



Information sheet:

Injecting student voice into positive behaviour approaches

School is a child or young person's place and space. It's where their young lives are evolving. A sense of connectedness to school is a protective factor for young people. Students who are connected to school have improved longer-term health and wellbeing and educational outcomes.

- You can enhance their sense of belonging and connectedness by providing them with opportunities to have meaningful input into school decisions, and to show leadership at school.
- These opportunities also help students to develop social competencies.

Ways of working

Ensure individual students can share their perspective

- Children and young people who exhibit challenging behaviour can feel different, incapable and inadequate, lonely, left out, not listened to, not understood, frustrated, angry, picked on, sad, rejected, and not treated equally and fairly. They need a way to express what's going on for them. They need someone who understands.

Ask students for their views on health and wellbeing

- Involve students in school self-reviews or on school or student health teams. Students can consult with their peers about ways to promote health and wellbeing at school.
- Put in place processes that enable students to connect with and support their peers in different year levels (eg, through mentoring programmes for young leaders, peer, buddy or tuakana-teina approaches, whānau or house groupings).

Encourage student leadership in ways that build relationships and connection to school

- Offer students a range of leadership opportunities (eg, student council reps, class leaders, senior leaders).
- Support students to take lead roles and have input into co-curricula activities, such as kapa haka, cultural groups, clubs, enviro-schools or sport, physical activity, dance or drama.
- Support students to lead school activities, such as running assemblies, hosting visitors or inducting and looking after new students.
- Ensure all students have at least one extra-curricula interest or leadership opportunity.

Increase student involvement in health promotion through the curriculum programme

- Plan health or integrated topics so that students can design health promotion inquiries to improve aspects of school or classroom life.

Address student conflicts or social concerns in a way that builds students' strategies and skills

- Adopt a whole-school focus on positive youth development or social problem-solving approaches to support students to resolve conflicts in ways that build relationships.

Tip

Remember to record student engagements and share discussions and findings across the school.