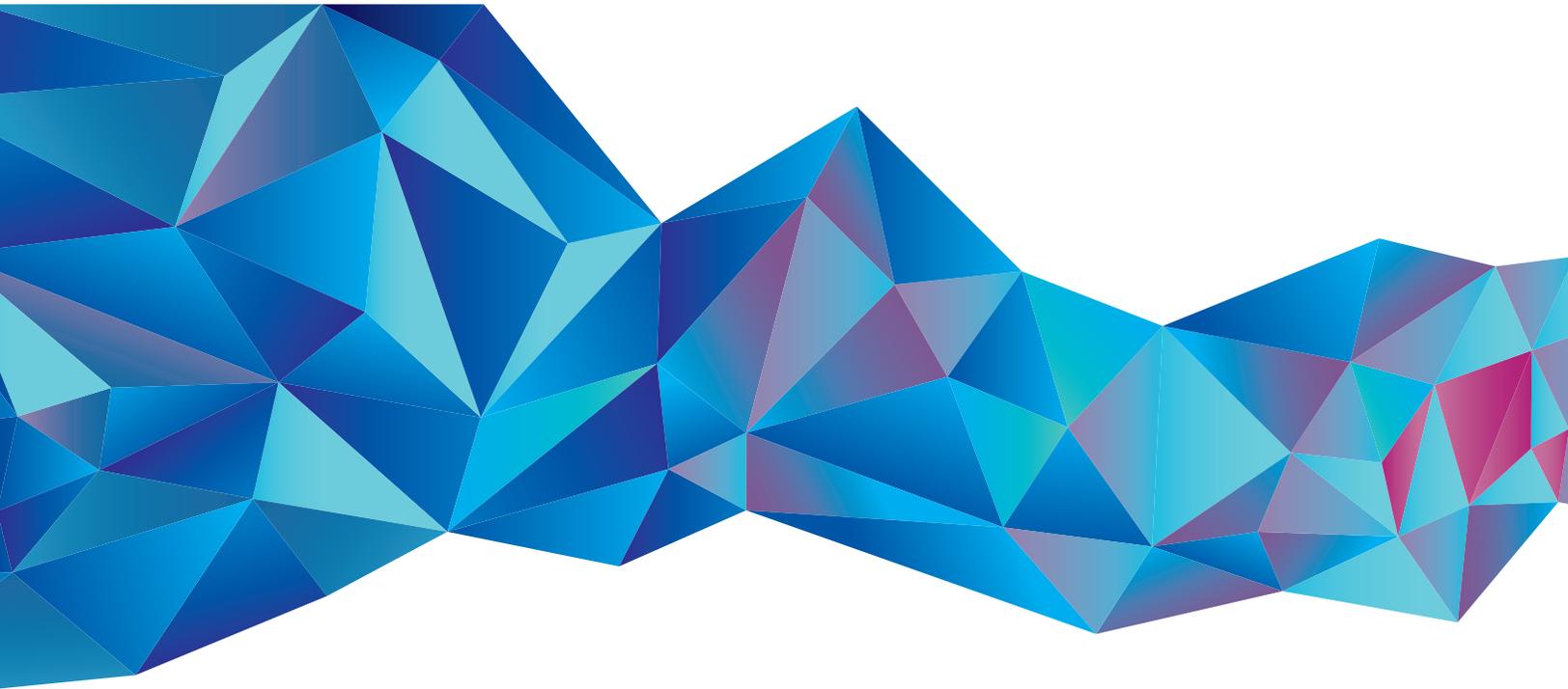


White Paper - Educator Wellbeing

Facilitating wellbeing enables teachers to perform at an optimum level. An enhanced level of wellbeing in turn sees educators delivering the best possible learning outcomes for students. But how to begin the journey to enhanced teacher wellbeing?



CYBERHOUND



Educator Wellbeing

A career in education can be challenging, so too is keeping educators' wellbeing in check. This is particularly true for frontline educators teaching an increasingly diverse range of content to an even more diverse range of students.

Educators continually have high expectations placed on them, by leadership, parents, students and particularly by themselves. More reporting and documentation needs to be in place and in many cases teachers are doing more than they ever have, but with much less resources.

Teachers also need to know the unique abilities, needs and pressures of each student while still delivering on an evolving curriculum. All this while they should be aware that their own wellbeing and performance is closely linked to that of their students and the wider school community.

No question, it's a stressful job and part of that stress is the expectation that teachers be monitors of student behaviour and wellbeing, both in the classroom and the wider environment.

Technology is one element of the classroom environment that can both increase and decrease the stress levels. Appropriate access to, and control of, technology in and out of the classroom enables educators to decrease workload and stress. While the same technology can be a cause of stress simply through lack of access to it. Likewise in the classroom it can be a stress-inducing factor if technology is being used for purposes other than intended by students.



1

School Leaders Feeling The Pressure Too

Just as their teaching staff are feeling the pressure, so too are principals and their deputies. In the 2016 Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey, the two greatest sources of stress for school leaders were identified. These sources being firstly the sheer quantity of work, and secondly a lack of time to focus on teaching and learning.

This lack of time is in spite of a large amount of hours being worked, with the survey finding that on average, 55 percent of principals worked upwards of 51 to 56 hours per week during term. The study also found that 27 percent were working upwards of 61 to 65 hours per week.

Time poor staff is one factor, but so too is the financial burden endured by school leaders. According to the Australian Principals Federation, life in schools continues to be challenged by bottom line fiscal challenges linked with economic, industry and societal trends. These trends that are giving rise to numerous challenges causing significant pressures on individuals leading schools.

Julie Podbury, Federation President said that school leaders and their teaching staff are working harder but emphasised that there is assistance and resources available.

“Principals and teachers can sometimes be their own worst enemies when it comes to not managing their own wellbeing,” Ms Podbury said.

“Often there are support networks and mentors who they can access to talk things through, but we get so bogged down we don’t know, or don’t think, to seek these out.”

“When used effectively, technology is key to trying to alleviate some of the pressure faced by educators at all levels, whether that is being able to communicate with a mentor that isn’t at the same school or ensuring students are doing what they should be doing in class.”

CyberHound, a leading provider of teaching productivity solutions, is a partner of the Australian Principals Federation. To assist with enhancing teacher wellbeing, the Australian technology company has launched LiveZone, a portal that provides teachers with up-to-the-minute oversight on what students in their class are accessing on the internet.

John Fison, CyberHound Chief Executive Officer, said that technological challenges faced by educators over the past decades has evolved.

“Computers and devices are increasingly important parts of the delivery of education,” Mr Fison said.

“In the late 1990s into the 2000s, students may have had access to a limited number of computers in class or occasional sessions in a computer room.”

“Now children, even those in the early years cohort, have direct and frequent access to devices that have a whole world of information, and distraction, at their fingertips.”

“Being able to accurately monitor what students may be viewing helps maintain the wellbeing of both teachers and students, this in turn helps provide peace of mind for school leaders that quality educational outcomes are being delivered.”



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**Julie Podbury, President,
Australian Principals Federation**

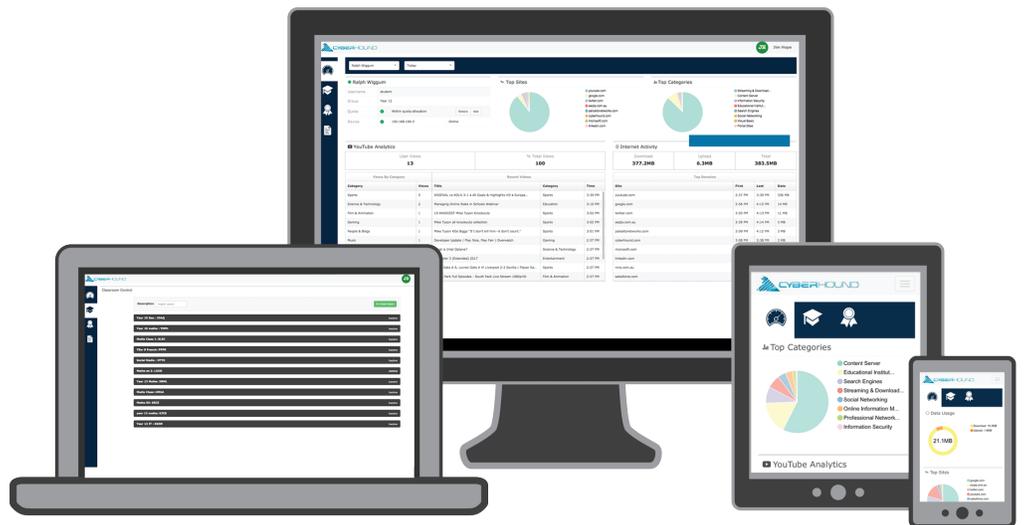
Enhancing Teacher Wellbeing

Facilitating wellbeing enables teachers to perform at an optimum level. An enhanced level of wellbeing in turn sees educators delivering the best possible learning outcomes for students. But how to begin the journey to enhanced teacher wellbeing?

This includes teachers, and school leaders, being encouraged to take what might seem like the simple step of saying, 'I am struggling and I need help'. Like other life-problems, being able to verbalise a problem is the first step on the road to recovery (and wellbeing).

Open communication should be encouraged so teachers feel free to be able to be able to say they are experiencing difficulties, and so colleagues feel comfortable asking each other how they doing.

Enabling effective use of appropriate technology to communicate and deliver teaching also enhances the wellbeing of teachers.



CyberHound provides a variety of education enablement solutions to leading schools across the Asia Pacific region. This includes tools such as LiveZone, a portal that's easy to use for school leaders, teachers and students. LiveZone provides comprehensive role-based controls, leveraging evidence-based reporting and analytics to enhance learning outcomes.

Teachers also benefit from the power of CyberHound's ClearView. This innovative solution scans all internet traffic to identify the most common social media, chat, instant messaging and Web 2.0 applications. ClearView acts as a catalyst to enable enhanced protection for students while at the same time reinforcing the training and policies that are set by the school around positive digital citizenship.

Technological solutions like these empower teachers to deliver their best in class, knowing they have ownership of the work they do and the space they operate in.

Steps To Wellbeing

The Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey had clear recommendations on steps to increasing wellbeing. This included taking the moral choice of reducing job demands, increase resources to cope with increased demands, or better still, do both.

Another recommendation from the survey was to trust rather than rule educators. After all, who knows better about teachers than the teachers themselves. School leaders and authorities can't be expected to step in and be wholly responsible for enhancing the wellbeing of teachers, but they can enable teachers to enhance their own sense of wellbeing.

There are a number of steps that teachers and their schools can take to ensure wellbeing, these include:

- Provide healthy food options where possible, fruit and nuts instead of chocolate and chips
- Create space for mindfulness, this could range from school-provided yoga instruction or as simple as access to an app to help with breathing
- Enable teachers to control variables in their own space, such as air conditioning, lighting, and technology resources
- Make teaching staff aware of current wellbeing initiatives
- Allow access to professional support, such as formal networks and identifying opportunities for a mentor relationship to be established
- Ensure teachers are able to participate in professional development that increases capabilities and confidence
- Consider an employee survey for real actionable feedback on where the school is at and where it should be in terms of wellbeing
- Foster a sense of inclusive open communication so teachers know it's ok to say 'I'm struggling and I need some help'

According to the Northern Ireland Safety Group, promoting wellbeing can help increase productivity, improve absenteeism rates, help retain staff, reduce workplace injuries, improve the morale of the workplace and create a positive corporate image.

Ensuring teacher wellbeing is something that has a cost to it, but is also something that can have an even greater cost if not maintained. Just think of the cost to the school if teachers did not have a good sense of wellbeing and what would be affected. This could lead to an insurmountable impact on employee morale, school reputation, student outcomes or worse.



About CyberHound

CyberHound is a leading provider of learning enablement and cybersafety solutions for classrooms from Kindergarten to Year 12. Established in 1999, CyberHound is part of the Superloop Group, an independent provider of connectivity services across the Asia Pacific region. More information can be found at cyberhound.com or by calling 07 3020 3330.

