

BUILD YOUR SCHOOL'S STUDENT WELLBEING WITH PEER SUPPORT



Empower your students to develop positive relationships, social and emotional literacy skills, and contribute to a positive school culture.



ABOUT US

We are an Australian charity. Our program has been supporting student wellbeing for 50 years.



WE SUPPORT SCHOOLS WITH STUDENT WELLBEING.

The Peer Support Program is a whole-of-school student wellbeing program available to primary schools and high schools across Australia.

It's a student-led program that is supported by research and endorsed by state education departments.

OUR PROGRAM IS BACKED BY 50 YEARS OF PRACTICE.

The first iteration of the Peer Support Program was developed more than 50 years ago in response to an insight: young people turn to each other for advice, and need tools to support each other. The program has since been run by thousands of schools around the country, and has evolved to its current format, using an evidence-based approach.



WE ARE BEST PRACTICE.

Our program is built on evidence and has several studies supporting its efficacy. We are endorsed by several education departments and listed in their wellbeing directories, following rigorous tender processes. And we are supported by NSW Ministry of Health.

The program outcomes speak for themselves. Students report an increased sense of belonging and confidence.

THE FOUR PILLARS OF WELLBEING



Our approach to wellbeing is based on four concepts.



Connectedness

Connectedness involves the feelings of belonging that a student develops through their relationships with their peers and teachers within the school community.



Sense of self

Sense of self involves what students think, feel and believe about themselves. Sense of self is formed by the individual and their relationships, interactions and experiences. It manifests itself in the student's values, attitudes and behaviours.



Resilience

Building resilience involves the empowerment of the student to be positive, proactive and resourceful in dealing with life experiences. Resilient students have the ability to reflect on and learn from their experiences and to creatively turn challenges into opportunities for growth and learning.



Sense of possibility

A strong sense of possibility involves an awareness and belief that positive outcomes can be achieved in the future. It empowers individuals to take responsibility for enhancing their sense of self, developing and maintaining positive relationships and turning challenges into opportunities.





THE PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

The program involves senior students being trained as Peer Leaders, and leading small groups of younger students in weekly structured sessions.

The program fosters students' wellbeing by nurturing peer relationships, empowering students to take on leadership roles, and enabling all students to learn and practise transferable life skills that will support their mental health and wellbeing now and into the future.

Schools can select from a range of modules to run with their students over an 8-week program. Topics include resilience, relationships, optimism, values, and anti-bullying.

There are additional resources and activities to reinforce the program and nurture peer relationships that you can run any time with your students.

Watch the video to hear teachers and students share their experiences of the program.



How to choose a wellbeing program for your school

It can be tricky for teachers and school leaders to navigate the plethora of wellbeing programs available. A large study conducted in 2020 supports the structure and approach of the Peer Support Program.

The Australian Centre for Education Research (ACER) conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of 78 evaluations of school wellbeing programs.

The review highlights the benefits of wellbeing programs on academic performance, in addition to wellbeing measures.

It found that the most effective wellbeing programs are those that:

- ✓ foster school belonging and engagement
- ✓ provide mentoring
- ✓ build social-emotional skills

The review reinforces the importance of teacher professional learning.

The research identifies factors common to wellbeing programs with the most evidence of impact on student outcomes. These include:

- ✓ shorter programs of up to one school term (fits in a crowded curriculum)
- ✓ delivered over a number of regular sessions (builds student capacity)
- ✓ universal interventions that raise awareness (builds the whole community)
- ✓ delivered to small groups of students

The review confirms that the structure and approach of the Peer Support Program is aligned with best practice.

You can find a summary of the review at acer.org/au



The evidence for Peer Support

Students report positive outcomes from the program

Many schools report significant improvements in wellbeing, including:

- 69% of younger students who participated in the Peer Support Program reported greater feelings of acceptance and inclusion.
- 80% of Peer Leaders felt they experienced personal growth, 82% felt they improved their leadership skills, and 89% improved their confidence.

Peer Support Australia offers the world's most effective school-based peer leadership program, according to [research by Deakin University](#).

School leaders give a high rating to Peer Support Program outcomes

A 2021 [study published in the journal, School Mental Health](#), looked at mental health and wellbeing programs in Australian schools.

The researchers surveyed 597 school leaders at NSW primary schools. They looked at five core social emotional competencies: recognising and managing emotions and behaviours, setting and achieving positive goals, appreciating the perspectives of others, establishing and maintaining positive relationships, and making responsible decisions.

The Peer Support Program was the most commonly used program. The program had, on average, been in use in schools for more than five years and been targeted to students at all or most stages. Principals rated the effectiveness of our program 2.28 (with highest score being 3).

We're endorsed by state education departments

Our program meets the high standards of the NSW Department of Education, and the SA Department for Education, and has been included in their external wellbeing programs directories. Our one-day program implementation workshop is accredited by TQI in the ACT. We are supported by NSW Ministry of Health funding. And we are a registered charity.



NSW Health

What teachers say about Peer Support



The Peer Support Program is a really good opportunity for our younger and older students to form some really positive connections. For our younger students, it means that out in the playground they've got someone else they can talk to. For our older students, it gives them a sense of responsibility that they have another person they know and look after in the junior school. It's like a sibling relationship. At the end of the program, they have a really close bond and I think that's a lovely thing moving through high school.

**Nick Briffa, Dean of Students
Mamre Anglican College**



The Peer Support Program was exactly what our school needed. It covered all of our grades and all of our stages. Peer Support has become one of our rock solid foundational skills and programs that we run here. It empowers the kids, it builds the confidence in our kids to manage life and to manage the complexities of school life. I've seen many students at our school when they're having difficulties, when they're having problems regulating their emotions, put in the skills of Peer Support into their everyday practice.

**David MacVean, Relieving Principal
Oxley Public School**



The Peer Support Program works really well at our school. It fits right into our whole-school approach to student wellbeing. And with Peer Support, the students get a chance to take control and it's more student centred. It allows our student leaders to take control and build their capacity as student leaders and work with all the other students.

**Gordon Parish, Principal
Robertson Public School**



The program continues to go from strength to strength. The Year 7s have responded very well to the program by building good relationships with Peer Leaders and appear a lot more settled and confident at school. Feedback from parents, staff and students alike is incredibly positive. Being a new school, we are focused on developing a positive culture and know that this program is a huge step in the right direction.

**John Vandermark, Teacher
Joseph Banks Secondary College**

What students say about Peer Support



School for me before I took on this [Peer Leader] position was a bit difficult, I guess, because I'm not very good academically. I was able to help some Year 7s build confidence and build connections with other students. And it's really important for me to try to help them be better, because I know what I was like in Year 7, and it wasn't the best to be honest. But it's really nice, because they know they can come to me for whatever they need.

It has impacted my schoolwork a lot actually. My grades have improved, my focus and work ethic in class have definitely improved. I think nearly all of my teachers have seen a good improvement and have told me that I have been doing really good and how I've improved.

Javier, Peer Leader, Year 10

#BeKind

Being a good friend is when you be kind to other people. Like being a kind friend and being nice to one another. And I learnt it in Peer Support.

Ruby, Participant, Year 3



What I love about Peer Support is being able to communicate with the kids. I love teaching the little kids how to make friends and not bully each other.

Elisamae, Peer Leader, Year 6



The Peer Support Leaders come pick you up from your class. So sometimes they help me write my name or do some maths. I have so much fun at Peer Support – everything I do makes me feel happier.

Blake, Participant, Kindergarten



I think it helps kids understand their emotions and feelings in such a way that they can deal with them better and learn to live more positively. It helps me cope a lot more than if I didn't know how to do that stuff.

Wolfie, Peer Leader, Year 6



PEER LEADER TRAINING

We provide the training and resources for your Peer Support Coordinator and supporting teachers to run Peer Leader training with your students.

The training prepares students for their role as Peer Support Leaders. We recommend training the entire cohort of senior students. Students will learn and practise a range of skills, including team work and communication. It's an opportunity for all students to take on leadership roles -- not just students who are typically chosen as leaders.

The training is designed to go over two days. The Peer Leader training resources are available in our members' portal with different versions available for primary schools and high schools.



Many of our students have surprised us with stepping up into the role of Peer Leader, especially ones that are not our school captains and our school leaders. It's been a really great opportunity for them to step up and be a Peer Leader and show that they can demonstrate those leadership skills.

- Carmel Coles, Year 6 Classroom Teacher, Robertson Public School

CHOOSE WELLBEING TOPICS TO SUIT YOUR PRIMARY SCHOOL



Peer Support offers four core modules for primary schools. Choose which one to run over eight weeks.

- ✓ **Keeping Friends:** Supports students to form and maintain positive relationships.
- ✓ **Stronger Together:** Empowers students to build an anti-bullying culture.
- ✓ **Living Positively:** Helps students develop an optimistic mindset.
- ✓ **Moving Forward:** Building resilience so students can manage life's ups and downs.

These are peer-led modules, run by pairs of trained Year 6 students, with participants from Kindergarten through to Year 5.

Additional primary school resources include a range of activities that can be run any time.

These are led by either a teacher or Peer Leader. The choice is yours.

- **Planning Our Paths:** Building resilience.
- **Connections:** Supporting healthy relationships.
- **Positive Directions:** Exploring positive thinking and emotions.
- **Supporting Change: Preparing For High School.**
- **Great Transitions:** Exploring transition and change.
- **Passport To Belonging:** Supporting connection and belonging.

CHOOSE WELLBEING TOPICS TO SUIT YOUR HIGH SCHOOL



Peer Support offers three core modules for high schools. Choose which one to run over eight weeks

- ✓ **Strengthening Our Connections:** Empowers students to build an anti-bullying culture.
- ✓ **Rethinking Challenges:** Building resilience to manage life's ups and downs.
- ✓ **Best Version Of Me:** Students explore values, influence, and integrity.

The high school resources have been designed for Year 10 students to lead groups of Year 7 students. However, some schools use the resources with other year groups too.

There are a range of additional high school resources that can be run any time of year.

- **Framework For Orientation:** An orientation framework with fun activities to support the transition to high school.
- **Linking To Thrive:** Activities for building strong relationships.
- **Thrive:** Managing change and transition.
- **Connected And Capable:** Supporting resilience.



It really brings the school together as a whole rather than it just being separate cohorts. It unifies the school into a greater community than what it already is. And I think the Peer Support Program has been really beneficial in that.

- Holly, Year 10 Peer Leader, Mamre Anglican College

5 steps to introduce Peer Support



Become an accredited Peer Support school in five simple steps.

Step 1: Register online and book a workshop

Complete the '[Join Peer Support](#)' form on our website. You will be asked to reserve your place at one of our training workshops.



Step 2: Complete your payment

After you've registered online, we will email you an invoice within 48 hours. You will gain access to the members' portal when we receive your payment.

Step 3: Login to the members' portal

The members' portal gives you access to the resources you need to run the program.



Your membership licence is valid for 12-months, and you will be invited to renew it before it expires. Most schools continue to run the program ongoing, and see a big impact on school culture over time.

Step 4: Attend training

The teacher who is responsible for the program at your school – your Peer Support Coordinator – attends a Peer Support workshop. They will learn everything they need to know to plan and implement the program during the workshop.



We encourage schools to train more than one teacher in the Peer Support approach to build capacity across the school.

Our training provides your Peer Support Coordinator with a three-year accreditation to implement and run the program. This accreditation is valid at any member school.

Step 5: Implement and run the program



You're ready to go. Our Wellbeing Education Consultants are only a phone call or email away and can provide you with all the support you need to feel confident in implementing the Peer Support Program in your school.

Now you just need to decide the finer details of your program, such as which module to run, when to run it, and how to group your students.



Support the transition to high school

The Peer Support Program offers resources for both high schools and primary schools to support Year 6 students move into high school.

High schools use the program to help foster relationships and introduce incoming Year 7 students to their school. Primary schools use the program to build a range of skills in their Year 6 students that will support them to navigate high school.

The start of high school is usually the time when peer groups are established. The Peer Support Program can help students develop new friendships and connections across the school community.

The Peer Support Program helped me adapt to high school because they (the Peer Leaders) helped me get around the school when I was lost. And I knew I could always go to them when I had a problem or I was struggling with studying or being organised.

I just felt like I could talk to them about anything.

- Harper, Year 7, Mamre Anglican College

5 reasons why schools need Peer Support



In NSW, there's one school counsellor for every 750 students. Teachers take mental health seriously, but many report low confidence about supporting their students' mental health.

In a 2017 US study almost 50% of teachers reported they had received inadequate mental health training, and 85% indicated they would like further training in mental health issues.

(Source: [The Conversation 2023](#))



Post-COVID, teachers have reported student behaviour appears to be getting worse, with students more distracted and less engaged than before the pandemic began.

(Source: [The Conversation 2023](#))

Attendance levels are at an all-time low. The national student attendance level (the percentage of students with above 90 per cent attendance) declined to 49.9% from 71.2% in 2021.

(Source: [ACARA 2023](#))



Half of young people report feeling either very positive or positive about their future and almost one quarter feel lonely all or most of the time.

(Source: [Mission Australia Annual Youth Survey, 2022](#))



LGBTQIA+ students are twice as likely to be regularly bullied as their peers (23%). Students with depression are three times more likely to be bullied regularly and four times more likely to feel lonely at school.

(Source: [Black Dog Institute, 2023](#))



Schools report ongoing issues with students, such as anxiety and conflict.

This is evidenced in a recent report that found prescriptions for drugs used to treat anxiety in children jumped by more than 30 per cent in 2022, in the biggest annual increase seen in a decade.

(Source: [Sydney Morning Herald 2023](#))

HOW WE CAN HELP

We offer a range of services to support schools across Australia.



THE PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

Our signature program is available to all schools across Australia. Peer Support provides training to teachers to implement and coordinate the program. Member schools access a range of resources to run the program.

Find out more at

www.peersupport.edu.au/peer-support-program

IN-SCHOOL TRAINING

Some schools choose to train the entire staff – or a group of teachers – in the Peer Support Program and approach. Bespoke training means we tailor our workshop to meet the needs of your school. The outcome will be: Peer Support will be embedded into your school culture, with many teachers supporting and championing the program.

Find out more at

www.peersupport.edu.au/peer-support-training



STUDENT WELLBEING STRATEGY

Our Wellbeing Education Consultants can lead a professional development session at your school that focuses on your student wellbeing strategy. Our approach puts peer-to-peer relationships at the core of wellbeing.

Find out more at

<https://peersupport.edu.au/student-wellbeing-strategy>





STUDENT WELLBEING TALKS

We offer student wellbeing talks to schools that will help boost the Peer Support culture in your school. Our consultants deliver talks to teachers, parents, carers and students around Australia.

Find out more at www.peersupport.edu.au/student-wellbeing-talks

SRC COORDINATOR TRAINING

The value of SRCs in schools is supported by a large bank of research showing the benefits of student voice and engagement, in everything from student wellbeing to learning outcomes. We offer training for SRC Coordinators to learn a best practice approach to your school's SRC.

Find out more at www.peersupport.edu.au/student-representative-council



TALK-AND-WALK-A-THON

The Talk-And-Walk-A-Thon is a free annual event hosted by Peer Support Australia as part of Mental Health Month in October. It's an opportunity to build connections between students, and help develop your students' conversational skills and self-confidence. We provide the resources to run the event each year.

Find out more at www.peersupport.edu.au/talk-and-walk-a-thon

Join a Peer Support workshop

The teacher who is responsible for the Peer Support Program at your school needs to attend a workshop to become an accredited Peer Support Coordinator. We recommend the face-to-face workshop for new coordinators, which includes time for planning, group activities, and one-on-one input from our facilitator. We also encourage schools to train two or more staff members.

[Register Now!](#)

Term 1 & 2 face-to-face workshops

Our one-day training runs from 9:00am to 4:00pm local time.

Date	Where
8 February 2024	Sydney CBD
29 February 2024	Melbourne (VIC)
27 March 2024	Sydney CBD
3 April 2024	Newcastle (NSW)
10 April 2024	North Ryde (NSW)
2 May 2024	Adelaide CBD
15 May 2024	Perth CBD
22 May 2024	Gymea (NSW)
29 May 2024	Darwin CBD
30 May 2024	Melbourne (VIC)
6 June 2024	Brisbane (QLD)
12 June 2024	Ballina (NSW)
18 June 2024	Sydney CBD
20 June 2024	Canberra (ACT)

We also offer online workshops

You can join our two-hour online workshop, which is an abridged version of the one-day training. This accredits teachers as Peer Support Coordinators, but excludes time for planning and one-on-one advice from our facilitator. Check our website for details.

Find out more about how Peer Support can help your students thrive

We would love to hear from you.

p: 1300 579 963

e: admin@peersupport.edu.au

w: www.peersupport.edu.au

