

Welcoming families to KidsMatter Primary

What does it mean to be a KidsMatter Primary school?

We know that mental health and wellbeing is very important for children's learning and development. Children who are mentally healthy learn better, benefit from life experiences and have stronger relationships with their families, friends and school staff. KidsMatter Primary helps schools to support children's mental health and wellbeing by bringing together the important people in a child's life: their family, their school and the wider school community. KidsMatter Primary recognises that the members of a child's family are the most important people in their life, so the initiative provides information for families and encourages schools to involve families in planning and activities and provide opportunities for them to get to know each other.

What does KidsMatter Primary look like at school?

The way that KidsMatter Primary works varies from school to school. KidsMatter Primary is not a program that schools work through from beginning to end. It's more about developing a positive school community and culture where support for children's mental health is promoted and the whole school community is involved in planning and strategies to support children's mental health and wellbeing.

As mentioned in the video, schools work through four components on their KidsMatter journey. Each component focuses on a different area that research has shown to be important for children's mental health and wellbeing.

Component 1: Positive school community

Helps schools to focus on building a positive school community where children, families and school staff feel like they belong, have a voice and can contribute to the school.

Component 2: Social and emotional learning for students

Focuses on teaching students the social and emotional skills they need to develop friendships with peers and build strong relationships with their families and school staff. Component 2 also focuses on helping children to understand and respond appropriately to their own emotions and those of others.

Component 3: Working with parents and carers

Focuses on helping families and schools work together to support children's mental health and wellbeing.

Component 4: Helping children with mental health difficulties

Helps schools to focus on assisting children who are experiencing mental health difficulties and their families.



How does KidsMatter Primary help the whole school community?

It's not just children who benefit from KidsMatter Primary. The whole school community benefits when schools make mental health and wellbeing a priority.

KidsMatter Primary helps families too. KidsMatter Primary schools build positive relationships with families so that they can work together to support children. A KidsMatter Primary school is also a place where families can connect with each other and seek support for their children's mental health and wellbeing.



Can I be involved in KidsMatter at my child's school?

Families are an important part of KidsMatter Primary and can be involved in many different ways. For example, planning and participating in school activities and providing valuable information about your child's mental health and wellbeing to school staff. These questions might be useful when talking to your child's school about KidsMatter Primary:

- Where is the school up to in its KidsMatter journey?
- How can I become involved in KidsMatter Primary at the school?
- Is there a parent representative on the Action Team? If so, who are they?
- How will my child be involved in KidsMatter Primary?
- What will KidsMatter Primary look like and how will it work at the school?
- Who can I talk to about my child if I have any concerns about their mental health and wellbeing?

The KidsMatter journey in a school

One of the first things that a school does when it starts KidsMatter Primary is to put together an Action Team that is responsible for coordinating KidsMatter Primary at the school. The Action Team consists of a diverse group of members of the school community, including families, who are encouraged to contribute to KidsMatter Primary at their school.

The Action Team will guide the school through a review of each of the four components. This involves surveying school staff and families to find out what's most important to them when it comes to supporting children's mental health and wellbeing. This information is then used to develop the school's KidsMatter Primary Action Plan, which includes strategies for sustained improvement over time.

Other resources

KidsMatter has a collection of online resources about children's mental health and wellbeing that parents and carers might find useful, including information about family relationships, managing children's behaviour and friendships in childhood:

www.kidsmatter.edu.au/families



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