



## MEDIA RELEASE

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May 2019

### **Wellesley invites community to hear expert psychologist discuss enhancing emotional wellbeing for children**

The mental health of our youth is a primary concern to all New Zealanders. In response to these concerns, Wellesley, an independent primary and intermediate school for boys in Wellington, is taking the lead by hosting a free information evening open to all, featuring an expert educational psychologist who will be sharing what parents can do to enhance emotional resilience in their children. It is on June 6th at Wellesley in Days Bay, Eastbourne at 7pm.

“In this age of digital disruption, increasing pressures on children, and less time away from technology, mental and physical wellbeing must be central to how we approach education,” says Brendan Pitman, Principal at Wellesley. “At Wellesley, we take our role in building wellbeing among the boys very seriously.

“Latest Mental Health Foundation statistics show one in five young Kiwis will be affected by depression or anxiety by the age of 19. Teaching boys how to understand themselves and others, and giving them strategies to cope with setbacks, is critical to their educational foundation. To aide building resilience at a young age we need to help them understand and manage their emotions,” says Mr. Pitman.

During Wellesley’s Insights evening on ‘Enhancing Emotional Resilience’, educational psychologist, Kathryn Berkett from ENGAGE, will be talking about the latest research in neuroscience and its impact on wellbeing and resilience. Wellesley’s Wellness Team will also share their holistic approach and will be available to discuss programmes put in place to support students.

Steve Girvan, Deputy Principal and Head of Pastoral Care at Wellesley, says that it is fantastic to have someone of Kathryn’s experience share with the community ways to help young people.

“We all need practical tools to navigate today’s world - kids and adults alike. But it is essential we ensure children have a solid foundation and are emotionally as well as mentally ready to transition to secondary school and beyond,” says Mr. Girvan.

Realising the need to support students with more than a traditional primary and intermediate education, Wellesley incorporated emotional wellbeing programmes into the curriculum at the start of 2018. These underpin the school’s values of risk taking in learning; respect and empathy; and perseverance for personal bests.

There are three strands to the Wellesley Wellbeing Programme, each building on the other, and rolled out gradually throughout the year groups.

In Years 0-3 it is delivered as an interactive classroom programme with a focus on self-awareness, healthy relationships and emotional resilience.

When the boys reach Year 4, they transition to the New Zealand developed and researched mindfulness programme, *Pause, Breathe, Smile*. This programme is continued throughout Years 5 and 6.

When the boys enter their final two years at Wellesley in intermediate, they start looking outside themselves towards giving back to those around them and the community through the *Wellesley Service Award* – bronze, silver and gold levels.

The aim of the Award is to encourage and acknowledge the students as they engage in acts of service at school, at home, and in the community. At Year 7 and 8 the boys also explore *VIA character strengths* - characteristics that define what's best about people. The boys identify their character strengths through a survey and the school provides opportunities for them to develop and use their strengths. There are 24 character strengths including leadership, teamwork, creativity, humour, and kindness. When used effectively, character strengths can enhance health and overall wellbeing and resilience.

All of the year levels at Wellesley have implemented the international anti-bullying programme *KiVa*. This was developed in Finland and has been shown to prevent bullying and to tackle cases of bullying effectively using self-reflection, prevention, intervention, and monitoring strategies.

“We believe it is important to proactively enhance the wellbeing of our students and build their ability to bounce back and move forward after a set-back,” says Wellesley Chaplain, Libby Bloomfield. “Recent findings from scientific research have highlighted the benefits associated with higher levels of wellbeing – more creative thinking, a greater capacity for resilience, stronger relationships, and improved academic outcomes. It is now known that the skills to enhance wellbeing and build resilience can be effectively taught.

“Dr. Lucy Hone from the NZ Institute of Wellbeing and Resilience is an expert in this field and believes the skills to enhance wellbeing and build resilience can be taught. Wellesley believes primary school is the perfect time for this journey to begin and ‘wellbeing’ has become part of foundational learning,” says Mrs. Bloomfield.

**Wellesley Insights ‘Enhancing Emotional Resilience’** will be on June 6th from 7pm in the Centennial Hall at Wellesley in Days Bay. There is no charge. Please RSVP to [karen@wellesley.school.nz](mailto:karen@wellesley.school.nz)

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**Further information:**

**Engage**

ENGAGE is a company that specialises in delivering neuroscience information to schools, public and private organisations. Kathryn has a Masters in Educational Psychology, is certified as a Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics practitioner, and has extensive experience in this area. She has worked and trained, nationally and internationally, on the subject of neuroscience for over sixteen years, delivering training to a variety of organisations including Primary and Secondary Teachers; the Police; Child Youth and Family;

Prisons; Kindergartens; Parents; Recreation Groups; Mental Health Professionals; Politicians; and Corporates. For more information on Kathryn and ENGAGE, visit [www.engagetraining.co.nz](http://www.engagetraining.co.nz).

### **About Wellesley**

In an unrivalled setting between the bush and the sea, Wellesley College is filled with opportunities, grounded in nurturing relationships and values, so that every boy is empowered to discover his best.

We believe no boy is the same and we offer our boys every opportunity, academically, physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually, to discover their personal passions and strengths. Our aim is to infuse our ākongā, students, with a spirit of inquiry and to give them the skills they need to become lifelong learners. Focusing on creativity and building the ability to think independently, we give every boy every chance to discover what's out there, and what's in them. Visit <http://www.wellesley.school.nz>

### **Wellbeing and resilience at Wellesley**

Promoting wellbeing and resilience is an important focus at Wellesley. With increasing involvement in extra-curricular activities, higher performance expectations, and less down-time away from technology, children are facing a greater level of stressors in their lives which can negatively affect their wellbeing.

We believe it is important to proactively build the ability to bounce back and move forward after a setback. Recent findings from scientific research have highlighted the benefits associated with higher levels of wellbeing – more creative thinking, a greater capacity for resilience, stronger relationships and improved academic outcomes.

The Wellesley Wellbeing and Resilience Team is made up of Chévon O'Leary, Head of Religious Education, ([Chevon@wellesley.school.nz](mailto:Chevon@wellesley.school.nz)), Steve Girvan, Deputy Principal (Pastoral Care) ( [Steve@wellesley.school.nz](mailto:Steve@wellesley.school.nz)), Libby Bloomfield, Pastoral Care and Chaplaincy ([Chaplain@wellesley.school.nz](mailto:Chaplain@wellesley.school.nz))

- Junior Syndicate Programme is adapted from several sources (details available if required)
- Pause, Breathe, Smile Programme. Provider: Mindfulness Education Group, NZ. Middle Syndicate teachers receive PBS Educator Training. <https://mindfulnesseducation.nz/pause-breathe-smile/>
- Wellesley Service Award is developed for Wellesley based on St Kentigern School Service Award
- VIA Character Strengths. Provider: VIA Institute on Character <http://www.viacharacter.org/www/>
- KiVa. Provider: KiVa NZ <http://www.kivaprogram.net/nz>
- Wellesley Wellbeing Programme- <https://www.wellesley.school.nz/about/why-wellesley/values/>

### **Wellesley Insights**

Each term Wellesley hosts a Wellesley Insights evening whereby parents and/or the community are invited to attend a presentation and Q&A by an expert in a subject which is particularly topical for parents and families with young children. Previous topics have been: concussion, digital safety, Family Zone, child psychology.

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**DISCOVER YOUR BEST**

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