



THE  
**WELLBEING**  
**COMPASS.**

The background features a gradient from orange at the top to purple at the bottom. A large, faint circle is centered on the page. Inside this circle, there are several concentric circles and arcs. A dotted line forms a larger circle around the central text. Two solid white triangles point towards the center from the left and right sides. The text is centered within the innermost circle.

**GUIDING SCHOOLS FROM  
BUSINESS TO EFFECTIVENESS  
AND FROM INTENTION TO IMPACT**

# THE WELLBEING COMPASS

School leaders care deeply about the wellbeing of their community, yet often wonder whether their many efforts are truly making a difference. ***The Wellbeing Compass*** is a robust, evidence-informed insight engine comprising a suite of partner surveys, designed to help school leaders see, understand, and strengthen their whole-school approach to wellbeing, and make clear, data-informed decisions with confidence.

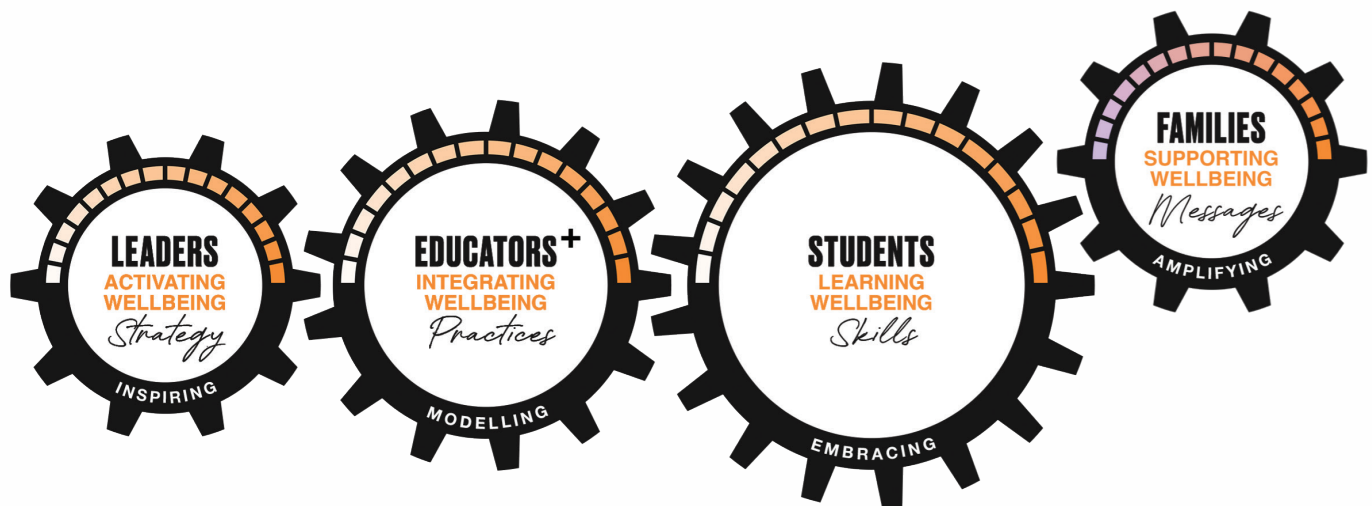
Built on **The Wellbeing Distillery's School Wellbeing Operating System (swOS)** – and co-designed with **The University of Adelaide's WiLD Lab** and **Resilient Youth Australia** – it provides both rigour and relevance. By listening to every voice – leaders, educators, students, families, and support staff – the Wellbeing Compass reveals what's working, where challenges lie, and where to focus next for the greatest impact. It enables schools to align people, practices, and priorities, directing limited resources strategically and driving system-driven, sustainable impact across the whole community.

## Three questions for school leaders:

1. Has your school been investing time, energy, and resources into wellbeing?
2. Do you know whether those efforts are achieving the impact you hope for?
3. Would you value clear, evidence-informed insights showing exactly where to focus next for the greatest return?



# THE SCHOOL WELLBEING OPERATING SYSTEM (swOS)



The School Wellbeing Operating System (swOS) is the strategic framework underpinning the Wellbeing Compass. It empowers schools to embed wellbeing across leadership, teaching, learning, and family engagement.

Just as every complex organisation needs an operating system to coordinate its moving parts, schools need one to connect people, processes, and purpose. swOS brings clarity, consistency, and coherence – turning wellbeing from something schools do occasionally into something they live intentionally – every day, by everyone.

## OUR RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

We gratefully acknowledge the research expertise and collaboration of **The University of Adelaide** and **Resilient Youth Australia** in the development of The Wellbeing Compass

Led by The Wellbeing Distillery, this partnership combines our strategic leadership in school wellbeing with our partners' academic rigour and data science expertise – ensuring that every insight is both practical and evidence-informed.



# INTRODUCING THE WELLBEING COMPASS SURVEY SUITE

The Wellbeing Compass Survey Suite is a comprehensive measurement system designed to assess the health, alignment, and effectiveness of a school's wellbeing culture across its four core partners: leaders, educators and support staff, students, and families. Rather than measuring wellbeing in isolation, the survey suite captures how wellbeing is experienced by each group and how it is activated and transmitted through the system. Each survey is built on the same core wellbeing framework, enabling schools to gain a coherent, connected view of their wellbeing ecosystem.

What makes this survey suite truly distinctive is its ability to reveal not only how individuals are feeling and functioning, but how effectively wellbeing messages, behaviours, and expectations are being modelled, reinforced, and received. By measuring a series of overlapping "Transmission Points", the survey identifies the degree of alignment and connection between partners. This reveals whether wellbeing practices and expectations are being clearly communicated, modelled, and reinforced across all partner groups.

In doing so, the Wellbeing Compass Survey Suite moves beyond traditional satisfaction or climate surveys. It operates as a strategic diagnostic tool that gives leaders clarity, confidence, and actionable insight — highlighting strengths to build on, risks to mitigate, and opportunities to align people, practices, and purpose. With a consistent structure, evidence-based domains, and a strong theoretical foundation, the survey suite brings precision to wellbeing measurement and positions wellbeing as a strategic function that can be led, evaluated, and improved over time.

Each survey contains approximately 50 questions and takes around 15 minutes to complete. Responses are anonymous and reported only in aggregate to protect confidentiality, with results used solely to inform strategic decision-making. Most items are rated on a 4-point Likert Scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree), ensuring clarity of response and actionable insights.

- Leadership Team survey (47 questions)
- Educators and Support staff survey (56 questions)
- Primary (Year 3-6) & Secondary (Year 7-12) Students survey (48 questions)
- Families – Parents & Carers survey (46 questions)



# PARTNER SURVEY OVERVIEWS

## LEADERSHIP TEAM SURVEY - *Leading with wellbeing for wellbeing*

Designed to capture the extent to which wellbeing is experienced in leadership practice within the school, and to assess leaders' confidence and capability in activating a whole-school approach to wellbeing.

### Experience of wellbeing (WITH) domains:

- Absence of psychosocial risk factors that contribute to stress or diminish wellbeing
- Presence of psychosocial protective factors that buffer stress and enhance wellbeing
- Fulfilment of core psychological needs – competence, autonomy, and relatedness

### Capability of key wellbeing function (FOR) domains:

- Strategic commitment – clarity of purpose, vision, and direction for wellbeing
- Collective engagement – fostering an inclusive, participatory wellbeing culture
- Sustaining impact – ensuring long-term progress and continuous improvement

## EDUCATOR SURVEY - *Teaching with wellbeing for wellbeing*

Designed to assess the extent to which wellbeing is experienced within the educator role and work environment, and to evaluate educators' capability and confidence in integrating wellbeing practices into teaching, student care, and classroom culture.

### Experience of wellbeing (WITH) domains:

- Absence of psychosocial risk factors that contribute to stress or diminish wellbeing
- Presence of psychosocial protective factors that buffer stress and enhance wellbeing
- Fulfilment of core psychological needs – competence, autonomy, and relatedness

### Capability of key wellbeing function (FOR) domains:

- Wellbeing literacy – knowledge, confidence, and shared language for wellbeing
- Relational practice – fostering respectful, inclusive and supportive connections
- Wellbeing integration – embedding wellbeing across teaching, learning, and pastoral care

## SUPPORT STAFF SURVEY - *Supporting with wellbeing for wellbeing*

Designed to capture the extent to which wellbeing is experienced within operational and support roles, and to evaluate how equipped staff feel to contribute to a safe, caring, and supportive school environment for students, colleagues, and the broader community.

### Experience of wellbeing (WITH) domains:

- Absence of psychosocial risk factors that contribute to stress or diminish wellbeing
- Presence of psychosocial protective factors that buffer stress and enhance wellbeing
- Fulfilment of core psychological needs – competence, autonomy, and relatedness

### Capability of key wellbeing function (FOR) domains:

- Wellbeing literacy – understanding of wellbeing principles, language, and practices
- Relational practice – interactions that strengthen connection, respect, and belonging
- Wellbeing contribution – alignment of individual roles within the school's wellbeing culture

## STUDENT SURVEY - *Learning with wellbeing for wellbeing*

Designed to understand the lived experience of students in their school environment, including their sense of wellbeing, connection, and confidence in learning and applying wellbeing skills to support personal growth and positive relationships.

### **Experience of wellbeing (WITH) domains:**

- Connected – experiencing positive relationships and a sense of belonging
- Protected – experiencing safety, support, and positive engagement
- Respected – experiencing affirmation, identity, and purpose

### **Capability of key wellbeing function (FOR) domains:**

- Awareness – understanding wellbeing, personal strengths, and self-knowledge
- Skills – practising and applying wellbeing strategies in daily life
- Agency – using wellbeing knowledge to make positive choices and contribute to others

*Note: The Primary and Secondary versions mirror each other in content and intent, with small wording refinements to ensure clarity and age relevance while preserving consistency in the data collected.*

## FAMILIES (PARENTS & CARERS) SURVEY

### *Partnering with wellbeing for wellbeing*

Designed to capture family perceptions of their connection with the school's wellbeing culture, and to assess the extent to which families feel informed, supported, and equipped to foster their child's wellbeing and learning in partnership with the school.

### **Experience of wellbeing (WITH) domains:**

- Belonging – feeling welcomed, respected, and connected to the school community
- Voice – confidence that family perspectives are heard, valued, and considered
- Trust – confidence in the school's commitment to student wellbeing and care

### **Capability of key wellbeing function (FOR) domains:**

- Clarity – understanding the wellbeing messages and practices promoted by the school
- Capability – confidence in reinforcing wellbeing messages at home
- Partnership – recognising and engaging in their role as active wellbeing partners

# TRANSMISSION POINTS

Measuring whether wellbeing practices and expectations are being clearly communicated, modelled, and reinforced throughout the system as intended.

A powerful and distinctive feature of this wellbeing survey suite is its ability to measure not only how individuals feel, but how effectively wellbeing is being transmitted through the school's operating system – from leaders, to educators and support staff, to students, and finally to families. These points of transmission reflect the flow of influence, culture, and practice across the four key wellbeing partners in the school community.

At each transmission point, overlapping questions are asked to both the sender (intention and action) and the receiver (perception and lived experience). This allows for a direct comparison between what is being communicated and what is being experienced. For example, leaders are asked whether they actively model the wellbeing culture they want to see in the school, while educators are asked whether their leaders do, in fact, model these behaviours. Similarly, educators report on the extent to which they embed wellbeing practices into teaching, while students indicate whether they experience those practices in the classroom.

This approach makes visible a fundamental truth in organisational wellbeing: good intentions do not always translate into lived experience. Research consistently shows that **messaging is often perceived by the sender to be stronger than it is received**, with gaps emerging due to communication breakdowns, competing demands, or negativity bias. By measuring transmission at three critical junctions, the survey reveals whether wellbeing is truly being shared, caught, taught, and reinforced throughout the entire school community.

## Why this matters

The Transmission Point analysis provides unique insight into:

- Whether leadership intent is being enacted through staff behaviours
- Whether wellbeing practices modelled by educators are being seen and felt by students
- Whether wellbeing messages taught at school are being reinforced and amplified by families
- Where alignment is strong and where gaps or friction may be limiting impact

Rather than relying on a single perspective, the transmission items connect the “we say” with the “they see”. This enables schools to identify where the strategy is working, where it is gaining momentum, and where supportive action may be required to ensure wellbeing is travelling through the system as designed.

This is a unique and defining element of the survey suite. The Transmission Points provide visibility into one of the most important indicators of long-term wellbeing success – the activation and alignment of people, practices, and partnerships across the whole school community.

To ensure a complete picture of school wellbeing, the survey concludes with two powerful insight components that reveal overall community sentiment and provide rich qualitative data to inform meaningful action.





## COMMUNITY CLIMATE INDICATORS

Embedded across all four partner surveys, the Community Climate Indicator questions provide a powerful whole-system lens into how the school community collectively perceives safety, inclusion, prioritisation of wellbeing, and the strength of school–family partnership.

Because the exact same items are asked of leaders, educators, students, and families, these responses create a shared barometer of cultural health – revealing whether wellbeing is not only being discussed, but genuinely felt as a lived reality across the community. For example, comparing how each group responds to “Our school is an inclusive and safe environment for everyone” or “Wellbeing is valued and prioritised across our school community” provides immediate clarity on areas of strong alignment, as well as where expectations or experiences differ. This offers schools a unique opportunity to see how culture is experienced across the system, and to identify high-impact leverage points for deeper connection, communication, and trust.

These Community Climate insights go beyond individual wellbeing to reflect the collective conditions that enable thriving. They reveal the perceived priorities of the school, the visibility of its commitment to student care, and the quality of the collaboration across the community. Because these questions sit at the heart of school culture, they serve as an early indicator of system readiness – showing whether the foundations are in place for wellbeing initiatives to be sustained, embraced, and amplified by the whole community.

## OPEN-TEXT RESPONSE QUESTIONS

The open-text response questions provide rich qualitative insight that brings the survey data to life. While the quantitative questions reveal patterns, trends, and levels of alignment, the open responses capture personal perspectives, lived experiences, and practical suggestions in participants’ own words.

These questions are intentionally designed to elicit constructive insight – such as “What’s one thing we do well?” and “What’s one thing we could do better?” – giving each stakeholder group a meaningful voice in shaping the future direction of wellbeing in the school. They also deepen understanding by inviting reflection on the most rewarding and most challenging aspects of school life, helping to uncover the emotional drivers behind engagement, motivation, and wellbeing.

This qualitative data is invaluable for decision-makers, as it reveals not only what is happening, but why. Themes often emerge around belonging, workload, relationships, communication, and culture – providing clear direction for improvement. Importantly, these responses create a sense of psychological safety and partnership by signalling to the school community that their experiences matter and their insights will inform action. When combined with the survey’s statistical findings, these narratives help leaders craft data-informed strategies that are grounded in the lived reality of their people and aligned with the shared aspiration for a thriving school community.





Strategic Design for

NARRATIVE ANCHORS

HISTORY

CURRENT REALITIES

STRATEGY

THE WELLBEING  
DISTILLERY

THE WELLBEING  
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