What is MBC doing to increase connectness?

- Friday morning pastoral care sessions designed to teach students SEWB skills and provide opportunities for students to mix with one another.
- The use of Heads of year to follow up pastoral care issues.
- The appointment of a School Psychologist and a Chaplain.
- The 11/8 peer mentoring program.
- Greater involvement of the Student Council in organizing events at the College.
- After-school tutoring.
- Welcoming exchange students from Japan and Europe.
- Opportunities for students to represent the College interstate and overseas eg Canberra trip, Melbourne volleyball tour, Europe trip, Bali mission trip.
- The creation of Sports and Arts captains to assist these areas within the College.
- Staff vs. students lunchtime activities such as table tennis and other sporting events.
- Camps in Year 9, 11 and for the Student Council.
- Social events for each year group once a term.
- Year 12 mentors.

How do we measure connectness?

The extent to which students reported feeling safe in the school.

According to Michael, there are 7 common parenting mistakes that reduce children’s resilience:

**Mistake 1:** Fight all their battles for them.

There is nothing wrong with going into bat when kids struggle or meet with difficulty inside or outside school but make sure this is the last option, not the first.

**Resolutions action 1:**

- Give kids the opportunity to develop their own resourcefulness.

**Mistake 2:** Make their problem your problem.

Sometimes parents can take too much responsibility for issues that are really up to the children to work out or decide.

**Resolutions action 2:**

- Make their problem, their problem.

What is Social and Emotional Well-being (SEWB)?

The NSW Commission for Children and Young People defined emotional well-being as:

“...children and young people's ability to relate to each other and their social environment, adapt to change and cope with adversity.”

Why is SEWB important?

Studies have shown that young people with positive SEWB will be less likely to use alcohol and illegal drugs, less likely to engage in violent or deviant behaviour, have a later sexual debut and be less likely to experience emotional distress and suicidal thoughts or attempts. There is also a strong relationship between positive SEWB and high academic achievement.

**Indicators of healthy SEWB**

- Be happy
- Have positive self-esteem
- Volunteer to make his/her community a better place
- Like being in school
- Get along with teachers
- Get along with classmates including those who are different
- Be interested in helping others
- Feel like he or she belongs

**Indicators of deficit SEWB**

The young person generally appears to:

- Make responsible choices to stay out of trouble
- Feel safe and free from harm
- Be positive about the future
- Participate in a wide range of activities
- Relate positively with family

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What does MBC do to enhance protective factors and minimise risk factors?

Two interrelated ideas are important to discuss:
1) Having an Social and Emotional Learning program in place
2) Increasing connection at the school

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

What is SEL?
The process through which children and adults develop the skills, attitudes and values necessary to understand and manage life tasks such as cognitive learning, forming relationships and adapting to the demands of growing up in today’s complex society.

What does an SEL program teach?
SEL programs provide systematic classroom instruction that enhances children’s capacity to recognise and manage their emotions, understand and appreciate the perspective of others, establish and attain goals, identify and solve problems and use a variety of interpersonal skills.

What SEL program does MBC use?
We are using an Australian program called, “You Can Do It” education. This program runs from primary school right through to the senior school. The program uses a Cognitive Behaviour Therapy approach that centres around the idea that our thinking can influence our emotions which can in turn influence our behaviour. Students are taught how to change their thinking (Habits of the Mind) and in so doing, learn to keep calm, work through challenges and to have a more positive approach to problem-solving. The program also teaches 5 keys to success:

Confidence, Persistence, Resilience, Getting Along and Organisation.

These keys help to strengthen students’ Social and Emotional Well-being and give them the skills they need to succeed at school and in life beyond school.

Connectness

What is connection?
School connection refers to the belief by students that adults in the school care about their learning and about them as individuals.

Why is connection important?
Research suggests that by high school, as many as 40-60% of students are disengaged from school. This disengagement worries educators and researchers who say that a sense of connection to school is vital to children’s and adolescents’ academic engagement. They also say that engagement to school can help protect youth from a variety of health threatening behaviours. According to researchers Adema M.Kilum and James P. Connell:

Researchers have found student engagement a robust predictor of student achievement and behaviour in school regardless of socioeconomic status. Students engaged in school are more likely to earn higher grades and test scores and have lower drop-out rates.”

How do we measure connection?

Accademic engagement: The extent to which students are motivated to learn and do well in school
Belonging: This includes being proud of one’s school, feeling respected, being able to talk to teachers and feeling like school staff are interested in the students
Discipline/fairness: The extent to which students perceive the rules of the school to be enforced fairly
Liking for school: Whether students looked forward to going to school
Extra-curricular activities: Participation in out-of-school activities
Student voice: This includes opportunities for students to participate in decision making
Peer relations: This includes the presence of friends and students’ feelings of loneliness

YCDI Education - An example of the Habits of Mind in action:

Resilience notion 4:

Mistake 4:

Expectations about success and achievement are important. Too low and kids will experience anxiety. Too high and kids can give up. Too much or at least pressure on them.

Mistake 5:

Resilient learners link success with effort. They don’t give up because they don’t like the teacher or when confronted with multi-step or more complex activities.

Mistake 6:

Don’t wait until they are teenagers to develop the skills of independent living. Start early and promote a broad skill set so that they can look after themselves.

Mistake 7:

Don’t routinely do for kids what they can do for themselves.

Mistake 8:

Overcoming challenges enables kids to grow and improve

Sometimes the manageable hardships that children experience such as a friend moving away, not being invited to a party or completing a difficult school project are fabulous learning opportunities. They help kids to stretch and grow. Dealing with them effectively also teaches kids they are capable of coping when they meet some of life’s curve balls.

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