

Wellbeing and Positive Education



St Peter's College
ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA

At St Peter's College we always talk about the 'whole' boy. It is an expression of our belief that developing a boy's character is as important as fostering his intellect. After all, it is the whole boy who will eventually leave school and embark on life's journey. How well prepared he is may well determine his success in life and his ability to contribute as a citizen.

Today, a critical component of educating the 'whole' boy involves the implementation, across the School, of Positive Education classes. It may not be widely known but, in fact, St Peter's College today has more than 150 staff trained in the science of wellbeing, resilience and Positive Psychology. This staff capability, developed in partnership with the University of Pennsylvania, has put the School among a handful of global leaders in this important area of education.

The introduction of Wellbeing and the training of our staff has taken time but in 2013, more than 800 boys from ELC to Year 10 have commenced Positive Education classes conducted by 46 teachers, all of whom have been trained under internationally renowned experts Professor Martin Seligman and Dr Karen Reivich from the University of Pennsylvania. Our other partners in this important initiative have included:

- Professor Patrick McGorry AO
- Professor Jane Burns
- Associate Professor Lea Waters
- Dr Ilona Boniwell
- Professor Toni Noble

In effect, at St Peter's College we have developed a whole-school Wellbeing strategy in the same way that there might be a whole-school approach to numeracy or literacy.

It is our belief that everyone at St Peter's College is responsible for your son's wellbeing. For that reason, in partnership with the University of Pennsylvania, we have trained 150 staff over a six day period to equip them to help roll out the latest in Wellbeing, resilience and Positive Psychology. Dr Karen Reivich puts it this way:

"What we have done is that we have taken the science of Positive Psychology and Wellbeing and brought it to the lives of St Peter's College staff. We have been talking about the skills of mental toughness, character strengths and how to fully engage with the best of who you are."

The teaching is both explicit (*ie. classroom based skills*) and implicit (*supported in the curriculum and behaviour management*). Explicit lessons are given from ELC to Year 7 in Junior School and in Years 8 and 10 in Senior School. These programs include evidence based psychological approaches and teaching strategies.



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In summary:

Early Learning Centre (ELC) - Year 3

Social-emotional learning will be explored with boys in ELC through various activities. These activities will assist boys to recognise and manage emotions, demonstrate care for others, make responsible decisions and learn the skills of independence and resilience.

In the Kimochis® (*Kimochis® is the Japanese word for feelings*) Program, children will learn how to manage their feelings such as being mad, sad or frustrated. Each of these plus many other emotions are explored through class room reflection and communication.

Reception – Year 5

Bounce Back! is an Australian program written by Professor Toni Noble from the Australian Catholic University and Professor Helen McGrath from Deakin University. It is a program designed to teach children how to “bounce back” when they are frustrated or dealing with challenging circumstances.

Year 6

St Peter's College has developed a program to 'Bridge the gap' between where Bounce Back! finishes and Personal Wellbeing programs begin. This program has particular focus on service learning and the wellbeing of self and others.

Year 7

Personal Wellbeing lessons by Dr Ilona Boniwell is a program developed in the United Kingdom and addresses six streams: Positive Self, Positive Body, Positive Emotions, Positive Mindsets, Positive Direction and Positive Relationships. The program is designed to promote participation, open-mindedness and inquiry.

Year 8

As boys commence Senior School we deliver the Penn Resiliency Program (PRP) written by Professor Martin Seligman and his team. Based on more than 20 years of research this curriculum teaches cognitive behavioural and problem solving skills.

Year 10

The Strath Haven Positive Psychology Curriculum designed by Professor Martin Seligman and his team is an introduction to the science of Wellbeing and Positive Psychology and aims to foster gratitude. The program is based on strengths of character and giving students the opportunity to develop their non-signature strengths.

Leadership Development

In conjunction with the School Captain and Vice Captain, an annual Leadership Summit for School Captains has been introduced. This is a student run initiative that includes many of the central concepts from wellbeing science. Our School Captain and Vice Captain were able to seek input and advice from the Governor of South Australia, Associate Professor Lea Waters, Professor Martin Seligman and Professor David Cooperrider.

ELC - Year 3
Program: Kimochis® Program

Reception - Year 5
Program: Bounce Back!
Author/s: Toni Noble & Helen McGrath

Year 6
Program: “Bridge the gap”
Author/s: St Peter's College

Year 7
Program: Personal Wellbeing Lessons
Author/s: Ilona Boniwell

Year 8
Program: Penn Resiliency Program
Author/s: Professor Martin Seligman

Year 10
Program: Strath Haven Program
Author/s: Professor Martin Seligman