioritise and set goals → Develop and plan → Implement and monitor

How do schools use the Tool?

- Find the Tool on **PAL** at the **'Mental Health Fund and Menu'** page, in the **'Resources'** tab
- Download the Tool as a PDF, save to your desktop and open Adobe Acrobat
- Fill out the Tool with your school improvement and health and wellbeing teams
- Save changes and click **SUBMIT** on the last page of the Tool
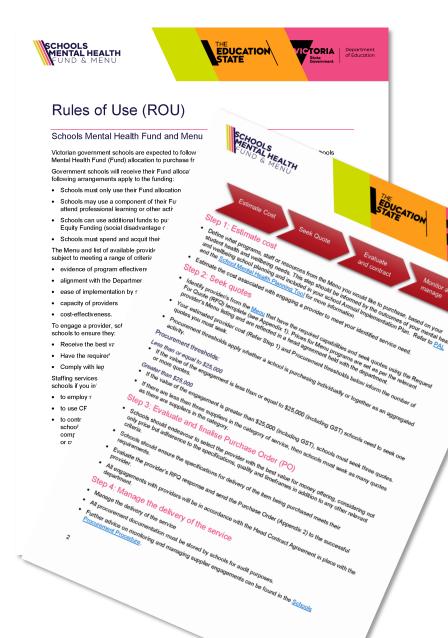
- Tools are received by the evaluation team in Central

Resource 2: Rules of Use

Why are the Rules of Use so useful?

- Provides information about how to procure programs and services from the Menu

- Reminds schools of important details:
  - No need to contract providers as a Head Contract Agreement is in place between Menu providers and the department
  - There is no maximum spend threshold
  - Hyperlinks for handy templates – Request for Quote and Purchase Order

What should schools do to purchase from the Menu?

- *less than $25,000 (inc. GST), request **a quote***

- *more than $25,000 (inc. GST), request **3 quotes** (or if there are less than 3 suppliers in a category, seek as many quotes as there are suppliers - 2 or 1)*

1. **Evaluate** the provider's response to the **Request for Quote**
2. **Select** the provider that best meets the needs of the school
3. **Send a Purchase Order** to the successful provider

Resource 3: Skills Checklist

Why is the Skills Checklist useful?
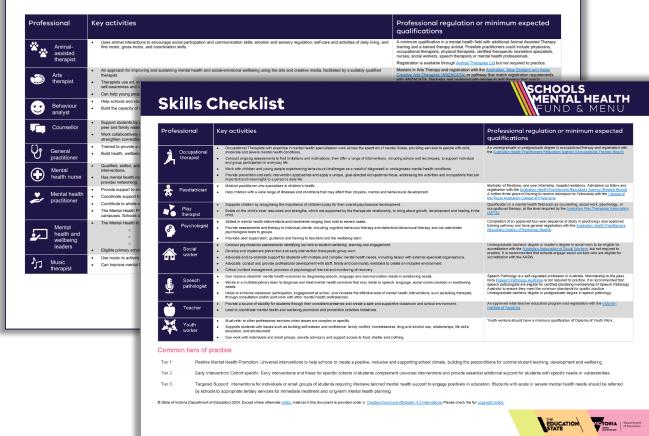
- Outlines the professionals schools can engage with their Fund
- Provides information about
  - minimum required qualifications for each profession
  - key activities of each profession
  - required membership to professional associations

Consult [Recruitment in Schools](#) for additional support

Resource 4: Instructions for reporting expenditure

Why are the Instructions so useful?

- Provides detailed information about reporting and acquitting the Fund for credit and cash
- Lists sub-program codes for Fund and Menu expenses
- Oulines steps on:
  - how to pay new and existing staff salaries in eduPay
  - how to report cash transactions in CASES21

Use the Funding Planner in SPOT to report your plans for the Fund in your AIP

Instructions for reporting expenditure

The following instructions are provided to support schools with their reporting of the Schools Mental Health Fund expenditure transactions. Underpinning the Fund is an evidence-based Menu to give schools confidence in purchasing programs and interventions that will meet their students' needs. Schools must only use their Fund allocation to purchase programs, staff or resources from the Menu. Further information is available in PAL.

Reporting **cash** transactions

All cash transactions funded through the Schools Mental Health Fund must be reported against CASES21 sub-program code 5230, titled **Mental Health Fund**, as follows:

CASES21 Instructions

1. In CASES21, go to program code **520**.
2. Select sub-program code **5230**, as the funding source for the transaction, as shown below.

Program Code	Sub program code	Program/Subprogram title
520		Student Welfare
	5230	Mental Health Fund

3. Once the sub-program code **5230 – MENTAL HEALTH FUND** has been selected, all... transaction against the appropriate General Ledger expenditure category, indicati... amount.

Some common examples of the account codes you are likely to use include,... the following:

Account code	Account Title	Account Description
80052	Non-Teaching Staff	Salaries and allowanc... Includes psychologist...
80071	Casual relief Teaching Staff	Salary paid to a ... School Council... working days... Excludes a...
86910	Conferences/ Courses/ Seminars	Incurred... lecture... train...
89204	Service Provider	P...
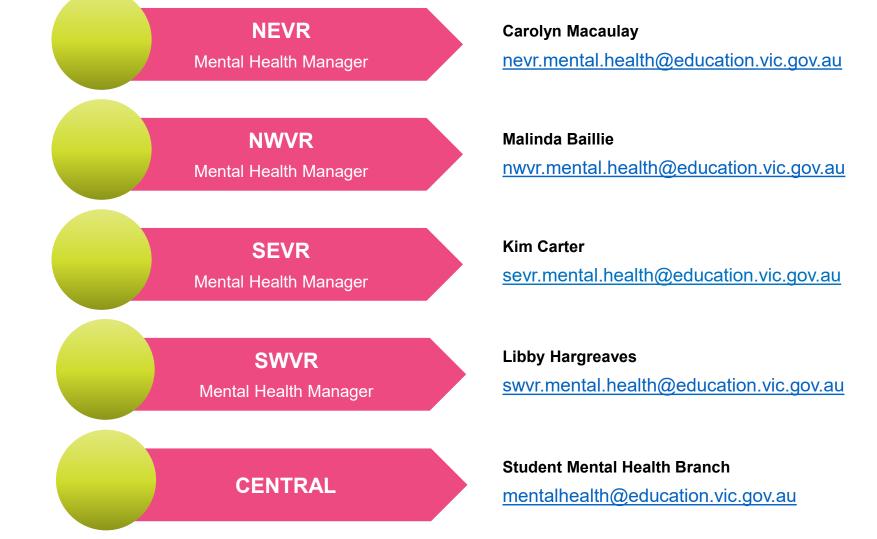
Key contacts

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CENTRAL

Student Mental Health Branch
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Case studies

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Case Study 1: How might a school spend their Fund?

About the school

- P-12 Specialist School located in metro Melbourne
- On-site café for employment pathways

About the students

- 440 enrolments
- Teacher observations note increase in student anxiety
- Health, Wellbeing and Engagement dashboard shows decreasing trend in sense of connectedness
- Students enjoy creative and artistic activities
- Traditional counselling such as talking therapies typically not effective

Fund amount: $57,000

Goals

- Increase students' feeling of connectedness
- Provide therapeutic support to address anxiety rates
- Offer opportunities for student voice and expression

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Program from Menu	$3,000
• Staff professional development with 'Youth Mental Health First Aid' program	
Occupational Therapist	**$17,000**
• Employment of a qualified Occupational Therapist one day/week to work with students at on-site cafe	
Art Therapist	**$35,000**
• Employment of a qualified Art Therapist two days/week to: - provide targeted sessions with at-risk students - hold art exhibition	
Auslan Interpreter	**$2,000**
• Employ interpreters to attend art sessions with students for full accessibility	
TOTAL	**$57,000**

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Case Study 2: Healthy Minds Program

Casterton Secondary College engaged the Healthy Minds program to prevent and reduce the risk of anxiety, depression and eating disorders, while building wellbeing and resilience. The school's year 8 and 9 students and staff received training in the 'wellbeing wheel', challenging perfectionism, how thoughts cause feelings, being a critical consumer of the media, understanding emotions, how to manage stress, healthy thinking, gratitude and self-compassion.

Students learned psychological skills to build and maintain good mental health. School staff said they would recommend the program to others and students said the program would help them to be mentally healthy.
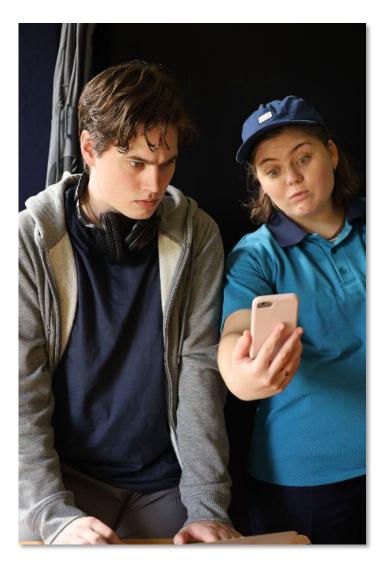
Case Study 3: Brainstorm Productions

Alkira Secondary College engaged Brainstorm Productions to deliver two performances of 'Wired' for their year 7 students. The performances helped students discuss and learn how to manage cyberbullying and build resilience, healthy relationships and positive mental health. Performances included a question and answer session for students and resources for teachers mapped to the curriculum.

The school leadership team found the program entertained, educated, and generated discussion among their students. It emphasised the importance of empathy, self-care, and real-life connections in a digital world.

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Case Study 4: The Song Room

Springvale Park Special Developmental School engaged The Song Room to teach social and emotional skills through the arts. After consultation with school leaders to identify the programs artform, goals and objectives, the Teaching Artist delivered a 10-week sequential social-emotional-learning dance program with 50 students, teachers and aides.

Lessons were tailored to address students' specific special development needs and were delivered to small groups, whole classes and the whole-school.

Students participated in game-based warm-ups, dance classes, workshops and performances. School staff were impressed by the Teaching Artist's ability to engage every student in the activities and noticed an increase in their students' confidence after the program.

The school will use their Fund to engage The Song Room again in 2024.

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How did we do?

Please complete our survey:

https://forms.office.com/r/4nUpTD0SiE

Thank you

Student Mental Health Branch
E: mentalhealth@education.vic.gov.au