

Case Study: St Benedict's Catholic College's Wellbeing Journey



St Benedict's is a Catholic, systemic co-educational College of approximately 120 staff and 1200 students in Years 7-12 in South West Sydney.



Year Level:
Secondary 7 - 12



Sector:
Catholic



Location:
Sydney, Australia



Stage in
Journey:
Established

THE WHY: COLLEGE GRADUATE STATEMENT

The College is guided by the Benedictine Values. A **student graduate** of St Benedict's Catholic College will embody a Love of God, a Love of Learning and a Love of Neighbour; helping them to flourish and enrich their lives and those around them.



Figure 1: St Benedict's College

THE HOW: UNDERPINNING METHODOLOGIES

At the heart of **St Benedict's Learning Framework** is St Benedict's vision, 'be my light' and three pillars that shape all aspects of education at the college:

- **Love of God:** nurturing faith and spiritual growth
- **Love of Learning:** fostering curiosity, resilience, and academic excellence
- **Love of Neighbour:** developing empathy, responsibility, and community engagement

Building on these pillars, the **Practice Principles** (grey ring, figure 2) articulate how teachers deliver curriculum and engage students. Each principle is supported by a theory of action, showing how effective teaching practices lead to improved student learning over time. They provide a shared language for teaching and learning and define what excellence looks like in a Catholic school, integrating faith development with curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment.



"We all
have
something
to strive
for"

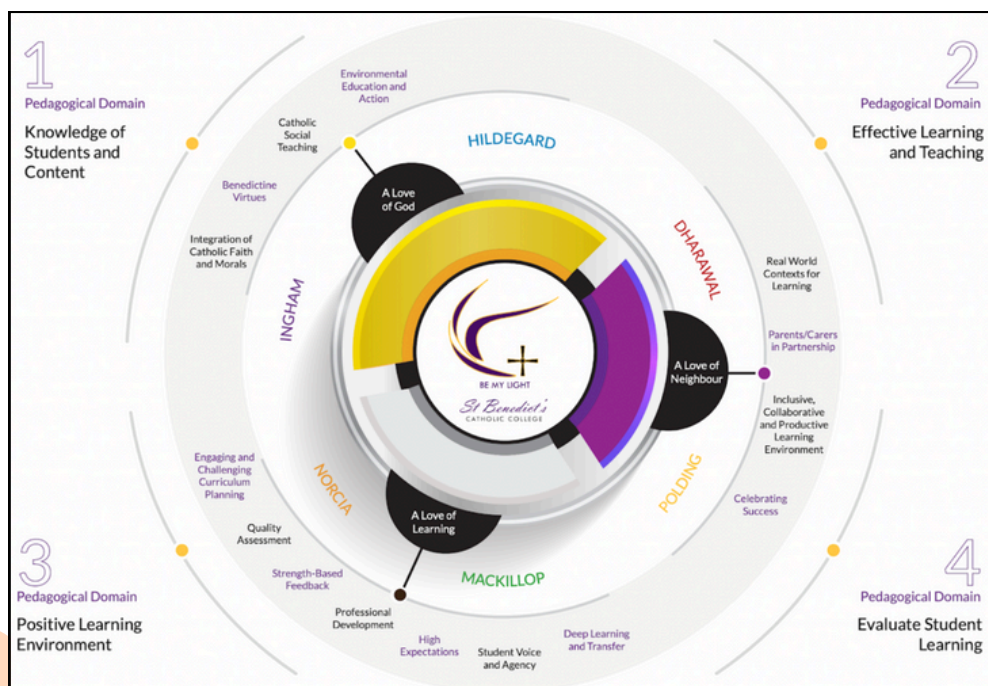


Figure 2: St Benedict's Learning Framework

The **Learning Framework** (domains 1-4) places student learning at the centre of planning and implementation. Teachers design engaging and challenging learning experiences through the deliberate integration of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment, ensuring every student is supported to flourish.

Through the houses, students are engaged in **STRIVE**, a student focused wellbeing program.

STRIVE MODEL

St Benedict's dictum: "A School of the Lord's Service.....should be a place where there is something to strive for and nothing to run from."

The STRIVE program, is a student focused program closely related to the [PERMA+ model](#):

- Promotes **academic, personal, and wellbeing growth** through individual care.
- Daily STRIVE classes with **regular coaching** to discuss strengths and set goals.
- Goals may be **academic, social, emotional, or community-based**.
- Students **track progress** in their Learning and Wellbeing Planner and on Compass.
- **Achievements** recognised through 'Strength spotting,' certificates, and badges.
- Builds **personal responsibility** and **celebrates personal bests**.



Figure 3: STRIVE model based on the PERMA+ wellbeing model

MEASUREMENTS



Hold fortnightly meetings between KLA and Year Coordinators to review successes and address areas for improvement.



Daily student check-ins via short survey i.e. PIVOT



Attendance and behaviour/ PB4L data



Gather student feedback via forums with Leader of Pedagogy and Innovation and Wellbeing Leader



Figure 4: Character Strengths Tree made visible around the school.

IMPACTS OF WELLBEING MODEL



Students are happier are more engaged



Stronger sense of belonging and improved attendance



Graduates highlight the lasting influence of the STRIVE program on their post-school lives



Enhanced academic outcomes e.g. NAPLAN, HSC results



Improved relationships between educators and students and amongst year groups



Educators and students share a common language grounded in wellbeing



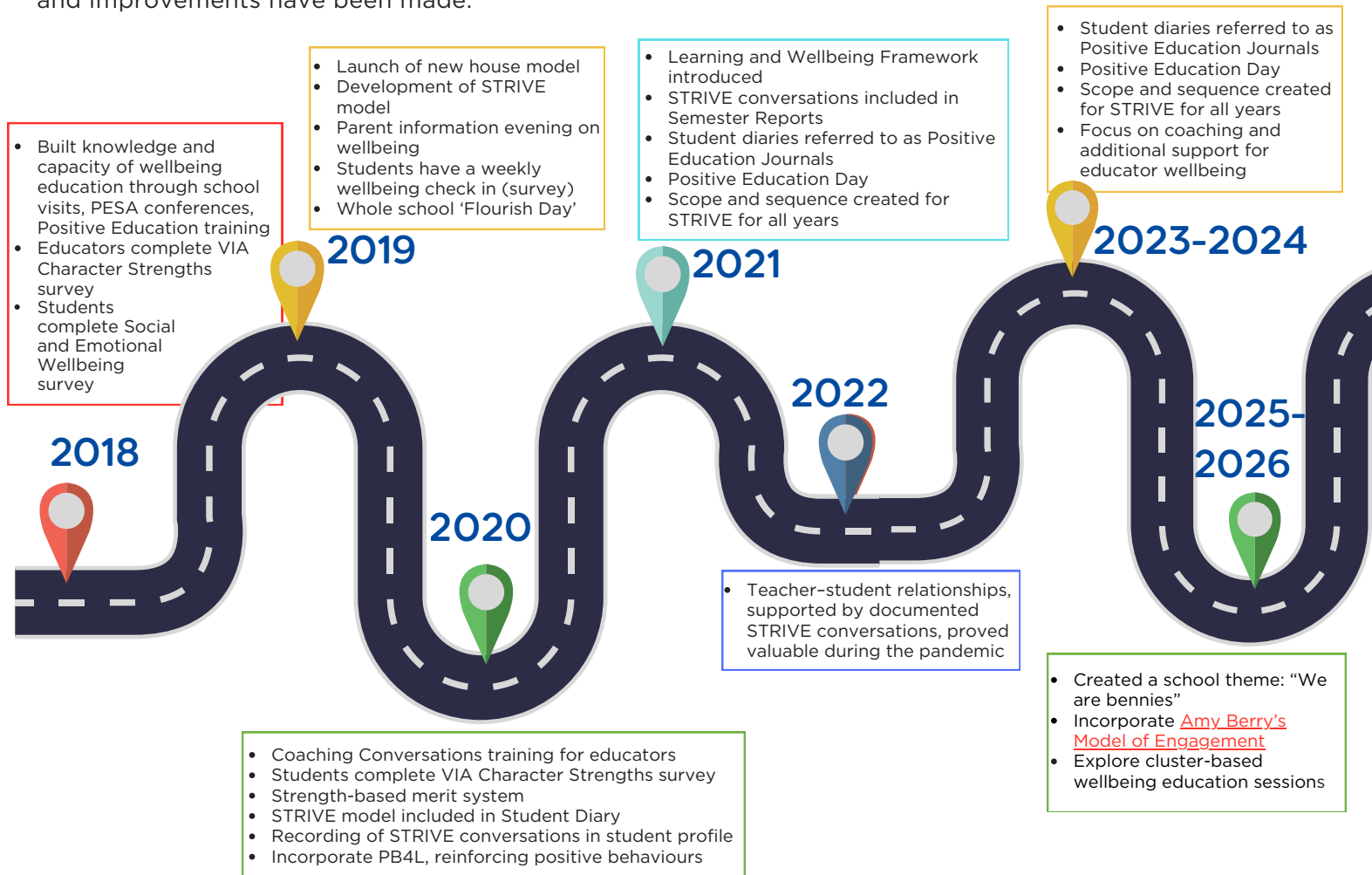
Improved positive behaviour e.g. increased merits and reduced incidents



Figure 5: Character strengths are visible around the school.

THE JOURNEY SO FAR

St Benedict's wellbeing journey began in 2018. Over the years, initiatives, learning and improvements have been made.



KEY LEARNINGS/ INSIGHTS/ CHALLENGES



Establish a Wellbeing Committee with staff from all levels to ensure diverse input in planning and decision-making.



Gather feedback through school forums and combined KLA/Year Coordinator meetings (e.g. STRIVE discussions).



Focus on meaningful measurement to avoid survey fatigue.



Support staff buy-in with ongoing professional learning; maintain consistency despite staff turnover.



Conduct an annual review and refinement of wellbeing programs in Terms 3 and 4, allowing flexibility for emerging needs.



The role of the Wellbeing Team is to support new educators, deliver professional learning, support students, and develop new initiatives. Balancing this with the demands of the day can be challenging.



Engage parents/carers through education sessions with external providers



"Invest in your character strengths so that you can give your best when your best is needed"

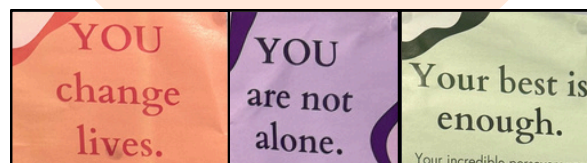
EXAMPLE WELLBEING INTERVENTIONS

St Benedict's have implemented a range of high-impact wellbeing initiatives, which are regularly reviewed and refined to ensure their relevance and effectiveness. A selection of these initiatives/ resources are outlined below.



Wellbeing is Made Visible

- Character strengths are displayed throughout the school
- Connection to country mural (left)
- Gratitude walls (right)
- Affirmations in staff room (below)



School Theme: "We are Bennies"

Symbolic art displaying this to create a sense of belonging and community.

Yearly Retreats/ Reflection Days For All Year Groups

Opportunity to educate and reflect on key aspects of wellbeing and involves spirituality and school Youth Minister.

Breakfast Club

To address the issue of many students skipping breakfast on school days, the Breakfast Club was established. Held twice a week, the program promotes cross-year collaboration among students.

Learning & Wellbeing Planners

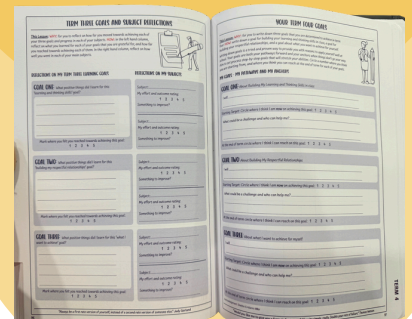
Provided to all students to aid organisation, assessment, goal setting, positive psychology interventions, STRIVE lessons and activities.

Letters from House Patrons

Students receive letters from their house patron focusing on the character strengths and virtues of their house patron.

Parent Breakfasts

Welcome Year 7 parents, Mother's and Father's Day are celebrated with parents.



THANK YOU

We extend our sincere gratitude to **Mr Michael Turner and Mr Steve Bulfon** for taking the time to share St Benedict's framework and insights with the PESA community. If you have any questions about the school's journey or resources, contact Steve Bulfon via: info@sbccdw.catholic.edu.au



Visit: <https://www.sbccdw.catholic.edu.au/>