

# SCHOOL SUPPORTS AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS, INCLUDING SCHOOL COUNSELLING

In Catholic Schools Maitland-Newcastle, every child is cherished as a unique creation of God. We are committed to nurturing school communities where children and young people feel safe, supported, have a deep sense of belonging and are inspired to grow.

Our schools work closely with families, and together we aim to help every student flourish in their learning, relationships, and wellbeing.

Our approach to student wellbeing support is grounded in the values of compassion, dignity, inclusion, and hope - values lived out daily across our diocesan school communities.

## Wrap-around student support

Every Catholic school in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle is supported by a caring team of professionals who work together to nurture student wellbeing, learning and belonging. Each role brings unique strengths, but together they form a wraparound network that ensures every child is known, valued and supported through all aspects of school life.

Below are the supports available for your child, grouped so families can easily see what exists in schools and what is additional to primary or secondary settings.

## Supports available in all schools (Primary and Secondary)

### School Counsellor or School Psychologist

Our qualified counselling staff provide sensitive, confidential support for students' social, emotional and mental health needs. They work closely with families and teachers to ensure students feel heard, supported and equipped with strategies to navigate challenges and thrive at school.

### Learning Support Teacher/Coordinator

Learning Support Teachers/Coordinators work with students, teachers and families to identify and support students with additional learning needs. They collaborate with classroom teachers to develop reasonable adjustments, provide targeted support and interventions, coordinate personalised planning, monitor student progress and guide classroom practice to foster inclusive classrooms. This enables all students to access, engage with and succeed in their learning.

### Learning Support Assistant

Learning Support Assistants work with teachers to assist students who need additional learning or wellbeing support. They assist with classroom routines, guided learning, personalised adjustments and practical tasks, helping students feel confident, included and able to participate fully in school life.

### EAL/D (English as an Additional Language or Dialect) Teacher

EAL/D teachers support students who are learning English as an additional language, ensuring they develop the language skills and confidence needed to demonstrate and engage in learning. These teachers support each student's needs and collaborate with fellow educators to ensure teaching and learning strategies support the English language learners and create inclusive and culturally responsive classrooms.

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Teacher

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Teacher supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through targeted teaching and learning programs that recognise each student's strengths, needs and cultural identity. They work in partnership with classroom teachers to improve educational outcomes and to embed Aboriginal content in meaningful and respectful ways across the curriculum. Aboriginal Education Teachers also contribute to whole-school practice by supporting culturally responsive teaching, building staff understanding, and working alongside families and community to support student success.

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Worker

The Aboriginal Education Worker supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' wellbeing, engagement and participation in learning. They work closely with students, families, teachers and school staff to strengthen relationships between home, school and community. They are a key point of contact for Aboriginal families and play an important role in supporting communication, trust and collaboration.

## Additional supports available in primary schools

### Pastoral Care Worker

Pastoral Care Workers support students' emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing. They help children feel safe, supported and connected at school through caring conversations, wellbeing and resilience programs, and one-on-one or small group support.

They support students, families and staff during times of need, including grief and loss, and help students explore values, spirituality and ethical questions. Pastoral Care Workers also work closely with school staff to run support sessions and community activities that strengthen wellbeing and belonging across the school.

## Additional supports available in secondary schools

### Assistant Principal Wellbeing

The Assistant Principal Wellbeing leads the whole-school approach to wellbeing, ensuring that students feel supported,

respected and safe throughout their secondary schooling. This role coordinates wellbeing programs, works with other staff to support students with complex needs and helps shape a positive school culture where all young people can thrive.

### Beyond the Gates Caseworker

Beyond the Gates Caseworkers provide extra support to young people experiencing vulnerability by building strong connections between school, home and community services. Their outreach ensures students remain engaged in learning and feel supported during times of challenge.

### Careers Advisor

Careers Advisors guide students through subject selection, future pathways and postschool options. They help young people understand their strengths, explore opportunities and make confident, informed decisions about their future study or employment.

### Working together for every child

Although each role has a different focus, they form a coordinated support network that surrounds students with care. Staff collaborate daily, share professional insights and partner closely with families to ensure every child feels known, supported and included.

In addition, schools are supported by a team of staff in Catholic Schools Maitland-Newcastle's central office, which is led by the Leader of School Learning and Wellbeing and includes roles dedicated to speech pathology, student wellbeing, behaviour support, developmental disabilities, learning difficulties and culturally inclusive practices.

### Counselling services

Every primary and secondary school in the Diocese has access to a qualified school counsellor who provides a professional, confidential, culturally safe, and inclusive service to support the needs of students and families.

Our counsellors hold qualifications in psychology, social work, or counselling, and are registered with the appropriate professional associations. They are committed to providing care that is evidence based, culturally safe, and grounded in the Catholic understanding of each young person's dignity and worth.

Support is designed around a student's needs and the capacity of the school counselling service. Depending on your child's needs, school counsellors may offer:

- individual counselling
- small group programs
- student assessments
- working with teachers to develop personalised support plans
- attending parent/carer meetings within the school setting
- assisting families to connect with external support services

*Please note, school counsellors do not:*

- provide clinical diagnostic assessments for ADHD or Autism.

*These assessments must be completed by external qualified health professionals*

- provide family or joint parent-child counselling sessions

However, counsellors and other school support workers may contact parents to discuss a student's needs and collaborate on the best ways to support them at school

To find out more about our school counselling services, visit [mn.catholic.edu.au/learning-wellbeing/student-wellbeing](http://mn.catholic.edu.au/learning-wellbeing/student-wellbeing)

### Accessing school support services

There is no cost for families to access school-based supports, including school counselling. However, it is important to also keep in mind that these supports are only available to students during school hours and access to these supports will vary, dependent on your child's needs and the staff available to support them.

Families can access school-based support services by contacting:

- **Primary schools:** your child's classroom teacher.
- **Secondary schools:** the Leader of Wellbeing and Engagement, Learning Support Teacher/ Co-ordinator, Leader of Learning, Leader of Wellbeing.
- **For sensitive matters:** the Principal or Assistant Principal.

If in doubt, families can contact the school's administration, who can direct them to the relevant school role.

## Student Wellbeing in Catholic Schools Maitland-Newcastle

At Catholic Schools Maitland-Newcastle, your child's wellbeing is at the heart of everything we do.

Our schools are communities built on faith, respect and genuine care; places where every young person is known, valued and supported to thrive.

Our approach is guided by Catholic identity and shaped by clear policies and practices that nurture student wellbeing, positive relationships and safe behaviour in every school day.

As parents in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, by enrolling your child in one of our schools, you can expect the following:

- A school community for your child that is explicitly

Catholic and unambiguously student-centred, where wellbeing and learning are woven together each day.

- Consistent use of Positive Behaviours for Learning and transparent responses to bullying and unsafe behaviour.
- Safe behaviour planning that restores safety and relationships when harm occurs.
- Authentic avenues for student voice and leadership that build confidence and responsibility.
- A safeguarding culture that meets diocesan, state, and national standards, with prompt reporting and rigorous processes.
- A home-school partnership in which you are respected as the primary carer of your child.