

Primary Welfare Officer Initiative

Tailored Outcomes

October 2013

Schools are in the best position to understand the needs of the school community. Schools can utilise this knowledge and understanding to tailor the provision of the Primary Welfare Officer Initiative in accordance with school needs, ensuring the school receives the most effective service that promotes and achieves positive health and wellbeing outcomes, in the context of Government priorities and desired outcomes for the Initiative.

Needs Analysis

In order to achieve the greatest benefit from the Initiative, schools should consider undertaking a comprehensive needs analysis that provides a baseline of health and wellbeing within the school community, and identifies prioritised needs to be addressed.

A needs analysis could involve:

1. a review of the existing school health and wellbeing framework (the framework), consisting of policies, programs, strategies and resources, to determine:
 - **quality** – is the framework comprehensive, evidence-based, consistent with government policy and been developed in consultation with the whole school community?
 - **relevance** – does the framework reflect the profile of the school community and utilise strategies that promote engagement and acceptance of the current approach?
 - **currency** – has the framework been recently updated and is there a schedule in place to ensure this occurs on a regular (minimum annual) basis?
 - **status** – are these policies/strategies communicated effectively to the school community, in multiple languages if appropriate, and in a consistent manner so there is a high level of awareness and knowledge?
 - **internal consistency** – do the framework and all associated materials create a clear and consistent picture about the school's approach to health and wellbeing?
2. identification of any policy or service gaps based on the current health and wellbeing framework implemented in the school
3. consultation with students, teachers, wellbeing staff, parents/carers and local community service

providers about their views of health and wellbeing within the school community, including level of satisfaction, options for improvement, and unmet needs.

The information and knowledge gathered during needs analysis process should then inform decision making about the most appropriate model of implementation for the school, and to assist in developing a tailored position description for the Primary Welfare Officer.

Tailored Outcomes

Schools, in collaboration with the Primary Welfare Officer and student wellbeing team, are required to tailor the objectives and expected outcomes of the Primary Welfare Officer Initiative based on local needs. Depending on the socio-economic, geographic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the student cohort in each school, as well as gender and stage of life considerations, desired outcomes for the Primary Welfare Officer Initiative may vary. For example, some schools may focus on improving student attendance rates and engagement in response to poor attendance records, whereas other schools may not have attendance issues but have identified a bullying problem.

Schools should set very clear expectations and outcomes for the Primary Welfare Officer Initiative before it is implemented and revise these expectations each year in response to improved and changing issues. At the end of each year, strong correlations should be able to be drawn between the Initiative and improved outcomes in the health and wellbeing focus areas identified by the school.

Developing and evaluating measurable outcomes relies on:

- establishing a clear approach to health and wellbeing in the school
- identifying the gaps or service needs the Primary Welfare Officer is being engaged to address
- developing a work plan and concrete strategies that are going to be utilised to address the identified gaps or service needs
- identifying indicators of success, including performance measures for the Primary Welfare Officer and impact measures of the strategies utilised. These could be both quantitative and qualitative

- reviewing the workplan regularly throughout the year to ensure the strategies and initiatives are on track, realistic, and continue to be relevant
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the strategies and initiatives and their relationship to the overall state of health and wellbeing within the school.
- Modifying the objectives and outcomes for succeeding years based on a needs analysis, review and evaluation of previous year's results, lessons learned and revised government and school focus areas.

Data Sources

Existing accountability and reporting processes undertaken by schools as part of the Accountability and Improvement Framework and development of a Student Engagement Policy can be utilised to streamline planning and priority identification for the Primary Welfare Officer Initiative.

This includes the development of a School Strategic Plan, Annual Implementation Plan and during the associated formal School Self-Evaluation and School Review.

Similarly, existing data sources and surveys already used by schools can be used to identify priorities for the Initiative and track positive changes in the school as a result of the Initiative:

- Attitudes to School Survey
- Staff Opinion Survey
- Parent Opinion Survey
- school attendance data (CASES21)
- NAPLAN data
- school level report etc.

Where can I obtain further information?

General information about the Primary Welfare Officer Initiative is available at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/welfareofficers.aspx>.