Resilience in Schools

ISSUES BRIEF

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Catholic Schools NSW

Kathleen Burrow RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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Kathleen Burrow Research Institute

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Executive Summary

- Resilience in school students is an important and growing discussion in the school community. Evidence links resilience to positive academic and schooling outcomes, yet surveys reveal that three in ten Australian students report a low degree of resilience. Much research is being conducted on how to increase student resilience, and substantive investments are being made in programs to achieve this goal.
- The Catholic tradition offers a distinct perspective on resilience, where it is linked to the cultivation of virtue, including both the moral virtue of fortitude and the theological virtue of hope. This unique perspective has contributed to positive outcomes in resilience for Catholic school students, as illustrated across a range of research published recently. More generally, there is a well-established and international research base linking resilience and spirituality to greater resilience.
- In the school context, resilience typically refers to ***everyday resilience*** or ***academic buoyancy***, the ability of students to deal with everyday setbacks and challenges at school. It is thus applicable to all students, distinguishing it from more clinical definitions dealing with smaller groups of students facing major adversities (*"academic resilience"*). Resilience is nearly always measured through student self-reported surveys that ask students about their levels of hope, school-based pressures, anxiety, or other traits.
- Resilience can be fostered through *indirect* or *direct* methods. Indirect methods involve school and teaching practices that are not explicitly targeting student resilience, yet tend to boost it anyway – for example, quality teaching practices such as *high expectations* and *effective feedback*. The Catholic school tradition of virtue education would generally fall under this category.
- Direct methods usually refer to explicit resilience classwork, programs or *school-based interventions* (SBIs), typically targeting *all* students (rather than just those *at risk*). These are sometimes considered a sub-category of *universal mental health lessons*.
- The evidence on resilience SBIs is mixed. Meta-analyses show a shortage of high-quality studies, and a wide range of effectiveness across specific programs tested – some are highly effective, others are counterproductive, and many show only modest effects.
- A broader academic debate is in train on whether universal mental health lessons are sufficiently effective, or whether targeted, opt-in, indirect, or outside-of-school approaches are more appropriate.
- Resilience SBIs can be effective, yet educators should be discerning in commissioning resilience programs, favouring those with strong evidence bases. More broadly, educators should remain aware that indirect methods (including those within the Catholic school tradition) can also increase resilience, and that many school and teaching practices designed to boost student academic outcomes or wellbeing will often boost resilience as well.

Useful resources for scanning resilience programs, include ACER's Wellbeing Program Guide and the NSW Department of Education's Student Wellbeing external programs catalogue and accompanying checklist.

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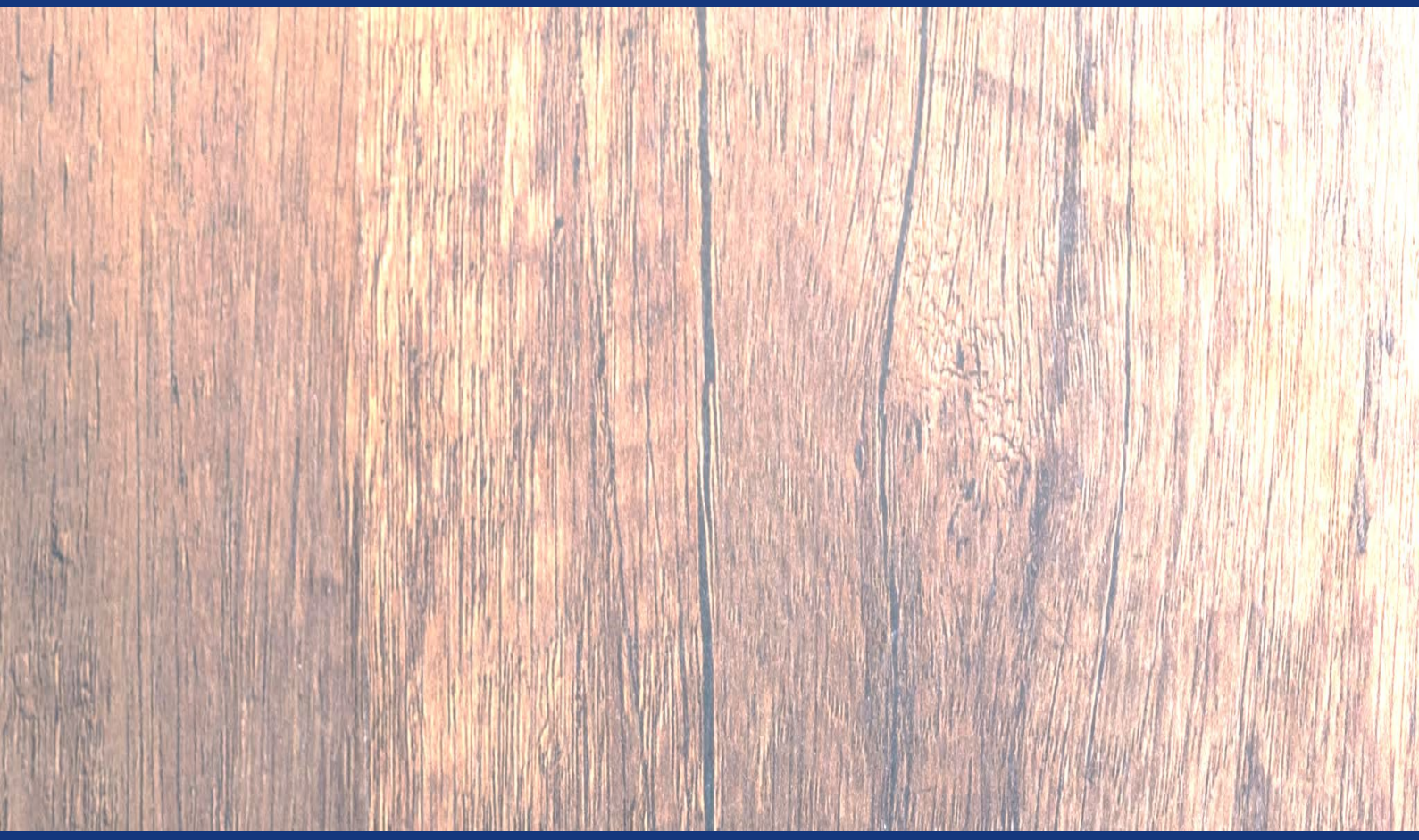


CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVES ON RESILIENCE

> *"In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."*
> John 16:33
>
> *"… we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts…"*
> Romans 5:3-5
>
> *"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."*
> Psalm 23:4

Resilience, the capacity to withstand and grow from challenges, holds a distinctive shape in the Catholic tradition. Catholic thought stewards a long-held perspective on resilience, one of particular relevance for young people and the challenges they face today.

The Bible offers vivid narratives of resilience. Job, despite his suffering, proclaims an unshakeable trust in God amid his trials: "*…the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away … blessed be the name of the Lord*."[1] St Paul, who endured shipwrecks and imprisonments, proclaims, "*We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed…"*[2] These examples present a distinctly Christian concept of resilience, where resilience is not merely a psychological skill, but an expression of hope grounded in virtue and sustained through grace. It is acquired not merely through lessons and experience, but through the cultivation of virtue, especially the moral virtue of *fortitude*, and the theological virtue of *hope*. As stated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*:

> Fortitude is the moral virtue that ensures **firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good**. It strengthens the resolve to resist temptations and to overcome obstacles in the moral life. The virtue of fortitude enables one to conquer fear, even fear of death, and to **face trials and persecutions**.[3]

A young person who develops fortitude, in the Catholic view, is learning to be resilient in the face of challenges while remaining oriented toward the good. Beyond this human virtue, Catholic theology locates the ultimate source of strength in theological virtues infused by God, chief among them, *hope:* "*…placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit…*".[4] The Catechism says of hope:

> **It keeps man from discouragement; it sustains him during times of abandonment;** it opens up his heart in expectation of eternal beatitude.[5]

From the vantage of this virtue, resilience is not a solitary struggle, or a naïve optimism for better material conditions, but a cooperation with grace. It is an expression of a hope that is impervious to all levels of material adversity because it trusts in God's faithful love.

RESILIENCE IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

In their focus on improving student resilience and wellbeing, Catholic schools aspire to draw on historical and distinctive Catholic perspectives, while also leveraging best practices from contemporary educational research.

Catholic education has historically emphasised the formation of the whole person - mind, body, and spirit. In the Catholic school tradition, character development and spiritual growth are integral to education, not add-ons. In this context, resilience is linked to the cultivation of virtue, and imparted through "*contemporary educational psychology … integrated with a sound Catholic anthropology*", as described by psychologist and theologian Sr Elena Marie Piteo OP.[6] [7]

Validation of this "both/and" perspective is recent Australian studies that show positive associations between Catholic schooling and student resilience and wellbeing:

- *Fewer depressive symptoms:* A 6-year longitudinal study of nearly 3,000 Victorian school students found "*Adolescents in Catholic schools reported significantly fewer symptoms of depression compared to those in Government and Independent schools*."[8]
- *Higher life satisfaction:* A team at Victoria University analysed the *Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia* (HILDA) survey data of 34,000 respondents, and found Catholic school attendees scored highest on life satisfaction and other wellbeing measures.[9] These findings were statistically significant, including after accounting for individual and family characteristics (age, gender, etc.).
- *Higher wellbeing:* The *NAB Education Insights Special Report*,[10] a survey of 400 Australian secondary school students, found Catholic school students scored highest on emotional and mental wellbeing, and lowest on loneliness.

More generally, this moral and spiritual perspective is linked to positive outcomes in resilience for young people. For example, a recent systematic review of 72 studies on religiosity and youth mental health concluded that:[11]

> Participation in religious and spiritual activities in adolescence and young adulthood can have short- to medium- term protective effects in depression and to a lesser extent in anxiety. Interventions based on spirituality, and psychotherapies that integrate these beliefs in the management of depression and anxiety in young people, may be beneficial.

The review's findings align with a well-established international evidence base: systematic reviews published over the past six years link religiosity and spirituality with greater resilience,[12] mental health,[13] [14] emotional regulation,[15] life satisfaction,[16] and lower anxiety.[17]

In the Australian context, among the enablers of implementing this perspective on resilience in practice, is the *National Student Wellbeing Program* (NSWP),[18] formerly the *National School Chaplaincy Program* (NSCP), in place since 2006 and now supporting chaplains and student wellbeing officers in over 3,000 school communities each year, including the Catholic school sector.

Overall, while patterns of student wellbeing across Catholic schools are complex and vary by context, they support the continued integration of distinctly Catholic perspectives into efforts to cultivate resilience among young people.

TYPES OF RESILIENCE

In the context of mental health and wellbeing, **resilience** refers to *"the ability to positively adapt to or recover from adverse experiences*."[19] Within the schooling context, distinctions are made between *academic* resilience and *everyday* resilience.

Academic resilience refers to a student's capacity to overcome acute or chronic adversity that is seen as a major threat to a student's educational development.

Everyday resilience, also known as **academic buoyancy,** refers to a student's capacity to manage everyday setbacks and challenges at school.

In essence, academic buoyancy is relevant for all students ("universal"), while academic resilience is relevant for only the small minority of students experiencing severe challenges ("targeted", "at-risk").

Most resilience programs in schools tend to deal with everyday resilience, and references forthwith to "resilience" will adopt this definition.

MEASURING RESILIENCE

Resilience is usually measured through student **self-reported surveys** ("trait-based" measurements), rather than through observational studies or knowledge quizzes ("ability-based" measurements).

For example, NSW public schools measure resilience using student responses to the annual *Tell Them From Me* (TTFM) survey.[20] Specifically, students rate themselves on a four-point scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" on each of four statements:

- "*I don't let study stress get on top of me*."
- "*I think I'm good at dealing with schoolwork pressures*."
- "I *don't let a bad mark affect my confidence*."
- "*I'm good at dealing with setbacks at school (for example, negative feedback on my work, poor results)."*

Similarly, a national study of teenage resilience, utilising the *Longitudinal Study of Australian Children* dataset, used a composite of self-reports from respondents, "*including their ability to adapt to change, how well they can achieve goals despite obstacles and how easily they are discouraged by failure*".[21]

EFFECTS OF RESILIENCE

Substantive evidence associates student resilience with positive schooling outcomes. For example, a 2022 study of 71,000 NSW school students found "*academic buoyancy predicted students' motivation, engagement, and perceptions of school support 1 year later*".[22] A 2022 study of Australian school students found "*academic buoyancy was positively associated with gains in students' academic skills and engagement*".[23]

While a distinct construct, resilience tends to overlap with other measures of student wellbeing. For example, students with high resilience also tend to have a high "sense of belonging" as well.[24] More broadly, in school settings, resilience is often cited as one of many wellbeing concepts (for example, school system "wellbeing frameworks" tend to cite resilience alongside other measures of wellbeing), rather than receiving standalone attention.[25] [26] Similarly, the Commonwealth Department of Education operate a webpage of *Student Resilience and Wellbeing Resources*,[27] grouping the two constructs. Thus, it is worth noting that efforts or research on student resilience will usually be relevant to efforts or research on other aspects of student wellbeing (for example, mental health, sense of belonging, symptoms of anxiety or depression), and vice versa.

RESILIENCE AMONG AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL STUDENTS

The 2024 *Resilience Survey*[28] of nearly 150,000 Australian school students found "*two-thirds of Australian students reported a moderate to high degree of resilience*", [29] but also that:

> *Around 3 in 10 students (30.8%) were in the high-risk categories for resilience … with 6.8% reporting low hope and struggling in life.*

In this context, resilience was measured as a composite score of student responses to questions about *hopefulness* and *life satisfaction*.

Figure 1: Extract from 2024 Resilience Survey

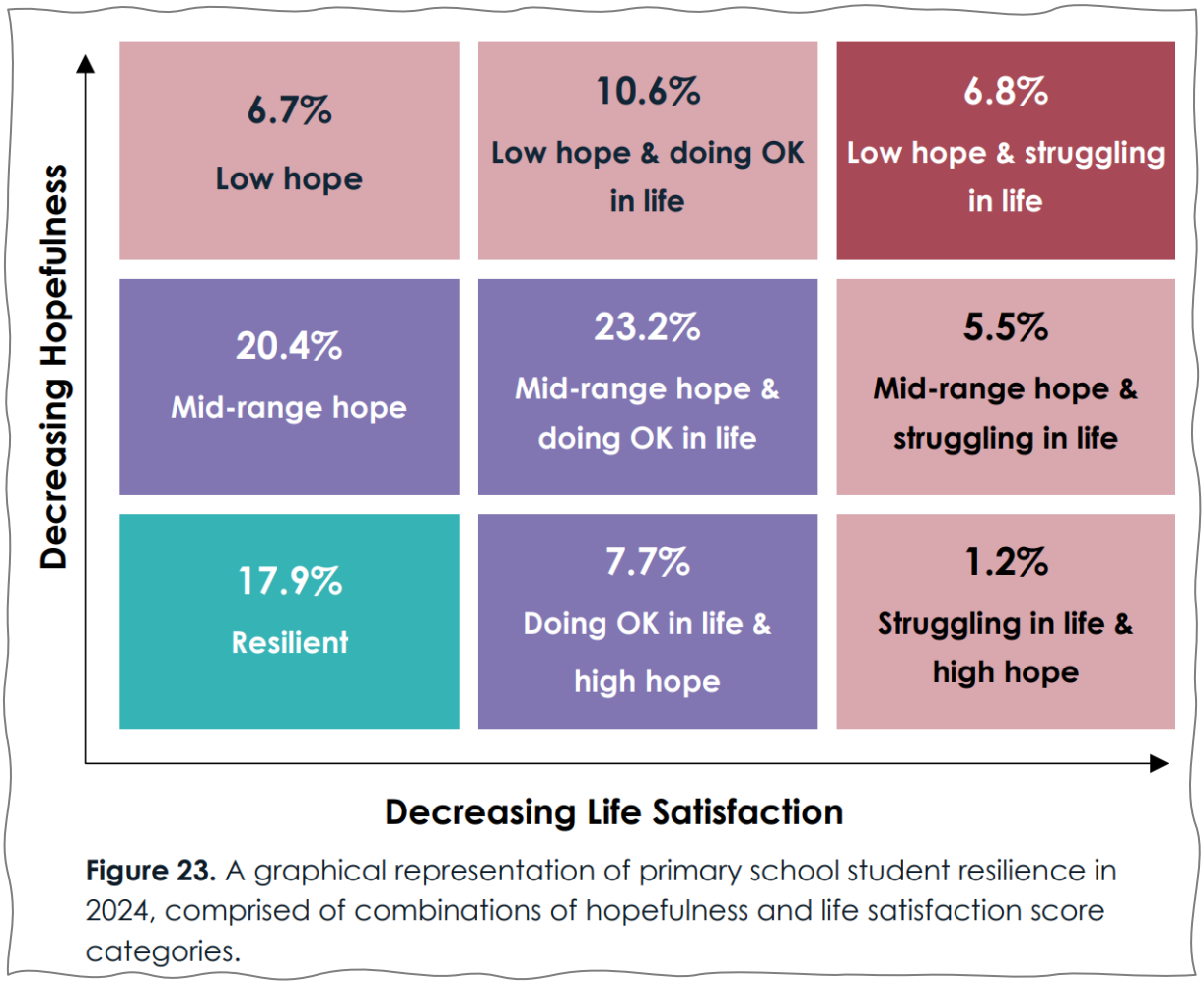


Figure 23. A graphical representation of primary school student resilience in 2024, comprised of combinations of hopefulness and life satisfaction score categories.

More broadly, the researchers found more than one in four primary students and nearly one in three secondary students experienced high levels of depression and/or anxiety symptoms. However, the researchers also found that these trends had stabilised or slightly improved following previous declines over time.[30] Relatedly, the *National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing* (2020-22) found almost one in three people (32%) aged 16-24 years had an anxiety disorder, more than double the share in 2007 (15%).[31] [32]

Also of note, a consistent finding across research is that everyday resilience is higher among boys than girls. A 2025 meta-analysis found "*the average effect of gender on academic buoyancy was statistically significant and small-to-medium in size*".[33]

BOOSTING RESILIENCE: DIRECT VS INDIRECT METHODS

> *"Schools can foster everyday resilience **directly** by working with students, or **indirectly** by developing fair and supportive classroom and school climates which promote a sense of belonging."*
>
> Centre for Education Statistics & Evaluation,
> *Everyday resilience – what works best in practice*[34]

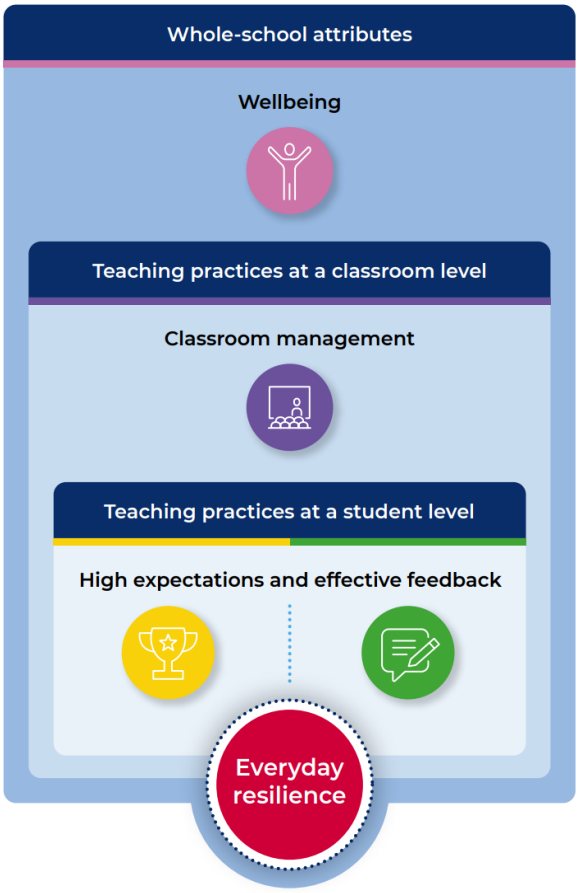
School efforts to foster resilience in their students can be broadly classified as either *indirect* or *direct*.

Indirect methods generally involve teaching practices and school policies that are expected to build resilience, *even if that is not necessarily their primary or explicit purpose*. For example, the *Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation* (CESE), a hub within the NSW Department of Education, recommends eight "*quality teaching practices*" to support student learning and outcomes.[35] The practice of virtue education in Catholic schooling would also generally fall under this category.

In their paper *Everyday resilience - what works best in practice*, CESE notes that four of these practices are also known to boost everyday resilience (*High Expectations*, *Effective Feedback*, *Classroom Management*, *Wellbeing*).[36] Similarly, a NSW study of 71,000 school students found "*schools with higher average classroom management and school belonging tended to also have higher average academic buoyancy 1 year later.*"[37]

Thus, **improved student resilience is often a byproduct of efforts to improve general student outcomes**.

Figure 2: Extract from CESE resilience guide



Direct methods to foster student resilience typically refer to explicit *school-based interventions* (SBIs), programs, or content within the formal curriculum. For example, resilience is a frequent part of the content of the *Personal Development, Health and Physical Education* (PDHPE) syllabi in the NSW curriculum. More explicitly, some NSW public schools offer an 8-week unit titled *Being resilient is brilliant*.[38] Many schools commission external providers to supply resilience classes or other school programs. For example, the Australian Council of Education Research's *Wellbeing Program Guide* lists 139 programs under the "*Resilience and Optimism*" category.[39] The NSW Department of Education's *Student Wellbeing external programs catalogue*[40] lists 27 resilience programs that have been "*quality assured*".[41] Many of these programs are widespread across schools; for example, *The Resilience Project* runs its programs across 1,150 schools.[42]

Figure 3: Screenshot of ACER Wellbeing Program Guide

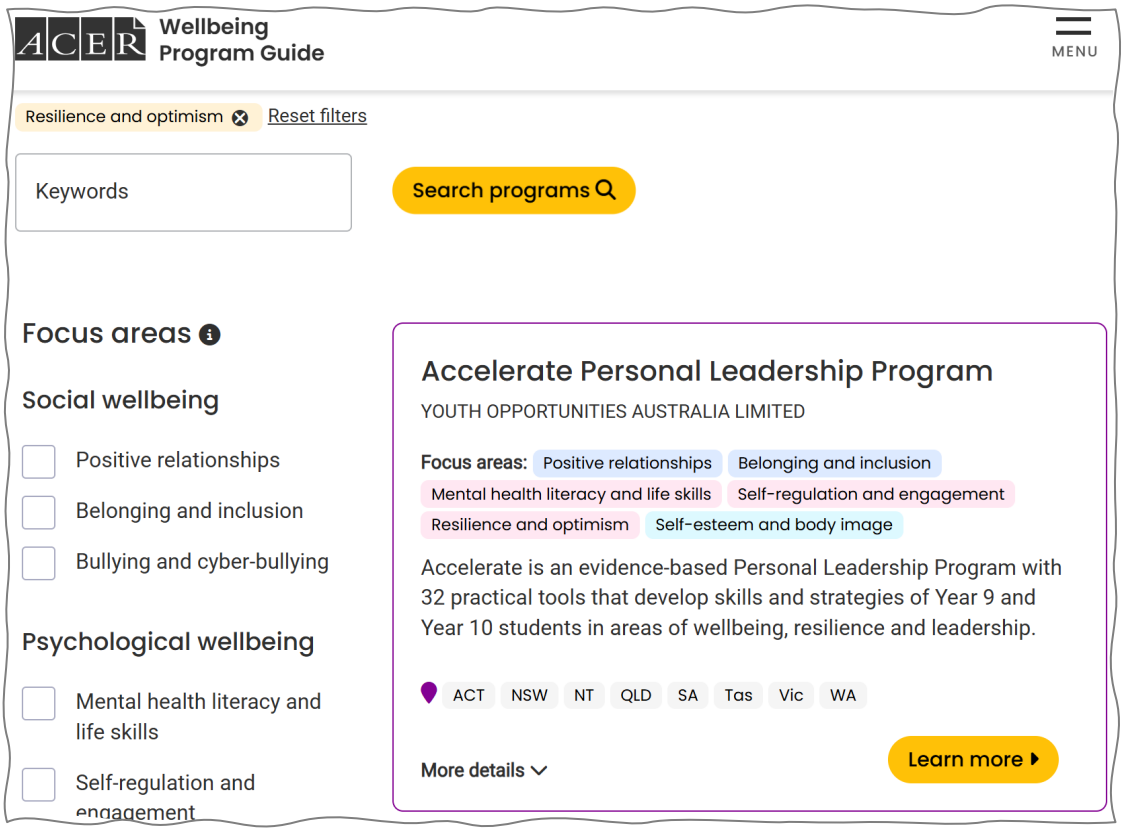


Figure 4: Screenshot of NSW Student Wellbeing external programs catalogue

Programs and providers

This list of commercially available external wellbeing programs featured in the Student Wellbeing external programs catalogue is current as at 24 July 2025. In addition, the catalogue includes a number of wellbeing programs provided to schools free of charge through partnership arrangements with the department.

Provider	Program	Behaviour	Resilience	Sense of belonging	Resp. rel. & consent
Act for Kids Ltd	Learn to Be Safe with Emmy and Friends				✓
Australian Red Cross Society	Mental Health Matters		✓		
Australian Rugby League Commission Ltd	League Stars Inspire			✓	
Batyr Australia	batyr @school		✓		
Be Unstoppable Coaching	Unstoppable Kids		✓		
Body Safety Australia	N@ked Truths				✓

RESILIENCE IN THE FORMAL CURRICULUM

Separate from programs from external providers, resilience is represented in the formal curriculum in NSW. Resilience is included at multiple points throughout each stage of the syllabi for *Personal Development, Health and Physical Education* (PDHPE), and is explicitly referenced in this educational area's rationale:

> *Through studying PDHPE, students develop, evaluate and apply a broad range of skills to build and maintain a sense of connection, identity,* ***resilience*** *and respectful relationships.*

For example, in the **K-6 syllabus** for PDHPE, the content describes various ways to "*build* ***resilience***", including "*connection to others, persistence, problem-solving and help-seeking*", "*emotional regulation",* "*support networks*", and a "*positive mindset*".[43]

Similarly, in the **7-10 syllabus**, the content on "*Applying self-management and interpersonal skills to movement"* aims to teach students to "*Apply strategies to enhance* ***resilience*** *and perseverance during physical activity to manage challenging or unfamiliar movements*."[44]

At the senior secondary level, the 11-12 syllabus for *Health and Movement Science* includes resilience as an aspect of the student's research on health-related issues for young people:[45]

- Analyse how the skills for strengthening the individual can protect and enhance the health and wellbeing of themselves and others using the health issue researched

  Including:
  - self-efficacy
  - health literacy
  - help-seeking behaviours
  - problem-solving
  - resilience
  - coping strategies
  - sense of purpose
  - ethical behaviour
  - connectedness

"A CONTESTED DEBATE"

Resilience programs in schools are not a controversy-free space, occupying as they do a place within the broader category of school-wide mental health interventions. In recent times, a barrage of academic critiques has been levelled, arguing that they are often ineffective or even counterproductive.

In a recent and much-publicised journal article,[46] [47] two psychologists at the University of Oxford, Jack Andrews and Lucy Foulkes, argued that **universal mental-health lessons in schools** (this category includes most resilience SBIs) are often ineffective and inappropriate, contending "*… universal school-based prevention is less effective than targeted approaches, often leads to null or unsustained positive effects, has the potential to elicit negative effects and is not well liked by young people themselves*." The authors cite several unsuccessful, large-scale trials of *"universal school-based mental health interventions*", including an Australian RCT, Teeson *et al.* (2024),[48] of more than 6,000 students that failed to demonstrate any long-term reduction in mental disorder instances. Andrews & Foulkes further posit that *"… many young people in each classroom already meet the criteria for a mental disorder, meaning that prevention approaches may not be appropriate or effective for this group*." They conclude by recommending:

> … the field should move towards alternative school-based approaches with a stronger evidence base, including
> - (1) **targeted** interventions that focus on smaller groups of individuals at risk of specific problems,
> - (2) **opt-in** interventions which are more in line with adolescents' desire for autonomy,
> - (3) **indirect** interventions which focus on adjacent risk factors, such as bullying and
> - (4) approaches which increase access to treatment **outside of school**.

Similarly, in Australia, Peter McEvoy, a professor of clinical psychology, has noted that two recent UK trials of resilience SBIs, one adopting a mindfulness approach[49] and the other an emotional regulation approach,[50] both showed ineffective or even harmful results. He argues:

> Schools need to allocate their scarce resources to children most in need of practical and emotional support in non-stigmatising ways, rather than universal approaches. Most children will develop resilience without intervention programs.[51]

Notwithstanding these contributions, the "debate" remains unsettled and retains advocates on both sides. For instance, a 2024 paper by a team of Australian researchers[52] acknowledges recent trials "*failed to demonstrate reduction in mental disorder incidence long term*" yet argue "*against abandoning universal school-based mental health prevention*", instead advocating "*programme adaptation based on feedback, embracing proportionate universalism and exploring alternative prevention strategies without discarding universal prevention*".

Nevertheless, the authors warn:

> *As schools face increasing pressure to address student mental health, many programmes are currently being implemented with little to low-quality evidence.*

This ongoing debate is no longer confined to academic forums, but has even reached general-audience non-fiction books. A prominent example is Abigail Shrier's *Bad Therapy* (2024),[53] which critiques current practices of social-emotional learning in U.S. schools, arguing that "*many of these interventions … target the healthy, inadvertently exacerbating kids' worry, sadness, and feelings of*

incapacity".[54] With new books appearing on both sides of the debate,[55] [56] [57] the discussion is likely to remain in the cultural mainstream for years to come.

Case Study: 'Growth Mindset'

A relevant case study for evidence-gathering on school-based interventions is the **growth mindset**. There has long been solid evidence that a growth mindset is associated with stronger academic outcomes,[58] but less research on how effectively it can be taught.

A recent meta-analysis of growth mindset interventions, assessing 24 randomised control trials, found most interventions "*exhibit null or very small effect sizes*".[59] [60]

> Given these findings, we found evidence that suggest that growth mindset interventions targeted for school-age students, do not have much or any relevant impact in academic achievement. It is therefore not advisable for schools, school districts or governments to allocate significant time or resources to the implementation of growth mindset interventions for school-age students, as the anticipated outcomes are likely to be either null or very modest.

While not necessarily the 'last word' on the subject (for example, one earlier meta-analysis found a positive effect on academic outcomes[61]), this review highlights an important and cautionary truth: when aspiring to impart a particular trait in school students, it is not enough to show the trait is associated with *positive* outcomes, it must also be shown the trait can be *taught* or imparted *effectively*.

META-ANALYSES OF RESILIENCE SCHOOL-BASED INTERVENTIONS

There have been numerous peer-reviewed studies on resilience school-based interventions (SBIs), and while there is wide diversity in the types of approaches and specific programs scrutinised, some consistent themes emerge when the body of research is viewed in aggregate.

Systematic reviews and meta-analyses of randomised controlled trials are considered the 'gold standard' of research, a way to review and synthesise findings from the highest-quality studies. In recent years, three notable such reviews have been conducted on resilience SBIs:

- Cai *et al.* 2025 (analysing 21 studies),[62]
- Llistosella *et al.* 2023 (16 studies),[63] and
- Pinto *et al.* 2021 (13 studies).[64]

Several themes emerge across these studies, summarised (and necessarily simplified) below.

The average resilience SBI works, but modestly. Average gains are statistically significant but small. Two of the three reviews showed effect sizes considered "*small*" (less than 0.5[65]); the standardised mean differences (SMDs) were 0.17 in Cai *et al.,* 0.48 in Pinto *et al.,* and 0.58 in Llistosella *et al*.

Some resilience SBIs are counterproductive. All reviews found a wide range of effect sizes, and while some individual trials showed large positive effect sizes, a substantial minority showed *negative* effects – that is, the programs made student resilience *worse*. Across the three meta-analyses, the share of trials that were "counterproductive" varied from 21% to 29%.

Evidence quality is mixed. Each review appraised every included trial for "risk of bias" (note this term refers to methodology reliability, not author impartiality). Cai *et al.* classified 5% of trials as "high risk", and a further 71% as having "some concerns". Llistosella *et al.* and Pinto *et al.* assessed risk of bias across seven standard domains; every study was high risk in at least one domain, most commonly

"blinding" (keeping participants and personnel unaware of who was in the control/treatment group).

The reviews highlight inherent limitations of research on the subject; for example, "blinding" is difficult for whole-class or curriculum-level interventions, especially when outcomes are self-reported.

The 'Gold Standard' of Research Quality

Like most areas of research in the social sciences, the various peer-reviewed research on school-based interventions can often appear contradictory or inconclusive. A useful and common way to draw clarity is to order the research by quality of evidence, and focus on those on the highest tier, namely ***systematic reviews and meta-analyses of randomised controlled trials*** (RCTs) -- the 'gold standard' of research.

This form of research combines *quality* (RCTs, the highest-quality but also highest-cost form of research) with *quantity* (an exhaustive search and synthesis of all published RCTs on the subject). It is the leading method to gauge where the preponderance of available evidence falls on a given research question.

Figure 5: Evidence hierarchy[66] [67]

AUSTRALIAN STUDIES ON RESILIENCE SCHOOL-BASED INTERVENTIONS

Within Australia, there is a shortage of high-quality studies on resilience SBIs. For example, in CESE's 2022 guide on academic buoyancy,[68] the two RCTs cited to "*demonstrate that everyday resilience can be increased through interventions*" are both from overseas:

- Puolakanaho *et al.* (2019),[69] a Finnish study of a web-based acceptance & commitment therapy program that showed a "*small but significant*" increase in academic buoyancy, and
- Putwain *et al.* (2019), [70] an English study of a wellbeing program that found a "*short-term*" increase in academic buoyancy.

Across the three reviews of resilience SBIs - Cai et al., Llistosella et al., and Pinto et al. - only four trials were included from Australia. Of these, two showed statistically significant improvements, while two did not:

- Moore *et al.* (2021)[71] found that a martial arts training program increased student resilience (although the effects were no longer significant when measured again at 12-week follow-up).
- Lee & Stewart (2013) [72] found that a "health-promoting school" model increased student resilience after 18 months of implementation.
- Johnstone et al. (2020)[73] found neither a Behavioural Activation (BA) program nor an Emotional Regulation (ER) program showed any increase in student resilience, either at post-program or at 6-month follow-up.
- Stapleton *et al.* (2017)[74] found "*no significant changes were observed in* [student] *measures of self-esteem or resilience*" following an Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) program.

Another high-profile study was Balasooriya *et al.* (2025),[75] which evaluated *The Resilience Project School Partnership Program*, a popular resilience program. The large-scale study, encompassing 40,000 secondary students, found no benefits in student outcomes during the first 2-3 years of implementation, but some benefits (for example, higher coping skills, lower anxiety) from 6 years of implementation onwards. The researchers concluded:

> *…whole-school interventions may require **long-term investment** to realise their potential and highlight **implementation duration** as an important consideration for future evaluations of whole-school interventions.*

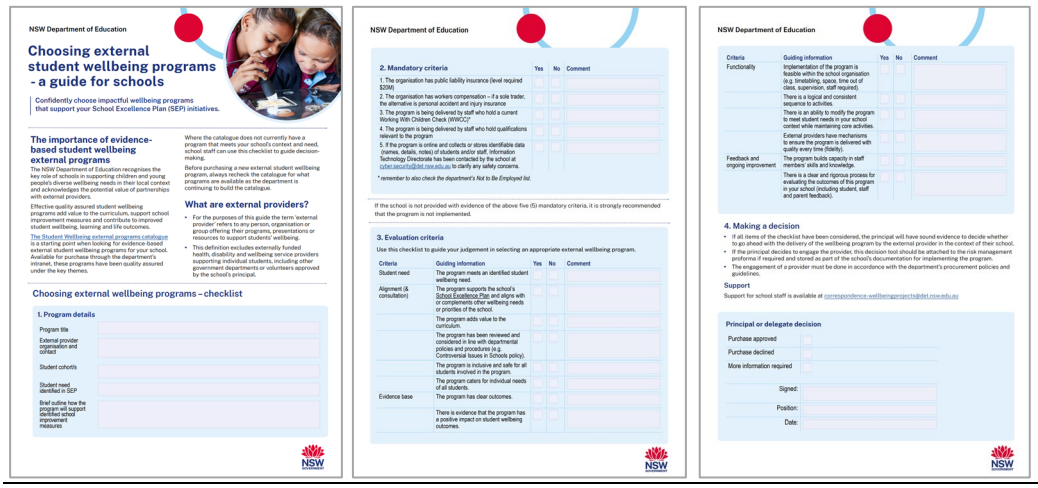
FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION REGARDING RESILIENCE SBIS

Resilience SBIs (as distinguished from resilience content in parts of the formal NSW curriculum) can be effective and valuable ways to improve student wellbeing. Their impact depends on careful selection and high-quality implementation; a poor fit or weak delivery may limit benefits or even lead to counterproductive effects. Where feasible, school leaders should consider the following factors, among others, when commissioning resilience programs.

- **Evidence for Approach:** What is the evidence base for the underlying approach (for example, mindfulness, CBT) within a school context?
- **Evidence for Program:** Has this specific program been evaluated? If so, what level of effectiveness was found?
- **Quality of Evidence**: Where does the evidence sit on the "evidence hierarchy"? Have there been any randomised controlled trials?
- **Sustainability:** Based on available evidence, how long until the benefits of the program are expected to come to fruition? And how long are these benefits expected to last?
- **Universal vs At-Risk:** Is the program designed for all students or for those identified as at higher risk? And is this targeting appropriate for our setting?
- **Monitoring & Evaluation:** Is there a practical way to assess effectiveness? For instance, is it feasible to measure student resilience (or related outcomes) before and after the intervention?
- **Opportunity Costs & Alternatives:** Have we also considered other, indirect ways to boost student resilience, and how do these compare?

For some programs, relevant information on these aspects may be available in The NSW Department of Education's *Student Wellbeing external programs catalogue*[76] or the Australian Council of Education Research's *Wellbeing Program Guide* [77] A further useful resource is the NSW Department of Education's checklist, *Choosing external student wellbeing programs - a guide for schools.*[78]

Figure 6: 'Choosing external student wellbeing programs - a guide for schools'



While resilience SBIs can be highly effective in improving student resilience, they are not the only way. Indirect methods focused on improving student learning outcomes (for example, classroom management, effective feedback) or virtue education (for example, the Catholic perspective on fortitude and hope) will usually improve student resilience as well. Student resilience is a goal common to all schools, but the best path depends on each school's context, priorities, and community.

Kathleen Burrow
RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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About Kathleen Burrow

Kathleen Burrow (1899-1987) had a strong presence in the history of Catholic education and the Catholic Church in the 20th century. From humble beginnings in NSW, she was educated at St Matthew's Convent of Mercy School in Mudgee and attended The University of Sydney. As a founding member of the University Catholic Women's Association, Kathleen began teaching, focusing on physical education in schools and identifying a particular need for it in orphanages and disadvantaged schools. She would go on to establish the Graham-Burrow School of Physical Education.

Kathleen Burrow embodied much of what it means to be a Catholic educator, holding a deep faith while being a caring mentor, a principled advocate, and a superb communicator and organiser who promoted social harmony among various groups. She was President of the Legion of Catholic Women and the Australian Council of Catholic Women. Her outstanding example makes her an appropriate patron of the Kathleen Burrow Research Institute.

Endnotes

[1] Job 1:21
[2] 2 Corinthians 4:8-9
[3] Catechism of the Catholic Church §1808 https://www.vatican.va/content/catechism/en/part_three/section_one/chapter_one/article_7/i_the_human_virtues.html
[4] Catechism of the Catholic Church §1817 https://www.vatican.va/content/catechism/en/part_three/section_one/chapter_one/article_7/ii_the_theological_virtues.html
[5] Catechism of the Catholic Church §1818 https://www.vatican.va/content/catechism/en/part_three/section_one/chapter_one/article_7/ii_the_theological_virtues.html
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