



Department of  
Education

**Shaping the future**

# Principal health and wellbeing strategy 2023-2027



# Acknowledgement

**We acknowledge and respect the traditional custodians of the lands and waters on which our students live and are educated throughout Western Australia.**

We acknowledge and understand that Elders, parents, families and communities are the first educators of their children and we recognise and value the cultures and strengths that Aboriginal children bring to the classroom. Aboriginal people have a long tradition of teaching and learning through sharing their connections with country, community, language and culture, and through their oral histories, stories and lived experiences that are passed from generation to generation.

We recognise and value the learning that Aboriginal children bring with them from their homes and communities into the classroom.

The word Aboriginal is taken to mean Aboriginal, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and Indigenous. When referring to individuals, use the term Aboriginal person.

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# Message from the Director General

**Our Western Australian public schools are led by passionate, dedicated individuals, who, together with their highly skilled staff are driven to deliver the high quality education our students deserve.**

Our principals play a vital role in creating positive and nurturing environments for students and staff, and shaping the future through education.

The diverse contexts within which our principals operate is continually changing. Our principals face daily complexities and challenges as they strive to ensure quality education is delivered in an environment of care, support and growth.

The Principal health and wellbeing strategy 2023-2027 recognises the reality of a principal's role and the many demands experienced in schools, their broader communities and within a system context.

The focus of the strategy is to provide a clear direction and targeted initiatives. It aims to support principals to be safe, healthy and well through strong support and connectedness across schools, regions and central services.

The Principal health and wellbeing strategy is centred around three pillars: trusted to lead; supported to lead; and connected to lead. Key elements are designed to:

- prioritise health and wellbeing, highlighting a culture of self-care
- build personal and professional wellbeing knowledge, skills and capabilities across leadership career stages
- enhance support at local, regional and system levels
- strengthen collegiate engagement; building trust, confidence and capability.

The strategy is underpinned by the Staff health and wellbeing strategy that includes initiatives applicable to all staff.

The hallmark of leadership excellence is the ability to create school cultures that support quality teaching and foster positive wellbeing in all students, staff and the broader community.

Through this strategy, our commitment is to ensure the system focuses its efforts on working with and supporting our principals to enable their health and wellbeing to thrive.



Lisa Rodgers  
Director General



# Our health and wellbeing vision

Our vision is a wellbeing culture that builds, supports and sustains the health, safety and wellbeing of principals, enabling them to flourish.

## Guiding principles

- The health, safety and wellbeing of principals is central to thriving school communities.
- Principals' knowledge and expertise is recognised, acknowledged and valued.
- Health and wellbeing needs evolve and change across the leadership journey.
- Individual and collective responsibility and effort builds health and wellbeing.
- Meaningful connection, collaborations and partnerships are core to personal and professional wellbeing.

## Our values

The values in our Code of Conduct: **Integrity, Equity, Voice, Truth-telling, Teamwork, Care, and Learning**; underpin this strategy, reflecting how our behaviour and actions contribute to individual wellbeing and creating a wellbeing culture.

# The wellbeing approach

**Wellbeing is our ability to effectively function and perform across key dimensions: physical, psychological, social, spiritual and environmental. It is a way of being, doing and thinking; individually and collectively.**

Well people make up well teams creating well organisations. These three layers make up the 'Wellbeing Ecosystem', with school leadership a fundamental part of a healthy ecosystem.

It recognises that principals shape their wellbeing and the wellbeing of those around them through a dual focus of self-care and staff-care:

- **Self-care:** paying attention and protecting one's own wellbeing
- **Staff-care:** leading and supporting the wellbeing of others



Prioritising self-care; recognising a principal's health and wellbeing is vital to effective leadership, creates a strong individual wellbeing foundation fostering a wellbeing culture that impacts staff.

# Principal health and wellbeing model

The health and wellbeing model is centred around three pillars: trusted to lead; supported to lead; and connected to lead, that emerged through forums with principals.

The individual is at the centre of the model, recognising wellbeing is influenced by the balance between demands, resources (internal and external) and how responsibilities are undertaken.

The Principal health and wellbeing strategy focuses on enhancing individual and collective wellbeing through initiatives that enable improvement across the five wellbeing dimensions through a strengthened culture of trust, support and connection.

## Trusted to lead

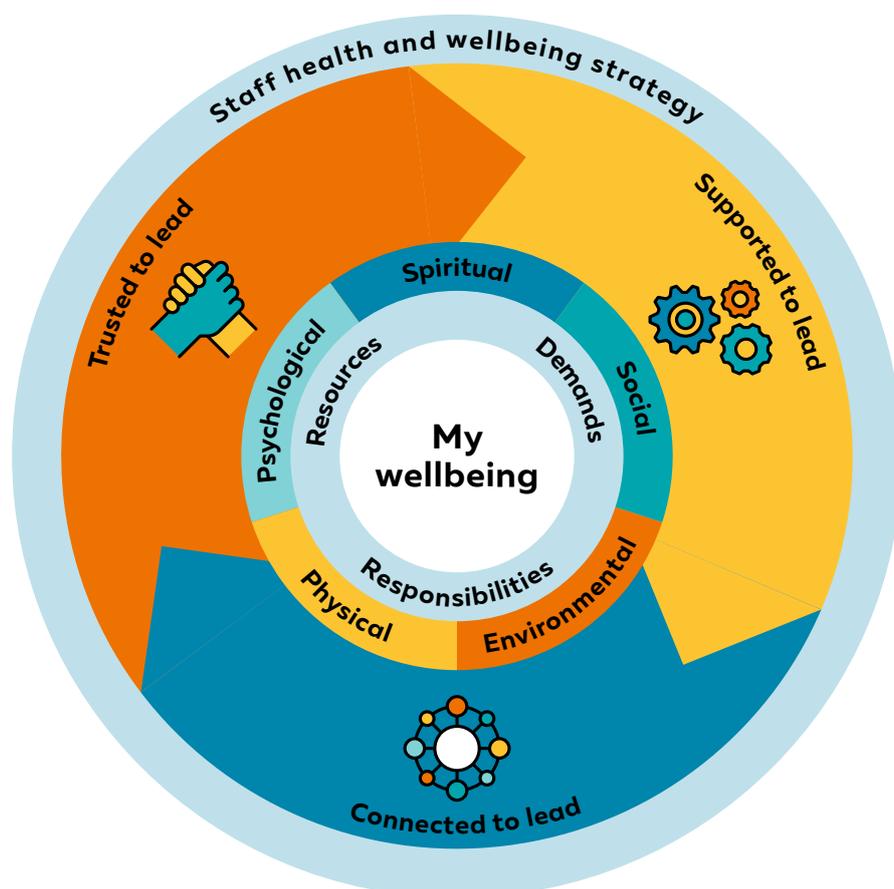
Principals act with autonomy, strengthened and empowered by the system. Leadership knowledge, expertise and capacity is recognised respected and valued.

## Supported to lead

Principals are enabled through policies, processes, systems and services that reflect health and wellbeing principles and practice.

## Connected to lead

Principals are connected, with wellbeing strengthened through quality collegiate relationships and collaborative partnerships.



# Health and wellbeing priorities 2023-2027

The priorities in this strategy are in addition to and supported by initiatives in the Staff health and wellbeing strategy 2023-2027.



## Trusted to lead

Principals act with autonomy, strengthened and empowered by the system. Leadership knowledge, expertise and capacity is recognised respected and valued.

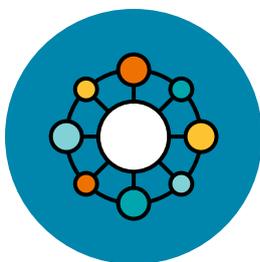
- Build wellbeing leadership through individual and collective action and practice.
- Support wellbeing through self-directed strategies aligned to individual needs.
- Foster a culture of self-care and staff-care through wellbeing practice.
- Strengthen system policies, processes and mechanisms reflecting principal expertise and autonomy.



## Supported to lead

Principals are enabled through policies, processes, systems and services that reflect health and wellbeing principles and practice.

- Identify opportunities to streamline principal administrative requirements.
- Establish individual and collective support systems for principals, aligned to leadership career stages and school and community contexts.
- Enhance leadership self-care and staff-care through professional learning, resources and supports that build wellbeing awareness, knowledge, skills and positive practice.
- Improve support for principals' physical and psychological safety.



## Connected to lead

Principals are connected, with wellbeing strengthened through quality collegiate relationships and collaborative partnerships.

- Build a wellbeing community of practice, sharing leadership expertise, fostering connection and collaboration.
- Strengthen networks, enhancing collegiate engagement and learning.
- Enhance principals' connectedness to system information and supports.
- Facilitate stakeholder engagement and partnerships to inform and support wellbeing needs.

# Health and wellbeing initiatives 2023-2025

These initiatives complement existing health, safety and wellbeing programs for principals delivered through central and regional services and recognise professional associations, networks, unions and other partners' contribution.

## Trusted to lead

- Develop and implement a Principal Self-Reflection Suite with online tools and resources supporting self-reflection, growth and development.
- Implement a Complaints Management Framework, providing clarity around management of complaints to the Department, with support through toolkits, resources and training.
- Targeted and tailored training for principals in leading employee performance and development.
- Share resources promoting respectful school community relationships, set clear expectations for respectful communications with schools and provide an escalation process for schools to manage complex parent behaviour and inappropriate communications.
- Review principal induction policy and Newly Appointed Principal and Aspiring Principal Preparation programs, to ensure a focus on principal health and wellbeing and building safe and supportive work cultures.
- Promote work, health and safety professional learning for principals with a focus on psychological safety and building a safety culture in schools.

## Supported to lead

- Collegiate principals support principals to lead school improvement and enhance connectedness across the system.
- Encourage school principals to access the support of a coach in areas including individual wellbeing and career enhancement.
- Review principal professional learning programs to include self-care and staff-care.
- A suite of professional learning to support principals through career transition stages e.g. Leading School Improvement, Leading Cultures of Teaching Excellence and Happy, Healthy Principals.
- Implement tailored professional learning and mentoring programs for aspirant and newly appointed principals.

### Connected to lead

- Implement a principal health and wellbeing resource hub with toolkits and appropriate resources.
- Incorporate regional and remote principal needs and community and cultural contexts into professional learning and support programs.
- Consider recommendations from the review of principal networks and opportunities to strengthen principal wellbeing.
- Work Health and Safety Advisory Committee to report on corporate risks.

### What success looks like

- Improved principal health, safety and wellbeing awareness, knowledge and practice.
- Health and wellbeing embedded into principal professional learning and support programs at each career stage.
- Health and wellbeing information, resources and professional learning applied to principal self-care and care of staff.
- Collegiate support programs (local and system) improve professional knowledge, capability and connectedness.
- Principal induction builds capacity and effective support, increasing personal and professional confidence.
- Principal networks strengthened, with increased collaboration and support.



# Implementing our strategy and measuring its impact

**The success of the Principal health and wellbeing strategy relies on the contribution and commitment of principals locally and in collaboration with regional and central services.**

A collaborative process with principals will inform the development and implementation of initiatives.

Supporting this work will be:

- Relevant stakeholders will be informed during the development and implementation of initiatives as appropriate.
- A Work, Health and Safety Advisory Committee monitoring and reporting on implementation of the new work, health and safety framework.

This strategy will evolve over time, responding to principal needs, initiative monitoring and evaluation, local and system data and information and ongoing feedback.

The Department will seek to understand the impact of this strategy as it is delivered, and in its totality, following 2027.



# Shaping the future

