START

Teacher Resource
Student Transition and Resilience Training

A Year 6 – 7 Resource

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The aim of START
The Student Transition and Resilience Training (START) resource has been designed to enhance the ability of schools to support Year 6 and Year 7 students transition from primary to secondary school. This resource will help to equip students with the skills to make a positive start to secondary school, and build a foundation for their secondary education.

How to use START
START is comprised of four documents. These documents are designed to work together to form a set of activities that will contribute to the development of students’ personal and social capabilities, and critical and creative thinking. Some activities include handouts for the students to either read or complete.

DOCUMENTS
The START resource includes the following documents:

▸ TEACHER RESOURCE (this document)
This document is the main resource for teachers, with references to the other two (student) documents that make up the START resource. It includes:

▸ Introduction
An overview of the START resource, and information on resilience and transition

▸ Activities
Activities for the teacher to implement with references to the appropriate student handouts

▸ Appendices
Alignment with the Victorian Curriculum, References

▸ HANDOUTS
Printable handouts that are designed to accompany the activities chosen by the teacher.

▸ WORKBOOK
This document is for students. It includes an introduction to the START resource. All handouts will be added to this workbook.

▸ PORTFOLIO
Students are asked to build and refine a personal portfolio that can then be accessed by themselves, their teachers, and their parents or carers, as they transition from primary to secondary school.

ACTIVITIES
The activities are intended to support students’ reflection and personal development throughout their transition to secondary school. These activities can be undertaken in Year 6 or Year 7.

For students who have completed START activities in Year 6, teachers can review their portfolio in Year 7 and consider ways to develop their responses further. Repetition of activities encourages reflection and reconsideration. Depending on the student level, teachers can raise questions like:

▸ How do you think it is different from the way you saw things last year?

▸ Do you think you might see things differently next year?

▸ If you have done this before, do it again and let’s see what changes have happened.

There are three introductory activities. The rest of the activities are divided into eight sections. Teachers can select as many or as few activities in these sections as they wish. In each of the eight sections there is one essential activity that can be tailored to students in either Year 6 or Year 7. Students will be prompted to enter the results into the relevant section of their portfolio.
PORTFOLIO
A key focus of START is to have students build and refine a personal portfolio that can then be accessed by themselves, their teachers, and their parents or carers, as they transition from primary to secondary school. Ideally the student starts his or her portfolio in Year 6 and it travels with them as a living record, potentially generating a “conversation” between the student, his or her teacher and their parent or carer.

Even if a student has not developed a portfolio in primary school, portfolios begun in Year 7 are still useful as they provide students with a snapshot of themselves that can be valuable in identity formation.

The portfolio can be an effective tool to help teachers identify the individual needs of each Year 7 student coming into the school so that their social, emotional and learning needs can be tailored to support them. The portfolio can encourage students to develop and reflect on their personal learning goals and ongoing development over the course of their transition. Reflection involves going back over issues and considering them further.

The activities in each of the eight sections, link directly to eight segments within the student’s portfolio, culminating in a statement about personal identity. As each section is completed, students will be able to fill in that segment of their portfolio.

SECTIONS, ACTIVITIES AND HANDOUTS TABLE
Note: Essential activities for each section are marked by purple text.

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| A  My Family, My Team! | 4  My Family, My Team! |
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| C  Class Resumes | |
| D  My Virtual Community | 5  Social Media Survey |
| E  Year 6 and Year 7 Audit | |

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| D  Success Assassins | 9  How to Stress Yourself Out |
| E  How Humans Can Make the Best of a Day | 10 How to Calm Yourself Down |
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# INTRODUCTION

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## HANDOUTS

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<td>Collaboration Wins in the End</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>Postcards from Your Future</td>
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## SECTION 8  WHO I AM

<table>
<thead>
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<th>How People See Me</th>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Portfolio</td>
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| 33 | How People See Me |

SEE SEPARATE DOCUMENT
Alignment with the Victorian Curriculum

START is intended to align with the Victorian Curriculum and specifically links to the Health and Physical Education curriculum and the English curriculum. Appendix 1 includes details of how START aligns with the Victorian Curriculum Standards.

Alignment with the Building Resilience Model

START also complements the Department of Education and Training’s Building Resilience model and Social and Emotional Learning materials, which are available for use with students across all years of schooling, from Prep to Year 12.

Building Resilience provides an evidence-based approach to developing students’ personal and social capabilities, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social management. It recommends a whole-school approach, encompassing strategic attention in the five interrelated domains of partnership, leadership, teaching, support and referral.

Teachers should follow the Department of Education and Training’s Building Resilience model of lead, teach, support, refer, partner.

- **Lead** activities across the school, orchestrating a comprehensive approach to transition including transition teams, parent involvement and student empowerment
- **Teach** social and emotional skills to all students across all year levels that will assist them in transition
- **Support** young people and their families identified as needing additional assistance with additional coaching, more intensive positive relationships and further input on developing a positive attitude towards learning
- **Refer** those in need to appropriate services
- **Partner** with the school community, including families (parents, grandparents and carers) and local and community services

For more information, visit: www.education.vic.gov.au/resilience
Transition
People who study the effects of transition agree there are three main stages:

1. SEPARATION
A change or move away from the person’s usual way of functioning

2. LIMINALITY
A time of confusion and lowered functioning as the person tries to make sense of changing circumstances

3. REINTEGRATION
An adaptation to new circumstances and an incorporation of new skills and experiences into the person’s next phase of life

Resilience
Research defines human resilience as the ability of people to flexibly use their internal capacities and external supports to respond to whatever challenges they face. Resilience is defined as the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties. This process often occurs when encountering a new challenge, and perhaps initially feeling confused, daunted or even overwhelmed by the challenges they are faced with, before finding new ways of adapting to the new circumstances.

For more information on building resilience visit: www.education.vic.gov.au/resilience

KEY PREDICTORS OF POSITIVE RESILIENCE IN YOUNG PEOPLE
Based on over 2.5 million young people worldwide, research from the Search Institute and Resilient Youth Australia (www.resilientyouth.org.au) points to 40 key predictors of high resilience in young people.

Simply put, the more of these 40 assets you have, the more likely you are to experience a safe, happy and fulfilling life. People with less than 10 of the 40 assets will find it hard to develop a successful or happy life.

The 40 assets have been grouped into eight main areas, which form the basis of the eight main sections of the START resource:

1. Adult connectedness (teachers, parents, community members)
2. Boundaries and expectations
3. Empowerment
4. School engagement
5. Positive values
6. Friendship and social skills
7. Community engagement
8. Identity

These eight areas provide a powerful framework of resilience for schools and communities to measure and act upon.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES
The Resilience Survey: www.resilientyouth.org.au
Transition points: A time of opportunity

The transition points in schools have the capacity to either consolidate existing disadvantages or create opportunities to grow, flourish and build positive identity and resilience.

The main school transition points are:

- School entry
- Year 3 to 4
- Year 6 to 7 (the focus of this resource)
- Late Year 8 into Year 9
- The commencement of senior secondary school
- School completion into work or further training and education

A growing body of research points to early adolescence being one of the times of maximal neuroplasticity. For young people, schools and parents, this represents a time of great opportunity. As the brain is already restructuring itself to be able to think in more sophisticated ways, it is a time to embed the habits and routines that will lead young people to maximise their intelligence.

The benefits of having a thorough approach to transition

It takes time to build successful transition programs between primary and secondary school settings and strong partnerships with families. However the benefits are far reaching.

For primary schools strong links with secondary settings can lower anxiety, increase resilience in students and strengthen parental involvement, correlating with better academic results and positive behaviours.

In secondary schools successful transition programs help to settle new students and maximise their learning. Research indicates that by Year 10 students who have had a smooth transition have higher levels of school attendance, better academic results, low behavioural problems and lower rates of substance abuse.

Three major changes from Year 6 to Year 7

The transition between primary and secondary school provides challenges for young people on many fronts. Already they are encountering three of the major changes in the human lifecycle:

1. Commencing their ability to reproduce, including massive hormonal changes
2. Restructuring of the prefrontal cortex to enable higher order, conceptual thinking (this is called the executive functions)
3. Beginning their quest for identity formation (while the answer to the question “Who Am I” may not arrive for many years, it is in early adolescence that the quest begins).

Key findings on transition

An extensive body of research into the transition between primary and secondary school suggests that a number of negative changes occur for some students. It can be tempting to view some of these changes (e.g. turmoil and possible disengagement) as a consequence of the upheavals of puberty and early adolescence. However if we succumb to that view we will miss the chance to support young people to capitalise on the great opportunities contained within this stage of life.

Whilst most adolescents succeed in school, have positive relationships with peers, teachers and families, transitioning to secondary school can impact on stress levels and exacerbate negative changes.

Research shows that school transitions can be stressful for many students, particularly for early maturing girls and low achieving boys (a quarter of Western Australian children surveyed by Edith Cowen University in a study published in 2014 found the transition from primary to secondary school difficult). Poor transition can also negatively impact on academic outcomes (NAPLAN writing achievements appear to be negatively impacted by transition, with boys being most negatively affected).

These negative changes are not inevitable. Schools that implement solutions to these issues in the form of an extensive transition process can overcome these setbacks and set them on a trajectory for long term success.

3 Compas, 1995; Fuller, 2002
4 Giedd, et. al., 1996
5 Felner and Adan, 1988
INTRODUCTION

RESILIENT YOUTH AUSTRALIA STUDY

In 2014 and 2015, Resilient Youth Australia surveyed 4,663 Australian students in Year 6 and 7 undergoing transition from primary to secondary school to determine their resilience.

The challenges faced by these students are summarised below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Year 6 Boys</th>
<th>Year 7 Boys</th>
<th>Year 6 Girls</th>
<th>Year 7 Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concentration problems</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of sleep</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel under strain</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhappy and depressed</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Losing confidence</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling worthless</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of most note was:

- The decline in resilience, sense of safety and the perceived quality of supportive relationships between Years 6 and 7
- The low levels of community engagement across both year levels
- The decline in positive personal identity between Years 6 and 7 (positive identity was also low for girls in both years)

It is clear from these results that the combination of school transition with the onset of puberty for many students is accompanied by an increase in distress and a lowering of functioning.

The activities in START have been tailored to address these challenges and to increase the likelihood of positive adaptation and resilience.
Mapping successful solutions to the potentially negative effects of transition

The following table outlines the potential negative changes and solutions based on a composite of research findings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POTENTIAL NEGATIVE EFFECTS</th>
<th>SUCCESSFUL SOLUTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An increase in worries and self-consciousness</td>
<td>Establishing strong adult connectedness and calm positive classroom cultures. Mindfulness and anxiety reduction methods taught to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A decrease in self-esteem, particularly for girls if it coincides with puberty</td>
<td>Positive goal setting, boundaries and expectation, - assist optimistic thinking and a growth mindset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased sense of alienation</td>
<td>Reduce the amount of environmental shifting between classes and other activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease in academic achievement associated with a loss of confidence about the ability to handle the work at the secondary level</td>
<td>Provide professional development for teachers on brain-based learning and the essential skills for academic success. Suggest monitoring and coordination of homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slowing of the momentum of learning progress between upper primary years and early secondary years</td>
<td>Promote student self-efficacy through approaches that enhance student empowerment and mastery learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease in student trust of teachers and teacher trust of students that seems connected to not knowing each other well enough yet</td>
<td>Increase visible teacher support to students. Conduct audits of students’ connectedness. Increase positive feedback and coaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of family engagement</td>
<td>Involve families in transition as co-coaches of their child’s future, by providing opportunities for discussion and a specific contact point for questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A widening of existing gaps in educational achievement</td>
<td>Academic success programs that emphasise that success is possible for all students and that early secondary school is where you establish the key skills related to academic success PD for staff on teaching and role modelling positive/growth mindset</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These successful solutions have been incorporated into the START. Strategies to develop these skills are also outlined in the Department of Education and Training’s social and emotional learning materials available at: [http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/Pages/resilienceframework.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/Pages/resilienceframework.aspx)

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Supporting the whole family through transition

Transition from primary to secondary school involves changes that can be both exciting and challenging to students and their families.

The promise of a whole new group of friends, a broader range of teachers and subjects, and an adolescent environment buzzing with hormones, is compelling for many students. However, even the most curious and brave have vulnerabilities at this age and stage.

Parents also have to adjust and establish themselves in a new school setting at a time when their children seem to want them to be as distant from school as possible. Many parents themselves find the transition difficult, due to a change in culture, the daunting scale of secondary schools and the loss of familiarity they had come to know as parents of primary school aged children.

Schools’ role is to ensure that the transition experience is positive and responsive to the needs of all kinds of students and their families. It is important to remember that for some families – such as newly arrived refugee families – parents can find the primary school environment daunting. Obviously the secondary school environment may be more overwhelming at first and so it is important to be aware of the additional support these parents may need while their children are moving from the primary to the secondary school setting.

INVOLVE PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS AND CARERS

While some teens want to use transition as a time to be more independent of their family, it is a time when the adults in each student’s life need to have a direct form of communication and a strong relationship.

Make Year 7 parents and carers feel welcome in the secondary school environment as some parents struggle with how to get involved when their children want to be independent. Year 7 students don’t always make their parents feel welcome at their secondary school like they did at primary school. It can also be a different environment for parents – as they are also “transitioning” from the Year 6 to Year 7 school environment. Consider ways to get parents involved in the secondary environment – BBQs, working bees, open days and transition days.

Creating positive Year 6 and Year 7 classrooms to enhance transition

BUILDING A POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

At transition times, schools should communicate to parents the school’s values, expectations and approach to supporting their child’s learning, highlighting that the school:

- Has a strong positive culture that is inclusive, safe and welcoming for their child
- Encourages parent participation in the education process

Students who are in a positive school culture and are resilient are known to have more successful transitions from Year 6 to Year 7. Ways to build a positive school culture include:

- Empowering students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making
- Defining and teaching explicit school-wide and classroom behavioural expectations
- Establishing mechanisms for recognising and rewarding positive behaviour
- Establishing school-wide and classroom processes for early identification of students experiencing academic and/or behavioural difficulties
- Developing school-wide and classroom processes for ongoing collection and use of data for decision-making
- Providing a physical environment conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning
- Using clear, consistent, step-by-step instructions to support students
- Taking into account the interests of your students and integrating these into lessons
- Being mindful of how much time you spend on lesson introductions and instructions. Align this time with the amount of time students are able to actively pay attention

INTRODUCTION

ADOLESCENT LEARNING: HOW SCHOOLS CAN CAPITALISE ON EARLY ADOLESCENT NEUROPLASTICITY

Just prior to puberty between 9 and 10 years of age there is a huge growth spurt in the frontal lobes with millions of new synapses. Then around the age of 11, massive pruning occurs. This time of life represents a great opportunity for educators to develop the neural architecture that will lead students on to success.

Schools should take advantage of the maximal neuroplasticity of the student brain at this stage of a student’s life, by providing opportunities for students to maximise their intellect. This could be done by:

- Encouraging students to gain a passion for learning by finding each child’s talent, strengths and passion
- Providing opportunities for professional development to teachers on the emerging adolescent brain

The adolescent brain is set up for being fast and impulsive and we need to help it move towards becoming slow and smart. Slowing adolescent minds down so that they don’t have to do the first thing that comes into their heads requires coaching in reflective rather than impulsive decision-making.

HOW SCHOOLS CAN DEVELOP A POSITIVE MINDSET

Research shows us that students’ mindsets directly influence results. Adopting a growth mindset enables students to remain engaged and achieve well. Students with a growth mindset outperform controls because they believe in effort and are resilient in the face of setbacks. Teachers who have a growth mindset have students who improve faster.

Changing students’ mindsets from a fixed (I can’t do any better) mindset to a growth (I can improve) mindset raises their achievement scores.

Our aim should be for each student to develop his or her potential. To achieve this we need to praise effort not just intelligence and improvement over accomplishment.

HOW SCHOOLS CAN PROMOTE PLANNING

Many teenagers have trouble planning. This is because their prefrontal cortex is being refined during these years. Most teenagers could have a sign on their foreheads that says, “closed for reconstruction.”

While the connections in the prefrontal cortex are being refined or pruned, it is also a time of great opportunity. It is in these years that thinking, problem solving and creativity can surge if nourished.

Key things we can do to boost the performance of the adolescent brain including:

- Structuring learning so that most of the initial planning and organisation is done for them. Clear instructions and task planning will reduce the amount of cognitive load inherent in planning and increase the likelihood students will experience success.
- Providing opportunities for mastery learning (students achieve a level of mastery in prerequisite knowledge before learning subsequent information)
- Giving them activities that develop the frontal lobes – prediction games, anticipation of consequences, mazes, and discussions about the long-term effects of social issues

HOW SCHOOLS CAN UTILISE EMOTIONAL PROCESSING

Adolescents like intensity, excitement and arousal. They are drawn to music videos and films that shock and bombard the senses.

At this time, hormones become more powerful and adolescents’ brains show more activity in the emotional parts of the brain (known as the limbic system) than they do in the planning and impulse control parts of the brain (known as the frontal lobes and the prefrontal cortex).

This means that adolescents learn best when there is emotion involved.

WHY SCHOOLS SHOULD REDUCE STRESS

When emotional, adolescents have lower activity in their frontal lobes and more activity in the amygdala than adults, drastically reducing their capacity to learn.

This means it is vital to create classrooms that are safe, open and inclusive.

BUILDING EXPECTATIONS

Teenagers who have lower expectations for themselves ask for help less often and are less likely to use feedback to improve outcomes.

Numerous teenagers are sapped of motivation by the fear of failure. Shame is toxic to learning. Build a classroom culture in which “having a go” is expected and mistakes are seen as a normal part of life.

The adage that we “learn from our mistakes” helps students to become more resilient and will help make the transition from primary to secondary school more successful.

TUNED INTO THE PEER GROUP
Teenagers are highly tuned into the opinions of those around them, especially their peers. They tend to be preoccupied with what others think and will sacrifice success for social acceptance.

This means we need to manage the peer culture by giving all students ways to be helpful, and to have a go at new activities and succeed.

Nothing overcomes reluctance and low motivation faster than challenges and a whiff of success. In this area we need to emulate computer game designers, who create games that offer a balance of rewards and challenges.

SLEEP PATTERNS
Most parents will tell you most teenagers’ brains aren’t ready to wake up until 8am or 9am in the morning. Adolescents need more sleep than they did as children and their circadian rhythms appear to be set later than children’s or adults.

Sleep declines from an average of 8.3 hours in Year 8, 7.5 hours in Year 10, to 7 hours in Year 12. Most teens function optimally on 9.25 hours of sleep. Sleep deprivation is associated with weight gain, moodiness, poorer attention and increased use of caffeinated stimulant drinks to become alert.

Adolescents getting only 5-6 hours of sleep a day lose out on the last two REM cycles and thereby reduce the amount of time the brain has to consolidate information into long term storage.

For more information check out www.andrewfuller.com.au and the Department of Education and Training’s SAFE Minds: Schools and Families Enhancing Minds Program:

PERSONAL BEST AND PASSION PROJECTS
Students completing projects of interest to them result in amazing leaps in learning.

Consider creating continuity in a particular project that a student is passionate about, for example astronomy. That project can “transition” with the student from Year 6 to Year 7 with a good “handover” to the student’s secondary teacher in that subject.

Ways to cater for the transition and wellbeing needs of girls and boys

There is always going to be some debate about whether the differences between girls and boys are a social construct or represent structural differences in their brains.

A detailed discussion of this issue is beyond this resource and instead teachers should focus on what a large body of research says works with each gender. However, keep in mind that these findings may not necessarily apply to all students, all of the time.

Generally speaking it is the high-achieving girls and low-achieving boys who are most negatively affected by transition. The following methods are worth considering.

Transition and wellbeing needs of boys

BOY SMARTS
Boys are the masters of minimalism and the practitioners of “just-in-time” management. Asked to do almost any task, their immediate response is “later”. If they are asked to write a 50-word essay they tend to count the words and if they write 51 words most of them will think they have overdone it.

If you have predominantly boys in your class there are a number of strategies you can use to improve behaviour, learning and wellbeing. These methods are likely to work with the majority of boys.

RESPECT
Boys are constantly checking to see if you respect them. They respond well to people who have expectations of them and respect them as capable of meeting those goals. If a boy has a sense that you respect him, he will walk over coals for you.

Never ask a boy who is a poor reader to read out loud in front of his peers. He will be humiliated and will never do anything for you again.

GAINING RESPECT FOR ROLES
Boys need boundaries. They need to know who needs to be the authority figure – why and when. They tend to respond to teachers who are fair, funny and respect their points of view and they generally do better with teacher-led learning. Open-spaced learning areas where no one clearly owns the space can be quite anxiety provoking for boys and that anxiety can convert into expressions of low motivation and clowning type behaviours.
GETTING THEIR ATTENTION

Boys need more signals than girls partly because they are less tuned into facial cues. Boys are more able to screen out white noise. (Teachers requesting quiet equals white noise!)

Therefore some strategies that may be more effective with boys include, not delivering instructions in a noisy room, using visual cues such as raising your hand, turning lights off and on and moving to a particular part of the room. Yelling or shouting is never appropriate and is also highly ineffective.

VALUE THEM AND THEY WILL BE HEROES

Boys are tuned into hierarchies. This means the predominant values of a classroom, family or school will play a powerful role in determining their actions. Have a couple of core values (e.g. compassion, generosity, being part of a team). Live by them and insist upon them.

Help boys to learn that they can be heroes and victorious but that winning doesn’t mean someone else has to lose.

USE KNOWLEDGE FROM COMPUTER GAMES AS AN INSPIRATION FOR LEARNING

Boys’ attraction to competition will override almost any disadvantage or loss of motivation. They generally love competitive games especially when there is not an ultimate winner. Quick fire quizzes with several rounds are a successful way of engaging boys.

Computer game designers have cleverly used the principles of engagement to captivate boys. These principals include:

► Make success challenging but attainable by breaking it down into stages
► Make success more likely than failure. The most motivating games have players succeed about 80% of the time initially before building up to 100% before moving to the next level
► Give people the opportunity to try again
► Try to create a sense of moratorium where boys and girls can try new activities in a setting where there are no consequences
► Convert learning into investigations, adventures and experiments
► Use lots of movement

Pay attention to less competitive, sensitive boys. Assisting them to attain personal bests can be powerful.

Give boys more time to answer and to assemble the words and give them a chance to phone a friend (the friend cannot answer the question but can make helpful suggestions).

MOVE REGULARLY

Teaching boys is like being a cross between a matador and a traffic cop. Keep on the move and mingle with the crowd.

Boys see things best in motion. Use visuals and animations as often as you can. Boys love targeting. If you have ever watched boys place rubbish into bins you will see that they don’t place it, they take a shot. For this reason movement and aiming to achieve a set target are powerful strategies with boys.

Boys often learn best standing up.

PLAN WHERE THEY SIT

Move boys who do not appear to be paying attention to the front. Proactively shift the seating of boys who seem unsettled or distracted. They will often be playing up to impress their local audience.

BOYS NEED QUIET TIMES

In order to reflect and re-energise, boys need quiet times to think, read and at times quietly chat with others. Create quiet places for thinking.

KNOW ABOUT ANGER

Anger and shame can stop boys learning and once boys are angry, it is harder for them to get over it. If they feel you are going to shame them in front of their peers they will fight you tooth and nail. Most boys will do silly, self-defeating things rather than lose the respect of their peers.

Deal with issues at a time of your choosing not when the boy wants to deal with it. If you need to address an issue with a boy, see him after class and not in front of his friends.

There are also decision-making differences between girls and boys when involved in dispute resolution. Girls are often more able to see the effect of their actions on other students so asking “how do you think she felt?” type questions may pay off. In contrast, boys may be less cued into other students’ emotions and a more successful strategy may be to explain the behavior that the school won’t accept.

BOYS ARE LOYAL AND FUNNY

Boys tend to be overtly competitive. Reinforcing your belief in their abilities increases their desire to be their best. Some boys gain popularity through achievement, jokes and skills. Humour is an essential quality. Make it smart to be smart.
BOYS GENERALLY LEARN THROUGH DOING-THINKING-TALKING

Boys like movement and tend to be more concerned with their performance. While some boys will be inherently interested in the material, almost all boys engage when there is a competitive spirit. The more that you mimic a game show format the more boys will be engaged.

GIVE THEM A WHIFF OF SUCCESS

Many men and boys waste time completing tasks that don’t need to be done and avoid tasks that don’t need to be avoided.

Help them to structure tasks and to improve on early attempts so that they gain mastery and success. Once a boy believes he can be successful, he’ll almost always live up to it.

Transition and wellbeing needs of girls

The variability between girls can challenge teachers. This variability is often concealed, as girls often like to highlight their similarities with one another. Nevertheless, if you have a class that is predominantly girls there are some key things you can do to maximise their learning, transition and learning needs.

WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

Girls generally like teachers who like them. They want to fit in and be part of the group. They want to do well.

Many girls like to be prepared. Give directions the day before. Give them advance notice of new topics as material to investigate.

OVERRIDE THE CLIQUES

Emerging adolescence can heighten worries about identity and friendships.

Starting at a new school in Year 7 and meeting a whole class of new people can heighten anxiety for some students, and boys and girls tend to respond differently. For many girls this stage of life can be intense and seemingly more “emotional”.

In supporting this age group through their transition into Year 7, encourage girls to interact with a variety of students.

Successful classes for girls don’t allow girls to splinter into set groups. From day one, move girls and get them interacting with a variety of other students, not just their special best friends. Have a classroom expectation that everyone needs to be able to work with everyone.

If allowed to control the social interaction, some girls may gang up on other girls. If this does occur, you need to call out the behaviour and give clear consequences.

Have a clear policy of girls being able to speak to staff members. Interview the girls doing the bullying. Use empathy (“how do you think she feels?”) and a clear hands-off warning regarding bullying. For example, “you don’t have to like her but there are to be no looks, rumours, telephone, electronic contact etc. If it continues we will have to take further consequences”.

Keep an eye out for anxious girls who float on the edges of social groups and help them by assigning groups to work with.

ASSIGN ROLES AND MEMBERSHIP IN GROUP WORK

Girls often thrive with group work when the teacher selects who is in each group and assigns a role to each girl. Give each member of the group the responsibility of completing a task and set a time limit. Rotate who reports back to the class. Generally use groups with even numbers. Don’t let girls become “invisible” in your class.

PRAISE MORE THAN YOU THINK YOU NEED TO

Just as boys love it if you tell them they are legends, geniuses and are brilliant, most girls initially want to know if you like them. They are more responsive than boys to facial cues so make eye contact, smile and nod more frequently.

Once they know you like them, engaging them is usually easy. Girls who have a sense that you like them and are interested in them will want to collaborate with you.

VALUE THEM AND THEY BECOME HEROINES

Have a clear set of values. Live them and insist on them. Talk about women who have had powerful impacts on the world and establish community projects (not just fund raisers) that show them they can make a difference.

TEACH SELF–RELIANCE

Once girls have a sense that you like them it is useful to move them from pleasing the teacher to self–reliance. Create a non-judgmental environment in which they can take risks.

The desire that many girls have to “get it right” can quickly topple into anxiety and perfectionism. Perfectionist girls may constantly seek reassurance from you that they are doing the right thing. Teach them to trust their instincts and do what they think is right.
Teach girls about the scientific method in which questions are investigated, hypotheses are made and reformulated depending on the results. The intention of learning is about helping them to discover things rather than always coming to one correct answer.

Most girls will do what is asked of them, but they may be less likely to realise that they have acquired a skill. They may be more likely to focus on having pleased the teacher and attribute successes to having pleased the teacher rather than improvements in their own skills and capabilities.

Help them to develop a resume of acquired skills. Teach them that everyone can get smarter. Don’t allow them to avoid trying things. Encourage having a go.

GIRLS NEED QUIET TIME
Girls tend to be reliant on what their friends think of them and can start discounting the value of their own abilities and opinions, which can lead to them losing confidence in their own decisions and self-reliance. Structure some solo quiet thinking and creativity times in schools.

THE ANSWER IS THE ANSWER
Girls often think that if hard work pays off, working longer and harder will always result in success. Teach them to work smarter not harder. They need to know it doesn’t matter how much time you put into completing a project, if the answer is incorrect.

Giving girls time trials e.g. “I want to see how much you can get done in 20 minutes” helps them to overcome procrastination.

DON’T DAMPEN HIGH-ENERGY GIRLS
Make sure you don’t subtly indicate to high-energy girls that they should be quiet and more docile. Girls often are given implicit messages such as don’t get too excited, run too fast, don’t overdo it, get too tired, don’t be too you.

Girls often try to gain acceptance through being similar to others and that can squash the spirit of some girls and engender over-compliance. Talk about women who have been rebels. Joan of Arc, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Julia Gillard, Germaine Greer, Margaret Thatcher and Mother Teresa are just a few examples.

Know that it is easy to disempower girls by showing them how to do things rather than getting them to solve them. Encourage their independence.

GIVE GIRLS SPECIAL ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY
Many boys often get plenty of screen time. Girls tend to use computers for social networking, however in these situations it may be beneficial to increase their academic computer literacy skills, such as conducting research and gathering data.

IMPROVE SPATIAL SKILLS
Some studies have found that girls are not as adept as boys at non-verbal problem solving and spatial visualisation. For this reason, make time to help them develop spatial problem solving.

This can be achieved by:
- Playing puzzles: jigsaws, scrabble, chess, pottery and weaving
- Making and reading maps
- Using physical objects such as blocks to stand for variables in equations
- Using physical representations of atoms, electrons, planets

GIRLS GENERALLY LEARN BY TALKING-THINKING-DOING
Often girls need to discuss an issue in small groups and then need time to think about an issue before applying the knowledge. Try to structure most activities for girls in the sequence of talk-think-do.
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INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITIES
A  Optimal Growing Conditions
B  What am I Grateful For?
C  The Barometer of Feelings

These activities will assist students to:
- Begin to understand ideas relating to resilience and wellbeing

A  Optimal Growing Conditions

HANDOUT 1
Optimal Growing Conditions

LEARNING INTENTION
- For students to learn how to thrive

METHOD
Provide students with a copy of the Optimal Growing Conditions handout to complete.

Explain to students:
If you have ever bought a plant at a garden nursery you may have noticed the plant often comes with a plastic sleeve that specifies the optimal (or best) growing conditions. It says something like “If you plant this in partial shade and give it lots of water, it will flourish.”

We are all like that plant. We all have our own Optimal Growing Conditions. These are the things that help us to grow and flourish.

B  What am I Grateful For?

HANDOUT 2
What Am I Grateful For?

LEARNING INTENTION
- For students to learn that gratitude is related to resilience and wellbeing
- For students to learn how to reflect on the things they are grateful for

METHOD
Provide students with a copy of the What am I Grateful For? handout.

Explain to students:
To have a great life, it is good to keep in mind the things and people we appreciate. Here is a list of things you might like. Circle all of those things that you appreciate and then develop your own top five.

C  The Barometer of Feelings

HANDOUT 3
The Barometer of Feelings

LEARNING INTENTION
- For students to understand that their feelings may shift and change
- For students to learn to visually consider the changes in their emotions

METHOD
Provide students with a copy of the The Barometer of Feelings handout.

This activity links with the Department of Education and Training’s Building Resilience materials, particularly developing self-awareness. As well as this handout, you might want to map students’ feelings in other ways or ask students to research apps that do this.
1 MY FAMILY, MY TEAM!

ACTIVITIES
A My Family, My Team!
B Getting to Know Parents
C Class Resumes
D My Virtual Community
E Year 6 and Year 7 Audit

These activities will assist students to:

- Identify adults who support them
- Encourage deeper and more positive relationships between the student and adults in their world
- Increase parental involvement with the school

THEORY
Positive involvement of adults in a young person’s life is a powerful protective factor. Research by Resilient Youth Australia indicates that while highly resilient students can identify adults who care for them and listen to them, this is not true for less resilient students.

Positively involving parents in schools is related to lower levels of behaviour problems and increased academic outcomes.

How teachers can build adult connectedness

- Lead activities that develop and deepen connections between school and family, and use student activities around transition as an opportunity to involve parents and grandparents
- Teach students to identify the adults who support them
- Support young people with low levels of adult connectedness to develop this at school by increasing the positive intensity of adult-student relationships
- Refer families and students with issues around dislocation, disengagement, grief or estrangement for support
- Partner with the local and community services that can support families

For more information visit:

A My Family, My Team

HANDOUT 4
My Family, My Team!

LEARNING INTENTION

To clarify the adults and people that play a positive role in each student’s life

METHOD
Provide students with a copy of the My Family, My Team! handout to complete.

This activity can be simple or complex depending on the interests of the class group. The idea is for students to map their family with their parents and other family members and then add in other significant adults.

This is a two-stage process repeated in both Year 6 and Year 7. In Year 7 students can deepen or extend their map to include broader family members, community members and other adults in their lives.
Ask students to:

- Map your family mentioning all the significant people in it. Note: who you consider to be in your family is your decision.
- Add in non-family adults who contribute positively to your wellbeing and happiness.
- Indicate the adults you go to when you need help. (You might also want to ask students to add the types of help they need from each person and what they don’t need help with).
- Do another map with some members of your family asking them to add to it.

B ▶ Getting to Know Parents

LEARNING INTENTION

- To involve parents in school and in the transition process

METHOD

Post or email the following letter to a parent or give it to them as they enrol in their child in the school.

Dear Parents and carers,

Welcome to this school for what promises to be a great year! Your children will soon be working hard on their assignments. Fair’s fair so... here’s an assignment we’d like parents to do for us!

We often say parents know their children best. This assignment will give you an opportunity to share what you think is important for us to know about your child so we can better meet his or her needs. Welcome to what promises to be a great school year! I hope you have fun with this activity.

Choose one of the following topics to respond to:

1. Please tell us about your child. (Or children, if you have more than one child at the school.) Here is an example of what we would like to know:

Dear

I would like to introduce my child ....to you. What I like best about them is... The way that they seem to learn best is... They become unhappy when... Their friends tend to be... They seem to worry about... They are terrific at...

Yours sincerely

2. Tell us how your child has changed in the past two years.

3. Tell us your greatest wish for your child as they go through their school years with us.

Please return your homework assignment to the office by .... Please include your name, your child’s name, and your child’s homeroom teacher on the completed assignment. If you prefer to email your assignment, send it to...

C ▶ Class Resumés

LEARNING INTENTION

- To identify the hidden skills, talents and experiences of an entire class group
- To convey the message that we all have individual strengths and collectively we have a range of strengths

METHOD

We usually think about a resume as representing one person’s skills, abilities, post roles and interests.

In this activity we collect an entire class’s skills, abilities, past roles and interests.

Graph the classes past roles, hobbies, roles, attributes, interests, skills, achievements, interests and so on. Use sticky notes and have students create different types of graphs to develop creative and critical thinking. E.g.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Can ride a bike</th>
<th>Can play an instrument</th>
<th>Likes reading</th>
<th>Can speak more than one language</th>
<th>Cooks dinner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20 10 0
Can ride a bike Can play an instrument Likes reading Can speak more than one language Cooks dinner
**D ▶ My Virtual Community**

**HANDOUT 5**

**Social Media Survey**

**LEARNING INTENTIONS**

- To teach students to understand that social media can be a form of social support
- To help students, teachers, parents and carers get an idea of how connected people are to a virtual community

**METHOD**

Social media is important for many young people. Provide students with a copy of the *Social Media Survey* handout. Ask them to compile and discuss the results.

**Discuss:**

- What are the best things that happen online?
- What are the worst things?
- If someone makes negative comments, what is the best thing to do?
- If someone posts a positive piece of news about themselves, what is the best thing to do?

This activity links to the Department of Education and Training’s cyberbullying content and safe use of digital technologies web content.


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**E ▶ Year 6 and 7 Audit**

**LEARNING INTENTION**

- To identify students who may lack adult connectedness

**METHOD**

Throughout the year, conduct a staff meeting where class lists with every student’s name are placed on tables.

Staff will then be asked to go around and place a tick next to any student they know well enough to hold a reasonable conversation with if they were stuck in a lift for twenty minutes.

This highlights which students everyone knows and which ones have slipped through the social network.

Staff can then develop a strategy to get to know the kids that are not really known.

This is critical and identifies students likely to fall through the cracks. At secondary level this will be best done during meetings held by the Year 7 or middle school coordination team.
MY BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS

ACTIVITIES
A  Mapping my Pizza Smarts
B  Your Inner Albert and Rex
C  Rex, Albert, and the Stress Response
D  Success Assassins
E  How Humans Can Make the Best of a Day
F  How Much Should I Really Expect of Myself
G  How to Take the Mood and the Roll at the Same Time

These activities will assist students to:
► Build up positive expectations and hope for students’ lives and for the transition
► Use the idea of multiple intelligences to develop a growth mindset and to overcome ways that we limit or sabotage our success
► Develop the idea that having routines, rituals and boundaries contribute to a positive life
► Understand how stress works in our body and mind

THEORY
Research on self-efficacy and mindset shows that expectations predict success in academic as well as social and emotional functioning.

In addition, the idea that all students have the capacity for some form of genius is compatible with developing a growth mindset.

How teachers can build boundaries and expectations.
► Lead activities across the school that encourage the view that transition is a time of opportunity
► Teach students and their families about brain functioning, increasing intelligence and how to maximise existing strengths to build a growth or positive mindset
► Support the development of positive boundaries and expectations for students
► Refer those in need to appropriate services
► Partner with the school community, including families and local and community services

For more information visit: www.education.vic.gov.au/resilience
A ▶ Mapping My Pizza Smarts

HANDOUT 6
Mapping My Pizza Smarts

LEARNING INTENTION
▶ To have students consider their areas of intellectual strength

METHOD
Teachers should familiarise themselves with the following ideas, perhaps even completing it for themselves before teaching it to their students.

Provide students with a copy of the Mapping My Pizza Smarts handout to complete. Enter it into their portfolio when completed.

Background information for teachers to read and ideas to present to students

How to identify your strengths
To unlock your genius you need to work out what you are already good at. Building upon strengths goes a lot further than fixing weaknesses.

You don’t need to be good at everything
The good news about the different areas of intelligence is that you don’t need to be a genius in every area.

To develop intelligence you need to know what you are good at and amplify those strengths. Intelligence is made up of many parts and not just limited to IQ and academic smarts.

Provide students with a copy of the Mapping My Pizza Smarts handout.

Ask students to bring both the one they have done today and the one they complete with a family member or trusted adult, to the next session.

Once the family pizza smart map has been completed you may wish to move around the class making a one on one comparison of the two maps as the students enter their pizza map into their portfolio.

B ▶ Your Inner Albert and Rex

HANDOUT 7
Rex and Albert – An Introduction to the Inner Workings of Your Brain

LEARNING INTENTION
▶ For students to understand brain functioning in a fun and memorable way
▶ To provide ways for students to lessen anxiety

METHOD
Provide students with a copy of the Rex and Albert – An Introduction to the Inner Workings of your Brain handout to complete.

Paraphrase in your own words the following to students.

If you stop and think about it, you might ask why do most people do such stupid things to avoid feeling anxious. People argue, fight, escape, avoid important deadlines, put off important tasks, procrastinate or become controlling in a usually ineffective attempt to stop feeling anxious.

(Teaching note: You might generate a list of all the ineffective ways people try to avoid feeling worried or anxious.)

Albert
To simplify things a bit you have two brains. The first is the brilliant, insightful, creative and compassionate brain that evolved most recently in humans.

Now we could call the clever, creative, brilliant, wonderful, imaginative, fantastic and genius part of your brain (tap on your forehead) the prefrontal cortex but in honour of Albert Einstein lets call it “Albert”.

Rex
The second part of your brain evolved a long, long time ago and forms the bottom part of your brain. This part of your brain keeps you alive. It keeps your heart beating while you sleep. It keeps you at the right temperature. It does a lot of really important things. In fact this lower part of your brains contains 80% of your brain cells. It knows what frightens and threatens you and it is pretty much the same brain that dinosaurs had. Once this part of your brain detects a threat it acts as if it is a life or death issue, even if it isn’t.

We could talk about the reticular activating system and the basal ganglia but in honour of Tyrannosaurus Rex, lets call it “Rex”.
Rex is very old, can get quite grumpy and isn’t very bright. Rex doesn’t use language. Rex doesn’t use logic much so he can’t be reasoned with. Also he is incredibly easy to distract.

Now we all like to think that our inner Albert runs the show. We are all reasonable, intelligent people in control of our own destinies, right? Wrong! Rex runs the show. At times Rex will listen to Albert but only if it is something Rex wants to hear.

For example, your inner Albert might decide to start a new exercise program but if your inner Rex wants to lie in bed, I’d suggest you might not decide to run a marathon.

If your inner Albert says “this issue isn’t worth worrying about” but Rex detects a threat, you’re likely to be up pacing the floorboards at 4am.

Rex can save your life. If something were to attack you, Rex would have you running away before Albert had even thought about it. Rex thinks the most urgent thing to do is always the most important thing to do.

You can get your inner Albert to take matters into hand but only if you distract Rex with something to keep him comfortable. Food, drink, sleep, rest, distractions all help Rex to settle for a while.

The problem for many of us, is that as soon as inner Rex is feeling warm and snuggly we think the problem is solved and don’t put our inner Albert to work in sorting out the issue. Instead we take a break. Things are fine, we think, and they are until our disgruntled Rex roars back to life. Then we start feeling anxious again.

**METHOD**

Watch with students the 5 minute video on the stress response and Robert Sapolsky Stress Response from Savior to Killer.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPS7GnromGo&list=PLHB-B89p2qJ8JEc6hqehqPJJ6vDEeYk-k

Provide students with a copy of the **Rex, Albert, and the Stress Response** handout, and the **How to Stress Yourself Out** and **How to Calm Yourself Down** handouts. In teams, discuss this and then ask them to develop two lists:

1. Things that stress students out
2. Things they can do to calm down

Then ask them to develop their own personal calm down plans.

**Success Assassins**

**HANDOUT 11**

Success Assassins

**LEARNING INTENTION**

- For students to consider how they can sabotage their own success through unrealistic expectations and unhelpful strategies

**METHOD**

Provide students with a copy of the **Success Assassins** handout. With some groups you may need to discuss or get the group to research what an assassin is.

**Explain to students**

Almost everyone has some ways that they stop themselves from being the success that they could be. Have you ever reacted first and then later regretted what you have done or said, as it probably wasn’t the best option?
E  How Humans Can Make the Best of a Day

HANDOUT 12
The Ideal Day

HANDOUT 13
The Ideal Week Planner

LEARNING INTENTION
- To provide ways for students to consider what time of the day is best for particular activities

METHOD
Creating rituals and rhythms in a day decreases chaos and stress.

Provide students with a copy of The Ideal Day handout.
Discuss their thoughts.

Provide students with a copy of The Ideal Week Planner handout.

Have students compare an ideal week with their actual week.

F  How Much Should I Really Expect of Myself

HANDOUT 14
‘Can’t Do’ to ‘Can Do’

LEARNING INTENTION
- To teach students that they can get smarter
- To teach students that smarter behaviour can improve their outcomes

METHOD
Think of all the things you have got better at doing. (walking, balancing, running, talking etc.)

How did you do that?

Provide students with a copy of the Can’t Do to Can Do handout.

Ask them to discuss it with their parents or a trusted adult and to come back with comments about the things they agree or disagree with.

G  How to Take the Mood and the Roll at the Same Time

LEARNING INTENTION
- For students to reflect on their moods and to communicate their readiness to learn

METHOD
Arrange for each student to have four facial photos made up as fridge magnets. Each one has their face, their name and a colour trim that indicates their mood: red = angry; black = worried or tired; blue = sad; green = calm and ready to learn.

Alternately you could have small signs made up and placed on a board. Ask students to place their name under the appropriate colour/sign.

Put all of the students’ photos in a tray shaped box with alphabetical dividers.

As students enter the class they select which photo of themselves reflects their current mood and place it on a whiteboard to indicate their mood and attendance to the teacher.
MY VALUES

ACTIVITIES
A What I Believe In and What I Stand For
B The Best Classroom in the World
C The Fine Art of Happiness
D Depression Proofing Yourself

These activities will assist students to:
- Clarify the values they hold and to consider how these make a difference to their levels of happiness

THEORY
Having clearly articulated values that you live by, is associated with gains in wellbeing and happiness.

How teachers can build assist students to build values:
- Lead activities across the school that emphasise the development of a positive values school culture characterised by respectful relationships between everyone
- Teach the importance of value-based interactions. Look to influence the peer culture
- Support those young people identified as needing additional assistance in developing positive values
- Refer those in need to appropriate services for further work
- Partner with the school community, including families and local and community services

For more information visit: www.education.vic.gov.au/resilience

A What I Believe In and What I Stand For

HANDOUT 15
What I Believe In and What I Stand For

LEARNING INTENTION
- For students to learn how to identify personal values that influence behaviour, and apply them to social dilemmas

METHOD
Values are principles that guide behaviour. They give us a portal to free will and choice when emotions and stressors swamp our thinking. The values portal allows us to make choices about how we behave. It gives us power over reactivity.

Our values in part define who we are and who we become.

Discuss your own school’s values and motto. When and how were they made the values of the school? What do they stand for? Do you feel the school honours its values? Why?

Provide students with a copy of the What I Believe In and What I Stand For handout. Ask students to identify the top five of most importance to them personally.

Discuss in small groups.

Ask students to interview their parents or family. Which five do they think are most important? Which ones do they think you most strongly show?

Discuss a series of scenarios that describe social and moral dilemmas. Which values do you think would be helpful? Why? Discuss in small groups.
B The Best Classroom in the World

LEARNING INTENTION
- For students to develop social and communal values that are shared within the classroom as the basis for cooperation and discipline
- For students to identify personal responsibilities and clarify expectations regarding behaviour

METHOD
Ask students to draw and design their Personal Best classroom. Discuss the results as a classroom.
Classes may wish to produce a classroom declaration of values.
Individuals may wish to produce a personal declaration of values.

These discussions should be revisited intermittently to maintain relevance. They may act as the basis for disciplinary discussion.

Discuss:
- The teacher in The Best Classroom in the World would...
- The students in The Best Classroom in the World would...
- As a student in The Best Classroom in the World I would...
- The most important thing I want to contribute to school is...

C The Fine Art of Happiness

HANDOUT 16
How to Be Happy

HANDOUT 17
How to Be Miserable

HANDOUT 18
Agony Aunt and Uncle Scenario Cards

LEARNING INTENTION
- To encourage students to consider different strategies for approaching life scenarios
- For students to learn about helpful and unhelpful coping styles

METHOD
Provide students with a copy of the How to Be Happy handout and the How to Be Miserable handout. Discuss.

Print the Agony Aunt and Uncle Scenario Cards handout.

Divide the class into the following roles:
- Three students to form the ‘Happiness’ panel (to discuss how the situation or person could be made happier)
- Three students to form the ‘Misery’ panel (to discuss how the situation or person could be made more miserable)
- One student to be the script reader
- The rest of the class to be judges

The script readers present a series of scenarios to the panels. Each panel member reads from an advice card provided, an option for approaching the scenario. The audience then votes on the most helpful, the most difficult, and the most likely option.

This can be repeated with other scenario cards, and changing the roles of the students.
Depression Proofing Yourself

HANDOUT 19
Depression Proofing Yourself

HANDOUT 20
My Depression Proofing Plan

LEARNING INTENTION
- To help students deal with depression

METHOD
Draw on the board:

Explain to students:
Research by Csikszentmihalyi, indicates that a powerful way of protecting ourselves from depression is to have some forms of “flow”. Flow is a state of absorption and enchantment where there is a balance between the challenges you face and the skills you have. This occurs when you do activities that engross you so much you lose track of time.

Generate with the class a series of activities that give them a sense of flow. If this is a positive experience students could take this home and add to it after discussing it with their parents.

Provide students with the Depression Proofing Yourself handout and the My Depression Proofing Plan handout to complete.
MY FRIENDSHIP SKILLS

ACTIVITIES
A  How I Make Friends and Lose Enemies
B  The Art of the Exuberant Greeting
C  Forgiveness and Relationships
D  Forgiveness
E  Trapped
F  Collaboration Wins in the End

These activities will assist students to:
▶ Broaden their friendship groups
▶ Learn how to resolve differences with friends

THEORY
Research shows that students who develop strong peer friendships and connections have improved outcomes and resilience. Developing social connections also increases emotional literacy, self-awareness, empathy and compassion for others.

How teachers can build friendship skills:
▶ Lead activities across the school that extend and deepen positive interactions and friendships
▶ Teach friendship skills and conflict resolution skills to all students across all year levels
▶ Support those young people identified as needing additional assistance to develop friendships and social connections
▶ Refer those in need to appropriate services that specialise in social and emotional intelligence
▶ Partner with the school community, including families and local and community services

For more information visit:

A  How I Make Friends and Lose Enemies

HANDOUT 21
How I Make Friends and Lose Enemies

LEARNING INTENTION
▶ To help students consider what type of friend they are

METHOD
Provide students in both Years 6 and 7 with a copy of the How I Make Friends and Lose Enemies handout. After they have completed the task, generate a list with the class about what do we look for in a good friend.
Discuss this quote by Abraham Lincoln: Am I not destroying my enemies when I make friends of them?
If students circled “not very often” for some statements, they might want to think about whether they should change the way they do some things.
See if their answers change between Years 6 and 7.
B ▶ The Art of the Exuberant Greeting

HANDOUT 22
The Art of the Exuberant Greeting

LEARNING INTENTION
▶ To help students learn how to feel confident and act confidently when meeting people

METHOD
Ask students: What are the signs that you look for when you meet someone, that they are actually pleased to see you?
Generate a list of signs or behaviours.
Provide students with a copy of The Art of the Exuberant Greeting handout and either discuss as a class or in small groups.

Once you have done this conduct a small experiment.
Ask students to practice exuberant greetings around the school, at home, with friends, relatives or neighbours. Note reactions. Let’s see how many exuberant responses we get. Let’s also see how many people seem a bit weirded out by it.
Discuss as a group how it made you feel.

C ▶ Forgiveness and Relationships

HANDOUT 23
Walk or Talk Situation Cards

LEARNING INTENTION
▶ To help students consider ways to repair friendships and relationships if they fall into difficulties
▶ To help students consider which situation they would walk away from and which one they would choose to talk through the problems

METHOD
Distribute the Walk or Talk Situation cards. Discuss with class.

One student is asked to select and read out a situation card to the rest of the class.
You could either have the class decide through thumbs up or thumbs down voting whether they would suggest walking (leaving the relationship or friendship) or talking (try to patch it up and solve it).
Alternatively you could set up a debate with one side of the class arguing for walking and the other side for talking. You might also ask each team to discuss the consequences of their decisions. For example, if they walk, what will be the result? If they talk, what should they say?
Ask students to develop other scenarios to consider.

D ▶ Forgiving Yourself

HANDOUT 24
Forgiveness

LEARNING INTENTION
▶ To teach students that forgiveness is an essential part of good social skills

METHOD
Ask if anyone here has never done anything that someone else has had to forgive him or her for?
Ask if anyone here has never had to forgive someone for something that they have done to you?
Make the point that for most relationships to continue there has to be some form of forgiveness involved.
Show the following quotes:
“As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn’t leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I’d still be in prison.” -Nelson Mandela
Discuss:
▶ What does he mean by still being in prison?
▶ What do you think he gained from this approach?

“Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies.” -Nelson Mandela
Discuss:
▶ What does he mean by this statement?
▶ How did this approach help Nelson Mandela lead his people?

Distribute the Forgiveness handout. Discuss with class.
LEARNING INTENTION
- To have students look at moral judgments

METHOD
Divide students into teams of six.
Give each student a number from 1 to 6.

Read the following:
You are part of a group touring the secret spy facility at Pine Gap. You are waiting in a completely bare room when a large earthquake shakes the room. An alarm sounds, the door locks and can’t be reopened. You are trapped.

A warning comes over the loud speaker above your heads.

“Warning! A container of biological weapons has begun leaking in the next room and will seep into your room completely covering the floor in the next 15 minutes. When it comes into contact with human skin it causes a one-year loss of speech and a permanent erratic increase in romantic thoughts. The chemical easily passes through clothing and shoes. The good news is the chemical is only toxic for 30 seconds. If you can keep people from touching the floor for 30 seconds they will be safe.

As the liquid starts to spread the tour guide rips the cover off the alarm. The cover is made of material that can't be cut or bent, but can withstand the effects of the chemical. The only problem is, it is very small and only one person can stand on it at a time. Your group must work out how many people they can protect by having them stand on the alarm cover.

Allocate roles from 1 to 6 (see ‘Roles’) for the six students in each group. Then ask each of the groups to decide amongst themselves which people to save.

Roles
1. The tour guide
25 years of age, married with 3 young children, your spouse has recently passed away and you are the sole support for your children.

2. Company CEO (52 years of age)
Your company employs 8,000 people in a socially disadvantaged area but due to a downturn in sales you will have to retrench 30% of employees unless a new product can be developed. This morning, in the shower, you dreamt up the new product.

3. Medical researcher (46 years of age)
For the past 12 years you have been researching a cure for AIDS. You feel a cure is only months away. Due to appalling funding, you have no colleagues or assistants who are aware of the research advances.

4. Maths teacher (28 years of age)
You have just won an award for developing a maths program that inspires middle school students and increases their maths achievement dramatically. You have been asked to develop the program to be introduced nationally. You have also spent the last few months studying circus skills.

5. Military commander (63 years of age)
You are an expert in counter-terrorism methods and have been asked to advise the government on keeping public transport safe.

6. Unemployed person (35 years of age)
You have been living rough for several years without paid employment. You have a drug habit to support.

Discuss the process of decision making with the class. Perhaps two people can fit onto the alarm instead of just one. Who would they then choose to save?
F  Collaboration Wins in the End

LEARNING INTENTION

- To teach students about collaboration and cooperation

METHOD

Group students into pairs (not in their usual friendships, if possible).

Ask them to decide who is “A” and who is “B”.

A’s are told that they have $10 that they need to distribute with B in any way they decide. For example they could keep $5 for themselves and give $5 away or they could keep $9.99 and give B one cent. However, if B does not accept the offer, neither of them gets any money. If B accepts the offer, they both get to keep the money.

Ask A to think about what offer they will make to B carefully before making it. Then ask them to make an offer.

Then on the board record all of the offers writing down the amounts and whether the offer was accepted. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A gets to keep</th>
<th>A gives to B</th>
<th>Offer accepted:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$10</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5</td>
<td>$5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$6</td>
<td>$4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3</td>
<td>$7</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$9</td>
<td>$1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discuss:

- Did it matter if the offer made was seen to be fair?
- Ask some B’s how they felt.
- Do people always make decisions based on their best interests? If not, why do you think this is so?
- Which was the more successful strategy, collaboration or cooperation?
A → My Resilience Assets

HANDOUT 25
My Resilience Assets

LEARNING INTENTION
- To help students identify strengths and resilience assets

METHOD
Provide students with the My Resilience Assets handout to complete.

B → The Karma Club

LEARNING INTENTION
- To help students gain an understanding of their own personal power to create positive change in the world

METHOD
Ask students to increase goodwill in the world by doing something positive for someone else.
Try this out for one week. Pick someone you know and try to “knock their socks off” as much as possible. Give them compliments, greet them exuberantly and take time to be with them.
You’ll be amazed at how much benefit you get from increasing someone else’s happiness.

ACTIVITIES
A  My Resilience Assets
B  The Karma Club
C  Bullying and School Safety
D  Cybersafety and Cyber Learning

These activities will assist students to:
- Describe the range and influence of personal qualities and strengths
- Monitor their progress in consolidating their strengths
- Assess the value of working independently

THEORY
Research in the field of positive psychology emphasises the importance of identifying and using individual strengths. Social and emotional learning programs that use strength-based approaches promote student wellbeing, positive behaviour and academic achievement

How teachers can build empowerment
- Lead activities across the school that emphasis student-lead activities that build responsibility and empowerment. Use highly resilient students to help inspire other students and build a positive school culture
- Teach all students that they have the power to make a difference to others
- Support those young people who find it difficult to see this capacity within themselves, to identify possible areas of strength and capacity
- Refer those in need to appropriate services

For more information visit:
C ▶ Bullying and School Safety

HANDOUT 26
Is This Bullying?

HANDOUT 27
School Safety Survey

LEARNING INTENTION
- To increase students’ awareness of bullying
- To empower students to take actions to prevent bullying

METHOD
Ask for examples of bullying or use the Is This bullying? handout to start a discussion.

Administer the School Safety Survey handout.

Fact sheets on cybersafety, cyberbullying and bullying can be found here: [http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/advice.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/advice.aspx)

Develop a composite picture of safe and unsafe areas within the school.

Work through bullying scenarios.

Alternatively, you may wish to complete the following map activity.

Copy a map of your school. Get students to mark a cross in areas that they consider unsafe and a tick in areas they consider safe, and a question mark (?) in areas they are unsure about. Students could then discuss the issues their maps raise and report to the class.

Using these results, list the significant issues.

D ▶ Cybersafety and Cyber Learning

LEARNING INTENTION
- To make students aware of cyber issues and cyber learning

METHOD
Explain:

Online relationships are becoming as important as face-to-face ones. In fact cyber friendships are so important to young people that many of them would endure pain rather than lose access to them. As one young man commented, “I’d rather lose a leg than access to Facebook”. On average, young people have 56 online friends.

The strength of online relationships mirrors the best and at times, the worst of face-to-face relationships. The only problem is that when things go badly online, they go really bad. As we know, what goes on the net stays on the net.

In fast paced heated interactions in chat rooms, people who are usually friendly and positive can post nasty and hurtful comments with devastating consequences. For this reason, we need to develop “netiquette” (standards of behaviour) for people online.

Cybersafety is about relationships and how people behave rather than about technology.

Almost two thirds of children have had a negative experience online and 20% feel badly about something they have done online.

Ask students to develop a statement of Netiquette outlining the things that should and shouldn’t happen on line. Some suggestions include:
- Don’t harass or stalk people online
- Always check your privacy settings
- Don’t pass on embarrassing photos or posts about others
- Parents should not allow kids to have webcams in bedrooms
- Skype shouldn’t be used except in a family room
- Don’t use Chat roulette.


Fact sheets on cybersafety, cyberbullying and bullying can be found here: [http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/advice.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/advice.aspx)

ACTIVITIES

A  How I Learn Best
B  How I Feel about Secondary School
C  How to Make a Good Decision
D  How to Plan
E  Developing Willpower
F  Great Mistakes

These activities will assist students to:

- View their strengths in relation to learning and to broaden their repertoire of approaches to achieving academic success

THEORY

How teachers can build school engagement:

- Lead activities across the school, orchestrating a comprehensive approach to the learning needs of early adolescent girls and boys
- Teach the skills that predict academic success to all students across all year levels
- Support those young people identified as needing additional assistance to special needs assessment and support
- Refer those in need to appropriate services
- Partner with the school community, including families and local and community services

For more information see: www.education.vic.gov.au/resilience

A  How I Learn Best

HANDOUT 28
School Engagement Index

LEARNING INTENTION

- To encourage students to reflect on how engaged they are in school

METHOD

Provide students with the School Engagement Index. Ask them to complete it and score it up. This index should give you and your colleagues a clear indication of the issues involved in engaging some students at school. Collect the results for each student and use it to consider ways to engage each student. The results of your discussions could form the basis for an action plan for each student.

B  How I Feel About Secondary School

HANDOUT 29
Start Survey for Schools

LEARNING INTENTION

- To encourage students to begin thinking about secondary school and take charge of the process of transition

METHOD

Create ‘Better’ and ‘Worse’ signs. Ask students to stand in a horseshoe shape. Place a ‘Better’ sign at one end of the room and a ‘Worse’ sign at the other end of the room.
Explain to students that this is a 'continuum'. When you say a word or phrase, you want students to stand on a position along the continuum that represents how strongly they feel. For example, if you say the words, 'Life', students who think their life will definitely be better at secondary school, will stand close to the top of the continuum near the 'Better' sign, while those who aren't sure about what will happen to their 'life', will stand toward the middle of the continuum, half way between the signs, and those who think their life will be worse, will stand more toward the 'Worse' sign.

Ask students to explain why they are standing in the position they have chosen.

Tell students they can change their position if their opinions change while listening to other students.

Complete the START Survey for Schools handout.

As well as getting students to think in more detail about their move to secondary school, this survey can be used to pin point issues that may need to be addressed either individually or as a whole class.

Ask students to complete the survey. Some suggested words for the continuum activity are:

- BULLYING
- FRIENDSHIPS
- CANTEEN
- ENJOYMENT
- TEACHERS
- SPORTS
- SUBJECTS

How to Make a Good Decision

LEARNING INTENTION

- To teach students a decision-making strategy called PICCA

METHOD

Explain the following to your students:

CROSSROADS

Decisions are like crossroads in your life. When you come to a crossroad there are basically five ways you can approach it:

Go straight ahead and keep going. Turn left, Turn right, Turn around and go back. Stop and stay where you are.

PICCA

To know which way to go, we need to make a decision. To help us remember how to do this, we use an acronym called PICCA. PICCA stands for a five-step way of making decisions:

1. Problem
2. I wants
3. Choices
4. Compare
5. Act

1. Problem

The first thing to do is to clarify what the problem or decision you need to make is. Generally the need for a decision arises when there is a problem.

At first glance, stating what the problem is may seem very straightforward but it is also important to get it right.

Try out a few different ways of expressing the problem. To help clarify the problem, ask yourself five 'why' questions.

For example:
I'm worried I might fail in my next test at school.
Why?
I haven't studied enough.
Why?
I haven't been sleeping well.
Why?
I've been stressed out.
Why?
I think I will disappoint my parents.
Why?
I want to give up piano.
Why?

In this example the problem to be solved shifts, as it often does, from one thing to another. Problems are shifty things. What sometimes seems to be the problem camouflages the real problem.

Once you have identified the problem move to the next stage.

2. I wants

Describe what you want.

3. Choices

Describe as many alternative ways of getting what you want as you can.

Often choices that we haven't even considered appear if we give ourselves some time to dwell and ponder on the decision. The best decisions often take some time.
4. Compare
Go through your list of choices and note which is the one you’d really love, which one you think has the best chance and which one is a long shot. If you don’t have a long shot option you might want to go back and spend more time developing your choices.

A list of choices that looks too practical and realistic can indicate that you have played it too safe in developing possible choices.

In difficult decisions there is usually a tradeoff. For this reason it is worth drawing up a comparison table (as described on the next page).

5. Act
The last thing to do is to select an option and act upon it.

AN EXAMPLE OF HOW WE CAN USE PICCA
Emma wants to do an after-school activity this term. She is interested in Girl Guides, piano lessons and gymnastics. Girl Guides meet on Thursday evenings. Piano lessons can be scheduled at any time except that her parent’s work late on Mondays and Tuesdays, and Wednesdays is the evening her brother Kyle has karate lessons on the other side of town. Gymnastics has a Saturday session as well as one on Thursday evenings. Friday night is a traditional family evening at home.

1. Problem
Whether Emma should learn piano, join the Guides or become involved in gymnastics.

2. I wants
Emma makes a list of her ‘I wants’:
   ▶ I want to meet new friends.
   ▶ I want to have fun.
   ▶ I want to learn a musical instrument.

3. Choices
   ▶ I could choose gymnastics or Guides but not both.
   ▶ I could ask Granddad to take me to piano lessons on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday.
   ▶ I could learn another instrument at school and do piano lessons later.
   ▶ I could not do an after school activity.

4. Compare
To compare the choices, Emma and her parents draw up a table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wants/Activities</th>
<th>Piano</th>
<th>Gymnastics</th>
<th>Guides</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New friends</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Emma isn’t clear on her decision so she decides to give each activity a ranking based on a star system 3 stars for best, 2 stars for next and 1 star for worst.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wants/Activities</th>
<th>Piano</th>
<th>Gymnastics</th>
<th>Guides</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It’s close. Emma has to spend some time thinking about it. While she really loves the piano, she thinks having more friends would be great fun. After a while she thinks that maybe having guitar lessons at school would also be ok. Given that she would like to make new friends, Emma thinks she could do this both through the guitar lessons and Girl Guides.

5. Act
Emma decides to go to Girl Guides on Thursday night.

DECISION-MAKING SCENARIOS
Ask students to work in small teams through the decision-making scenarios. Then compare the decision they made with other class members’ decisions.

Film
A film director spots you and wants you to star in one of three movies. The first role is a horror figure where you look like a serial murderer. The second is a pirate in Pirates of the Caribbean 16, and the third is a horse riding, freedom loving outlaw in the wild west.

Adventure playground
The local mayor asks for your help. There is a million dollars to spend on developing a local adventure park. The mayor wants you to let the council know which of these two choices is best:

1. A skate park
2. An underwater aquarium that people can dive, swim or snorkel in
Transport
The Prime Minister wants your input. You have to decide where to spend money on transport needs (roads, public transport and railways). The total budget is $6,000,000,000 dollars.

D ▶ How to Plan

HANDOUT 30
Personal Best Goal Setting

LEARNING INTENTION
▶ To teach students how to plan, anticipate and alter their behaviour accordingly

METHOD
The ability to plan, anticipate and alter your behaviour accordingly is strongly related to success in life. Planning assists the development of the prefrontal cortex (PFC) and executive functions associated with higher order thinking. Provide students with a copy of the Personal Best Goal Setting handout.

Ask students to develop a to-do list of things they would need to do to make today highly successful. At the end of each hour, take one minute to refocus and reconsider their priorities. This helps them to learn to manage a day, hour by hour.

Review their thoughts on this process at the end of the day.

E ▶ Developing Willpower

HANDOUT 31
Developing Willpower

LEARNING INTENTION
▶ To teach students the ability to do the hard thing, to resist impulses and to maintain focus on the task at hand

METHOD
The ability to do the hard thing, to resist impulses and to maintain focus on the task at hand strongly predicts school and life success.

Show students the video on the marshmallow experiment.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yo4WF3cSd9Q

Provide students with a copy of the Developing Willpower handout. Ask them to take this home and share it with their parent or email it to parents with a request they discuss it with their child.

F ▶ Great Mistakes

HANDOUT 32
Great Mistakes Survey

LEARNING INTENTION
▶ To help students realise they can make mistakes and ponder issues without having to come up with a quick answer
▶ To let students know that these processes contribute to resilient learning

METHOD
Provide students with a copy of the Great Mistakes Survey handout.

Discuss the concept of mistakes with your students: that instead of saying “I can’t do it” and giving up, it is more liberating to say “I haven’t done it yet” and keep on trying.

Discuss how mistakes can be useful. Talk about the idea that there are no failures, only ineffective solutions. If we try to predict our abilities at tasks too early, we focus on the wrong thing.

Ask: What top sports people were brilliant right from the start without lots of work and practice?

Consider the history of Abraham Lincoln who was eventually elected President of the USA after almost thirty years of continuous defeat:
▶ 1831 Failed in business
▶ 1832 Defeated for the Legislature
▶ 1834 Second failure in business
▶ 1836 Had a nervous breakdown
▶ 1838 Defeated for Speaker
▶ 1840 Defeated for Elector
▶ 1843 Defeated for Congress
▶ 1848 Defeated for Congress (again!)
▶ 1855 Defeated for Senate
▶ 1856 Defeated for Vice President
▶ 1858 Defeated for Senator
▶ 1860 ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE USA
A ➤ Mapping My Community

LEARNING INTENTION

➤ To help students build resilience by knowing and connecting more powerfully with the community.

METHOD

There are many ways to map a community: photo profiles, statistical, resources, needs, tribal, opportunity mapping, and geocaching, interesting spots, shops, theatres, cinemas, animals, streetscapes, Google earth, social media usage.

Discuss different types of profiling and mapping used.

This is a chance for your students to be as creative as they can be. Ask them to come up with wild, whacky, wonderful ways of mapping their community, streets, town, and area. (e.g. video, photography, graphs)

Plan to put on an exhibit of the different maps.

This can be repeated or extended upon in Year 7.

B ➤ Do You Create Your Own Luck?

LEARNING INTENTION

➤ To enable students to examine the concept of luck and how it can change people’s lives both individually and as a community.

➤ To teach students to understand that they have some ability to create their own luck.

METHOD

The Secret of Luck

Watch with your students the Derren Brown episode on The Experiments: The Secret of Luck (48 minutes). This is available on YouTube.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O4mN33w5Ftw

ACTIVITIES

A  Mapping My Community
B  Do You Create Your Own Luck?
C  Personal Best
D  Postcards from Your Future
E  Local Heroes

These activities will assist students to:

➤ Powerfully link with their community and learn that they can make a positive impact.

THEORY

How teachers can build school engagement:

➤ Lead activities that deepen the links between the school, students and their local community.

➤ Teach students ways to access community resources.

➤ Support those young people identified as needing additional assistance.

➤ Refer those in need to appropriate services.

➤ Partner with appropriate community agencies.

For more information see: www.education.vic.gov.au/resilience
Discuss:
- Do we create our own luck?
- Success doesn’t come to you. You go to it.
- Can communities have attitudes towards concepts like luck?
- What do you think your community’s attitude is towards luck?

Alternative videos
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BKYk6sIUfRI
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cnExnIXgIHc

C ▶ Personal Best

LEARNING INTENTION
- To teach students to develop and extend the concept of growth mindset and self-efficacy

METHOD
Personal Best is a program that allows each student to take on a project of their choosing and to develop it with supervision and consultation from their homeroom teacher. The project will run over two terms and time will be set aside for each student to individually meet with a staff member.

This requires staff to take on the role of coaches who meet individually with each student to set goals to review progress and to expand the project.

The aim is to have each student have an experience of taking on a project of interest and to then set goals regarding that project, implement the project, have it reviewed with constructive feedback and to then incorporate that feedback and to expand the project.

Some project ideas are:
- Create a magazine about basketball
- Write a play/television show/story on a topic of your choosing
- Develop a series of school policies and interview a series of staff and students about the rules you would have in an “ideal” school
- Develop a good food guide for kids (survey students about food choices and develop suggested menus)
- Survey a class group about different musical tastes and write a report on this
- Create an artistic representation of the school as a series of pictures or sculptures
- Set a goal to achieve a certain level of skill or competency at a sport. Discuss and write down a plan to achieve this level. Implement the plan and review progress.

- Develop a survey for local council
- Develop a business idea
- Establish business links with the community
- Tape and analyse a television series
- Learn to ride a horse to a certain level
- Develop a community portrait
- Survey parents of the school about their expectations regarding how they are going to celebrate the end of the year
- Develop a “what you really need to know guide” for new students
- Write and perform a piece of music
- Develop a presentation around a type of music


D ▶ Postcards from Your Future

LEARNING INTENTION
- To help students examine possible futures

METHOD
Cut out postcard-sized cards, (four cards to an A4 piece of card)

Give each student a blank postcard. Have them write a postcard to themselves from their future. They can write on one side of the postcard and draw a picture on the other.

For example:

Berlin, 2052
Dear Me!
I’m in Germany. I am visiting my assistants to help me pick out the latest nuclear powered car. It’s the fastest and coolest thing on the planet. I hope to win the Grand Prix in it this year.
Looking forward to seeing you.
Love Me!

Then have students discuss how to make that postcard a possibility for them.
**E ▶ Local Heroes**

**LEARNING INTENTION**
- To help students examine the concept of resilience

**METHOD**
This project can occur over several weeks.
Local Heroes is a project where students become involved in studying resilience through developing a biography of a local person (or family member) who has been resilient in their lives.

Ask students to form small teams and nominate a local hero. In a few lines, get them to write on a card why they think that person is resilient. For example:

- What has been hard in their lives?
- What difficulties did they face growing up, working at their jobs or living in their families?
- What did they do to keep going, get on with their lives and bounce back to enjoying themselves again?

The teams can then plan how they will collect their information.

They can then construct a storyboard of the person’s life based on interview, pictures and/or associated historical events.
ACTIVITIES
A  How People See Me
B  Portfolio (Separate document)

These activities will assist students to:

• Develop an overview of their identity, strengths, vulnerabilities and Optimal Growing Conditions

THEORY
Identity formation is a key developmental task of adolescence.

How teachers can help students to build a positive identity:

• Lead activities that highlight the positive attributes and characteristics within all people
• Teach students about identity formation
• Support those young people who struggle in this area to investigate their own strengths and character
• Refer those in need to appropriate services
• Partner with the school community, including families and local and community services

For more information visit:

A ▶ How People See Me

HANDOUT 33
How People See Me

LEARNING INTENTION

• To help students develop an overview of their identity, strengths, vulnerabilities and optimal growing conditions

METHOD
Ask students to complete the How People See Me handout, with 10 equalling very likely to see me this way, and 0 being very unlikely to see me this way.

B ▶ Portfolio

DOCUMENT
Portfolio

LEARNING INTENTION

• To help students' develop an overview of their identity, strengths, vulnerabilities and optimal growing conditions
• To build students' self-esteem
• To inform teachers and students about each other
• To celebrate and acknowledge students achievements at primary school
• To continue to encourage the process of building a positive identity for students

METHOD
A key focus of START is to have students build and refine a personal portfolio that can then be accessed by themselves, their teachers, and their parents or carers, as they transition from primary to secondary school. Ideally the student starts his or her portfolio in Year 6 and it travels with them as a living record, potentially generating a “conversation” between the student, his or her teacher and their parent or carer. Even if a
student has not developed a portfolio in primary school, portfolios begun in Year 7 can still be useful as they provide students with a snapshot of themselves that can be valuable in identity formation.

The portfolio can be an effective tool to help teachers identify the individual needs of each Year 7 student coming into the school so that their social, emotional and learning needs can be tailored to support them. The portfolio can encourage students to develop and reflect on their personal learning goals and ongoing development over the course of their transition. Reflection involves going back over issues and considering them further.

The activities in each of the eight sections of this resource link directly to eight segments within the student’s portfolio, culminating in a statement about personal identity. As each section is completed students will be able to fill in that segment of their portfolio.

Teachers can decide whether students create an online or paper-based portfolio.

For students with special needs, the portfolio would need to be adapted to their learning needs or abilities. For example, they could record a portfolio or create it in images as a picture journal.

The portfolio provides students with the opportunity to develop:

- Identity formation
- Depression prevention
- Mindfulness
- Positive or growth mindset
- Anxiety reduction methods
- Empowerment
- Increased friendship skills

Provide students with the Portfolio document, or ask students to develop their own document on the computer.

- Introduce the notion and benefits of students creating their own portfolio. (E.g. To celebrate their achievements at primary school and to communicate to their teacher at secondary school)
- Advise students about how much control they will retain over its distribution – whether it will be sent to their Year 7 teachers and whether other people will see it
- Be aware that the portfolio can contain personal information about family characteristics, illnesses etc. Refer to the Department of Education and Training’s website for more information about confidentiality and teaching and learning resources: http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/curriculum/Pages/selection.aspx
- Provide support to students as required
APPENDICES

1 How START Aligns with the Victorian Curriculum Standards 48
2 References 52
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### Year 6

#### CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP

- Investigate how people with shared beliefs and values work together to achieve their goals and plan for action ([VCCCC016](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCCCC016)) 1C, 3A, 3B, 5A, 7A
- Examine the concept of global citizenship ([http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCCCC017](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCCCC017)) 1A, 5B, 7A

#### CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING

**Questions and possibilities**

- Experiment with alternative ideas and actions by setting preconceptions to one side ([http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCCCTQ022](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCCCTQ022)) 2C, 3A, 5A, 5D
- Identify and form links and patterns from multiple information sources to generate non-routine ideas and possibilities ([http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCCCTQ023](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCCCTQ023)) 1C, 6C, 6D

#### META-COGNITION


#### DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

**Digital systems**

- Acquire, store and validate different types of data and use a range of software to interpret and visualise data to create information ([http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCCCTQ028](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCCCTQ028)) 5D
- Plan, create and communicate ideas, information and online collaborative projects, applying agreed ethical, social and technical protocols ([http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCDTDI029](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCDTDI029)) 1C, 5D, 6D, 8B, 8A
ENGLISH

Literature and context
- Make connections between own experiences and those of characters and events represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCELT365) 2A, 2B, 2C, 2E, 2F, 3A, 3C, 6C, 7E

Literacy

Interacting with others
- Participate in and contribute to discussions, clarifying and interrogating ideas, developing and supporting arguments, sharing and evaluating information, experiences and opinions, and use interaction skills, varying conventions of spoken interactions according to group size, formality of interaction and needs and expertise of the audience (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCELY366) 2F, 27

ETHICAL CAPABILITY

Understanding concepts
- Examine the contested meaning of concepts including truth and happiness and the extent to which these concepts are and should be valued (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCECU009) 5A, 5D, 6B
- Discuss how ethical principles can be used as the basis for action, considering the influence of cultural norms, religion, world views and philosophical thought on these principles (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCECU010) 3A, 3B, 4D, 4E, 5C

Decision making and actions
- Explore the significance of ‘means versus ends’ by considering two ways to act when presented with a problem: one that privileges means and one ends (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCECU011) 1D, 5D, 6C

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Being healthy, safe and active
- Explore how identities are influenced by people and places http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCHPEP105) 1A, 6B, 7D
- Investigate resources to manage changes and transitions associated with puberty http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCHPEP106) INTRO A, 2E, 6B, 7D
- Investigate community resources and strategies to seek help about health, safety and wellbeing (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCHPEP107) 4A

- Plan and practise strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCHPEP108) 2B, 2C, 3D, 4A, 4C, 6B

Communicating and interacting for health and wellbeing
- Practice skills to establish and manage relationships (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCHPEP109) 1A, 1D, 2E, 4C
- Examine the influence of emotional responses on behaviour, relationships and health and wellbeing (VCHPEP110) 2B, 2F, 4A, 6B
- Recognise how media and important people in the community influence personal attitudes, beliefs, decisions and behaviours (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCHPEP111) 1A, 5C, 5D, 6A, 6C

Contributing to healthy and active communities
- Investigate the role of preventive health in promoting and maintaining health, safety and wellbeing for individuals and their communities (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCHPEP112) 5C
- Explore how participation in outdoor activities supports personal and community health and wellbeing and creates connections to the natural and built environment (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCHPEP113) INTRO, B
- Investigate how celebrating similarities and differences can strengthen communities (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCHPEP114) INTRO, B, 1C, 3B, 5B

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY

Recognition and expression of emotions
- Explore the links between their emotions and their behaviour (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCPSCSE025) INTRO A, 1D, 2B, 2C, 2E, 6B

Development of resilience
- Reflect on how personal strengths have assisted in achieving success at home, at school or in the community (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCPSCSE026) B, 1B, 2A, 5C, 7C, 8B, 8A
- Describe what it means to be confident, adaptable and persistent and why these attributes are important in dealing with new or challenging situations (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCPSCSE027) INTRO, A, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, 2F, 4B, 4C, 4D, 5C, 6B, 6E, 6F, 7C, 7E, 8B, 8A
- Identify the skills for working independently and describe their performance when undertaking independent tasks (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCPSCSE028) 1D, 2D, 3B, 6B, 6E, 6F, 7C
Social awareness and management

Relationships and diversity
- Explore and discuss behaviours that demonstrate sensitivity to individual, social and cultural differences (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCPSCSO029) 1B, 1D, 3B, 3C, 5C, 7C
- Define and recognise examples of stereotypes, discrimination and prejudice and discuss how they impact on the individual (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCPSCSO030) INTRO, C, 2F, 3A, 3B, 3C, 5C

Collaboration
- Identify the characteristics of an effective team and develop descriptions for particular roles including leadership, and describe both their own and their team’s performance when undertaking various roles (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCPSCSO032) 1A, 5A, 7C
- Describe the various causes of conflict and evaluate possible strategies to address conflict (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCPSCSO033) 3A, 5A, 5C, 5D, 6C

Year 7

CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship, diversity and identity
- Identify how values can promote cohesion within Australian society, including the values of freedom, respect, inclusion, civility, responsibility, compassion, equality and a ‘fair go’ (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCCCC026) 1D, 3A, 5A, 5B, 7A
- Explain how groups express their identities, including religious and cultural identity, and how this expression can influence their perceptions of others and others’ perception of them (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCCCC026) 1A, 6C, 7A

CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING

Questions and possibilities
- Consider how to approach and use questions that have different elements, including factual, temporal and conceptual elements (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCCCTQ032) 3A, 5A, 6C
- Suspend judgments temporarily and consider how preconceptions may limit ideas and alternatives (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCCCTQ033) 3A, 5A, 7C
- Synthesise information from multiple sources and use lateral thinking techniques to draw parallels between known and new solutions and ideas when creating original proposals and artefacts (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCCCTQ034) 1C, 6C

Meta-cognition
- Consider a range of strategies to represent ideas and explain and justify thinking processes to others (VCCCTM040) 1C, 1B, 6A
- Examine a range of learning strategies and how to select strategies that best meet the requirements of a task (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCCCTM040) 6A, 7C
- Consider how problems can be segmented into discrete stages, new knowledge synthesised during problem-solving and criteria used to assess emerging ideas (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCCCTM042) 1D, 2C, 3A, 6A, 6D

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

Data and information
- Manage, create and communicate interactive ideas, information and projects collaboratively online, taking safety and social contexts into account (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCDTDI039) 1D, 5D, 8B, 8A

ENGLISH

Literacy
Interpreting, analysing, evaluating
- Use comprehension strategies to interpret, analyse and synthesise ideas and information, critiquing ideas and issues from a variety of textual sources (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCELY378) 1C

Literature and context
- Identify and explore ideas and viewpoints about events, issues and characters represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCEL393) 2F, 3A, 3C, 6A, 7E

Responding to literature
- Reflect on ideas and opinions about characters, settings and events in literary texts, identifying areas of agreement and difference with others and justifying a point of view (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCEL394) 1D, 3A, 6A, 6C

Interacting with others
- Identify and discuss main ideas, concepts and points of view in spoken texts to evaluate qualities, using interaction skills when sharing interpretations or presenting ideas and information (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCELY395) 1D, 2F

ETHICAL CAPABILITY

Understanding concepts
- Explore the contested meaning of concepts including freedom, justice, and rights and responsibilities, and the extent to which they are and should be valued by different individuals and groups (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCECU014) B, 1D, 2A, 4E, 5A, 5C, 5D, 6B, 6C
Investigate why ethical principles may differ between people and groups, considering the influence of cultural norms, religion, world views and philosophical thought (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCECU015) 3B, 4D

Investigate criteria for determining the relative importance of matters of ethical concern (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCECU016) 1D, 2B, 5C, 5D, 6C

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Being healthy, safe and active

Investigate the impact of transition and change on identities (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCHPEP123) INTRO, A, 1A, 6B, 7D

Evaluate strategies to manage personal, physical and social changes that occur as they grow older (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCHPEP124) 1D, 2C, 6B, 7D

Examine barriers to seeking support and evaluate strategies to overcome these (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCHPEP125) 4A

Investigate and select strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCHPEP126) 2C, 2E, 3D, 4C, 6B

Communicating and interacting for health and wellbeing

Investigate the benefits of relationships and examine their impact on their own and others’ health and well being (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCHPEP127) 1A, 1D, 2F, 4A

Analyse factors that influence emotions, and develop strategies to demonstrate empathy and sensitivity (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCHPEP128) INTRO, B, 1A, 2B, 2F, 4A, 4C, 5C, 6B

Develop skills to evaluate health information and express health concerns (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCHPEP129) 3D, 5C, 5D

Contributing to healthy and active communities

Plan and use strategies and resources to enhance the health, safety and wellbeing of their communities (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCHPEP130) 1D, 2E, 4E, 5B, 5C

Plan and implement strategies for connecting to natural and built environments to promote the health and wellbeing of their communities (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCHPEP131) INTRO, B

Examine the benefits to individuals and communities of valuing diversity and promoting inclusivity (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCHPEP132) INTRO, B, 1C, 3C, 5B, 5C

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY

Recognition and expression of emotions

Describe how and why emotional responses may change in different contexts (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCPSCSE034) INTRO, C, 2B, 2C, 2E, 6B

Development of resilience

Assess personal strengths using feedback from peers, teachers and others and prioritise areas for improvement (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCPSCSE035) INTRO, A, 2B, 2B, 2C, 2D, 2E, 2F, 6F, 6G, 7C, 8B, 8A

Reflect on their effectiveness in working independently by identifying enablers and barriers to achieving goals (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCPSCSE036) 2D, 3B, 4C, 4D, 6E, 6F, 7C, 8B, 8A

Discuss the range of strategies that could be used to cope with difficult tasks or changing situations (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCPSCSE037) 1D, 2B, 2C, 2D, 2E, 2F, 3B, 4C, 4D, 5C, 6E, 6F

Social awareness and management

Relationships and diversity

Explore their personal values and beliefs and analyse how these values and beliefs might be different or similar to those of others (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCPSCSO038) 1A, 1B, 1D, 2F, 3A, 3C, 5C, 7C, 7E

Investigate human rights and discuss how these contribute to a cohesive community (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCPSCSO039) 3B, 3C, 5C, 6C

Recognise the impact of personal boundaries, intimacy, distribution of power and social and cultural norms and mores on the ways relationships are expressed (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCPSCSO040) INTRO, C, 1B, 1D, 3B, 5C, 6C

Collaboration

Perform in a variety of team roles and accept responsibility as a team member and team leader, assessing how well they support other members of the team (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCPSCSO041) 5A, 7C

Identify ways to be proactive in initiating strategies to prevent and/or accomplish positive resolutions to conflict (http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCPSCSO042) 3A, 5A, 5C, 5D, 6C, 7C
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