Improving Learning

Smiling Mind Evaluation 2021 – 2022

Effectiveness of the Smiling Mind Primary School Program

October 2023

ACER

Smiling Mind Evaluation 2021-2022: Effectiveness of the Smiling Mind Primary School program

Dr Katherine Dix, Dr Tamara Van Der Zant, Toby Carslake, Rachel Felgate and Syeda Kashfee Ahmed

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Dr Katherine Dix
The Australian Council for Educational Research
E: katherine.dix@acer.org
W: www.acer.org

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In the spirit of reconciliation ACER acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea, and community. We pay our respect to their elders past and present and extend that respect to all First Nations peoples today. ACER acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who continue to contribute to our work to improve learning, education, and research.

Contents

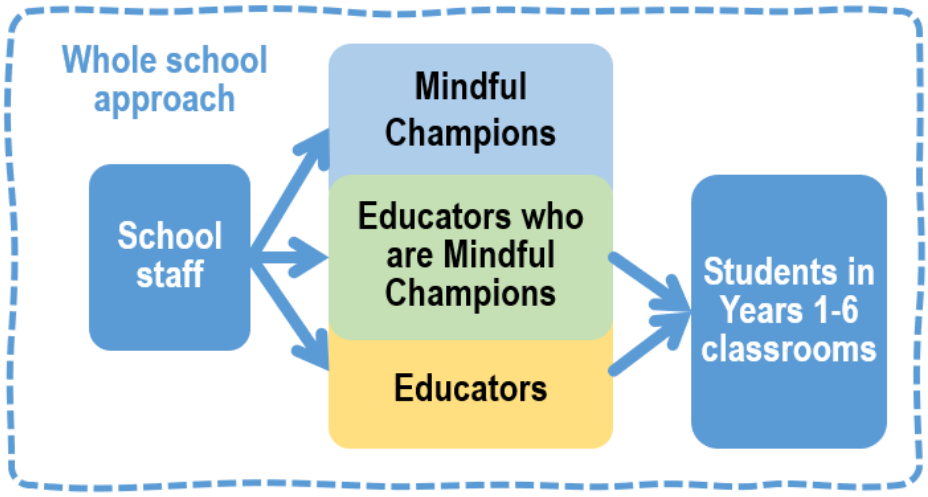
Key information

This report presents a large-scale evaluation conducted independently by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) of the **Smiling Mind Primary School Program**, delivered in regional and rural areas via funding through the federal Department of Health and Aged Care.

The program was delivered in 461 primary schools in regional and disadvantaged communities across Australia.

It involves a whole-school approach by training the school's nominated Mindful Champions, who may also be a classroom educator, to rollout the program across their school.

The Mindful Champions support their colleagues to implement the program in the classroom with students.



The evaluation covers the period from program launch in 2021, when the first wave of recruited schools commenced, and finishes at the end of 2022 – six months after the last wave of schools commenced.

The evaluation draws on the feedback given by Mindful Champions, educators and their students, gathered through pre-post surveys as well as program engagement data, to provide the following key findings and recommendations.

Executive Summary

The Smiling Mind Primary Classroom program has been rolled out in regional, rural and disadvantaged communities across Australia at a time when it is needed most.

In Australia, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of mental wellbeing and emotional resilience in students' overall development, particularly in regional and remote communities. This importance has been heightened by major disruption to schooling due to the COVID-19 pandemic, bushfire and flood. Reflecting these concerns, the federal Department of Health and Aged Care funded the **Smiling Mind Primary School program** (Smiling Mind, 2020) – an enhanced in-person and digitally delivered mindfulness-based social and emotional learning program for primary students in Years 1 to 6 – to be rolled out in regional and rural communities across Australia.

The teach-the-teacher model used in the Smiling Mind program includes both training and curriculum designed to build the capacity of educators and students. By explicitly shifting educators' mindsets, and teaching students key skills in building resilience and wellbeing, the program aims to build resilience to cope with stressors more effectively.

This report presents a large-scale evaluation of the Smiling Mind Primary School program, conducted independently by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). The evaluation covers the period from program launch in Term 1 2021, when the first wave of recruited schools commenced, and finishes with data collected at the end of 2022 – six months after the last wave of schools commenced. This evaluation draws on data collected from Mindful Champions, educators and their students through pre-post surveys as well as program engagement data.

Key findings

Smiling Mind is valued by schools and is having a positive impact, particularly on Mindful Champions' wellbeing outcomes. The extent of the impact on educators and students is less apparent at this early stage.

The clearest support for wellbeing improvement among students was found where engagement in and approval of the program was greater, such as for those students who took the content beyond the classroom.

The Smiling Mind Primary Classroom program stands as a promising avenue to promote a balanced and thriving educational environment, particularly for younger primary students in regional, rural or disadvantaged communities across Australia.

Students

- Three in four students reported finding Smiling Mind helpful – linked to improved focus on schoolwork, finding it easier to calm down during times of worry, and finding play time more enjoyable.
- Students who enjoyed Smiling Mind activities regularly in the classroom were more likely to be mindful, feel connected to school, engage and persevere in their learning, and were happy and optimistic about the future.
- Most students experienced positive sentiment. When asked how Smiling Mind activities made them feel, 88% of students reported positively associated feelings.
- Older students and female students were proportionally significantly more likely to report negative sentiment or distress, than younger students.
- Results from before and after the program indicated a small reduction in worry, along with improvements in optimism.
- A third of students who did Smiling Mind in the classroom (and completed post-survey), have taken it beyond school.
- Students who took Smiling Mind beyond school were more likely to report more happiness, optimism, mindfulness, perseverance, engagement with learning, and connection with their school.
- Three in four educators agreed that their students benefitted from the Program.

School staff

- Engaging with the program was associated with significant reductions in workplace burnout and stress in Mindful Champions.
- School staff were overwhelmingly positive about training quality. Achieving a Net Promoter Score of 75, approaching a world-class rating of 80.
- Over 90% of Mindful Champions were highly positive about the quality of the six-week intensive training.
- Most Mindful Champions praised the facilitator's expertise and supportiveness, engagement and informativeness of the sessions, and ease of understanding the content.
- The evidence supports the notion of the 'Mindful Champion' – staff that play a lead role in implementing the program across the school community. Compared to classroom educators, Mindful Champions more strongly agreed from the outset, about mindfulness practice being important as an effective tool to support mental health and promote positive classroom culture.
- Educator's wellbeing outcomes were much less impacted by the program, compared to Mindful Champions, which may have been due to differences in training content and varying degrees of exposure to the program.

Program reach and engagement

- The program has been effective at attracting its target cohort. Smiling Mind has reached all states and territories over the two years.
- As intended, schools participating in the program tended to be small government schools located in disadvantaged regional or rural communities with high proportions of students with First Nations backgrounds.
- As a reflection of a school's readiness to implement programs like Smiling Mind, many schools reported already taking other strides to implement broader whole-school wellbeing. However, fewer were actively explicitly teaching resilience and other social emotional learning (SEL) skills to promote student mental health.
- With a proportion of educators not currently explicitly teaching SEL skills to students, implementing the Smiling Mind Primary Classroom Curriculum (PCC) provided a new opportunity for schools to teach and promote SEL skills with their students in a structured and guided way.
- Amidst disruptions to schools due to COVID-19, bushfire and floods, achieving and retaining the participation target has proved challenging. Of the original target of 600 schools, the recruitment drive achieved 77% (461 schools) by the end of the evaluation period. An additional 166 recruited schools failed to start the program or withdrew after commencement.
- Implementation takes time. By the end of the two years, almost half the schools (46%) made it to Phase 2: Whole School onboarding, and over a third (36%) made it to Phase 3: Ongoing implementation.
- Not all will progress through all stages of training. By the end of the two years,
  - 64% of Mindful Champions and educators completed their training.
  - 20% of registered educators used the PCC at least 10 times in their classrooms and a third (36%) accessed it only once.
- Smiling Mind is achieving its goal to teach-the-teacher, and the onboarding has been effective in shifting attitudes and behaviours. Overall, the Smiling Mind professional learning had a medium to large impact on Mindful Champions and a small to medium impact on educators in shifting their attitudes and behaviours about teaching mindfulness in the classroom.
- Sustaining the levels of engagement and usage within schools may be challenging. Under the current approach, most educators and Mindful Champions stopped using the Smiling Mind app in their classrooms after about two years.
- While there is strong endorsement of the quality of the Smiling Mind program, the conversion to sustained uptake and implementation is weaker. This, in-part, may be due to the implementation strategy using the teach-the-teacher model that is vulnerable to diminishing levels of commitment after the initial excitement and intensive training have passed.

Recommendations

Taking the evaluation findings into account and subject to the recommendations below, the main recommendation is that the broad curriculum, processes and resources of Smiling Mind Primary School program be maintained as the basis for ongoing national roll-out.

Note that we have interpreted the effects of the Smiling Mind Primary School program as a total 'package' and have no basis for drawing conclusions if parts of the package were to be removed or substantively changes.

The evaluation suggested several ways for improving the efficacy of the program. Therefore, it is recommended that, *inter alia*, future development of Smiling Mind Primary School program:

1 Further consideration should be given to how educator engagement can be strengthened (e.g., through more opportunities for training, using the app) to better mirror the levels of engagement by Mindful Champions.

2 Considerations around program content should be made to account for the lives, experiences, and contexts that appeal to older primary aged students. Further research may assist in developing content which may better align with the specific needs and preferences of this cohort.

3 Based on the evidence of good acceptance and engagement, along with preliminary evidence of positive impact, we recommend the continuation of the program implementation.

4 Future iterations of the program should focus on equipping educators with greater knowledge and capacity to deliver mindfulness-based SEL in the classroom in a way that is engaging and promotes ongoing habit formation.

5 Future research should explore skill development as an intermediary between program intervention and wellbeing outcomes. A greater focus on skill development may provide a better indicator for the impact of programs and provide an additional layer of specificity in exploring the mechanisms that underlie the link between program and intended outcomes.

6 Future iterations of the program should leverage the key components of Mindful Champion training which promoted greater wellbeing outcomes and extend these practices to all educators to promote whole-school wellbeing. This includes providing a greater number of touchpoints and supports to all educators within the school, supporting greater uptake and investment in the intended program outcomes among all staff members in the school.

7 Evolve the program to continue skill development for educators, primarily related to enhancing active and focussed forms of teaching SEL to students in the classroom.

8 Consideration should be given to ways to further support the commitment to, and active engagement of, school leaders and educators to implement Smiling Mind in the classroom that encourage program retention. This could include:

- Increasing program flexibility with clear guidance around managing staff mobility and turnover.
- Providing guidelines to schools that enable them to enhance the quality of implementation in a structured and sustained way.
- Sharing best practice about the ways exemplary schools have implemented Smiling Mind.

9 Consider mechanisms to encourage students to embed mindfulness practices in their lives beyond the classroom, even as teachers' use in classrooms may wane.

10 Additional consideration should be given to how the Smiling Mind curriculum and activities are implemented with students with potential vulnerabilities to adverse experiences, and how to prepare teachers to respond to such occurrences.

11 Tailor content to more strongly reflect the contexts of marginalised communities in ways that serve their specific needs.

12 Continue to be responsive and flexible to the changing circumstances of communities (e.g., due to extreme events) will also be important.

13 Further research with larger sample sizes and greater time between surveys should be undertaken to confidently attribute any impact to the program.

14 Develop and maintain effective linked-together data monitoring system. Stronger user guidance may be needed to improve the ability to cleanly link data to better monitor program engagement and to build functionally effective operational data.

1 Background

Smiling Mind has a clear vision and mission: To help every mind thrive, and to provide accessible, life-long tools to support healthy minds.

An increasing number of young Australians are experiencing psychological distress and mental health problems, leading to student disengagement and poor life outcomes. Additionally, access to appropriate and practical training in social and emotional learning strategies is a challenge for regional and rural schools. Therefore, the current program seeks to deliver mindfulness-based social and emotional learning (SEL) to school communities to address these concerns for primary aged children.

To support their endeavours and recognise the growing concern of student mental health and wellbeing, Smiling Mind Primary School program was funded by the federal Department of Health and Aged Care (Smiling Mind, 2020). It builds on the success of its NSW schools program, and a series of smaller pilot programs, to develop an enhanced in-person and digitally delivered mindfulness-based social and emotional learning program.

A total of 461 schools from regional and rural Australia participated in the Smiling Mind Primary School program across 2021-2022. While the original target aimed to involve 600 schools, the unprecedented and prolonged disruption due to COVID as well as flooding events, impacted the capacity of schools and the program delivery team alike.

This report presents a large-scale evaluation conducted independently by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) of the Smiling Mind Primary School program in its first two years. The evaluation covers the period from program launch in Term 1 2021, when the first wave of recruited schools commenced, and finishes at the end of 2022 – six months after the last wave of schools commenced. This evaluation draws on data from embedded surveys, the learning hub and app data.

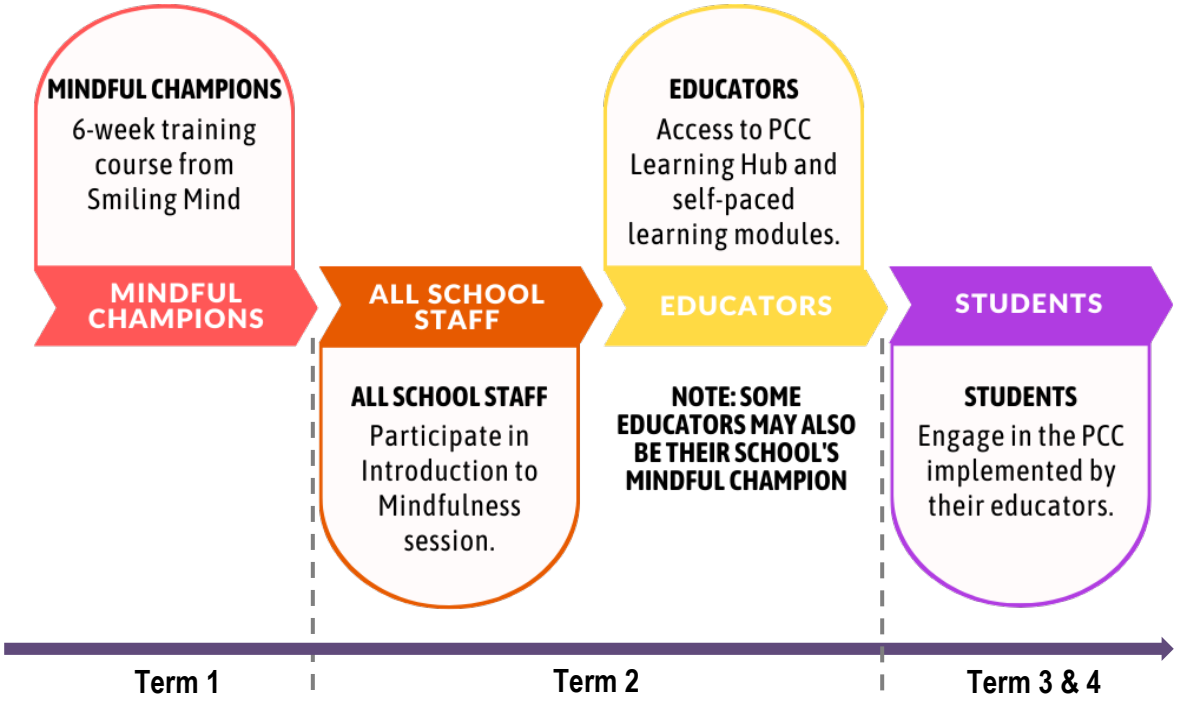
In brief, the Smiling Mind program provides schools with educator training and a Primary Classroom Curriculum (PCC) involving a structured mindfulness-based social and emotional learning program, lesson plans and activities that students engage with in the classroom that are taught in the classroom. This is delivered through a teach-the-teacher model where the school's nominated Mindful Champion is trained to implement the program school-wide.

The key components of the program include:

- **Mindful Champion training:** A 6-week training course completed by one or two staff members selected to lead and implement Smiling Mind in the school (see Appendix B Figure 44).
- **Introduction to Mindfulness:** All educating staff within the school participate in an introduction to mindfulness session with access to the Mindfulness Foundations modules.
- **Learning Hub:** Educators are provided with access to the Learning Hub, which houses the Primary Classroom Curriculum (PCC) and self-paced learning modules (see Appendix B Figure 45).
- **Ongoing support:** School staff are provided with ongoing support and resources.

Figure 1 highlights the program's flow of learning (Smiling Mind, 2020, p.3).

Figure 1. Key stages in Smiling Mind program delivery



2 Program Structure

2.1 Theory of change

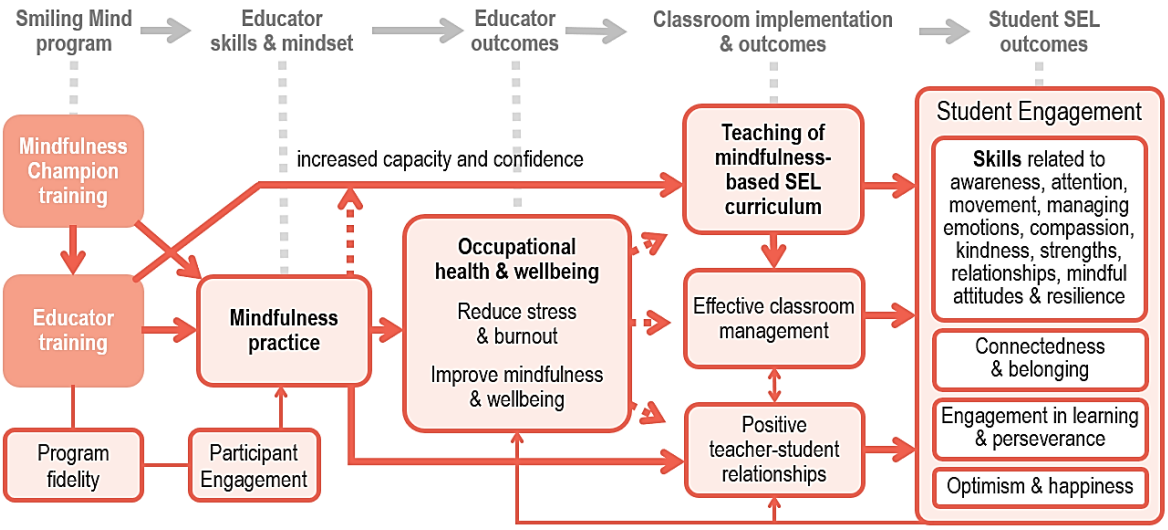
The program is grounded in a teach-the-teacher model, which seeks to provide intensive training to the school's Mindful Champion, who in turn leads and implements the Smiling Mind program in their school community. Mindful Champions are equipped with training, as well as resources, such as the PCC and the Smiling Mind app, to deliver mindfulness-based SEL.

As part of their responsibilities in the program, Mindful Champions lead a workshop introducing Smiling Mind to the rest of the schools educating staff. Following their participating in this workshop, educators gain access to the Learning Hub, which provides them with the educating resources necessary to delivery mindfulness based SEL in the classroom to their students.

One of the claimed benefits of mindfulness-based programs is their potential to enhance students' focus and attention. Mindfulness practices aim to help students develop the ability to anchor their attention to the present moment, allowing them to engage more fully in their learning. By explicitly teaching students how to observe their thoughts and emotions without judgment, mindfulness aims to facilitate the learning of each of the components of the curriculum. Accordingly, students should directly respond to the Smiling Mind activities they engage with, as well as indirectly respond to the improved classroom climate.

Building on the work of Roeser et al. (2012), Figure 2 presents a logic model describing the hypothesised effects of the Smiling Mind program on teachers and students. The theory of change posits that mindfulness training provides Mindful Champions and educators with a set of resources and knowledge that helps them to cope more effectively with the teaching profession as well as support them to implement a mindfulness curriculum in their classroom.

Figure 2. Teacher mindfulness training logic model and theory of change

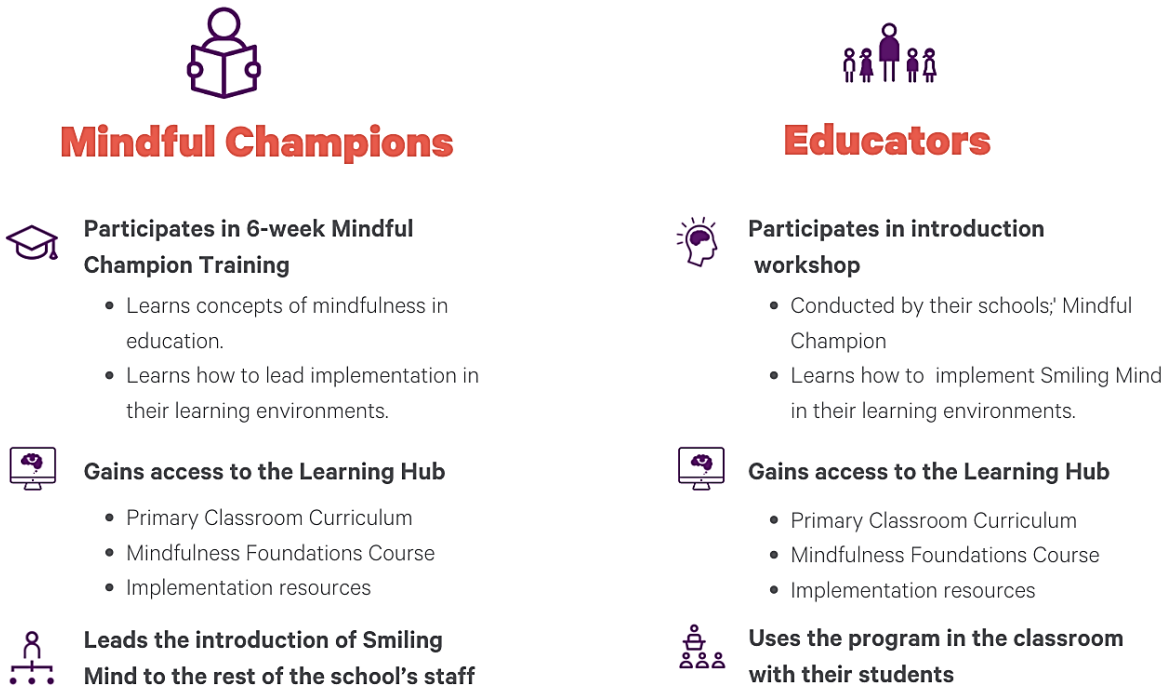


2.2 Participants

The Smiling Mind Classroom program works to reduce risk factors, as well as promote positive factors that contribute to a mentally healthy school community, and improved educator and student outcomes. It starts with the intensive training of an educator within the school (the Mindful Champion) to lead and champion the whole-school implementation of the Smiling Mind program. These Champions support the educators within their school to implement the program at various levels – within the classroom, the staff room and the whole school.

The program is delivered through a teach-the-teacher model, designed to have dual and sustained effect. Educators who undertake Smiling Mind training learn how to cultivate an attitude of kindness and compassion toward themselves, and are also supported to bring this capacity into the classroom to build an emotionally supportive climate. The differences in program implementation support between Mindful Champions and educators are outlined in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Training and resources for Mindful Champions and educators



The key differences between Mindful Champions and educators relates to the degree of training they receive, as well as roles and responsibilities throughout the implementation of the program.

2.3 The program

What Schools received

Flexible digital learning
Access to our Learning Hub, which includes a range of self-paced digital courses and opportunities to connect and share experiences with educators across the country who are also participating in the program.

Support and Guidance
Ongoing support from Smiling Mind's psychologists, facilitators and mindfulness experts.

Comprehensive Training
In-depth online training for staff on mindfulness and the Smiling Mind mindfulness based social and emotional learning program, and practical guidance on how to implement its benefits in diverse school environments.

Mindfulness Curriculum
The Mindfulness Curriculum, a comprehensive framework to support primary school educators in bringing mindfulness into their classrooms.

Impact measurement tools
Wellbeing surveys and measurement tools so schools can see for themselves the impact the program is having on students and teachers alike.

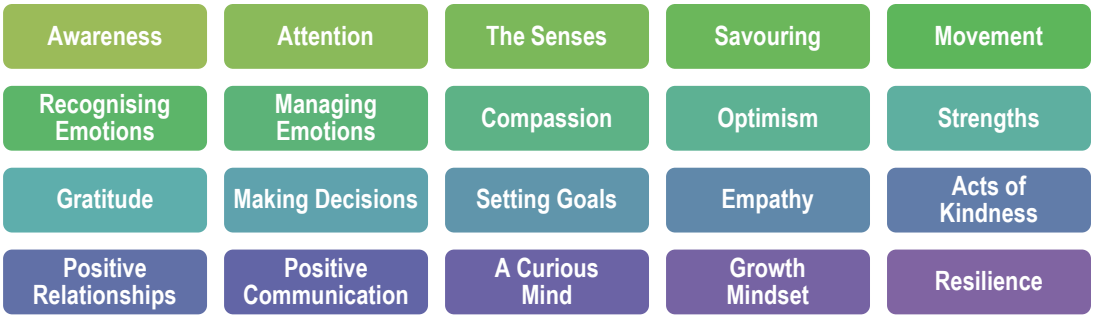
Resources and Tools
Resources to support sustainable implementation of the program, including tools to support parent and carer engagement.

The Smiling Mind Primary Classroom Curriculum (PCC) and Learning Hub

Participating educators log into the online Learning Hub to access the PCC resources and classroom practices. The PCC is a digital, comprehensive and stand-alone SEL program. It was released at the start of 2022 when the previous hard-copy curriculum resources were digitised and instead provided online through the Learning Hub, for ease of access and currency (see Appendix B Figure 46 for a timeline of changes).

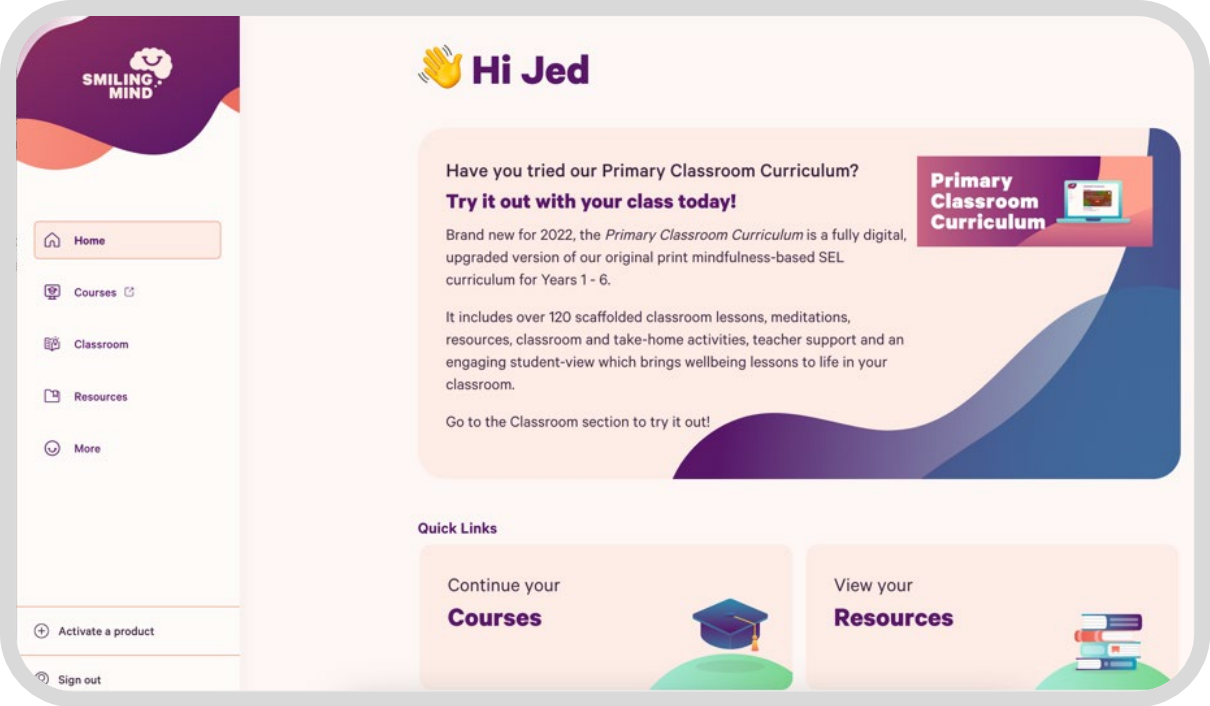
The PCC is based around 20 topics (see Figure 4 and more detail in Appendix B). The topics have been mapped to the Australian Curriculum (Personal and Social Capability), and are designed to support students in Years 1 to 6 to develop self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social management skills.

Figure 4. The Smiling Mind Primary Classroom Curriculum (PCC) topics



Through 120 pre-planned scaffolded classroom lessons and meditations, children learn, practice and integrate social and emotional skills. The mindfulness-based lessons and practices aim to provide a consistent and practical approach to teaching and exploring these topics with students, as well as providing students with an opportunity to develop tangible skills and strategies which support good mental health and wellbeing.

The Learning Hub dashboard (pictured below) and PCC have been created to support a whole school and community approach to wellbeing, and include a wide range of resources for educators, parents and students, which include the following: Self-paced learning for educators; Manuals for educators; Free Smiling Mind App; and Parent Resource Guide.

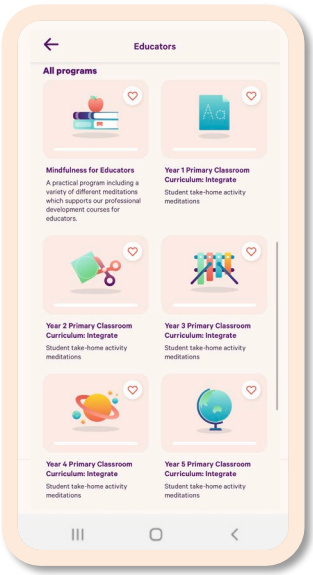


The Smiling Mind App

The Smiling Mind app, accessed free of charge, also houses resources for students (kids section) and school staff (adults section), as well as activities that directly support implementation of the PCC within the classroom (classroom section). The app provides accompanying meditations which are linked to year level, and take-home activities for students to complete.

Educators are also introduced to the Smiling Mind app to engage in their own personal mindfulness practice.

Appendix B Figure 47 presents an overview of the Classroom, Kids and Adult app sessions along with an indication of their popularity.



3 Research Context

3.1 Evaluation objectives

The primary aim of the research was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Smiling Mind Schools program in terms of increasing wellbeing skills among students. Specifically, to:

- Evaluate whether students demonstrated improvements in their wellbeing, school connectedness, engagement, and optimism.
- Explore whether the Smiling Mind program demonstrated adequate usability, feasibility, and appropriateness among students.

While the main beneficiaries of the Smiling Mind Schools Program were students, the implementation of the program was delivered through classroom educators. Therefore, the research also sought to understand whether the program was effective in its delivery of content and information to assist in teaching the program's primary beneficiary – students.

Specifically, to:

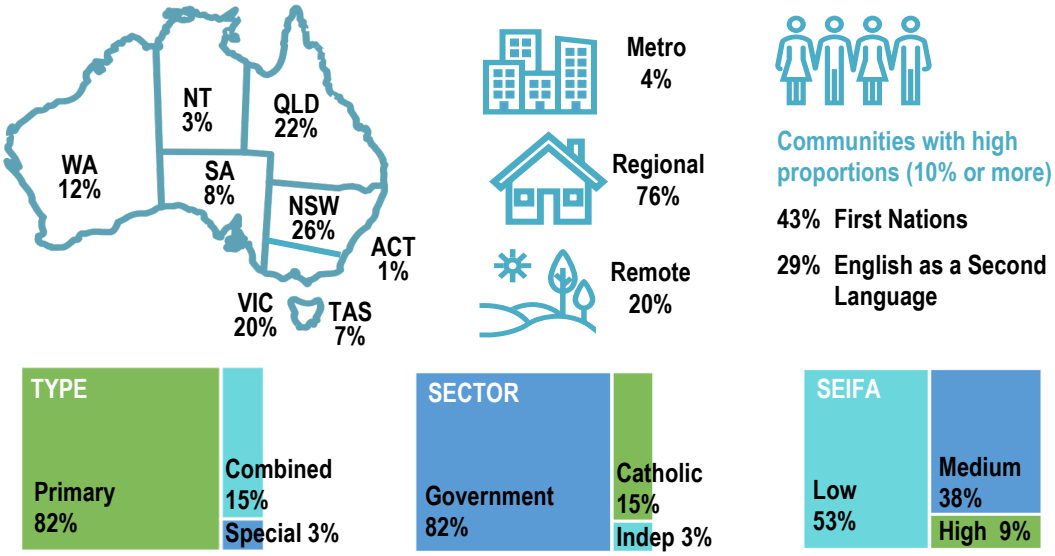
- Measure staff satisfaction with the program.
- Explore whether positive attitudinal change around the delivery of mindfulness based SEL had occurred.
- Explore the effectiveness of the program in developing confidence among educators teaching SEL skills.
- Measure whether educators had improved personal mental health and wellbeing outcomes.

3.2 Sample and demographics

While the Smiling Mind program is designed for use in all primary schools, the current program was funded specifically to support its use in primary schools in regional and rural locations across Australia, and in particular disadvantaged communities [1] in these areas (Smiling Mind, 2020).

The Smiling Mind Primary School program specifically targeted schools in regional (76%) and remote (20%) locations and in disadvantaged communities, with 91% of schools below the average socio-educational advantage (ICSEA of less than 1,000). Figure 5 depicts the demographic make-up of these school communities.

Figure 5. Characteristics of the Smiling Mind Primary schools



A total of **5,183** surveys were completed by participants of the Smiling Mind Regional and Rural Schools evaluation. Of these a total number of;

- **1,864 surveys** were completed by **educators** and **Mindful Champions**; and
- **3,319 surveys** were completed by **students in Years 3-6.**

Table 1 shows the number of surveys completed throughout the program's roll-out.

[1] Typically, these are defined as schools with an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) below 1000.

Table 1. Rolling survey participation

	Educator Check-in Survey		Student Survey	
	Schools	Staff	Schools	Students
0: Eligible	3	3		
1: MC training	36	53		
2: Whole school onboarding	204	634	19	569
3: Ongoing implementation	166	1,174	65	2,750
TOTAL	**409**	**1,864**	**84**	**3,319**
Withdrawal	24	37		
Ineligible	2	5		

Of the 3,319 students participating in the research, there were approximately even numbers of male and female students, with 4% either identifying with another gender or preferred not to answer.

The numbers across Years 3 to 6 were similar, with slightly larger samples of older (Years 5 and 6) than younger students (Years 3 and 4).

Personal demographic details about educators and Mindful Champions were not collected. Further details about the demographics of the sample are detailed in Appendix C.

3.3 Data collection procedures

A **Student Survey** and **Staff Check-in** (see Appendix D) were co-designed with Smiling Mind to monitor implementation processes and impact on educators and students.

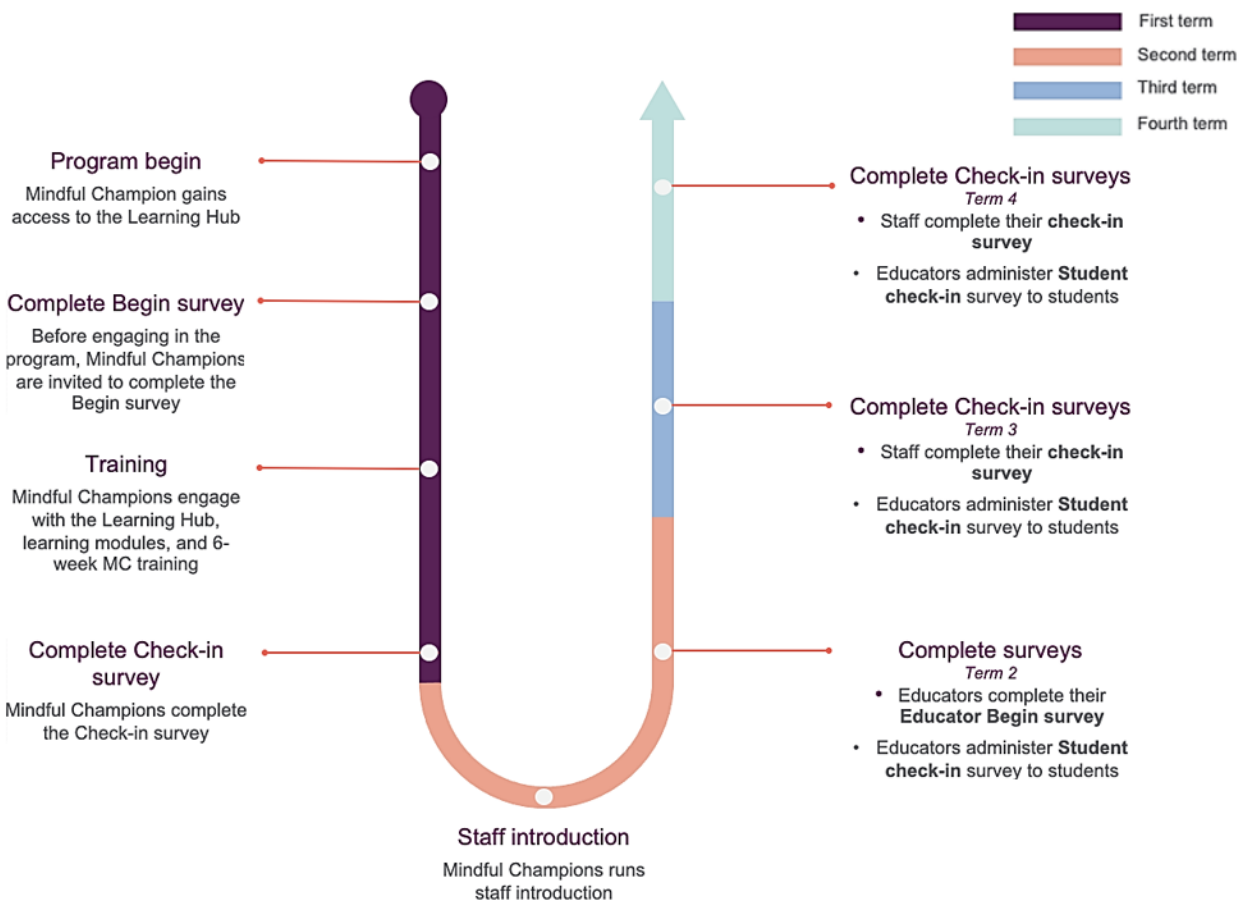
The surveys were administered as an embedded part of the program, as shown in Figure 6, amongst the other key stages. The dissemination of Mindful Champion and Educator surveys were provided via email direct messaging by Smiling Mind.

Mindful Champions were invited to complete the 'begin' Check-in as part of registration and prior to starting their 6 week training, followed by a 'post' Check-in at the end of the 6 weeks. They were encouraged to complete 'follow-up' Check-ins if they were also a classroom educator.

Educators were invited to complete their 'begin' Check-in once they registered and accessed the Learning Hub. They were encouraged to complete 'follow-up' Educator Check-ins the following Terms.

Educators were also encouraged to use the **Student Survey** with their students prior to implementing the PCC in their classroom (pre-survey). Educators were prompted to administer the Student Survey (post-survey) each term following implementation.

Figure 6. Key stages in Smiling Mind program delivery and data collection



3.4 Measuring engagement and impact

The surveys were designed using validated and established psychometric measures of wellbeing (see Appendix C). Additional items in the surveys monitored engagement and participation. Figure 7 presents the process and impact domains comprising the student and educator surveys.

Figure 7. Domains in the Smiling Mind surveys and other sources of user data

3.5 Approach to data analysis

In addition to survey data collected from school staff and students, ACER was provided with:

- Program administrative data,
- Learning Hub participation data,
- Records of completion of Mindful Champion and Mindfulness Foundation courses,
- App usage data.

School name and educator emails were used to link data, however students remained anonymous and were linked to educators by school and educator name -- allowing for confidentiality of student responses. Descriptive and inferential statistics were conducted using MS Excel, SPSS and Jamovi software.

Estimates of program impact that are of statistical and practical significance are interpreted according to Cohen's d where effect sizes of 0.2 are small, 0.5 are medium and 0.8 are large. Given the quasi-experimental approach of research in education settings, we also consider smaller effect sizes to be of potential importance and as such interpret 0.1 as a very small effect.

The main comparison in graphs is made between Mindful Champions and educators, noting that 52% of Mindful Champions also indicated they were a classroom teacher. Accordingly, in the results reported, Mindful Champions may also be educators, but educators are not Mindful Champions. Groups are compared according to their role within the context of this program, and therefore Mindful Champions are grouped together regardless of their role as an educator or non-educator within the school (see Figure 3 for criteria).

When the distinction between Mindful Champions and educators is not needed, we refer collectively to them as school staff.

Missing data varied by item and measure, thus valid samples used for each analysis are reported alongside results.

3.6 Research considerations and limitations

In any comprehensive research evaluation, it is important to recognise and address the various considerations and limitations which may impact the findings and conclusions presented in this report. The following outlines the factors that should be taken into account when interpreting results.

- **Program changes**: The Smiling Mind program experienced significant changes in the modality to which the Primary Classroom Curriculum was delivered to students. Beginning April 2021 (a mid-point of the program) the hard-copy physical curriculum was digitised and housed on the Learning Hub. Due to these changes, precautions should be taken when comparing educator engagement in the program, specifically due to usage of physical resources being reliant on participant self-report of actual usage behaviour.
- **Data linkage**: In the analysis of data obtained through self-report surveys, the Learning Hub, and the Smiling Mind app, difficulties arose in the linking of data. With quite different sources of data, some amount of non-matching was expected. For example, when an educator used different IDs, they could not be linked, even though they were asked to use the same ID. Of the 2,662 educator accounts in the Learning Hub, only 1109 (42%) could be linked to a user profile and linked to a school. Of these, 132 Mindful Champions and educators (less than 5%) could be linked to a student survey, and even fewer could be linked to an educator Check-in. There was not a sufficient sample size to fully test the combined relationships between program inputs, implementation processes, and educator and student outcomes. Accordingly, evidence of impact relied on independent analyses of the usage data, the Educator Check-in and Student Survey data.
- **Lower response rates at follow-up:** Response rates were significantly higher at baseline when compared to follow-up. While the dissemination of surveys to Mindful Champions was managed by Smiling Mind, Mindful Champions promoted use of the Educator and Student surveys within schools, and were used at the discretion of staff. Therefore these were less reliably collected and at greater risk of non-response bias.
- **Attrition**: Without a control sample with which to compare the results from those participating in the program, the evaluation relied on the retention of participants in the evaluation, even if they were not actively engaging in the program.
- **Self-report measures:** The study relied heavily on self-report measures from educators and students, which may introduce biases and subjective interpretations, potentially affecting the accuracy and reliability of the data.
- **Sample sizes:** While the evaluation largely presents adequate sample sizes throughout its analysis, there were some instances, such as some group comparisons, which resulted in low sample sizes. This is highlighted in relevant sections throughout the report, and findings should be viewed as indicative.
- **Real world environment:** The evaluation was conducted within a 'real world environment', and as such fewer controls were able to be implemented in the study design. However, the current method allowed for greater ecological validity.

4 Results

4.1 Program recruitment and uptake

Of the 3,700 eligible schools (41% of all schools nationally), 461 were recruited (12% of eligible schools). The first wave of school recruitment took place in South Australia and Queensland, with rollout reaching all states and territories over the two years.

Participating schools move through clearly defined phases of implementation (see Figure 1). Once the principal accepts the invitation for their school to participate, one or two staff from the school are nominated to become Mindful Champions, and drive whole-school change by supporting all staff to engage in professional learning and implement the program in their classrooms.

Due to the rolling recruitment, the 461 participating schools reached different phases of participation in the program by the end of the evaluation period in December 2022 (see Table 2).

- **Phase 0**: School is eligible, and principal has nominated their Mindful Champions – 95% completion rate moving into the next phase, with 5% still at this phase.
- **Phase 1**: The Champion registers for training through the Smiling Mind Learning Hub – 83% completion rate, with 12% still at Phase 1.
- **Phase 2**: Progressing into whole-school implementation with Mindful Champions completing all requirements of the six-week training – 36% completion rate, with 46% at Phase 2.
- **Phase 3**: Ongoing implementation with all staff attending *Introduction to Mindfulness* session and given access to self-paced learning and other resources in the Learning Hub – 36% making it to Phase 3.

An additional 166 schools that commenced the program, had **withdrawn** for various reasons: they were unreachable or no-shows (72 schools), the timing was poor (27 schools), or it was not a good fit (22 schools). Within the two-year period, a further 190 schools applied but were **ineligible** because they did not meet the participation criteria [2].

Table 2. Rolling recruitment of Smiling Mind schools

Phase	2021				2022			Completion Rate
School Terms	T1	T2	T3	T4	T1	T2	Total	
0: Eligible						25	25 (5%)	95%
1: MC training			5	6	15	29	55 (12%)	83%
2: Whole school onboarding	19	43	46	23	26	57	214 (46%)	36%
3: Ongoing implementation	23	48	25	6	29	36	167 (36%)	
	42	**91**	**76**	**35**	**70**	**147**	**461 (100%)**	
Withdrawal							166	
Ineligible							190	

[2] 190 schools were ineligible because they were secondary (24%), from metropolitan areas (56%) and/or had an ICSEA above 1000 (59%).

4.2 Setting the scene

The Smiling Mind program was designed pre-COVID, however, was implemented during unprecedented disruption in schools. This undoubtedly impacted, not only the ability to roll-out the program, which had to pivot to online delivery, but also the capacity for schools to implement the program.

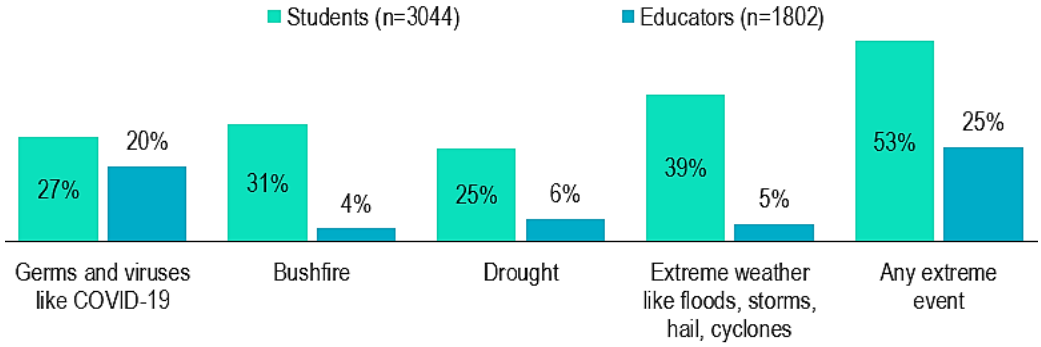
4.2.1 Worry about COVID and other extreme events

Wellbeing incorporates physical, mental, emotional and environmental aspects of one's state of being (Lambert et al., 2020), and is a multifaceted concept influenced by numerous factors. While it is important to acknowledge the multitude of potential factors impacting wellbeing, of note during the evaluation was the unprecedented disruption to schooling due to COVID-19.

Declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) in March 2020, Australia rapidly introduced public health measures and infection control strategies, including travel restrictions, school closures, and lockdowns. Schools had to rapidly pivot to online learning and home-schooling. Smiling Mind also rapidly and successfully pivoted. The resulting boost in digital resources was particularly important for isolated small regional and rural communities. This also potentially improved their ability to engage with online programs like the Smiling Mind Primary School program.

In addition to COVID, many communities also experienced flood and bushfire. Anticipating the possible impact of these events on the wellbeing of communities, the evaluation asked students and educators how often they currently worry about extreme events. During the two-year evaluation, educators (n = 1802) and students (n = 3044) in participating schools across regional and rural Australia rated their levels of worry on a five-point scale of 'never' to 'always'. Figure 8 shows the percentage of educators and students who 'often' or 'always' worry.

Figure 8. Proportion of student and educators who worry about extreme events 'often' or 'always'



Compared to educators, students reported worry a lot more, particularly about extreme weather events. Overall, half the students were worrying about something, compared to a quarter of educators.

Around a third of students often or always worried about *extreme weather* (39%) and *bushfire* (31%), and a quarter of students worried about *drought* (25%). In comparison, only around 5% of educators often or always worried about these types of natural disasters.

Regarding COVID, the levels of worry reported by students and educators were more congruent. Figure 8 also shows that 27% of students and 20% of educators reported that they often or always worried about COVID. Conversely, 29% of students and only 9% of educators never worried about COVID.

Implications

Results demonstrate the pronounced differences between students and educators on their worry toward extreme events. The large proportion of students exhibiting a higher degree of worry about world events should be taken into consideration when interpreting results.

4.2.2 Current state of wellbeing in schools

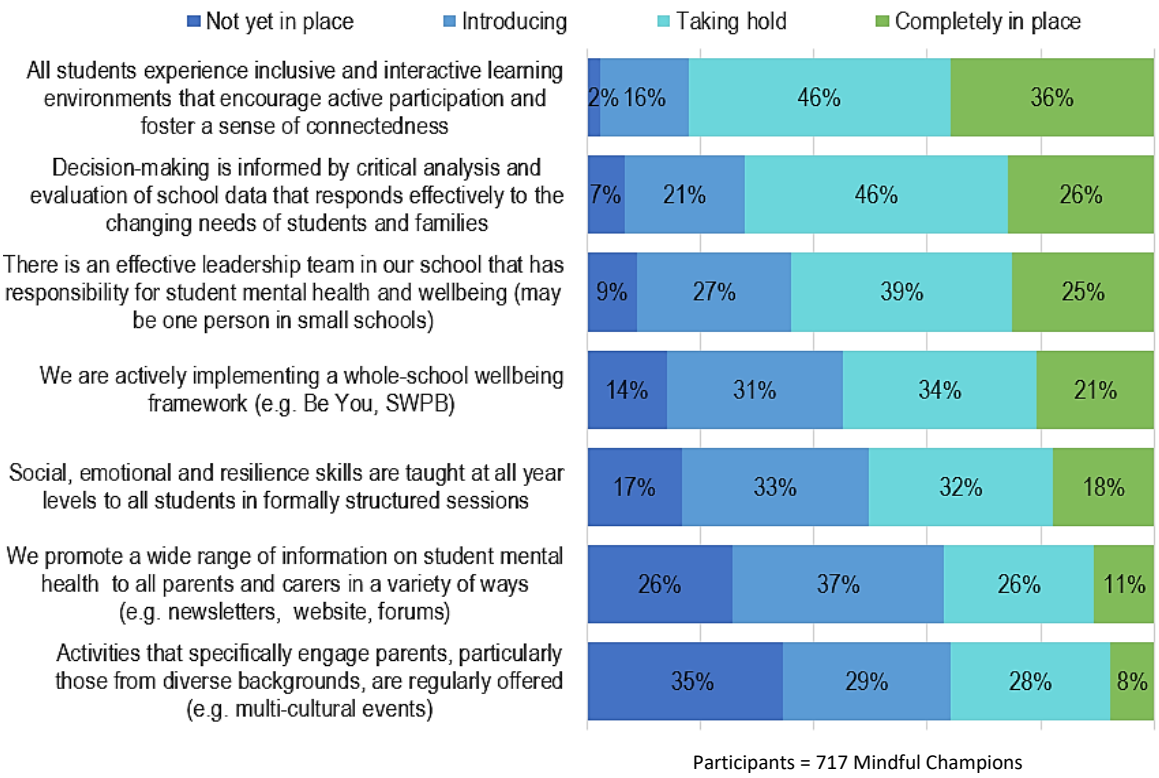
While many schools were taking strides in implementing whole-school wellbeing, fewer schools were actively engaging parents or explicitly teaching resilience skills to promote student mental health.

Primary schools across Australia have invested in promoting student wellbeing for decades, starting with pioneering initiatives like KidsMatter in 2007 (Dix et al., 2019). For many, participating in Smiling Mind is just one of several initiatives being undertaken in their school. Typically, a school's readiness to undertake a new program like Smiling Mind can be influenced by how much they already embody a whole-school wellbeing philosophy, which reflects a comprehensive approach focussed on creating a positive and supporting environment for all members of the school community (Cook et al., 2019).

In order to assess whole-school wellbeing promotion activities in Smiling Mind schools, Mindful Champions began the program by rating their school's current activities on a response scale of 'not yet in place', 'introducing', 'taking hold' or 'completely in place'. The seven items form an indicator of the extent to which schools are taking a whole-school approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing (Dix et al., 2019). The items focus on building a mentally healthy community, teaching SEL curriculum, and engaging families. Figure 9 presents the items, ordered from being most to least 'in place' in the school.

Results indicated that while a portion of schools had already implemented a range of whole-school wellbeing activities, a greater number were still in the process of introducing, or actively implementing activities. Of note were the relatively few schools currently teaching SEL and resilience skills in a structured manner (18%).

Figure 9. Whole-school wellbeing activities



Participants = 717 Mindful Champions

Implications

The less common practice of teaching structured SEL skills suggests that the Smiling Mind Primary School program provides a new opportunity for schools to teach and promote SEL skills with their students, However, this may also be challenged if the structured teaching of SEL is not commonplace.

4.2.3 *Mindful Champions' beliefs and attitudes*

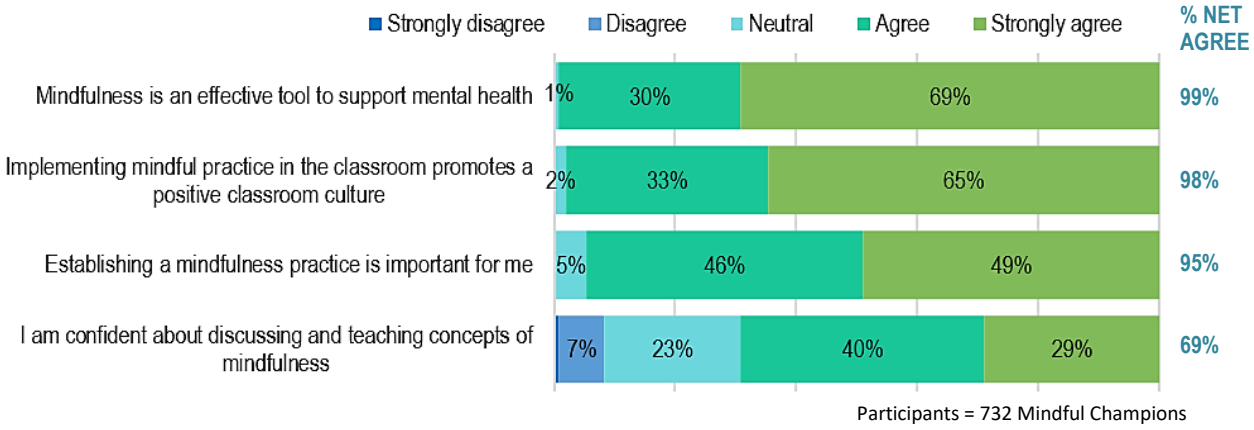
A key focus area of this evaluation is to explore the effectiveness of the Smiling Mind curriculum on student wellbeing outcomes, and the school and educator factors that influence those outcomes.

Exploring initial sentiment toward mindfulness among Mindful Champions was an important input in understanding program uptake among this cohort. Generally, Mindful Champions held positive attitudes toward mindfulness and the importance of mindful practice in the classroom. Prior to training:

- Nearly every Mindful Champion (99%) agreed that establishing a mindfulness practice was important.
- A similar proportion (98%) agreed that implementing mindful practice in the classroom promotes a positive classroom culture.
- The majority (95%) also indicated that establishing a mindfulness practice was important for them.

However, in practice, fewer Mindful Champions (69%) felt confident discussing and teaching concepts of mindfulness. Figure 10 presents the four items rated on a five-point agreement scale by the 732 Mindful Champions about to start their six-week training.

Figure 10. Mindful Champions' personal beliefs about mindful practice at the start of training

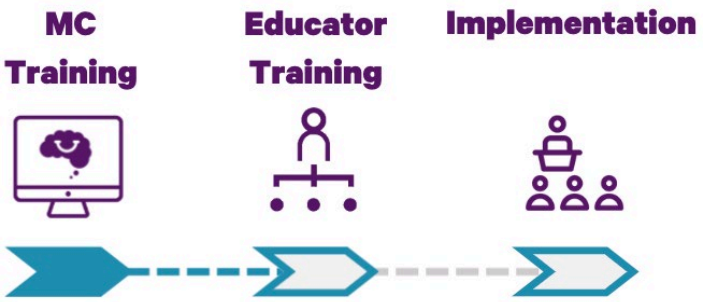


Implications

While many Mindful Champions held positive attitudes towards implementing mindfulness based SEL in the classroom, fewer felt confident in teaching the content. These findings suggest that Mindful Champion's positive attitudes may serve as an enabler in their engagement and training.

4.3 Mindful Champion and educator training

Mindful Champions were overwhelmingly positive about training quality, with most praising the facilitator's expertise and supportiveness, engagement and informativeness of the sessions, and ease of understanding the content.



4.3.1 Program quality and satisfaction

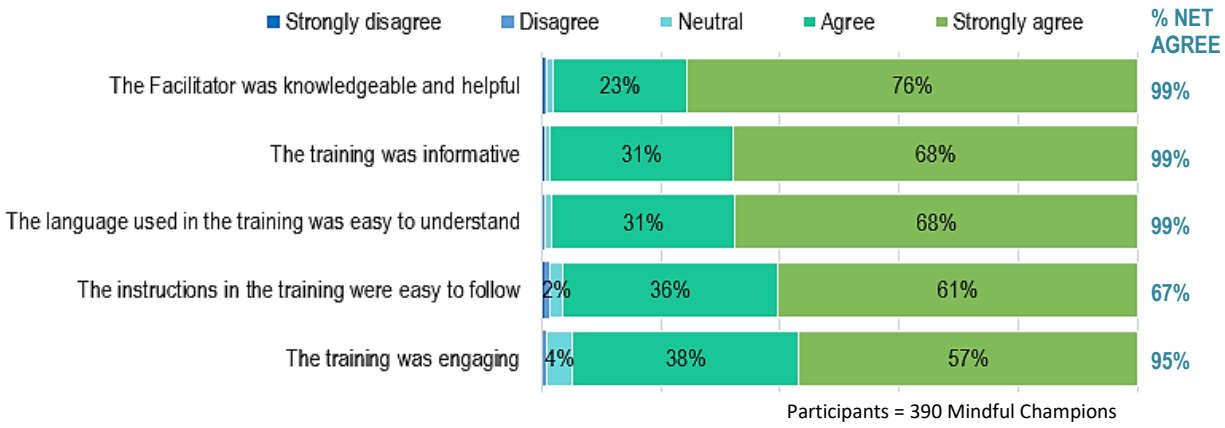
Mindful Champions were overwhelmingly positive about the quality of the training, with most agreeing that:

- The facilitator was knowledgeable and helpful (99%),
- The training was engaging (94%), informative (99%) and easy to understand (98%).

Figure 11 presents Mindful Champions' views about the quality of the training. Results suggest that the lowest performing area – providing training that is engaging – may be an opportunity for improvement.

The minor fluctuations in overall quality across each term's intake, ranging from 95% to 99% (not shown), reflected cohort differences or the time of year and not variation in program quality.

Figure 11. Quality of Mindfulness training



4.3.2 Quality of learning modules and resources

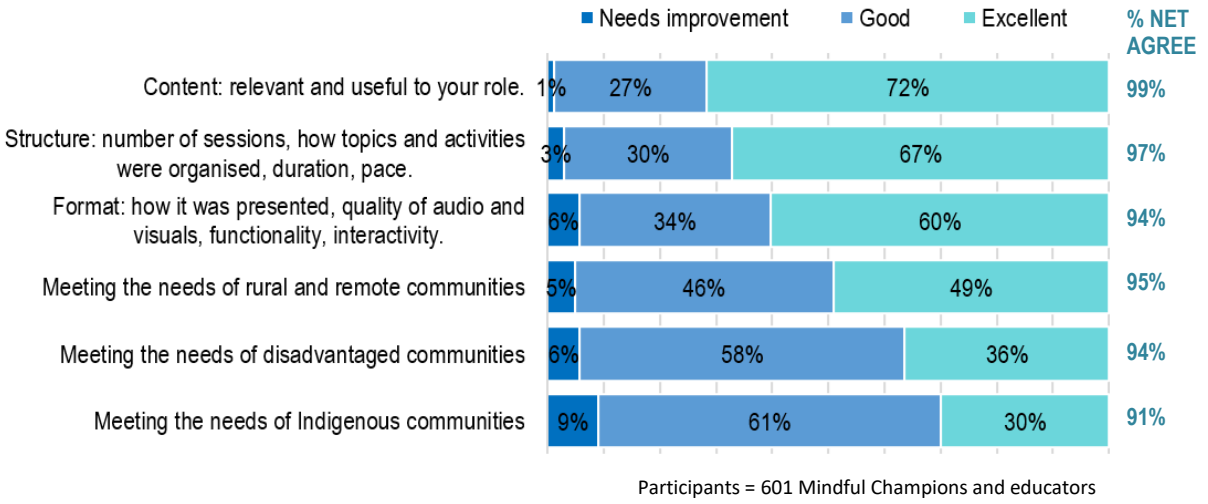
Mindful Champions were highly positive about the online learning modules, including the content, structure and format.

In addition to the facilitated webinar training, Mindful Champions access self-paced online professional learning modules and other resources through the Learning Hub. Educators also had access to these resources as part of undertaking the Mindfulness Foundations Course.

Figure 12 shows that nearly all Mindful Champions rated the training components as good or excellent.

Again, the minor fluctuations in overall quality of modules and resources term by term, ranging from 94% to 97% (not shown), were likely a reflection of cohort differences or the time of year and not variation in the quality of learning or resources.

Figure 12. Quality of the Smiling Mind learning modules and resources



Participants = 601 Mindful Champions and educators

Implications

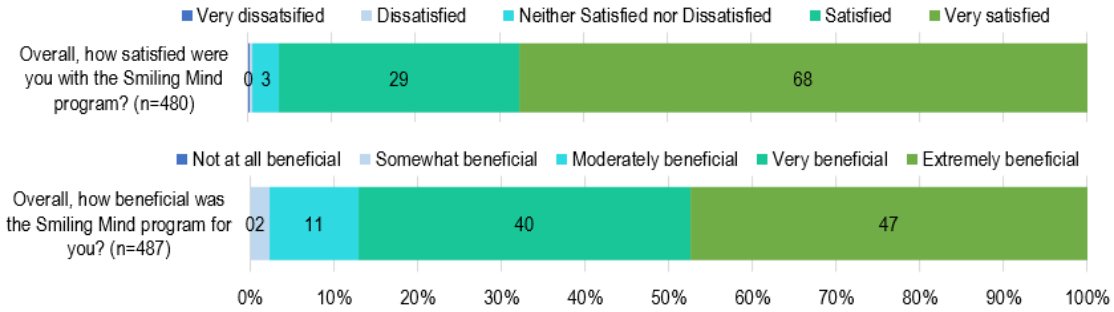
The quality of the Smiling Mind training, learning modules and resources are highly rated by most Mindful Champions. However, explicitly providing more content that reflects the disadvantaged and regional communities that the program is targeting, is suggested.

4.3.3 Overall program endorsement

Overall endorsement of the program from school staff was approaching 'world-class' levels.

In additional feedback gathered from school staff, Figure 13 shows that the vast majority were satisfied with the Smiling Mind program and its benefits.

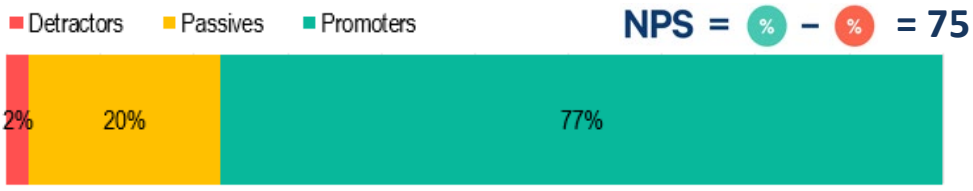
Figure 13. Overall, how beneficial has the program been?



A Net Promoter Score of 75 was given by school staff. This very positive result is based on the interpretation that a score above 50 is regarded as excellent and a score above 80 is regarded as world-class, according to the original developers of the NPS system (Allen et al., 2005). Figure 14 presents the result. Over half the participants (54%) report that they are 'extremely likely' (rating of 10) to recommend the Smiling Mind program to a friend or colleague.

- Mindful Champions alone scored the program 77.
- Educators alone scored the program 49.

Figure 14. NPS: How likely is it that you would recommend the Smiling Mind program to a friend or colleague?

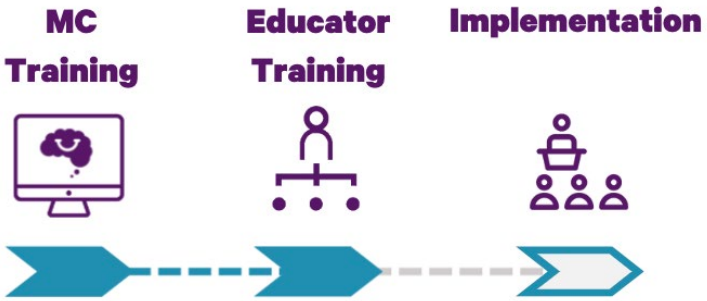


NPS: Net Promoter Score. Participants = 545 school staff

Implications

While program sentiment is quite positive, it is recommended that further consideration be given to how educator engagement can be strengthened (e.g., through more opportunities for training; using the app) to better mirror the levels of engagement by Mindful Champions.

4.4 Impact of training on school staff



4.4.1 Did the training improve Mindful Champion's capacity to implement Smiling Mind?

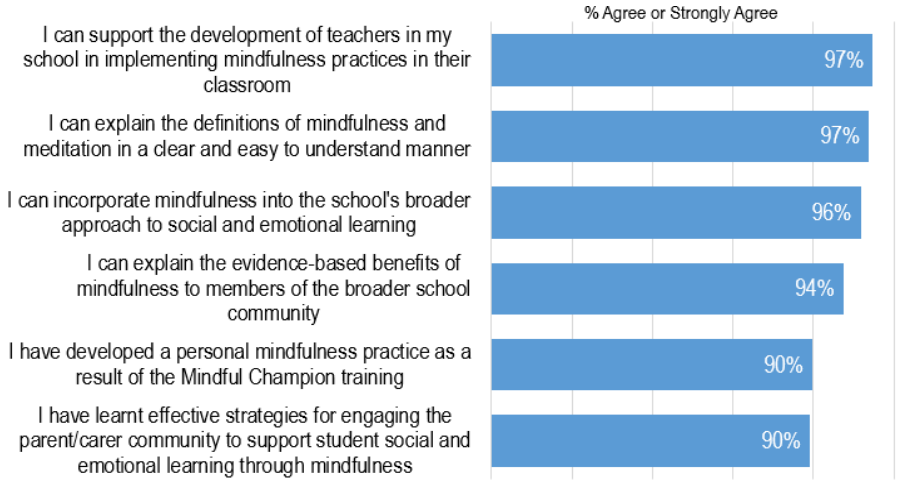
Most Mindful Champions agree that because of the training, they can incorporate mindfulness into the school's broader approach to social and emotional learning and they can support the development of teachers in their school to implement mindfulness practices in their classrooms.

An important aspect to achieving positive student wellbeing outcomes was building the capacity of Mindful Champions to implement the program school-wide, and hence, the effects of the training on confidence and capacity were assessed. Reflecting on their Mindful Champion training sessions, Mindful Champions rated how the online training impacted their capacity to explain and implement mindfulness practice. The majority of Mindful Champions reported high degrees of confidence and knowledge implementing wellbeing concepts within the school. Additionally, there was little difference in scores between intake cohorts.

Figure 15 presents the percentage of Mindful Champions who agreed with how the training impacted them. Following the Mindful Champion training, the majority of participants expressed high degrees of knowledge and confidence around implementation.

While engaging the parent and carer community is typically a barrier for educators, the training supported most Mindful Champions (90%) to learn effective strategies for engaging the parent/carer community to support student SEL through mindfulness. And for many (90%), the Mindful Champion training has helped them develop a personal mindfulness practice. These items (see Figure 15 above) were averaged to derive a measure 'training impact' on their capacity as a mindfulness leader in their school.

Figure 15. Thinking about the six weeks of Mindful Champion training you recently completed, please rate your agreement with how it has impacted your capacity



Participants = 387 Mindful Champions

4.4.2 Training quality and its impact on the capacity and confidence of Mindful Champions

Mindful Champions who are highly positive about the Smiling Mind training are significantly more likely to have increased capacity to lead and feel confident about implementing mindfulness in their school.

In Figure 16, we compared the feedback obtained from Mindful Champions concerning the quality of both the training and module program components – represented in Figure 11 and Figure 12, respectively. Moreover, we investigated how this feedback related to the training's influence on participants' capacity to explain and implement mindfulness practice – depicted in Figure 15. Importantly, this capacity should influence their confidence to discuss and teach concepts of mindfulness, as indicated in Figure 10 and the Theory of Change in Figure 2.

The results from this analysis show that there were moderate to high inter-relationships among these factors. Particularly noteworthy was the suggestion that those Mindful Champions strongly impacted by the training were significantly more likely to feel confident to teach mindfulness (Correlation r = 0.64, p < 0.001), reflected in the following positive comments.

> *"This is an amazing program. I can't wait to see the further advantages over time." (Mindful Champ)*
>
> *"Fantastic program for both students and staff members." (Mindful Champion)*

Figure 16. The impact of the training on Mindful Champion capacity (Correlation r)

Participants = 419 Mindful Champions

4.4.3 Program impact on beliefs about mindfulness

Implementing the Smiling Mind Program school-wide, involves a teach-the-teacher model.

- First, the nominated school **Mindful Champions** undertake an intensive online six-week training course.
- They then begin implementation by introducing the program to educators through and introduction workshop, followed by providing access to the Learning Hub.
- Within the Learning Hub, educators undergo training by completing the Mindfulness Foundations course that builds their capacity to run the PCC with their students as part of every-day classroom activities.

As such, it is theorised that to effect change in students, there needs to be change in teachers and teaching practice first.

Significant shifts were found in Mindful Champions' and educators' beliefs about mindfulness, before and after training (expressed as effect size Cohen's d, $p < 0.01$), as shown in Figure 17, and reflected in the following comment from an educator.

> *"Love the program, keep adding to it. It has made a huge difference to my life and my classroom." (Educator)*

These broad shifts in attitudes overall – a medium shift for Mindful Champions (d = 0.52) and a smaller shift for educators (d = 0.42) – are necessary preconditions and moderators for effecting change in teaching practice that may lead to supporting the development of student outcomes. Results indicated that the greatest shifts in attitudes were for:

- Feeling confident about discussing and teaching concepts of mindfulness (45% increase for MCs and 23% for educators)
- Establishing mindfulness practice being important (5% increase for MCs and 12% increase for educators).

Figure 17. Program impact on personal beliefs about mindfulness – Cohen's d

Attitudes and beliefs	School Staff	Post-Program % Increase	Effect Size	Cohen's d	Bars show pre-post Post % Agreement
Establishing a mindfulness practice is important for me	Mindful Champion	5%	Small	0.43	97%
	Educator	12%	Medium	0.54	88%
Mindfulness is an effective tool to support mental health	Mindful Champion	1%	No Effect	0.18	100%
	Educator	4%	Small	0.40	97%
Mindful practice in the classroom promotes a positive classroom culture	Mindful Champion	3%	Small	0.31	100%
	Educator	2%	No Effect	0.17	90%
I feel confident about discussing and teaching concepts of mindfulness	Mindful Champion	45%	Large	1.04	96%
	Educator	23%	Medium	0.59	69%

Effects are statistically significant $p < 0.01$, and interpreted according to Cohen's d of 0.2 small, 0.5 medium and 0.8 large.
Participants = 692 Mindful Champions and 519 educators

Implications

Significant shifts in attitudes before and after training suggests that the Smiling Mind training and onboarding has been effective. Of those who got to the stage of completing a Check-in survey, there was substantial gain made in the views of educators and Mindful Champions. This suggests that the training and onboarding was successful in terms of improving beliefs about the benefits of mindfulness among school staff.

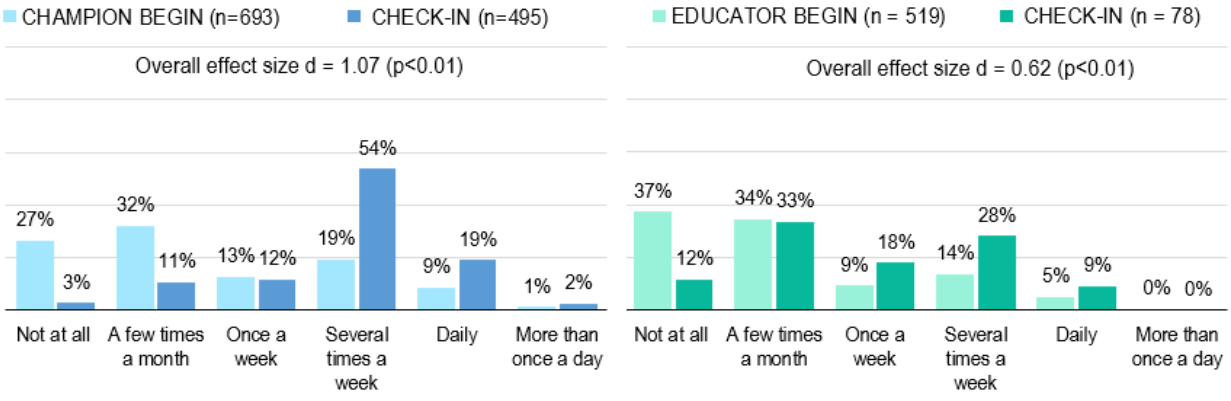
There is supporting evidence for the role of the 'Mindful Champion'. From the outset, Mindful Champions tend to agree more strongly than classroom educators about mindfulness practice being important as well as an effective tool to support mental health and promote positive classroom culture. The significant differences between Mindful Champions' views for each statement are equivalent to a medium effect ($d = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$). This supports the notion of the 'Champion', or individual likely to exhibit greater capacity to implement Smiling Mind in their school.

4.4.4 Increase in mindfulness practice

Personal mindfulness practice among school staff was examined before and after training. Both Mindful Champions and educators experienced greater personal practice of mindfulness. Figure 18 compares the responses given at the start of the training and then six-weeks later. Comparatively:

- Mindful Champions increased their mindful practice from *a few times a month*, on average, to *several times a week*, equivalent to a large effect ($d = 1.07$).
- Educators increased their mindful practice from *a few times a month*, on average, to *once a week*, equivalent to a medium effect ($d = 0.62$).

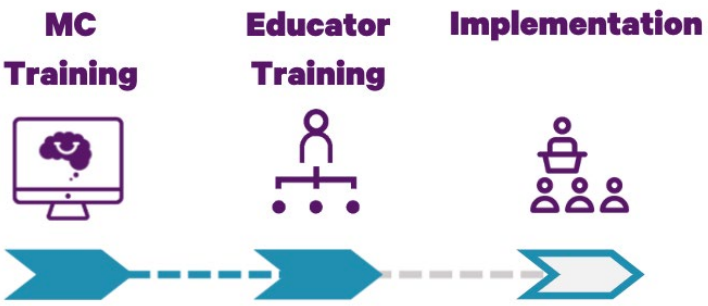
Figure 18. In the past month, how frequently have you deliberately practised mindfulness or meditation?



Implications

These results highlight that the program has encouraged increased personal mindfulness practice of school staff. However, this effect was smaller for educators when compared to Mindful Champions. Assuming that shifts in personal behaviours reflects similar greater uptake in classrooms, strengthening engagement, such as enhancing the number of touchpoints with non-Mindful Champion educator staff, may garner greater investment in the program and its intended outcomes.

4.5 Impact on wellbeing outcomes of school staff



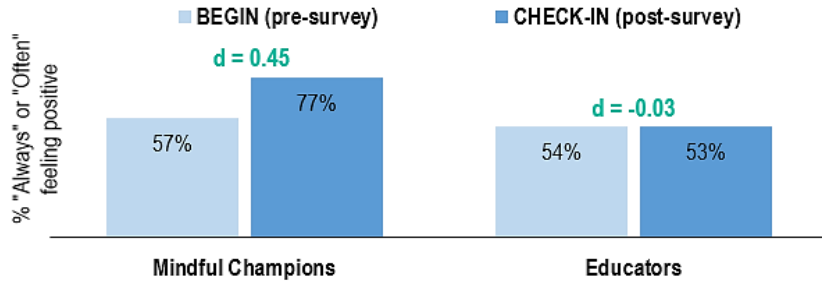
4.5.1 Increased wellbeing

Mindful Champions and classroom educators were assessed on their wellbeing at pre- and post-program implementation. Wellbeing was assessed using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS-7), which is a 7-item validated scale used to measure both feeling and functioning aspects of mental wellbeing (see Appendix C Figure 47 for scale items).

The aggregated pre-post results are presented in Figure 19, along with an estimate of impact (effect size d). The average proportion of respondents scoring positively on the WEMBS scale showed:

- Over half of the Mindful Champions (57%) scored positively on wellbeing at baseline, which increased significantly to 77% at follow-up (an increase of 20% following the 6-week training), equivalent to a medium effect ($d = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$).
- Around half (54%) of educators scored positively at baseline, and similarly at follow-up (53%), showing no improvement at pre and post surveys ($d = -0.03$, $p > 0.05$).

Figure 19. Staff wellbeing – percentage of staff often or always feeling positive



Effect sizes interpreted according to Cohen's d of 0.2 small, 0.5 medium and 0.8 large.
Based on average of the 7-item Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale, rated on Never to Always (See Appendix C).
Mindful Champion pre n = 689, post n = 472; Educators pre = 587, post n = 84.

While Mindful Champions reported significantly improved wellbeing, this benefit did not extend across all school staff. No evidence of wellbeing change was found for educators from when they began Smiling Mind to when they did a check-in several months later. However, there were some small increases in *feeling optimistic about the future* (4% more) and *dealing better with problems* (5% more), there were also fewer educators who were *feeling useful* or *being decisive* (7% fewer).

Delving deeper, Mindful Champions experienced positive increases across a number of areas within wellbeing. Including significant ($p < 0.01$) improvements on:

- Feeling relaxed (d = 0.63, medium effect)
- Having clarity of mind (d = 0.49, small effect)
- Dealing well with problems (d = 0.46, small effect)
- Feeling useful (d = 0.42, small effect), and
- Feeling optimistic about the future (d = 0.41, small effect)

Upon further exploration of the data, a consistent pattern emerged—indicating that educators' worry regarding COVID, bushfires, and extreme weather had increased since beginning the program. Conversely, Mindful Champions' worry showed a notable decrease over the same period.

The difference was not necessarily due to their role as a classroom educator. While approximately 66% of educators were classroom teachers and implementing Smiling Mind in their classroom, a similar number of Mindful Champions (54%) were also classroom teachers and implementing Smiling Mind in their classroom.

Another main difference was their role as the 'Wellbeing Coordinator' in the school, a responsibility taken on by only 1.2% of educators compared to 20% of Mindful Champions.

The differences in outlook may be a combination of not having the 'Champion' mindset and not having the six-weeks of intensive training. Subsequently, the higher frequency of mindfulness practice seen by Mindful Champions (see section 'increase in mindfulness practice') may be a contributing factor to their wellbeing improvement.

Perhaps the combination of mindfulness training supported their role and mindset as the Wellbeing Coordinator to reduce their worry about managing the impact of extreme events amongst the school community. Moreover, the increasing level of worry for educators may be more than the Smiling Mind program can alleviate.

Implications

It is evident that educators experience much less benefit on their wellbeing compared to Mindful Champions. It raises the question about whether the program was indeed less effective for educators, or the potential for other factors at play. For example, were educators more worried about extreme events and did their level of worry change over time? Or is this a reflection of greater personal practice seen by Mindful Champions?

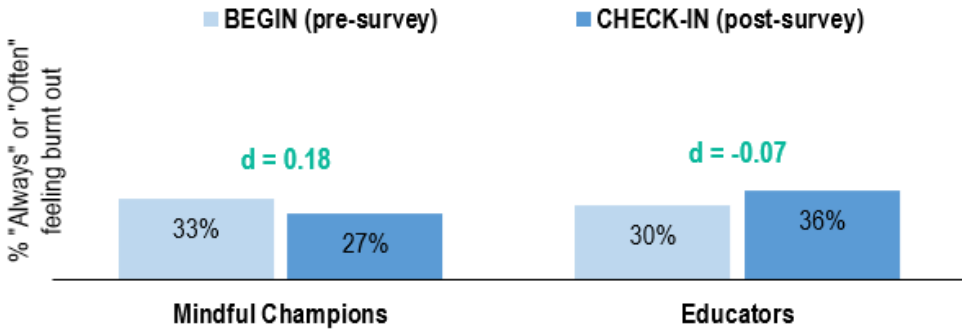
4.5.2 Reduced burnout

Mindful practice also aims to reduce the feeling of burnout (Roeser et al., 2013; Emerson et al., 2017). Burnout is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a syndrome conceptualised as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. Burnout refers specifically to phenomena in the occupational context and should not be applied to describe experiences in other areas of life. Burnout was measured using the burnout sub-scale of the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire II (COPSOQ II: see Appendix B Figure 50 for items).

The aggregated pre-post results for educators' levels of workplace burnout are presented in Figure 20, along with an estimate of impact (effect size d). The average proportion of respondent scoring negatively on burnout showed:

- A third (33%) of Mindful Champions often or always felt burnt out at baseline, compared to 27% at follow-up, showing a 6% decrease in feeling burnt out after the 6-week training ($d = 0.18$, $p < 0.01$).
- For educators, there were 6% more feeling burnt out between their pre and post surveys, although this difference was not significant ($d = -0.07$, $p = 0.57$).

Figure 20. Workplace burnout: How have you recently been going at work?



Based on average of the 7-item Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire II (COPSOQ II) Scale, rated on Never to Always (see Appendix C). Mindful Champion pre n = 681, post n = 473; Educators pre = 508, post n = 71.

Mindful Champions showed very small but significant reductions in their workplace burnout during the six-week training period ($p < 0.01$). For example:

- Mindful Champions reported having *energy for family and friends* ($d = 0.38$), and
- 12% fewer reported that they always or often *feel less worn out at the end of a working day* ($d = 0.20$).

In comparison, there were no shifts of practical significance in burnout for classroom educators reported between the Begin and the Check-in surveys several months later. Although 13% more educators were *feeling exhausted in the morning at the thought of another working day*, the effect was very small and not significant ($d = -0.10$, $p > 0.05$), potentially due to the small post-program sample size.

Another consideration is that these results may reflect the extent to which COVID and other extreme events were differentially impacting Mindful Champions and classroom educators. The negative impact of external factors might have been greater than the benefits of the program.

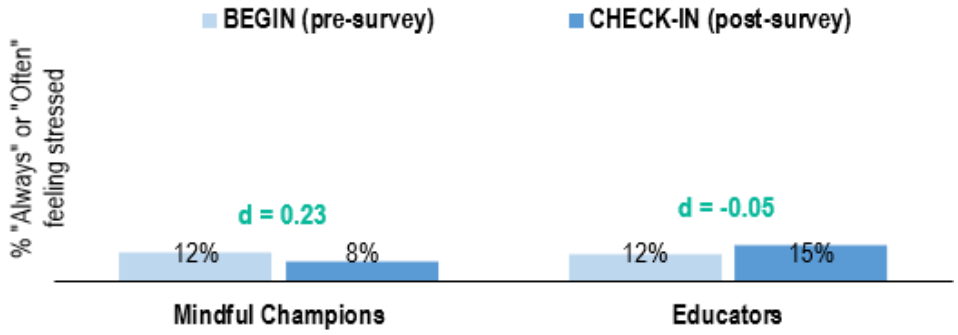
4.5.3 Reduced perceived stress

Four items from the Perceived Stress Scale (See Appendix C: Cohen, Kamarck & Mermelstein, 1983) were used to assess overall levels of perceived stress experienced by staff (see Appendix C Figure 49 for items).

The aggregated pre-post results for perceived stress are presented in Figure 21, along with an estimate of impact (effect size d). The average proportion of respondents scoring negatively on stress showed:

- 12% of Mindful Champions often or always felt stressed at baseline, compared to 8% at follow-up, showing a 4% decrease in feeling burnt out after the 6-week training (d = 0.23, small significant effect, $p < 0.01$).
- However, educators experienced a no practical changes in their levels of perceived stress (d = -0.05, $p > 0.05$), with scores of 12% at baseline and 15% at follow-up that were not significantly different.

Figure 21. Workplace stress: In the last month, how often have you felt stressed



Based on average of the 4-item Perceived Stress Scale (PPS), rated on Never to Always (see Appendix C).
Mindful Champion pre n = 759, post n = 531; Educators pre = 514, post n = 73.

Mindful Champions showed significant reductions in their perceived stress during the six-week training period ($p < 0.01$) – results that are similar to other studies (e.g., Roeser et al., 2013). For example, more Mindful Champions reported they always or often:

- *Felt confident about their ability to handle personal problems* (d = 0.28, moderate effect)
- *Feel that things are going their way* (d = 0.27, moderate effect)

In comparison, educators exhibited a slight increase in their perceived stress that was not of practical or statistical significance.

The Smiling Mind program therefore appeared to have reduced workplace burnout and stress for those educators who participated in the Mindful Champion training component of the program.

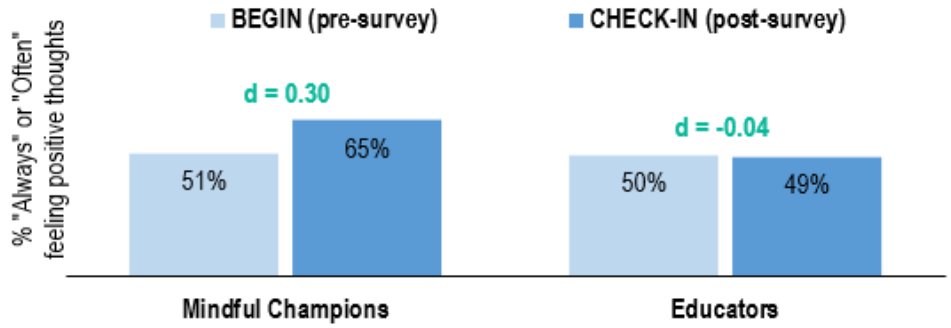
4.5.4 Improved mindfulness

To assess adult mindfulness, 9 items adapted from the Cognitive Affective Mindfulness Scale Revised (CAMS-R: Feldman et al., 2007), were included in the Educator Check-in survey. The items are presented in Appendix C (Figure 48) see and the overall results are shown in Figure 22.

The proportion of positive responses to the scale, as well as effect sizes are express in Figure 22. Results indicated that:

- Half (51%) of the Mindful Champions scored positively on cognitive and affective mindfulness, which increased to 65% at follow-up (an increase of 14%, with a small significant effect size of d = 0.30, p < 0.01).
- No difference was found for educators (with a slight 1% decrease of no effect d = -0.04, p > 0.05).

Figure 22. People have a variety of ways of relating to their thoughts and feelings. How much does each of these ways apply to you?



Based on average of 9-item from the Cognitive Affective Mindfulness Scale (CAMS-R), rated on Never to Always.
Mindful Champion pre n = 754, post n = 526; Educators pre = 566, post n = 80.

Mindful Champions showed significant increases in mindfulness during the six-week training period (p < 0.01). Looking at some areas of cognitive and affective mindfulness, Mindful Champions demonstrated:

- A small effect (d = 0.49) in their tendency to *observe their thoughts without judging them*.
- A small effect (d = 0.25), in their tendency to *acceptance for things they cannot change*

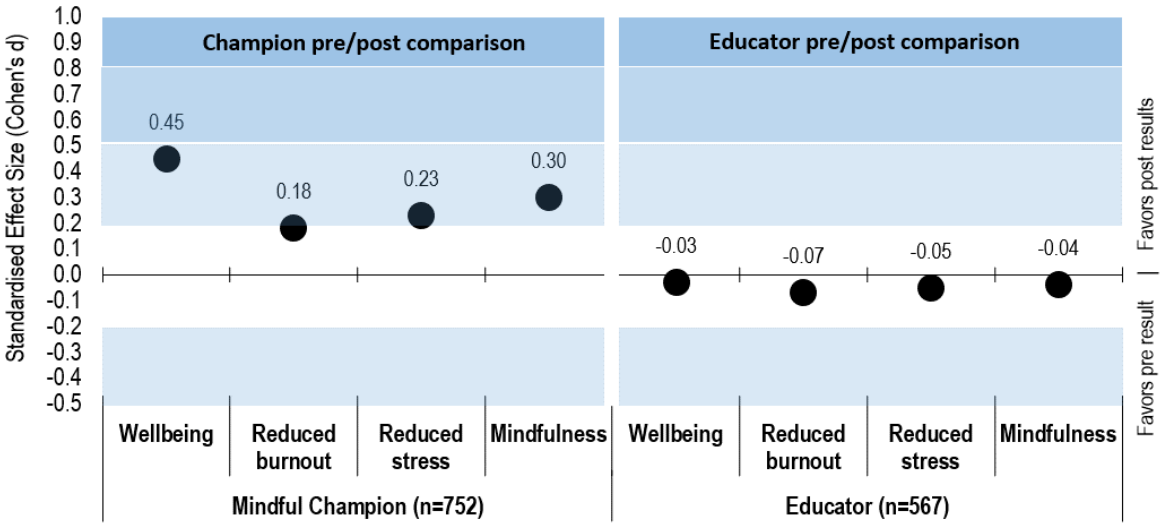
In contrast, there were no significant shifts in mindfulness behaviours for classroom educators reported between the Begin and the Check-in surveys. This again suggests that the Smiling Mind program appeared to improve outcomes for Mindful Champions, but had no impact on those who did not participate in the intensive training component of the program.

4.5.5 Summary

Figure 23 summarises the outcomes of Mindful Champions and educators who completed two surveys, before (pre) and after (post) their respective trainings.

The professional learning related to Smiling Mind appeared to have a medium positive impact on Mindful Champions' wellbeing (d = 0.45) and a smaller impacts on mindfulness (d = 0.30), and reducing their levels of perceived stress (d = 0.23) and burnout (d = 0.18). However, evidence for a positive impact on educators was not as apparent.

Figure 23. Evidence of impact of Smiling Mind on Mindful Champions and educators



Note that the effects for burnout and stress should be interpreted as reductions in burnout and stress.
Effect sizes interpreted according to Cohen's d of 0.2 small, 0.5 medium and 0.8 large.

Implications

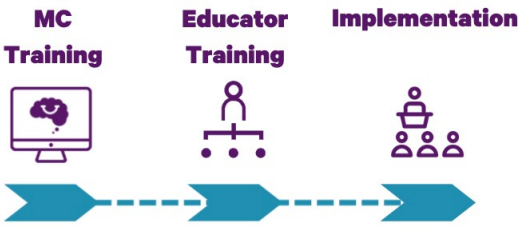
While Mindful Champions saw positive shifts in all areas of wellbeing, the wellbeing benefits for educators weren't as pronounced.

A key difference between these groups relates to their degree of exposure to the Smiling Mind program, with Mindful Champions experiencing intensive six-week training. In comparison, educators were exposed to the key elements of the program through their Mindful Champions, and again through digital resources provided by Smiling Mind.

It is recommended that future iterations of the program leverage the key components of Mindful Champion training which promoted greater wellbeing outcomes and extend these practices to all educators to promote whole-school wellbeing.

4.6 Implementation and engagement

Once Mindful Champions introduced educators in their school to the Smiling Mind Program and provided access to the PCC via the Learning Hub, classroom educators were encouraged to use the digitally delivered curriculum materials, classroom-ready lesson plans, and Smiling Mind app with their students in Years 1 to 6. Accordingly, this section considers how school staff and students engaged with the Smiling Mind Primary School program.



4.6.1 Digital Learning Hub usage

Primary Classroom Curriculum (PCC) usage

Learning Hub data concerning online usage of the PCC was available from April 2022 to December 2023. However, school staff were previously provided with printed hard copies of Learning Hub materials. As such, program uptake was difficult to monitor. Overall, results indicated that:

- the PCC was accessed digitally over 8,274 times by over 1,163 school staff members, of which almost 893 could be identified as registered users[3].
- users accessed the PCC digitally on an average of 7 unique days each, but varied with length of time since starting. For example, those starting in Term 1 2022 accessed the PCC 11 times on average, while those starting in Term 4 2022 accessed it 3 times.
- of the educators who accessed the PCC digitally, 35% accessed the PCC once, and 62% accessed the PCC fewer than 5 times.
- the 20% highest using educators accessed the PCC digitally at least 10 times each.

Training modules usage

The online Learning Hub also provided access to **Mindful Foundations Training Modules** and Mindful Champions **Training Modules** (see Figure 1)**.** The data showed modules were being used:

- **573 Mindful Champions** (533 identified as registered users) completed at least one Mindful Champion Training Module, with **more than half (368) completing all 7 modules.**
- **1,228 school staff members** (945 identified as registered users) accessed at least one module of the Mindful Foundations, with **781 completing all 6 modules**.

These results are from the school staff who could be linked to a 'user profile' in the Learning Hub, out of a total of 3,540 who were recorded as registered users in an active Phases 1-3 school.[4]

[3] 'Registered users' are those listed in the Learning Hub and identifiable as linked to an active school.

[4] Limited data could be linked from the Learning Hub though to student outcomes compromising the ability to make inferences about usage on student outcomes. Exploratory analyses described in Appendix C.

4.6.2 App usage

As part of the program, school staff access the PCC through the Learning Hub, to deliver pre-planned scaffolded SEL classroom lessons and meditations, for students to learn, practice and integrate social and emotional skill across 20 topics (see Appendix B Figure 44). The PCC is further supported by additional classroom meditations within the free Smiling Mind app. Figure 24 shows the most popular app programs and their sessions. Appendix C provides more detail on the app sessions and their usage (see Figure 46 and Figures 51-54).

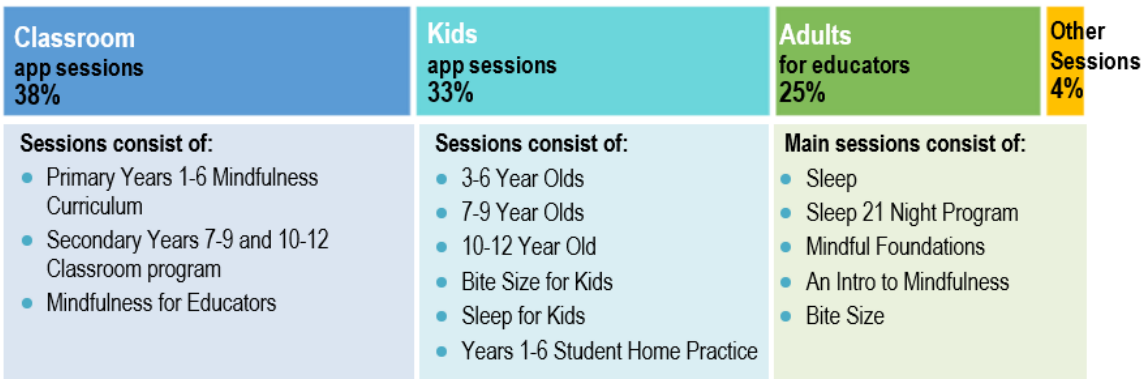
The most popular app components were therefore the **Classroom, Kids** and **Adult** sessions. Previous research reports that students have found the app user-friendly and enjoyable (Eadie, 2021; Adam, 2023).

- The **Classroom sessions** directly link to the PCC and lesson plans for whole-classroom use. Within the **Classroom sessions**, there is a module for each year level, and includes the lesson plans and supporting meditations for each topic.
- **The Kids sessions** are more flexible and designed for incidental or supplementary use, like after lunch to settle the students or with individual students who may need additional time to self-regulate.
- The **Adult sessions** are designed for Mindful Champions and educators to support their own wellbeing.

Figure 24 describes overall usage of the app by school staff, including the most popular sessions. In terms of overall usage:

- 38% of app sessions belong to the **Classroom programs** that comprise the PCC.
- 33% of sessions relate to the **Kids programs** used by teachers with students outside of the structured curriculum.
- 25% of sessions fall under the **Adult programs**, used by educators themselves – the sleep sessions being the most popular.

Figure 24. The array of Smiling Mind Program App sessions and their popularity amongst teachers



App usage data provided by Smiling Mind indicated overall:

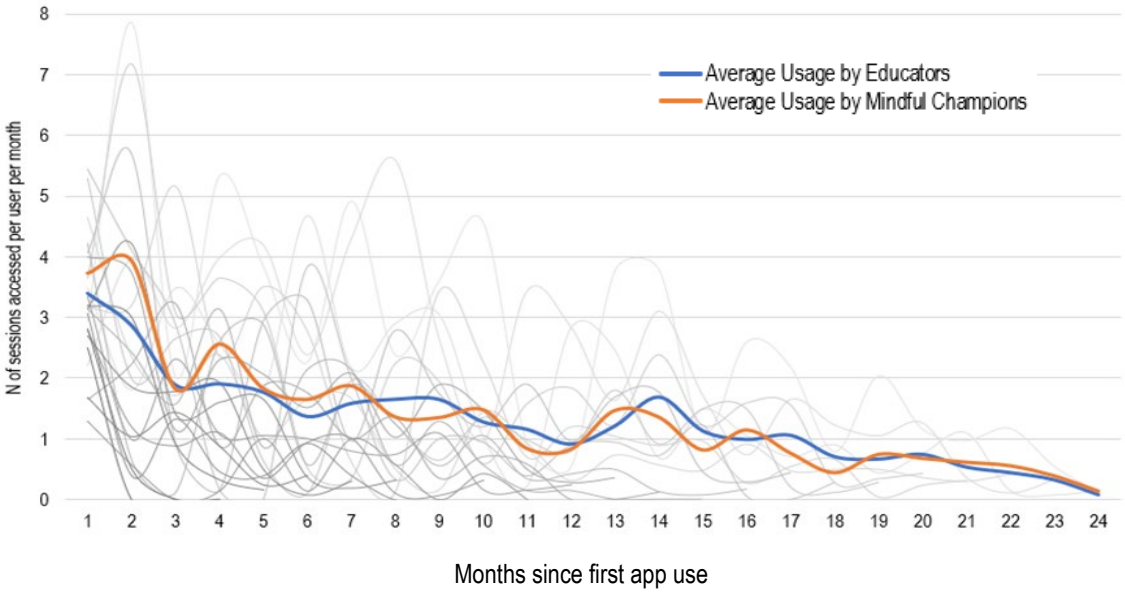
- **38,247 sessions** were accessed by **1,291 Mindful Champions and educators** during April 2021 to February 2023 (inclusive), with an average of **32 sessions** completed per user.

- Of the 1,291 educators, 10% accessed one app session, and 26% accessed fewer than 5 sessions.
- The highest using educators accessed more than 500 sessions each, with 7% of educators accessing more than 100 sessions each.

In terms of patterns of app usage over time, there was a small overall decline from the initial stages, in levels of usage across the two years relative to the growing number of recruited schools. This behaviour is not uncommon and reflects a lower level of commitment after the initial excitement and intensive support has passed (Johnson et al., 2014).

By aligning the different 'start dates' of schools revealed the trajectory of app usage by educators and Mindful Champions over time. Figure 25 shows the average app usage of the Classroom and Kids sessions each month since first using the app. Initial use within the first month was strongest, with around three sessions per month. Usage tended to decline and plateaued at one to two sessions per month around the 10-14 month stage, and then gradually declined to no use by around the 24-month stage. The peaks occur during term and troughs reflect term breaks. For additional app usage metrics, see Appendix C (Figures 51-54).

Figure 25. Trajectories of app usage (Classroom and Kids sessions) by educators and Mindful Champions



Participants = 1240 App Users.

Implications

Even though there were increasing numbers of schools and participating educators with each recruitment cycle, the actual trajectory of usage tended to decline with time. If Classroom app session usage is a reflection of program sustainability, increasing preferences and program flexibility may improve longer-term engagement.

4.7 Impact on students

In the previous sections the evidence suggests that Smiling Mind has been effective in improving the knowledge, confidence and behaviours of Mindful Champions, and to a lesser extent, the educators. In the current section, the use of Smiling Mind and its impact on student wellbeing outcomes is explored.

As part of the program, student engagement with the PCC was routinely monitored. Classroom educators were encouraged to administer the online Student Survey before they started teaching the PCC and again after each term of teaching.

Within the surveys, introduced in Figure 7 above, students responded to several questions about the nature of their engagement with Smiling Mind, as well as rating their levels of wellbeing across six domains: mindfulness, happiness, optimism, perseverance, connection to school, and school engagement (also see Appendix C).

These measures provided the opportunity to investigate evidence of impact of Smiling Mind on student wellbeing outcomes by comparing cohorts of students.

Accordingly, this section uses three ways of grouping students into 'control' and 'intervention' groups to test the hypothesis that students who have engaged with Smiling Mind, have improved wellbeing outcomes compared to those who have not.

1. Largest sample: Comparing between students who have not (n = 1111) and those who have (n = 1912) recently done Smiling Mind in class. This largest sample provides our main evidence.
2. Largest difference: Comparing between students who have not (n = 1221) and those who have (n = 558) taken Smiling Mind home. This cohort of the most engaged students provides additional evidence of impact.
3. Strongest design: Comparing within student pre (n = 429) and post (n = 347) survey results. This smallest group provides our most robust evidence of change.

The first two approaches, comparing different groups of students, were assessed to identify differences in the groups that might confound results. Demographic differences that are known to influence wellbeing include socio-economic background, gender and age.

There were no significant differences in socio-economic background (ICSEA) or gender. However, there were significant differences in average Year Level between the groups of students. This confounding effect of Year Level needed to be corrected for, as explained below.

4.7.1 Comparison 1: Students engaging in the classroom

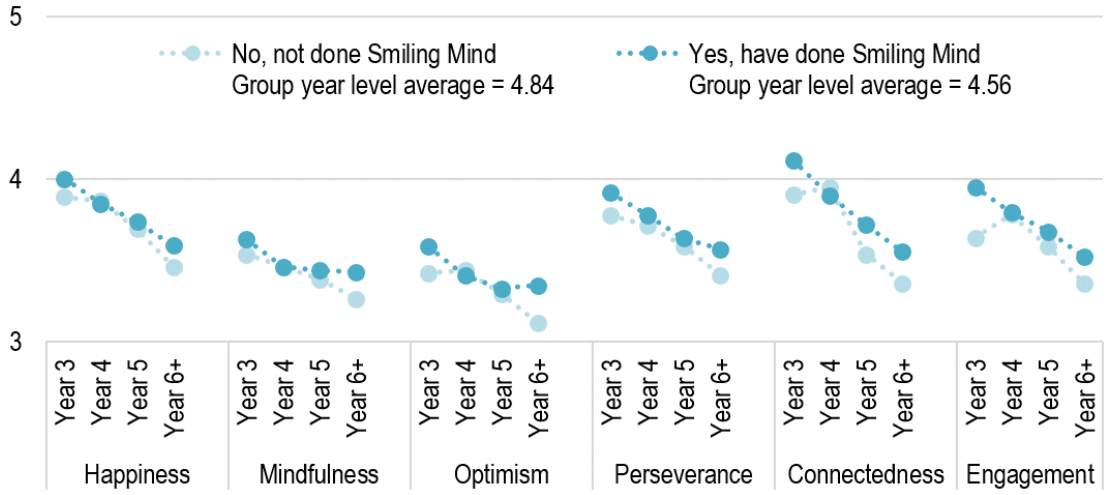
Of the 3,104 student surveys collected, 63% of students reported recently doing Smiling Mind activities in their class. The following results, presented in Figure 26, are based on their responses.

Figure 26. Student's engagement with Smiling Mind (% of students)

First, we considered if being a Mindful Champion made a difference within the cohort who had done Smiling Minds in the classroom (n = 1912). Interestingly, we found no significant differences in student wellbeing outcomes ($p < 0.05$) based on the teacher being a Mindful Champion or not.

We then checked the Year levels of both cohorts. The 'yes' group (average Year level = 4.56, sd = 1.17) was younger than the 'no' group (average Year level = 4.84 sd = 1.13). This is important because it is widely reported that wellbeing outcomes decline with age (e.g., Dumuid et al., 2023). Comparing the groups without accounting for age would risk over-attributing the impact of the Smiling Mind program on student wellbeing outcomes (e.g., Dix, Jarvis & Slee, 2013). This is demonstrated in Figure 27, where we highlight that the differences in wellbeing outcomes by Year Level are significantly greater than the differences observed between having done Smiling Ming recently or not.

Figure 27. Decline in wellbeing outcomes with age in students who have and have not recently done Smiling Mind activities in class



'No' Group n=1111 students; 'Yes' Group n=1912 students.

There are many approaches used to account for demographic characteristics in samples that can confound results (Gopalan et al., 2020). For this analysis, we simply averaged the average results for each year level (giving 'age' equal weighting) in each cohort.

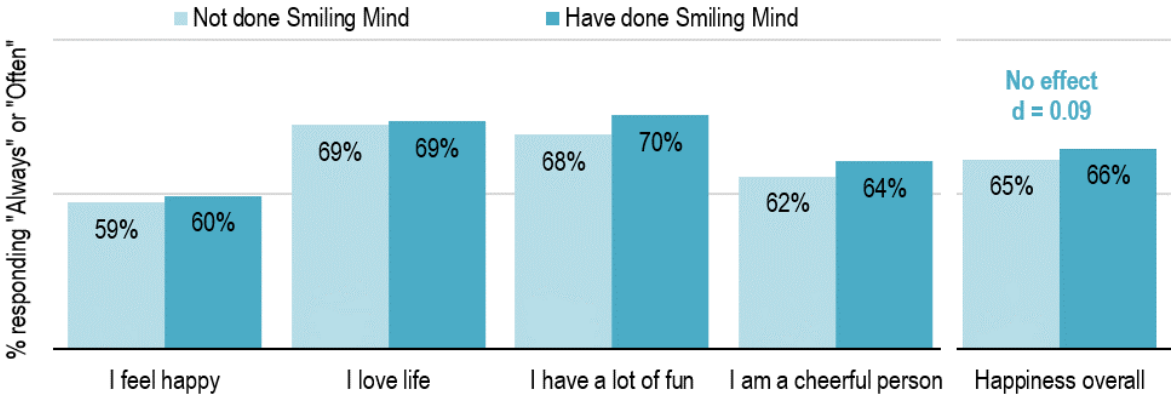
The following discussion considers each of the wellbeing domains to present our main evidence of impact. Accounting for the effect of Year Level, we examine the differences in student outcomes of those who have and have not done Smiling Mind activities recently.

Happiness

Happiness is broadly described as the overall feeling of contentment, joyfulness, and satisfaction with life (Kern et al., 2016). It was measured using the Happiness sub-scale of the EPOCH measure of wellbeing. Figure 28 presents the four items that assessed the dimension of happiness.

- Around 60% of students felt happy often or always, and 70% love life, regardless of whether or not they had recently done Smiling Mind activities in the classroom.
- Overall, there was no clear indication (d = 0.09) that the Smiling Mind Primary School program was making a difference to students' happiness.

Figure 28. Happiness: How often do you think or feel this way?



Results corrected for year level: Not done n=1111 students, Have done n=1912 students.

Comments from students were also collected and a selection are presented here that reflect aspects along the happiness dimension.

What do you like about school at the moment?

That I'm NOT crying half the time (Year 5 student)

I feel confident and happy about school at the moment. (Year 6 student)

I have awesome days even when I get a bit upset. (Year 3 student)

How do the Smiling Mind activities make you feel?

Happy and calm like I am a fresh person (Year 5 student)

Relaxed (This is why it is no fun) (Year 4)

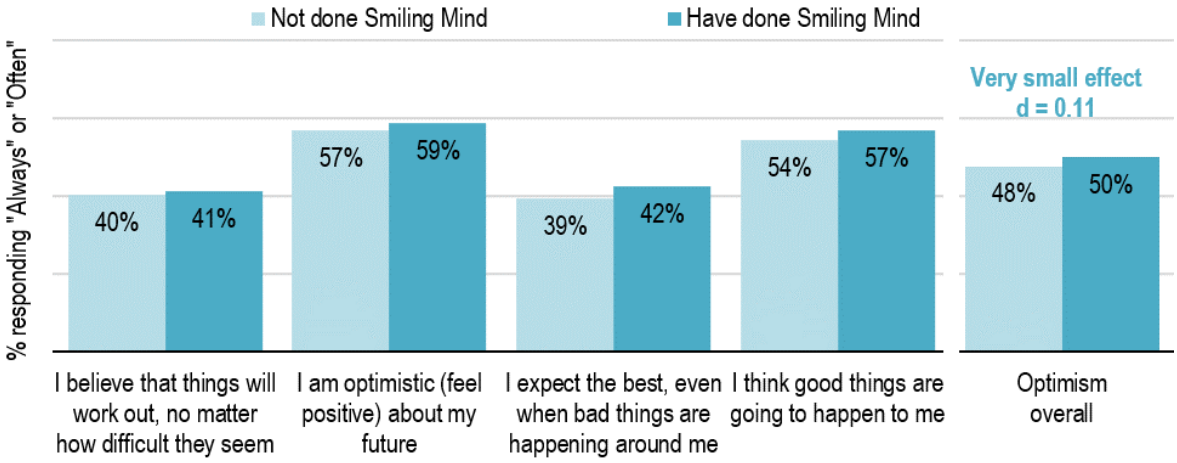
Calm bubbly and joyful (Year 5)

Optimism

Optimism means having a sense of expectation and holding a positive attitude about the future (Kern et al., 2016). Optimism was measured using its associated sub-scale of the EPOCH measure of wellbeing. Figure 29 presents the four items that assessed the dimension of optimism.

- **Overall, a very small effect was found for optimism when comparing students who recently completed Smiling Mind (50%), compared to those who had not (48%)**
- Many students often or always felt optimistic about their future (57%), but more so if they had done Smiling Mind (59%).
- Overall, 2% more students who recently engaged with Smiling Mind activities in class were feeling optimistic, a shift equivalent to a very small effect (d = 0.11).

Figure 29. Optimism: How often do you think or feel this way?



Results corrected for year level: Not done n=1111 students, Have done n=1912 students.

Students also reflected aspects of the optimism dimension in the following selected comments.

What do you like about school at the moment?

I know that going to school will help my future (Year 6 student)

Seeing my friends and being able to learn to help with my future (Year 6 student)

Being the oldest in the school and being a role model for younger students (Year 6 student)

I like how when I am sad I can easily make friends and they can play with me. I love the education. (Year 5 student)

How optimistic everyone is (Year 5 student)

How do the Smiling Mind activities make you feel?

good about my future (Year 3)

good, calm, mostly in control (Year 5)

Calm, Happy and overall positive. (Year 5)

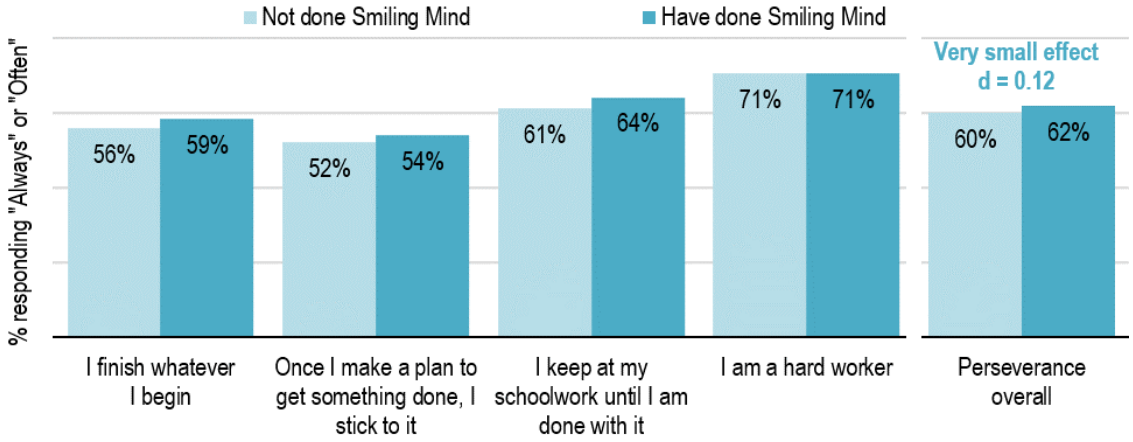
They make me feel calmer about my life and my emotions (Year 5)

Perseverance

Perseverance is the drive to pursue an aim, even when there are obstacles (Kern et al., 2016). The Perseverance sub-scale of the EPOCH measure of wellbeing was used to measure perseverance. Figure 30 presents the four items that assessed the dimension of perseverance.

- **Overall, 2% more students felt greater perseverance if they engaged with Smiling Mind compared to those who had not, a difference equivalent to a very small effect (d = 0.12).**
- 3% more students who did Smiling Mind in class, were more likely to finish whatever they began and kept at their schoolwork until it was done.
- Over 70% of students often or always believed they were hard workers regardless of doing Smiling Mind activities.

Figure 30. Perseverance: How often do you think or feel this way?



Results corrected for year level: Not done n=1111 students, Have done n=1912 students.

Students also reflected aspects of perseverance in their responses to the following questions.

What do you like about school at the moment?

I get to be with my friends and I am getting more work done than normal. (Year 6 student)

Working hard and being good (Year 4 student)

I really like how I have a lot of friends and that I am doing really well at learning in class (Year 4 student)

MY TEACHER MY FRIENDS AND WHEN THE TASKS THAT THE TEACHER GIVES US ARE DIFFILCULT I GET A BIT ANGRY (Year 3 student)

Doing excellent work (Year 3 student)

How do the Smiling Mind activities make you feel?

More good with my school work and calms me down after the break and makes me feel better and more happy (Year 5)

Refreshed in the head for a while (Year 6 student)

Determined and focused most of the time (Year 6)

They make me feel focused and more calm. (Year 4)

Be a more hard worker, calm, more concertrated (Year 3)

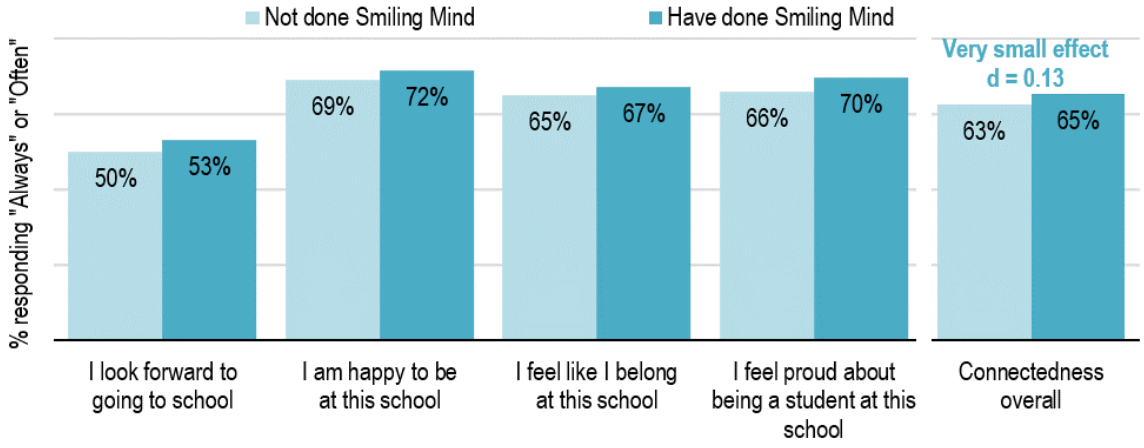
calm and ready to learn (Year 5)

Connectedness

School connectedness or the feeling of belonging to school has been found to be a strong predictor of young people's wellbeing, resilience and learning outcomes (Dix et al., 2017; Allen et al., 2018). Assessing school connectedness is based on a set of four items widely used by government education departments (Dix et al., 2017), shown in Figure 31.

- **Overall, there was a very small positive effect (d = 0.13) in students feeling connected to schools.**
- Around half the students looked forward to going to school often or always, but 3% more if they had done Smiling Mind.
- 4% more students in the group who had done Smiling Mind in class felt proud about being a student at their school.

Figure 31. Connectedness: How often do you think or feel this way?



Results corrected for year level: Not done n=1111 students, Have done n=1912 students.

These feelings of connectedness were captured in the following quotes about belonging and feeling welcomed and less socially anxious.

What do you like about school at the moment?

It is good because I feel like I belong. (Year 4 student)

They help with my understanding skills and how to treat each other (Year 6 student)

That everyone is being inclusive and we have fun in class! (Year 5 student)

That I like to be here with my friends and the teachers are great I am proud of who I am (Year 4 student)

The kindness in the teachers (Year 6 student)

my friends and I are not arguing a lot any more and spending fun time with them (Year 6 student)

Having and playing with my friends because they make me smile (Year 5 student)

How do the Smiling Mind activities make you feel?

Relaxed, it helps with social anxiety (Year 6 student)

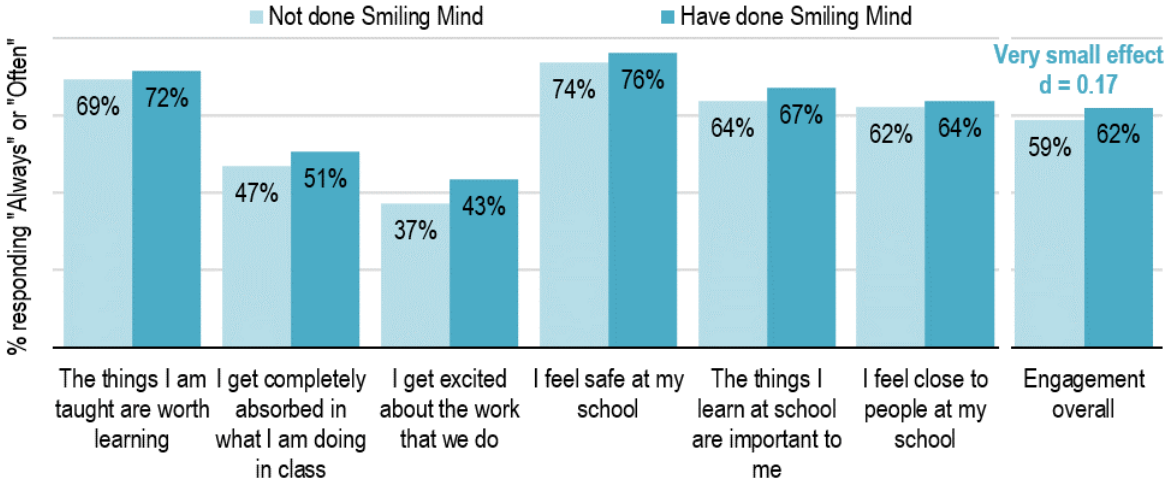
calm safe tired welcomed (Year 5)

Engagement

Engagement refers to being engrossed, focused, or wholly concentrating on an activity as well as a sense of inclusion (Goodsell et al., 2017). The measurement of engagement was sourced from the Young Minds Matter engagement scale. Figure 32 shows the six items that comprised the measure of engagement.

- **Overall, there was a very small positive effect (d = 0.17), reflected by 3% more students feeling engaged with their learning.**
- 6% more students were more likely to get excited about the work they did in class if they were in the group that had done Smiling Mind activities.
- Importantly, three-quarters of students felt safe at school, but even more so if they were doing Smiling Mind.

Figure 32. Engagement: How often do you think or feel this way?



Results corrected for year level: Not done n=1111 students, Have done n=1912 students.

Students also reflected how engaged they were feeling, in the following selected responses.

What do you like about school at the moment?

when i play with my friends because they make me feel safe (Year 5 student)

that the teachers are kind and help more (Year 4 student)

the subjects in which i can learn actively and engage. eg. Ngarrindjeri, SAASTA, and Visual Arts (Year 7 student)

I like mindfulness activities to calm me down. Love art because I focus on one thing and Love colour (Year 3 student)

learning more things that can help me in my success (Year 6 student)

How do the Smiling Mind activities make you feel?

Smiling Mind activities make me feel safe and relaxed (Year 5 student)

Calm and makes the class quieter (Year 6 student)

ready for my favorite thing, learning (Year 3)

Calm and ready for work and sometimes energetic (Year 6)

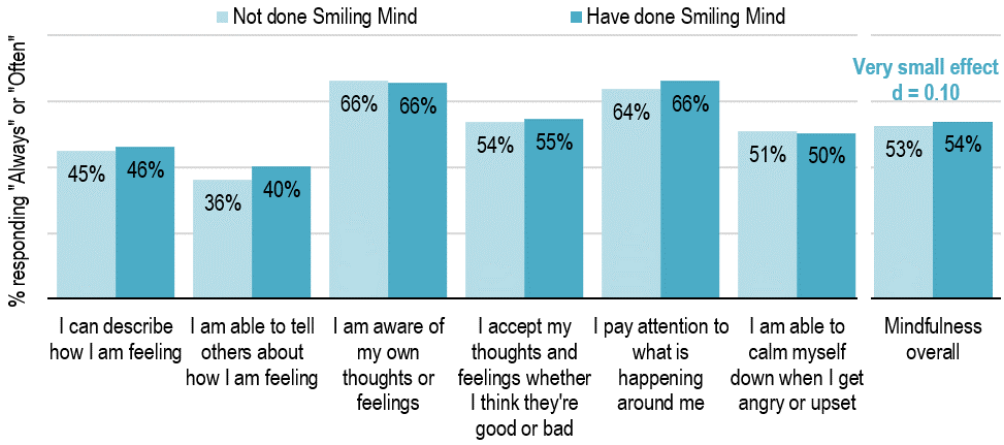
happy, excited, i think its good (Year 6)

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is paying attention to the present moment with openness, curiosity and without judgement (Bird, 2018). Mindfulness was measured via the Hart Mindfulness scale. Figure 33 presents the six items that assess mindfulness.

- **Overall, 1% more students who recently engaged with Smiling Mind activities in class were more mindful, a shift equivalent to a very small effect (d = 0.10).**
- Regardless of their participation in Smiling Mind, half the students were always or often able to calm themselves down, and two-thirds were aware of their own thoughts and feelings.
- 4% more students were able to tell others about their feelings if they were participating in the Smiling Mind program.

Figure 33. Mindfulness: How often do you think or feel this way?



Results corrected for year level: Not done n=1111 students, Have done n=1912 students.

Students also reflected aspects of mindfulness in the following selected comments.

What do you like about school at the moment?

I like mindfulness activities to calm me down. Love art because I focus on one thing. (Year 3 student)

I can calm done when I'm stressed (Year 3 student)

Mindfulness, schoolwork and friends. (Year 4 student)

I like that when I am feeling down, all the teachers are willing to talk about it. (Year 5 student)

that we get to share our ideas to the teacher and mindfulness after a long day. (Year 5 student)

I like doing the smiling mind meditation (Year 5 student)

How do the Smiling Mind activities make you feel?

I like smiling mind–- it relaxes my body and refreshes my mind, the characters are cool (Year 3)

They make me feel calm and it feels like I can control my body more and try not to get overwhelmed. (Year 6 student)

It depends if I am happy I will feel exited but if i am angry it sometimes help me to relax (Year 6)

It makes me feel calm and I can express how I feel and I like telling people how I feel (Year 5)

They make my feel like released from my bad emotions, makes me feel calm (Year 4 student)

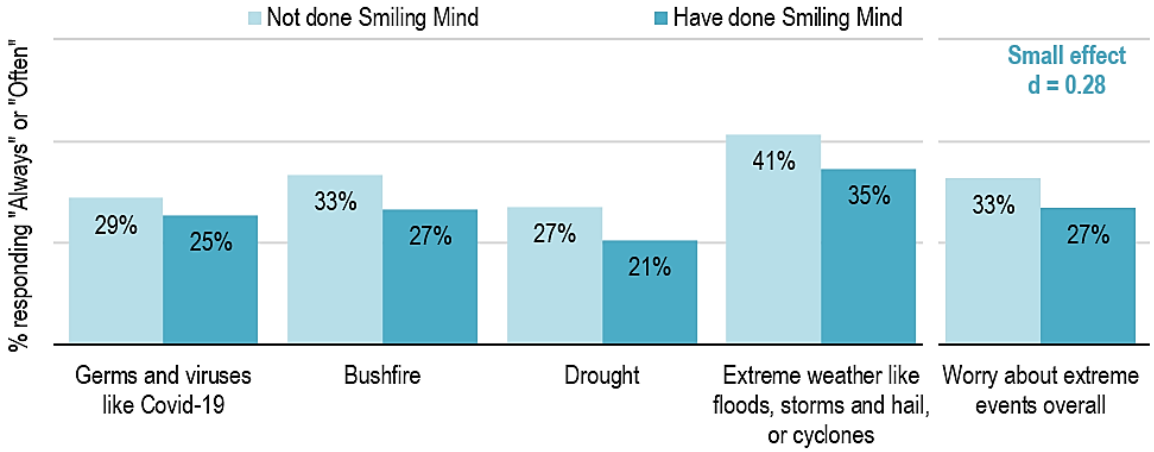
it makes me more aware of my feelings that can make me emotional or happy (Year 4 student)

Worry

In addition to the main wellbeing domains, students' level of worry was also assessed using a purpose-designed scale in light of the recent spate of extreme events. Figure 34 compares the levels of worry students had about COVID, bushfire, drought, and extreme weather.

- **Overall, the worry students had about events beyond their control was significantly lower if they were engaged in the Smiling Mind program, equivalent to a small effect (d = 0.28, p < 0.01).**

Figure 34. How often do you currently worry about …



Results corrected for year level: Not done n=1111 students, Have done n=1912 students.

These results may reflect the lessening of COVID restrictions and general concern about COVID in the community from mid-2021 to mid-2022, reinforced by improved mindfulness, connectedness and optimism.

These feelings of worry were reflected in the following quotes from students.

What do you like about school at the moment?

Everything ecsept storm (Year 4 student)

i like that you asked me if i had covid and i did it was not good. but thank you for this (Year 3 student)

it is a safe at this place and that the teachers will protect me if anything happens to me (Year 4 student)

How do the Smiling Mind activities make you feel?

The activities make me feel calm and less worried (Year 6)

they make me forget about my worries (Year 4)

Calm, relaxed and my brain is no longer stressed (Year 5 student)

it makes me feel releaved and feel calm (Year 6)

tired calm relaxed less worried (Year 5)

calm and less worried about life (Year 4)

4.7.2 Comparison 2: Students taking Smiling Mind home

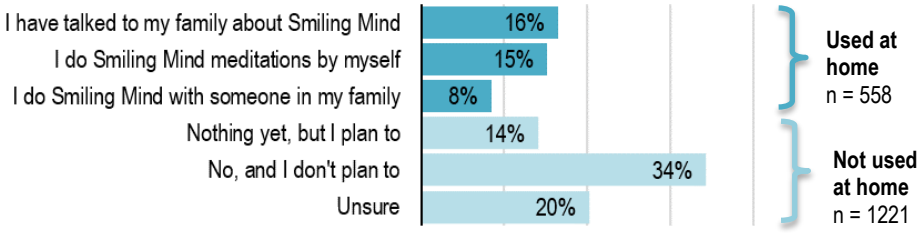
Around a third of students who have done Smiling Mind in the classroom, have taken it beyond school.

Grouping students by levels of engagement – those who had used Smiling Mind at home (highly engaged) and those who had not (less engaged) – provided our second approach to comparison.

Figure 35 shows that a third of students talked to their family about Smiling Mind (16%) or did Smiling Mind meditations by themselves (15%) or with a family member (8%).

However, another third of students (34%) did not plan to do Smiling Mind outside of school.

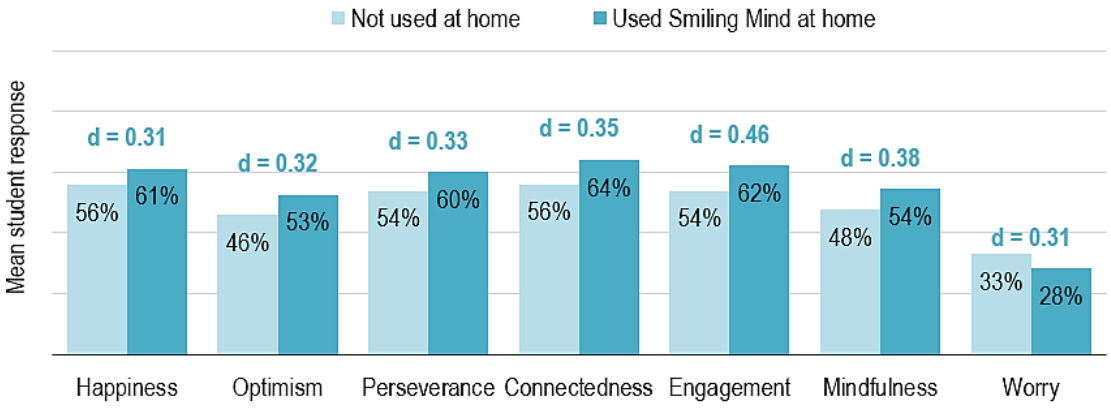
Figure 35. Have you done any of these things at home?



Findings indicate that students who actively engaged with Smiling Mind beyond the classroom (for example, talking about Smiling Mind or doing meditations alone or with family) experienced notably more positive wellbeing outcomes compared to their counterparts who did not engage with the program in these additional ways.

The observed effect size was found to be small to medium, suggesting a meaningful impact on students' wellbeing. In a similar wellbeing program using a teach-the-teacher approach, Valido et al. (2023) also found that greater exposure to SEL activities correlated to more positive wellbeing outcomes. In Figure 36, we present the differences in wellbeing outcomes between the two groups: those who had taken Smiling Mind beyond the classroom and those who had not.

Figure 36. Have you done any of these things at home? Comparing the 'yes' and the 'no' groups



Results corrected for year level differences between groups. Participants = 1779 Students.

Overall, students who had actively engaged with or expressed a willingness to take Smiling Mind beyond the classroom exhibited greater outcomes across all wellbeing domains, when compared to those who have not taken Smiling Mind home. Specifically, in order of effect size students with greater engagement in the program exhibited:

- Greater engagement in school (d = 0.46)
- Higher degrees of mindfulness (d = 0.38)
- Higher feelings of school connectedness (d = 0.35)
- Greater perseverance (d = 0.33)
- Higher optimism (d = 0.32)
- Higher feelings of happiness (d = 0.31)

Comparing student outcomes against their degree of engagement yielded the largest effect sizes when compared to other comparisons, noting that it was only a third of students who chose to take Smiling Mind beyond the classroom.

Implications

It is important to note that this finding may not imply a causal relationship between the program and improved wellbeing; rather, it suggests that students with higher levels of wellbeing may have been more accepting of and enjoyed the program, and were more likely to continue their application of the program's content outside of the classroom. Implications regarding the importance of engagement, practice and habit forming are explored further (see Discussion).

4.7.3 Comparison 3: Students completing pre and post surveys

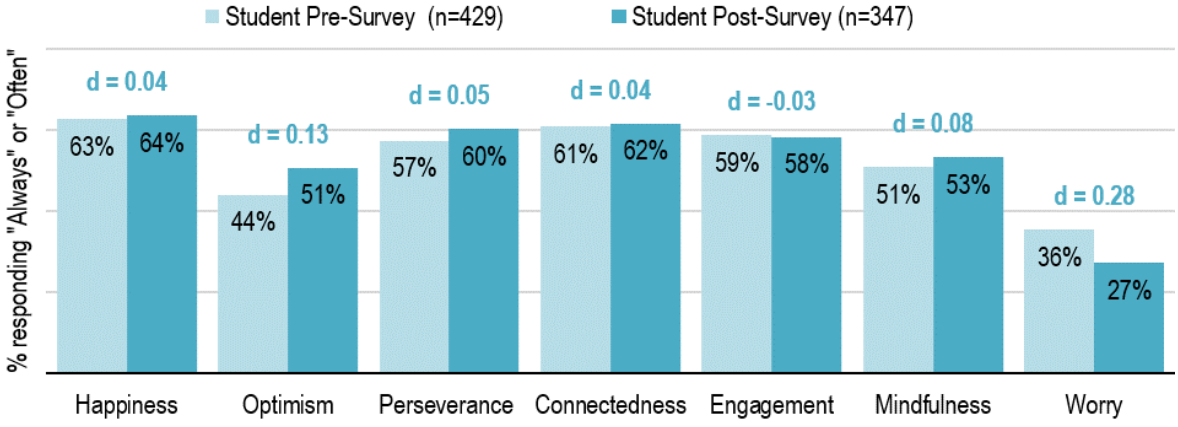
Students completing pre and post surveys experienced the greatest improvements to their degree of optimism and worry about extreme events.

Our final approach made use of a cohort of 15 classrooms that had pre-post student data. These classrooms were characterised as highly engaged because the educators asked their students (n = 429) to complete the Student Survey on two occasions, before they started the program and again one to two terms later, providing the opportunity for pre-post comparison.

This section presents the change in students' wellbeing outcomes. Although this is the smallest sample, it is arguably the most robust approach to providing estimates of impact because the quasi-experimental design compares the *same* group of students before and after using the program (Gopalan et al., 2020). However, due to sample sizes, results should be viewed as indicative. Figure 37 presents the results, which indicated the following:

- Most evident were the smaller effect sizes, which varied from d = -0.03 to 0.28. This may be partly due to the small sample size and short timeframe for follow up (one or two terms). Overall, students reported generally positive changes across most wellbeing measures several months later, albeit with little change from pre to post reports.
- Significant shifts ($p < 0.05$) were seen in students' experience of optimism as well as worry about extreme events. 7% more students reported greater optimism (very small effect, d = 0.13), and 8% fewer students reported worry (small effect, d = 0.28) following the program's implementation.
- There were no significant improvements ($p > 0.05$) from their pre-survey responses in students' levels of perseverance (d = 0.05), connectedness (d = 0.04), engagement (d = -0.03), mindfulness (d = 0.08), nor happiness (d = 0.04).

Figure 37. Evidence of impact of Smiling Mind on strudent outcomes based on pre-post responses

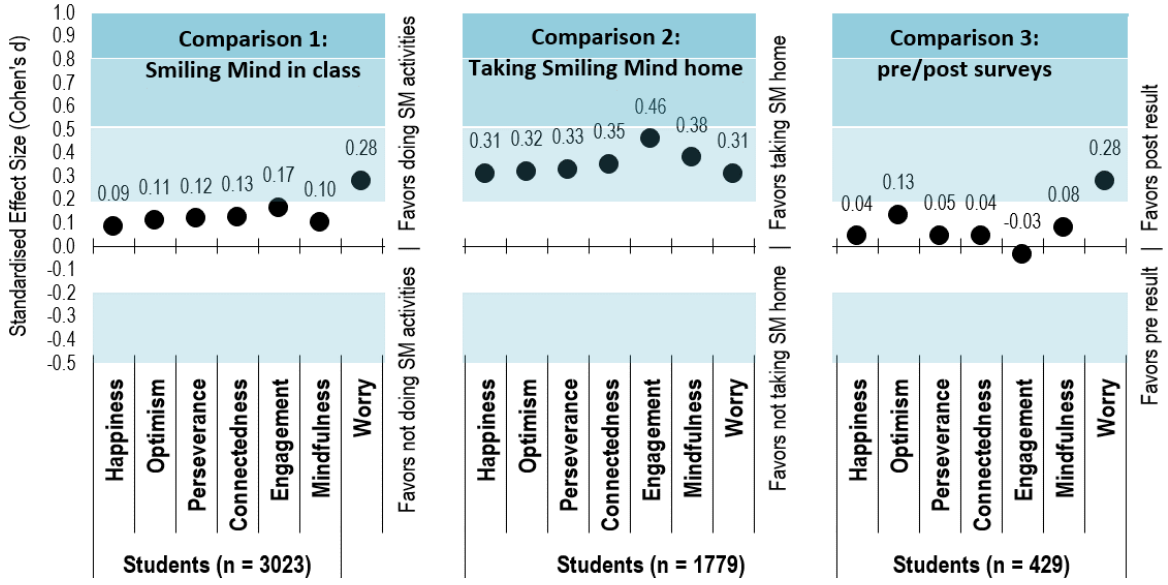


Pre-post effect size difference interpreted according to Cohen's d of 0.2 small, 0.5 medium and 0.8 large.

4.7.4 Summary

Figure 38 summarises the wellbeing outcomes of student based on the three approaches to analysis. Comparison 1 used the largest sample, Comparison 2 looked for the largest difference, and Comparison 3 used the strongest quasi-experimental research design at the expense of sample size. Interestingly, estimates of impact varied widely across the measures of wellbeing (ranging from d = -0.03 to 0.46), whereas *worry* varied little with each approach (a small significant effect of around 0.30). While it may be too soon to reliably detect measurable improvements in student wellbeing, the evidence for reductions in worry were strong.

Figure 38. Evidence of impact of Smiling Mind on student outcomes using three approaches



Effect sizes interpreted according to Cohen's d of 0.2 small, 0.5 medium and 0.8 large.

Implications

While observing changes over time typically provides the strongest evidence to support causal inferences of the effect of the program on student wellbeing, small sample sizes, limitations around longitudinal sampling, accurate measurement of program dosage, data linkage issues and a relatively short period of implementation may confound these results (see discussion). These factors limit observed change in wellbeing, and therefore the need for ongoing research is required.

However, the results indicate promising signs of the program's effects across many areas of wellbeing, particularly related to improved optimism and reductions in worry. Coupled with preceding comparisons related to recency of completing a Smiling Mind activity, and the effect of higher engagement with the program serve as supporting evidence that students who regularly engage with the Smiling Mind program are more likely to be happy, mindful, connected engage and persevere in their learning, show greater optimism and feel less worried about the future.

The following sections explore the perceptions of the program from students, including perceived benefits, attitudes, behaviours and satisfaction with the program.

4.8 Perceptions of the program's benefits

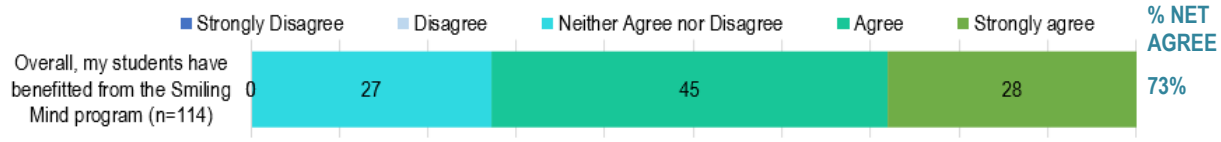
The Smiling Mind Primary School program, and the integrated curriculum, is based around 20 topics (see Figure 4) designed to support students in Years 1 to 6 to develop self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social management skills. The mindfulness-based lessons and practices aim to provide students with an opportunity to develop practical skills which support good mental health and wellbeing. The success of the program greatly depends on educators seeing the benefits and students enjoying it.

4.8.1 Benefits for students

Three in four educators agree that their students have benefitted from the Smiling Mind Program and 90% of students found it fun.

In feedback gathered from school staff, Figure 39 shows that the vast majority are highly positive about how beneficial the Smiling Mind program is for their students. Three in four (73%) educators reported that they found the program beneficial for their students, including 28% who strongly agreed that their students benefitted from the Smiling Mind program.

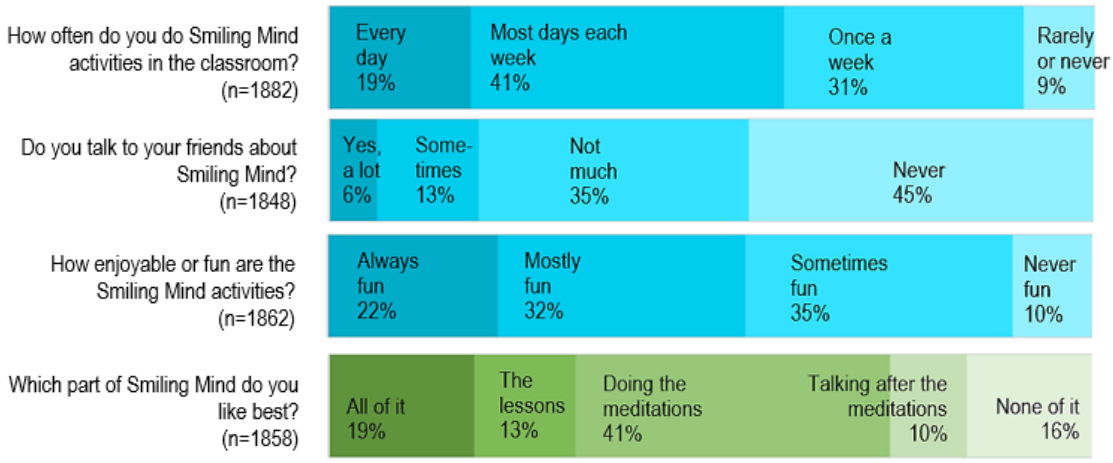
Figure 39. Overall, how beneficial has the program been?



In feedback gathered from students, Figure 40 shows that 91% of students were doing Smiling Mind activities weekly, including 60% of students who were doing the activities in the classroom most or every day each week. These activities could take the form of classroom lessons or activities conducted via the PCC, or meditations run via the PCC or the app. In terms of how the program was received by students:

- Nine in ten (90%) students found it fun or enjoyable at least some of the time.
- The majority (84%) of students liked at least one aspect of the program, with 19% liking all of it.
- Over half (55%) spoke to their friends about the program, with some students talking to their friends about Smiling Mind sometimes (13%) or a lot (6%).

Figure 40. Student's views about Smiling Mind (% of students)



The extent to which Smiling Mind influences student wellbeing outcomes logically depends on how much students engage with the activities (as explored in the preceding section 'comparison 2'). A theme also reflected in the following comment from a Year 5 student:

> *Smiling Mind is really good and I need to use it more often but until I do it doesn't really change anything. (Year 5 student)*

Implications

In the previous section we explored the importance of program engagement in allowing students to continue their learning outside of the classroom, which was associated with greater wellbeing outcomes. These results support the notion that students enjoyed various aspects of the program. Future iterations of the program should leverage existing elements which resonate with students and explore additional ways students can expand on their learnings outside of the classroom.

4.8.2 Relationship between experience and wellbeing outcomes

Student who regularly do and enjoy Smiling Mind were more likely to exhibit greater wellbeing outcomes across all measures.

As a further opportunity to establish evidence of impact, an indication of student experience with the program was derived from the first three items in Figure 39 above. The items regarding frequency, enjoyment and conversation were averaged. We hypothesised that students who had an enriching experience with the program – did the program more often, found it highly enjoyable and talked to their friends about Smiling Mind – were more likely to have elevated levels of wellbeing.

Table 3 presents correlations (n = 2010 students) that show significant but small relationships between students' positive experiences with the Smiling Mind program and their wellbeing outcomes. Students who regularly engaged with and enjoyed Smiling Mind activities in the classroom were more likely to:

- Exhibit higher mindfulness (r=0.30)
- Feel connected to school (r=0.32)
- Engage with learning (r=0.38)
- Persevere in their learning (r=0.27)
- Demonstrate higher happiness (r=0.31)
- Feel optimistic about the future (r=0.31)

Table 3. Correlation (r) between student wellbeing domains and their Smiling Mind experience

	Mindfulness	Connectedness	Engagement	Perseverance	Optimism	Happiness
Smiling Mind experience	0.30	0.32	0.38	0.27	0.31	0.31
Correlation strength:	moderate	moderate	moderate	weak	moderate	moderate

Correlations are interpreted as r: 0.1 weak, 0.3 moderate, 0.5 strong. Participants = 2010 Students

Implications

Results indicate that students enjoyment and regularly engagement with the curriculum builds their capacity for mindfulness practice and internalise the social-emotional strategies. Further support needs to be provided to educators to ensure greater frequency and quality of Smiling Mind sessions in the classroom.

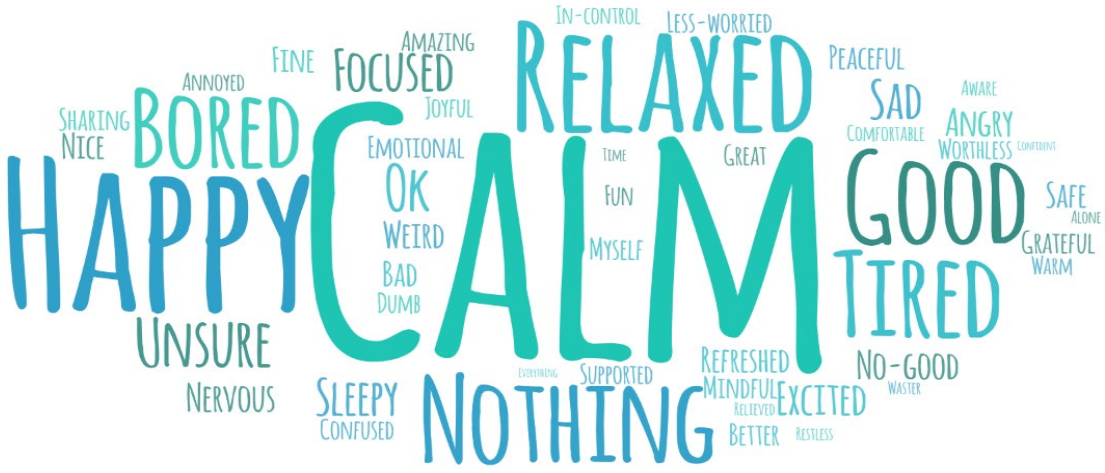
4.8.3 Students felt calmer

In their own words, the majority of students felt positive about Smiling Mind, with many reporting feeling calm, happy, relaxed and good.

When asked generally *what they liked about school*, students who engaged with the Smiling Mind program reflected concepts that related to happiness, optimism, perseverance, connectedness, engagement and mindfulness. Examples of comments were provided under each of the wellbeing domains first discussed above (for example, see comments under Figure 28 related to happiness).

The following selection also presents a sample of quotes from the 1,232 students about how *Smiling Mind activities made them feel*. As found in previous research (e.g., Eadie, 2021), **most comments (88%) were positive** (n = 1,430 positively associated feelings). Example comments were also provided under each wellbeing domain at the start of this section. These have been summarised in the following word-cloud in Figure 41, which provides a visual representation of students' comments, where the most frequently occurring words are displayed in a larger font size, while less common words appear in smaller font sizes.

Figure 41. How do the Smiling Mind activities make you feel?



As the word-cloud also reflects, **some students were less positive** (n = 195 negatively associated sentiment). Here are some example comments with a tendency to come from older students.

Smiling mind makes my chest tight and I become nervous (Year 6 student)

Doesn't make feel anything beside boredness and wonder and my thoughts (Year 6 student)

No different than normal (Year 5 student)

Well they don't make me feel the best but it does help (Year 6 student)

Annoyed cos they are boring but I don't have to do work so it's good sometimes (Year 6 student)

Sleepy and kind of sad (Year 5 student)

Bored and jittery (Year 5 student)

4.8.4 Older students may need additional consideration

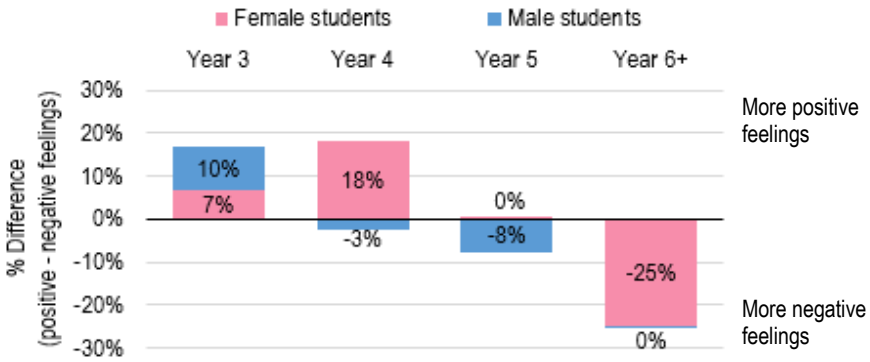
With research suggesting that mindfulness may be more effective in some developmental stages than in others (McKeering & Hwang, 2019), we investigated the age of students and the likelihood of giving positive or negative comments about the Smiling Mind program, we found:

- Older students were proportionally significantly more likely to report negative sentiment than students in Years 3 or 4 (Chi-squared: $X^2(3, N = 1625) = 22.05, p < 0.001$).
- Also, older female students were significantly more likely to report negative sentiment than male students (Chi-squared: $X^2(1, N = 1523) = 7.67, p = 0.006$).
- But noting that overall, reports of positive sentiment (n = 1430) vastly outweighed negative sentiment (n = 195) by a factor of 7 to 1.

Figure 42 provides a representation of the results as a percentage difference within positive and negative sentiment by gender and year level.

- For example, in the Year 3 cohort, there were 10% more boys and 7% more girls who responded positively, in proportion to the cohort that responded negatively.
- In contrast, there were proportionally 8% more Year 5 boys and 25% more Year 6 girls who reported negative sentiment after doing Smiling Mind activities.

Figure 42. Cohort differences in the proportional distribution of positive and negative feelings resulting from doing the mindfulness activities



Based on student reports of positive (n=1430) and negative (n=195) feelings.

Implications

These results were not surprising given mindfulness has been found to elicit less appeal for young people entering adolescence. In their qualitative study (Whitworth & Currie, 2019) the authors found that students in the 10-12 age bracket felt less likely to discuss or recommend mindfulness to their peers, and during sessions felt heightened awareness of their peers around them, coupled with a general feeling that the practice was not 'cool'. Risk for negative experiences of mindfulness practice in children and young people should be considered when delivering this type of SEL program (Johnson & Wade, 2021).

It is recommended that considerations around program content be made to account for the lives, experiences, and contexts to which appeal to older primary aged students (Recommendation 2).

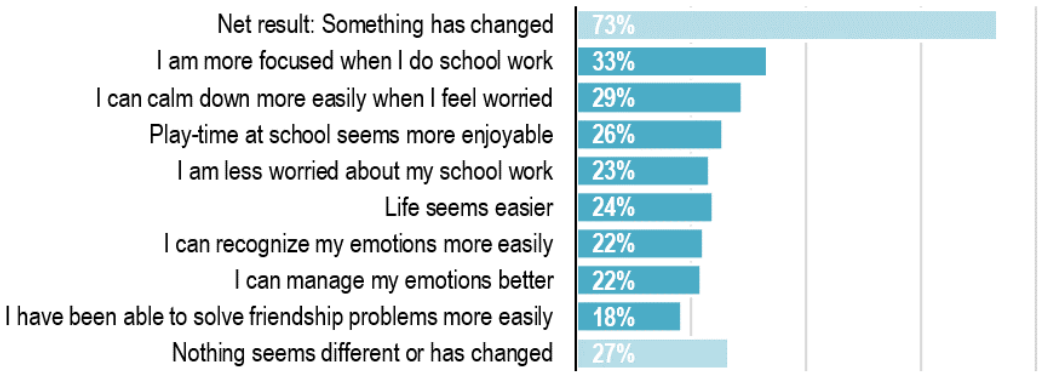
4.8.5 Doing Smiling Mind has been helpful

Three in four students found Smiling Mind helpful, with the greatest benefits to feeling more focussed on schoolwork, calming down during times of worry, and play time feeling more enjoyable.

When asked about what aspects the Smiling Mind program has helped with, most students (73%) found doing Smiling Mind helpful (see Figure 43). In descending order, the areas the program was most helpful were:

- Feeling more focussed when doing school work (33%)
- Being able to calm doing more easily when feeling worried (29%)
- Play time being more enjoyable (26%)
- Life seeming easier (24%
- Feeling less worried about schoolwork (23%
- Being able to recognise and manage emotions better (22%)

Figure 43. Has doing Smiling Mind been helpful?



Participants = 1818 Students

Additionally, a comparison between the sub-cohort of students (n = 455) who had completed the survey on two occasions around 10 weeks apart, found a 3% increase in how helpful the Smiling Mind program was, equivalent to a very small non-significant effect (d = 0.13, p = 0.067). These sentiments were also reflected in comments like…

> *They make me feel like released from my bad emotions, it also makes me feel calm (Year 4 student)*
>
> *Smiling Mind makes me feel prity great about my self (Year 6 student)*

5 Discussion and Recommendations

Growing recognition of the importance of students' mental wellbeing and emotional resilience has been accelerated through major disruption to schooling due to the COVID-19 pandemic, bushfire and flood. The Smiling Mind Primary School Program (Smiling Mind, 2020) was designed to meet these needs through the delivery of an enhanced in-person and digitally delivered mindfulness-based social and emotional learning program for primary students in Years 1 to 6.

This evaluation of the first two years of implementation reported on program acceptance, engagement with and use of the program, and impact of the program for students, educators and Mindful Champions. The evaluation aimed to address the following research objectives:

The primary aim of the research was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Smiling Mind Schools program in terms of increasing wellbeing skills among students. Specifically, to:

- Evaluate whether students demonstrated improvements in their wellbeing, school connectedness, engagement and optimism.
- Explore whether the Smiling Mind program demonstrated adequate usability, feasibility and appropriateness among students.

While the main beneficiaries of the Smiling Mind Schools Program were students, the implementation of the program was delivered through educator staff. Therefore, the research also sought to understand whether the program was effective in its delivery of content and information to assist in teaching the program's primary beneficiary – students. Specifically, to:

- Measure staff satisfaction with the program.
- Explore whether positive attitudinal change around the delivery of mindfulness based SEL has occurred.
- Explore the effectiveness of the program in developing confidence among educators teaching SEL skills.
- Measure if educators had improved personal mental health and wellbeing outcomes.

Note that we have interpreted the effects of the Smiling Mind Primary School program as a total 'package' and have no basis for drawing conclusions if parts of the package were to be removed or substantively changed.

Accordingly, the following discussion explores the evaluation findings in light of these objectives, and provides key insights and implications and recommendations for future iterations of the program. In addition, considerations are made around marginalised communities, the limitations of the study, and future research.

5.1 The Smiling Mind program was well received by school staff

The Smiling Mind Program rolled out across Regional and Rural schools utilised the teach-the-teacher model for improving whole-school wellbeing. Importantly, Educator engagement has been found to be essential in the delivery of successful initiatives in schools (Ransford et al., 2009; Wanless et al., 2015). To ensure the program was effective in reaching classrooms and adequately training educators to deliver SEL to students, the evaluation explored whether school staff were satisfied with the program.

Staff reported strong acceptance and approval of the program and the training, demonstrating positive shifts in their attitudes and behaviours related to the program's key objectives. The following section explores the impact of the program on staff in terms of acceptability, feasibility and appropriateness.

Mindful Champions, and to a lesser extent educators, reported high degrees of satisfaction with the program, with nearly all school staff reporting they were satisfied with the program and its content overall. Similarly, the perceived personal benefit of the program was also high.

Differences across these measures diverged when exploring program endorsement, attitudes and behaviours. While Mindful Champions scored the program close to 'world-class' levels of endorsement via Net Promotor Score (NPS of 77), educators scored it significantly less (NPS of 49). Despite the reduction in endorsement by educators however, their average response was still considered as bordering in the 'excellent' range (Allen et al., 2005).

Positive shifts in attitudes were also reported by school staff, in areas such as confidence to teach, positive sentiment, and knowledge around the program content. While Mindful Champions generally exhibited greater scores than educators across all areas, educators exhibited higher proportional change. This may be due to Mindful Champions initially exhibiting high degrees of positive sentiment and confidence around the subject matter when compared to educators when beginning the program.

Personal practice behaviour, similar to approval of the program, was much higher for Mindful Champions than educators, with measures of mindfulness practice and app usage substantially higher for Mindful Champions.

Therefore, while the Smiling Mind program and its training was well received by school staff, differences emerged when exploring sentiment toward the content, as well as behaviours. One possible explanation may be differences in the disposition between Mindful Champions and educators. Baseline surveys demonstrated generally high degrees of positive sentiment toward mindfulness and the implementation of SEL in the school among Mindful Champions. This was unsurprising given these individuals self-elected to champion the program within the school. Therefore, existing character traits of Mindful Champions may predispose them to engage more deeply into the content of the program. In addition, Mindful Champions received a six-week intensive training to learn the key concepts of the program and its implementation, while educators' accessed shorter online training via the Mindful Foundations course. These potentially compounding differences may have led to the substantial differences in program engagement and program impact that were observed between educators and Mindful Champions.

Strengthening engagement, such as enhancing the number of touchpoints with non-Mindful Champion educator staff, may garner greater investment in the program and its intended outcomes.

> **Recommendation 1: Further consideration should be given to how educator engagement can be strengthened (e.g., through more opportunities for training, using the app) to better mirror the levels of engagement by Mindful Champions.**

5.2 The Smiling Mind program was engaging for students

Previous research evaluating the impact of mindfulness-based SEL programs in schools discuss the importance of student engagement in realising wellbeing outcomes (Montero-Marin et al., 2022). Unsurprisingly, research shows a link between program engagement with greater habit forming, skill development and subsequently, greater wellbeing outcomes (D'Alessandro et al., 2022). As such, a key objective of the evaluation was to explore how the program was received by primary school aged students.

In their own words, the majority of students reported positive sentiment toward the Smiling Mind program. Most found the activities fun and enjoyable, with many taking the learnings home, or talking to their friends about the program.

Results indicated that in both prompted and unprompted questions, students were highly positive about their experience with the Smiling Mind program. In terms of components, meditations were most likely to resonate with students, followed by all aspects of the program, and the lessons. Subsequently, students mostly reported feeling calm, relaxed or happy following an activity, with a smaller number reporting neutral or negative sentiments, such as 'bored' or 'nothing'.

While the sentiment toward Smiling Mind was generally high, differences in responses were found when observing age, particularly older age groups. Negative feelings were more prominent for students in Years 5 and 6 when compared to those in Years 3 and 4. These results were not surprising given mindfulness has been found to elicit less appeal for young people entering adolescence (Whitworth & Currie, 2019).

In a recent randomised control trial of an 8-week mindfulness course conducted in Australian schools, Johnson and Wade (2021) suggested that **the universal use of formal meditation in the early teens may not be beneficial and that further investigation is needed to identify the appropriate acceptable and effective age limit.** Similarly, McKeering and Hwang (2019) and Montero-Marin et al. (2022) suggested mindfulness-based programs in schools should consider tailoring content in a way that better aligns with the lives of adolescent students to realise positive wellbeing outcomes. However, a recent systematic review found the evidence for mindfulness programs so compelling that it recommended mindfulness interventions in secondary schools should be considered as part of the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework (Southern, 2022).

Despite the sentiment from students in older primary years, the positive engagement experienced overall by participating students provides adequate acceptability of the program,

facilitating a greater likelihood that wellbeing outcomes could be achieved, particularly for the highly engaged – as discussed below.

> **Recommendation 2: Considerations around program content should be made to account for the lives, experiences, and contexts that appeal to older primary aged students. Further research may assist in developing content which may better align with the specific needs and preferences of this cohort.**

5.3 Engagement as a key driver for student impact

A primary aim of the research was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Smiling Mind Schools program in terms of increasing mental health and wellbeing skills among students.

When asked about the benefits of Smiling Mind three in four students reported finding the program helpful, specifically reporting improved focus on schoolwork, finding it easier to calm down during times of worry, and finding play time more enjoyable. Similarly, most educators reported observing benefits for their students as a result of the program.

While impact on student wellbeing is ultimately the goal of the program, establishing such effects is challenging within the complex and diverse school settings, particularly at the early stages of implementation. However, the evaluation found some early indication of wellbeing outcome improvements.

Three forms of comparisons were conducted to explore the effects of the Smiling Mind program on students. The first compared students who recently completed a Smiling Mind activity compared to those who had not. Results showed small improvements across all wellbeing outcomes with the exception of happiness. Results also highlighted the highest improvements to optimism and reductions in worry. Similar results were also found when comparing students at pre and post program implementation. This smaller cohort of students were also likely to be in classrooms that more closely adhered to the program, and along with the more robust quasi-experimental pre-post approach to analysis, provided the most reliable evidence of impact.

There are some possible explanations for the low effect sizes of the program on wellbeing outcomes. The first relates to the short timeframe of implementation. Educators typically disseminated the follow-up survey after a term of implementation, resulting in less pronounced changes across the wellbeing measures. Additionally, because of the rolling recruitment, most students had limited exposure to the program, and it may be too soon to detect measurable improvements. Again, when comparing against the recency of completing a Smiling Mind activity, results may be less pronounced due to insufficient time in developing wellbeing related skills and subsequent outcomes.

Educators were also less impacted by the program than Mindful Champions, which may also have reduced the potential for impact in the classroom. Educators gave lower endorsement of the program (NPS of 49), showed little change in their beliefs about mindful practice promoting a positive classroom culture, and had no improvement in educator wellbeing. When taking these additional aspects into consideration, it is not surprising to see modest change in student wellbeing outcomes at this early stage of program rollout.

Interestingly, differences according to engagement in the Smiling Mind program derived the strongest indications of potential wellbeing improvement. Students who took Smiling Mind home experienced significantly more positive outcomes across all wellbeing measures, when compared to those who hadn't. It is likely that the Smiling Mind program resonated more with these students, resulting in greater uptake and retention of the content through reflection and practice outside of the in-class activities. In the development of skills and resultant wellbeing outcomes, the establishment of habit forming, and practice takes special importance in realising wellbeing improvement (Durlak et al., 2011; Montero-Marin et al., 2022).

Taken together, these results highlight the complexity of delivering wellbeing focussed interventions in schools. However, they can provide an indication of some of the nuanced factors which influence wellbeing improvement – that a focus on implementation, program engagement and continued practice is required to see wellbeing related outcomes.

Recommendation 3: Based on the evidence of good acceptance and engagement, along with preliminary evidence of positive impact, we recommend the continuation of the program implementation.

Recommendation 4: Future iterations of the program should focus on equipping educators with greater knowledge and capacity to deliver mindfulness-based SEL in the classroom in a way that is engaging and promotes ongoing habit formation.

Recommendation 5: Future research should explore skill development as an intermediary between program intervention and wellbeing outcomes. A greater focus on skill development may provide a better indicator for the impact of programs and provide an additional layer of specificity in exploring the mechanisms that underlie the link between program and intended outcomes.

5.4 Engagement as a key driver for impact among school staff

While the primary beneficiaries of the program were students, the implementation of the program was delivered through school staff. Therefore, the research explored whether school staff also experienced improvements across a number of wellbeing outcomes.

While the teach-the-teacher model did not assume that educator wellbeing is required to result in wellbeing outcomes for students (see Figure 2), an interesting discourse around the importance of educator wellbeing as an input to student wellbeing also arose.

As discussed, Mindful Champions' engagement in the program was much higher when compared to educators. Similar results were found when comparing groups according to wellbeing outcomes. While Mindful Champions saw positive shifts in all areas of wellbeing including improved mindfulness and wellbeing, and reduced perceived stress and workplace burnout, evidence for a positive impact on educators was not as apparent.

A key difference between these groups relates to their degree of exposure to the Smiling Mind program, with Mindful Champions experiencing intensive six-week training. In comparison, educators were exposed to the key elements of the program through their Mindful Champions,

and again through digital resources provided by Smiling Mind. Additionally, it is notable that while all educators teach children, only a portion of Mindful Champions explicitly teach children.

Interestingly, children's outcomes did not change when comparing classes run by Mindful Champions and those run by educators. This suggests that increased focus may need to be on increasing engagement in the program and its content to students, and to a greater extent the promotion of ongoing practice in and outside the classroom to develop wellbeing skills.

> **Recommendation 6: Future iterations of the program should leverage the key components of Mindful Champion training which promoted greater wellbeing outcomes and extend these practices to all educators to promote whole-school wellbeing. This includes providing a greater number of touchpoints and supports to all educators within the school, supporting greater uptake and investment in the intended program outcomes among all staff members in the school.**
>
> **Recommendation 7: Evolve the program to continue skill development for educators, primarily related to enhancing active and focussed forms of teaching SEL to students in the classroom.**

5.5 Improving implementation

As discussed, evidence suggested that greater engagement and use of the program was associated with more positive effects. Simultaneously, it was apparent that engagement and use was found to reduce over time and was underutilised among educators compared to Mindful Champions. If greater engagement and use drive more positive outcomes, there are many opportunities to increase and maintain engagement, along with many barriers that may be worth proactively addressing.

Recruitment of schools to the program was relatively successful (77% of the target recruited), especially given the context, including school disruptions associated with COVID-19, natural disasters and staffing issues across the education sector. However, not all recruited schools progress through training to whole-school onboarding and ongoing implementation. Of the recruited schools, 64% completed the training phase, and 36% of staff accessed the PCC only once. Therefore, the progression from recruitment to full implementation may have opportunities to improve retention and engagement.

When asked what hindered implementation of the program, school staff reported that limited time was the most common barrier, especially relating to staffing shortages and competing priorities within their classrooms and schools. Difficulties with engaging students and other staff, including management, were also major barriers to effectively implementing. Educators reported difficulties obtaining adequate buy-in from school leadership and fellow educators.

Usage of the program, as evidenced by app usage, appeared to steadily drop over time. Some educators described concerns regarding repetitiveness in activities as a barrier to sustained use of the program with students. Therefore, continuing to adapt and expand the program resources and activities may help to sustain use over time. Additionally, it was evident that use beyond the classroom, where students had discussed or used Smiling Mind activities at home, was associated with better wellbeing outcomes for students, notwithstanding that these students may have already had a predisposition to mindfulness activities.

Recommendation 8: Consideration should be given to ways to further support the commitment to, and active engagement of, school leaders and educators to implement Smiling Mind in the classroom that encourage program retention. This could include:

- **Increasing program flexibility with clear guidance around managing staff mobility and turnover.**
- **Providing guidelines to schools that enable them to enhance the quality of implementation in a structured and sustained way.**
- **Sharing best practice about the ways exemplary schools have implemented Smiling Mind.**

Recommendation 9: Consider mechanisms to encourage students to embed mindfulness practices in their lives beyond the classroom, even as teachers' use in classrooms may wane.

5.6 Improvement to address potential risks in marginalised communities

The evaluation found strong evidence of acceptance and enjoyment of the Smiling Mind program generally by students, Mindful Champions and educators.

However, there was a contingent of students (mainly older) who reported uncomfortable or distressing emotional experiences and some Mindful Champions and educators who expressed concerns about appropriateness of the program for particular marginalised groups (e.g., people with mental illness or trauma, First Nations peoples, disadvantaged communities). These both present opportunities to explore and address potential risks and weaknesses of the program.

Negative emotional experiences during Smiling Mind activities

As discussed, most students reported that doing the Smiling Mind activities made them feel calm, happy, relaxed, good, and focused. Others reported generally neutral or valence free experiences, like "sleepy" or "nothing". However, some students (12%) reported negatively associated sentiment (bored, angry, confused, nervous, sad) or were unsure.

Negative experiences associated with mindfulness meditation practice is common in adults (Aizik-Reebs et al., 2021; Britton et al., 2021; Goldberg et al., 2022), with less evidence available for children (Dunning et al., 2022). These adverse experiences do not necessarily negate or even diminish the potential positive experiences and outcomes. The experience of crying or reexperiencing a traumatic memory may be interpreted as a distressing and harmful experience in some cases, though could be seen as healing in another (Britton et al., 2021). That an experience is unpleasant does not necessarily mean it should be prevented, but it does require consideration of how to ensure students' safety, psychological and otherwise.

This evaluation found older students were proportionally significantly more likely to report negative sentiment than younger students. Recent research suggests that the universal use of formal meditation in the early teens may not be beneficial (Johnson & Wade, 2021), and that further investigation is needed to identify the appropriate, acceptable and effective approaches

for different age cohorts. Research has also recommended caution regarding appropriateness and safety when working with people with vulnerabilities, such as mental illness and trauma backgrounds (Zhang et al., 2021). This is supported by a comment from an educator working with students who had experienced trauma, “Male voice triggered my trauma students – need more female options”.

> **Recommendation 10: Additional consideration should be given to how the Smiling Mind curriculum and activities are implemented with students with potential vulnerabilities to adverse experiences, and how to prepare teachers to respond to such occurrences.**

Appropriateness for marginalised communities

School staff were asked about the extent to which the learning modules and resources in the Smiling Mind Primary School Program were meeting the needs of Indigenous, disadvantaged, and rural and remote communities. While 30-50% deemed the program as ‘Excellent’ in meeting the needs of these communities, around 5-10% felt the program ’Needs improvement’. Table 4 summarises their suggestions for how the training, modules and the program in general could be improved. While half the concerns linked to module structure and time-demands, another clear area for improvement was the need to tailor and provide content that more explicitly reflected the context of the marginalised communities that the Smiling Mind program is targeting.

With regard to rural and remote communities, the most common concerns were regarding accessibility, especially with relation to the use of technology. There were suggestions to provide means of engagement that would not require internet as this can be less reliable. E-conferencing via Zoom was a specific barrier for numerous respondents, particularly in regional and rural spaces. When considering the appropriateness of the Smiling Mind program for students from disadvantaged communities, some educators raised concerns around working with students who have experienced previous trauma.

Of the marginalised communities mentioned, respondents were least convinced that the program was meeting the needs of First Nations students. Mindful Champions and educators suggested greater inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait cultural connections, including inclusion of Dreamtime stories and artwork. There were suggestions to engage in consultation with Aboriginal Elders and integrate Indigenous perspectives into tailored content. Lastly, there was requests for more use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language and voices in delivering content.

Multiple educators also mentioned the desire to see Smiling Mind resources modified to meet the needs of students with disabilities. This highlights the possible opportunities to meet the needs of other underserved communities with unique needs as educators provide valuable insight into the needs of the sector.

With reference to all three communities mentioned in the question, a common request was to see content that specifically addressed the experiences, strengths and disadvantages experienced by each group. Explicit focus on and reference to these marginalised communities was desired, both in resources and in training.

In summary, the vast majority of students reported positive emotional experiences participating in Smiling Mind. Similarly, the majority of school staff felt that Smiling Mind was ‘Good’ or ‘Excellent’ in meeting the needs of marginalised communities. While uncomfortable or distressing experiences and concerns of appropriateness for marginalised communities are minority

experiences and/or perspectives, they identify potential risks that should be addressed to continue improving the responsiveness, safety and appropriateness moving forward.

Recommendation 11: Tailor content to more strongly reflect the contexts of marginalised communities in ways that serve their specific needs (Recommendation 10).

Recommendation 12: Continue to be responsive and flexible to the changing circumstances of communities (e.g., due to extreme events) will also be important.

Table 4. How can we improve the training or program in general? Comments grouped by the areas that need improving to better meet need

Area	Concerns and improvements
Content: relevant, useful	• Implementation planning resources assume the Mindful Champions has authority, which may not be the case (e.g., if they are a Teacher Aide). • Adaptation may be needed for special school contexts. • More detail and needed soon in online training sessions, about how to implement Smiling Mind. • Grammatical errors in online content. • More specific content/training for marginalised groups is needed.
Structure: sessions, task organisation, duration, pace	• Too many Zoom sessions, too many break-out groups, repetitive. • Online sessions could be shortened to 1 hour – Committing 4hrs a week is too much. • The six-week duration is too intensive, stressful – shorter sessions every two weeks would allow more time to complete the homework. • Unrealistic expectation for implementation plan to be done in week 5.
Format: quality of audio/visuals, functionality, interactivity	• Tech issues with online learning platform and Zoom sessions. • Some education systems have firewalls that prevent Zoom being accessed. • Interrupted flow with multiple facilitators not knowing the requirements. • Online modules could be more interactive/dynamic. • Hard to monitor if tasks for each week were completed.
Meeting the needs in marginalised contexts	
First Nations background	• Program still needs to be more targeted to First Nations students and remote students by engaging those communities. • Incorporate more Aboriginal artworks into resources and consult with elders. • Highlight and include more Indigenous perspectives – they were not evident. • More reference to Dreamtime stories and healing meditations that reflect inter-generational trauma. • Language translation for Indigenous students is challenging – provide contacts for translators?
Disadvantage	• Literacy, technical and organisational requirements are high – unclear how people in communities that lack these requirements might engage with program. • No content that specifically addressed marginalised groups. • Be useful to have some differentiated parent / community information that takes into account marginalised contexts.
Rural and Remote	• Very difficult to keep up with the modules and the sessions in a six-week block. • Internet access is unreliable so need to also be able to deliver off-line and with printable resources.

5.7 Barriers to effective monitoring

Determining the potential effects of a program like the Smiling Mind Primary School Program is contingent on the collection of high-quality evidence. This evaluation drew on evidence from self-report surveys completed by students, educators, and Mindful Champions, as well as operational data collected associated with the use of online resources, including the App and Learning Hub. This provided data reflecting evidence of usage, acceptability, and impact of the project.

Two barriers to effective evaluation arose during analysis. The first was lower response rates to surveys through the implementation process. The first two Mindful Champion surveys obtained a high rate of response. These surveys bookend the training process and capture the early engagement and acceptance of the program. However, the Educator and Student surveys were less reliably collected, and this introduced the possibility of bias in responding that may have undermined the results. If attrition in survey responding was driven by attrition from the program, particularly due to lack of approval for the program, results that appeared to indicate efficacy of the program could simply be showing the effect of attrition.

Without a control sample with which to compare the results from those participating in the program, it was essential that there was strong retention of participants to the evaluation, even if they were not actively engaging in the program. As attrition was a major barrier to undertaking quality pre-post analysis, it will be important to consider ways to further promote the use of the Educator and Student surveys, particularly if survey completion is tied to program engagement.

The second barrier to effective evaluation was the difficulties in linking data. Of the 2662 educator accounts in the Learning Hub, only 1109 (42%) could be linked to a user profile and linked to a school. Of these, 132 Mindful Champions and educators (less than 5%) could be linked to a Student Survey, and even fewer could be linked to an Educator Check-in. There was not a sufficient sample to test the combined relationships between program inputs, implementation processes, and educator and student outcomes. Accordingly, evidence of impact relied on independent analyses of the usage data, the Educator Check-in and Student Survey data.

Effectively monitoring engagement and impact is particularly challenged by the constantly changing contexts of schools as staff come and go and student move through the system. This is also not helped by disruption to schooling due to events like COVID. Smiling Mind can be commended for their ability to pivot from in-person delivery to online delivery.

> **Recommendation 13: Further research with larger sample sizes and greater time between surveys should be undertaken to confidently attribute any impact to the program.**
>
> **Recommendation 14: Develop and maintain effective linked-together data monitoring system. Stronger user guidance may be needed to improve the ability to cleanly link data to better monitor program engagement and to build functionally effective operational data.**

6 Conclusion

In Australia, there has been growing recognition of the importance of mental wellbeing and emotional resilience in students' overall development. This importance has been heightened by major disruption to schooling due to the COVID-19 pandemic, bushfire and flood. In response to these concerns, the federal Department of Health and Aged Care funded the new Smiling Mind School Classroom program (Smiling Mind, 2020) – an enhanced in-person and digitally delivered mindfulness-based social and emotional learning program for students in Years 1 to 6.

Mindfulness-based programs in schools have gained significant traction as an effective way to equip students with valuable skills to navigate the challenges they encounter in their daily lives (Ergas & Hadar, 2019; Zheng et al., 2021; Zenner et al., 2014). However, according to recent large systematic reviews, the enthusiasm for mindfulness-based program in schools has arguably run ahead of the evidence (Dunning et al., 2022). In general, the evidence is of low quality and the evidence of impact is inconclusive (Dunning et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2021).

This evaluation report seeks to provide additional evidence of impact of the Smiling Mind School Classroom program specifically within regional, rural and schools within disadvantaged communities. The evaluation period began in February 2021 and closed at the end of Term 4 2022. The independent evaluation conducted by ACER, was based on pre-post surveys, app-usage data and other engagement data gathered from educators and their students in Years 3 to 6 in 461 participating schools across regional and rural Australia.

The teach-the-teacher model used by Smiling Mind offered a practical approach to rolling-out the program to scale, but also meant there were multiple considerations that challenged effectiveness.

While there was strong endorsement of the quality of the Smiling Mind program, the conversion to sustained uptake and implementation was weaker. This, in-part, may be due to the implementation strategy using the teach-the-teacher model that can be vulnerable to diminishing levels of commitment after the initial excitement from intensive training has passed (Johnson et al., 2014).

Moreover, in a systematic review of the sustainability of interventions in schools, Herlitz et al. (2020) suggested that program sustainability depends upon schools developing and retaining leadership and staff that are knowledgeable, skilled and motivated to continue delivering the program through "ever-changing circumstances". Interestingly, the evidence of effectiveness did not appear to be a factor that influenced sustained engagement implementation.

The surveys and app will continue to be used during 2023 and beyond, as part of the rolling nature of the program and the ongoing support provided to schools beyond the initial delivery of the Mindful Champion immersion course. However, as it expands, monitoring school engagement and progress will require greater management of data.

> The overall pattern emerging from the results of the evaluation is that Smiling Mind was valued and was having a positive impact, particularly on Mindful Champions' wellbeing outcomes. The impact on educators was less apparent.

The rolling recruitment of schools over the two years meant that all participants had varying levels of exposure to the program. Mindful Champions had the longest and most intensive exposure, being the first to engage, undertaking the six-week training and then championing the program in their school.

> The importance of engagement in the program has demonstrated the clearest support for wellbeing improvement among students and school staff alike.

While students exhibited small improvements in wellbeing outcomes when comparing pre and post surveys, as well as when recently completing a Smiling Mind activity, the degree of engagement with the program's contents derived the strongest indications of a positive association with wellbeing improvement. Students who took Smiling Mind home had significantly higher levels across all wellbeing measures, when compared to those who hadn't, however causation is unclear. It is possible that the Smiling Mind program resonated more with these students, resulting in greater uptake and retention of the content through reflection and practice outside of the in-class activities.

> While most students felt positive about doing Smiling Mind activities, additional consideration may need to be given to how the Smiling Mind curriculum is implemented with older students and vulnerable students.

In conclusion, mindfulness-based programs in schools, like the Smiling Mind program, can offer a holistic approach to building educator capacity and supporting students' wellbeing outcomes. By integrating mindfulness into the curriculum, schools have the potential to provide students with valuable tools to navigate the challenges of modern life and cultivate essential life skills. As the demand for student wellbeing and comprehensive education continues to rise, the Smiling Mind School Classroom program stands as a promising avenue to promote a balanced and thriving educational environment, particularly for younger students in regional and rural or disadvantaged communities across Australia.

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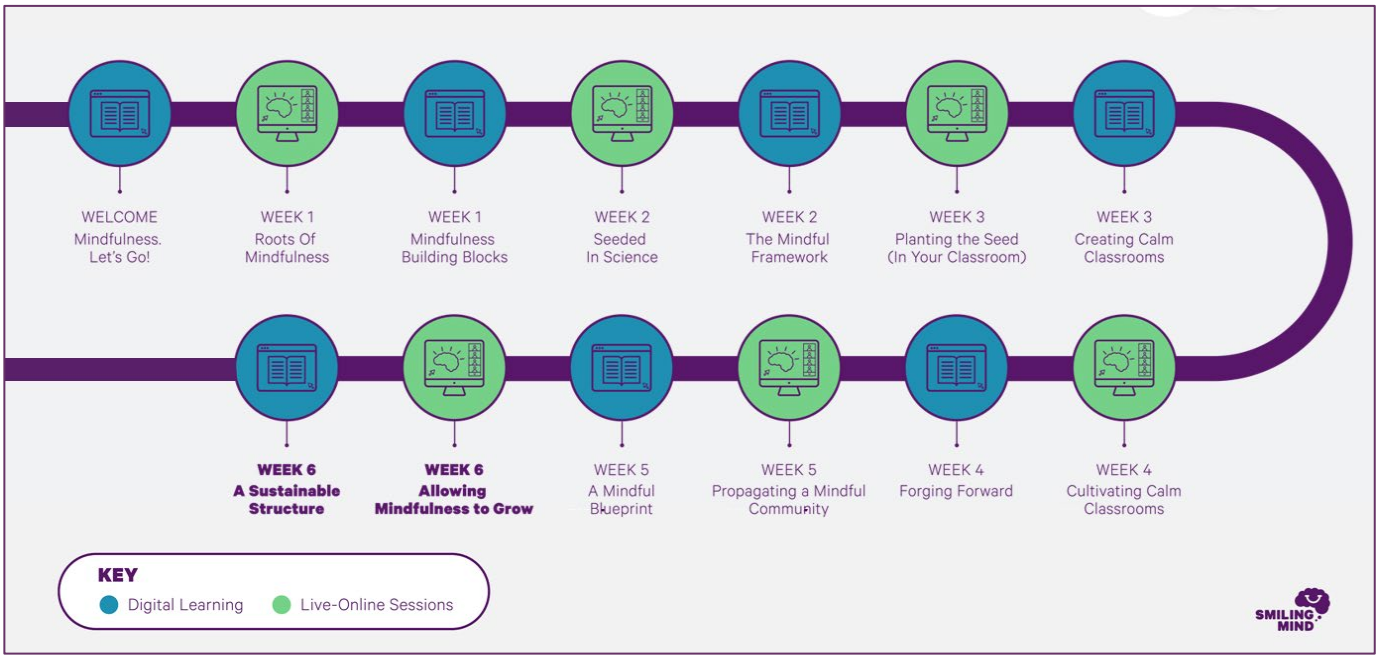
Appendix A: Glossary and abbreviations

ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
App	The Smiling Mind online application with mindfulness meditation sessions
CAMS-R	Cognitive Affective Mindfulness Scale for educators
Cohen's d	Standardized mean difference between two groups is one of the most common ways to measure effect size. An effect size is how large an effect is, interpreted as 0.2 is small, 0.5 is medium, and 0.8 is large.
COVID	COVID-19: The coronavirus disease of 2019
COPSOQ II	Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire II for educator burnout
ICSEA	Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage: provides an indication of the socio-educational backgrounds of students in a school
Indigenous	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples or First Nations peoples: We acknowledge the objections of some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations to the term 'Indigenous'. It is used sparingly in this report. The word Indigenous is capitalised in keeping with current practice, to indicate its specific use to apply to First Nations peoples.
EPOCH	Measure of student wellbeing that assesses five positive psychological domains: Engagement, Perseverance, Optimism, Connectedness, and Happiness
MC	Mindful Champion: key staff person leading the program in their school
Metro	Schools located in the metropolitan areas of major cities
NPS	Net promoter score: % of Promoter - % of Detractors
PCC	Smiling Mind Primary Classroom Curriculum
PSS	Perceived Stress Scale for educators
SAASTA	The South Australian Aboriginal Secondary Training Academy
School staff	A collective term used to describe Mindful Champions and educators
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Australia 2021, using the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage
SEL	Social emotional learning
Smiling Mind	Smiling Mind (SM) Primary School Program
WEMWBS	Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale for educators
WHO	World Health Organization

Appendix B: Program details

Figure 44. Overview of the 6 Week Training and Mindful Champion Learner Journey



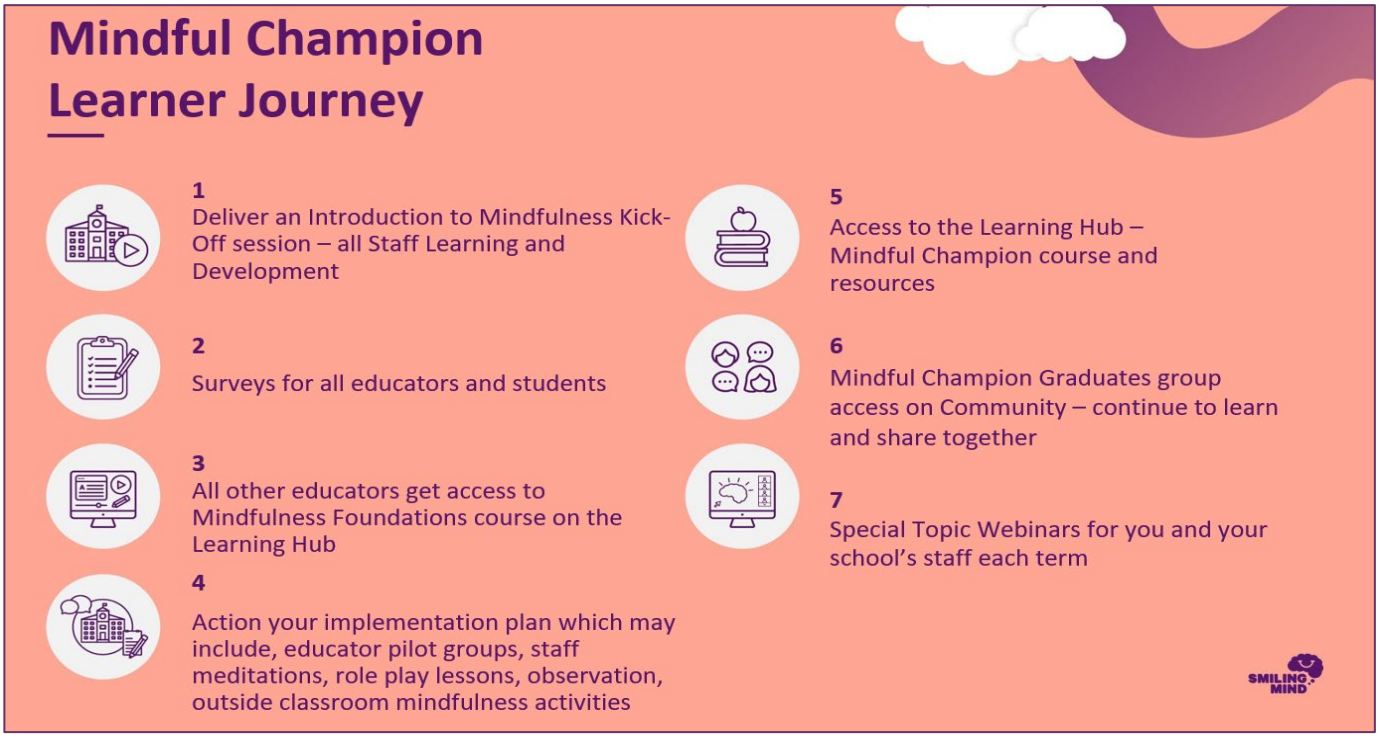


Figure 45. The Primary Classroom Curriculum

Lessons and Learning Intentions

SMILING MIND

0 — Orientation
Learning Intention:
- To use the Smiling Mind Primary Classroom Program.
- To understand mindfulness and how it helps wellbeing.

1 — Awareness
Learning Intention:
- To explore what mindfulness is.
- To build self-awareness by practising a body scan meditation.

2 — Attention
Learning Intention:
- To develop an understanding of attention and develop the skills of attention and focus.

3 — The Senses
Learning Intention:
- To develop sensory awareness through listening.

4 — Savouring
Learning Intention:
- To savour positive experiences through taste and place.

5 — Movement
Learning Intention:
- To learn to pay attention to the body through movement.

6 — Self-Compassion
Learning Intention:
- To develop the skill of kindness and self-compassion.

7 — Recognising Emotions
Learning Intention:
- To recognise emotions and how they change.
- To develop self-regulation skills.

8 — Managing Emotions
Learning Intention:
- To explore pleasant and unpleasant emotions.
- To continue to develop self-regulation skills.

9 — Optimism
Learning Intention:
- To develop the ability to cultivate an optimistic outlook.
- To recognise the benefits of an optimistic outlook.

10 — Strengths
Learning Intention:
- To identify and grow personal strengths.
- To recognise and appreciate strengths in others.

11 — Gratitude
Learning Intention:
- To develop an understanding of gratitude.
- To cultivate gratitude personally and through community.

12 — Making Decisions
Learning Intention:
- To develop decision making skills using awareness and values.

13 — Setting Goals
Learning Intention:
- To develop the skills to set and work towards goals.

14 — Empathy
Learning Intention:
- To understand and cultivate empathy.
- To develop social values and positive relationships.

15 — Acts of Kindness
Learning Intention:
- To understand and experience the benefits of kindness.

16 — Positive Relationships
Learning Intention:
- To grow positive relationships by practising mindfulness.

17 — Positive Communication
Learning Intention:
- To develop positive communication skills.

18 — A Curious Mind
Learning Intention:
- To be curious to support mindfulness and learning.

19 — Growth Mindset
Learning Intention:
- To develop a growth mindset.

20 — Resilience
Learning Intention:
- To use Smiling Mind topics to build resilience.
- To develop the ability to bounce back from setbacks.

Figure 46. Timeline of digital transition of the Primary Classroom Curriculum (PCC)

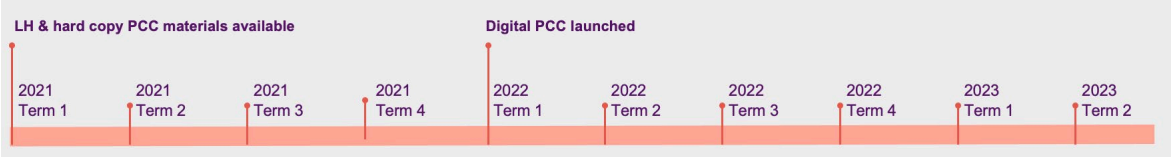
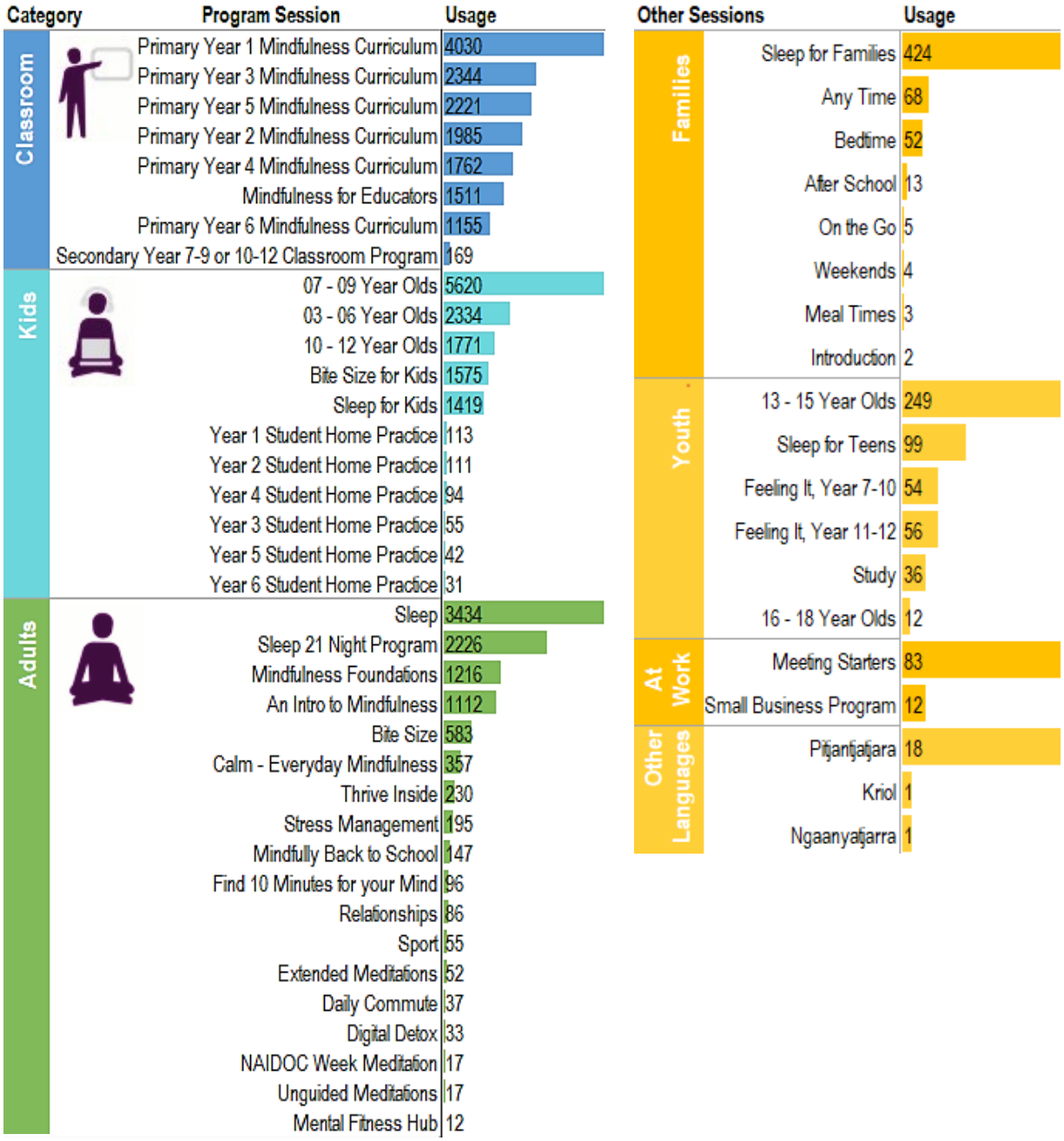


Figure 47. Popularity of app programs, showing number of sessions



Appendix C: Technical Notes

Eligible schools and onboarding

To be eligible, schools must be primary schools in rural areas, or in regional areas with an ICSEA [5] value less than 1000. Some schools not meeting this criteria are given special consideration – have a demographic feature that makes them a good fit for the program (e.g., a metro school with higher ICSEA but experienced natural disaster, like flooding, in the last two years).

The rolling recruitment of schools, which commenced in Term 1 2021 and continued up until Term 2 2022, takes schools through different stages of the application process. The stages are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5. Smiling Mind Program stages of a school

Phase 0: Application submitted	• Application has insufficient information to move to progress • SM staff follow up with applicants to get further information • Where appropriate, school is invited to resubmit an application by school leadership
Phase 0: Potentially ineligible	School has been flagged by the system as being potentially ineligible for the program, according to the eligibility criteria (primary or combined, Inner/Outer Regional or Remote/Very Remote, and ICSEA <= 1,000 if classified as regional). All schools flagged as potentially ineligible are manually checked by a member of the Smiling Mind team and are either moved to Invited or one of the two Ineligible stages.
Phase 0: Eligible invited	• School leader emailed invite to participate in a particular term • In 2021 these offers were made on a term by term basis • In 2022, offers were made for Term 1 or Term 2 in 2022
Phase 0: Eligible accepted	School leader has accepted offer for school to participate in the program and has chosen a term for the school to commence the program (and as such school as a value for the "School commencement term" property below). Example acceptance form: https://info.smilingmind.com.au/rr-offer-acceptance-t1. Nominated Mindful Champions for the school have received an invite to register for a specific training cohort in the commencement term but have not yet registered.

[5] ICSEA stands for the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage. ICSEA is set at an average of 1000 so below this number indicates a lower level of educational advantage of students attending that school.

Phase 1: Mindful Champions training	at least one nominated Mindful Champion for the school has registered for a training cohort.
Phase 2: Whole school onboarding	At least one Mindful Champion from the school has completed all the requirements of the Mindful Champions course and is now responsible for introducing the broader program to their colleagues.
Phase 3: Ongoing implementation	Mindful Champion at the school has completed the form, or otherwise let Smiling Mind know, that they have introduced their colleagues to the program by running an "Introduction to Mindfulness Kick-Off Session" for their colleagues (form is at https://info.smilingmind.com.au/rr-ko-complete).
Withdrawal	School has informed Smiling Mind that they no longer wish to participate in the program. Schools withdraw from the program in all the stages above; all moved to this one stage. Schools who have received an offer but then withdrawn from participation can "reactivate" their engagement if they contact Smiling Mind.
Ineligible (potential future offer)	Typically used for schools classified as Inner/Outer Regional. We are currently prioritising making offers to schools in these areas that have an ICSEA <=1,000 (or close to), and/or have some other demographic feature that makes them a good fit for the program (school size, # of students who fall in the bottom two SEA quartiles, experiences of natural disaster in last two years etc.). Schools in this stage have been advised that while they have not received an offer to participate at this time, they may receive an offer in the future depending on availability.
Ineligible (definitely)	School has applied for the program via website but has been assessed as being definitely ineligible to participate (secondary school, located in a major city etc).

Ethics

The ACER Ethics Committee approved the overarching project on 27 November 2020.

Based on the initial list of 61 recruited schools (provided by Smiling Mind 16 December 2020), ethics applications were prepared for five jurisdictions across two states: South Australia (20 government schools; 3 Catholic schools) and Queensland (36 schools government schools; 1 Rockhampton Catholic school; 1 Independent school). These applications were submitted on the 17 December 2020 and focussed on the new aspect of the M-SEL program, the student survey. This was drafted in time to include important information in the recruitment and sign-up of schools, so that principals were informed about the evaluation and the expectation of their schools' participation in it, at the recruitment and sign-up stage.

Ethics approvals were granted in March 2021 from the South Australian Department of Education, Catholic Education South Australia, Queensland Education, and the Rockhampton Catholic Diocese.

Participants

As students were not individually identifiable, it was not possible to determine how many students submitted surveys multiple times. For the purpose of analysing outcomes overtime, it was assumed that, when an educator or Mindful Champion was connected to student survey responses at multiple time points, that these were likely the same cohort of students.

However, for the purposes of providing information about the demographics of the student participants, it is not possible to pair responses and exclude cases of repeated response from students. As such, in Table 6 the participation data is presented for all responses, and then also for the responses with duplicates removed as best as possible, by removing responses that appear to be from the same classroom as previously sampled.

Table 6. Characteristics of participating students

	All Student Response		Student Response excl. probable duplicates	
Year Levels	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Year 3	828	23.9%	745	24.5%
Year 4	715	20.6%	628	20.6%
Year 5	936	27.0%	824	27.1%
Year 6+	991	28.6%	849	27.9%
Gender	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Female	1627	49.4%	1424	49.5%
Male	1543	46.9%	1356	47.1%
Other/prefer not to answer	122	3.7%	99	3.4%

Demographic information was not collected from Educators or Mindful Champions. Table 7 presents the distribution of Educators and Mindful Champions by role in for each survey type.

Table 7. Characteristics of participating school staff

	Educator				Mindful Champion			
	Begin		Check-in		Begin		Check-in	
Role	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Classroom Teacher	318	63.5%	53	73.6%	287	48.5%	27	40.3%
Wellbeing Coordinator	2	0.4%	0	0.0%	64	10.8%	12	17.9%
Principal or Assistant Principal	25	5.0%	4	5.6%	119	20.1%	20	29.9%
Other member of staff	156	31.1%	15	20.8%	122	20.6%	8	11.9%
Missing role data	29		8		121		442	

Data linkage

Of the 2662 accounts in the Learning Hub, 1109 could be linked to a user profile and linked to a school. Of these, 132 Mindful Champions and educators (less than 5%) could be linked to a Student Survey. While this was a very small sample which may be subject to bias, we conducted an exploratory analysis to investigate whether any associations could be found between use of the PCC and children's wellbeing. We found that no significant relationships could be identified,

with effects trending toward a negative effect (such that greater use of the PCC was associated with poorer student wellbeing). We would caution against inferring effects from these results due to lack of statistical significance, limited data sample and concerns of bias.

Survey measurement framework

An overview of the **Smiling Mind Evaluation measurement framework** is given in Table 8.

Table 8. Smiling Mind Evaluation measurement framework

Informant	Domain	Source / Scale	Timing	Cronbach's Alpha
STUDENT SURVEY				
Students in Years 3-6	Year level; Gender	Background	pre/post	
	Worry from extreme events	ACER 4 items	pre/post	.85
	Happiness	EPOCH 4 items	pre/post	.80
	Optimism	EPOCH 4 items	pre/post	.79
	Perseverance	EPOCH 4 items	pre/post	.81
	Mindfulness	Bird/Hart 6 items	pre/post	.79
	Connection to school	Connectedness 4 items	pre/post	.86
	School engagement	YMM 6 items	pre/post	.83
	Engagement with Smiling Mind	ACER/SM 4 items	post	.42
	Impact of Smiling Mind	ACER/SM 3 items	post	
EDUCATOR SURVEYS for Mindful Champions and Educators				
Both	Role; Year level, prior mindful exp.	Background	pre/post	
Both	Worry from extreme events	ACER 4 items	pre/mid/post	.58
Both/MCs only	Whole-school wellbeing activities	SSPESH 7 items	pre/mid	.81
Both	Personal mindful behaviour	SM 1 item	pre/mid/post	
Both	About teaching mindfulness	SM/ACER 5 items	pre/mid/post	.79
Both	Mental wellbeing	WEMWBS 7 items	pre/mid/post	.88
Both	Mindfulness	CAMS-R 10 items	pre/mid/post	.87
Both	Burnout	COPSOQII 7 items	pre/mid/post	.89
Both	Perceived stress	PSS 4 items	pre/mid/post	.76
MCs only	Program impact – teacher capacity	SM items	mid	.88
Both	Program impact – student benefits	SM items	post	
MCs only	Training quality	SM items 5 items	mid	.91
Both	Program quality 6 items	SM standard metrics	mid/post	.87
Both	Program implementation	SM items	post	.79
Both	Program improvement	SM open text items	mid/post	

Student measures

The Engagement, Perseverance, Optimism, Connectedness, Happiness (EPOCH) scale was originally designed as 25-item version then refined to the final 20-item version that was validated through testing this measure on adolescents from Australia and United States (Kern et al., 2019). The scale has acceptable psychometric properties, which was established after comprehensive analysis through factor structure, internal and test-retest reliability, and convergent, discriminant, and predictive validity (Kern et al., 2016; Zeng and Kern, 2019). For this evaluation we have included the EPOCH measures of **perseverance**, **optimism** and **happiness**.

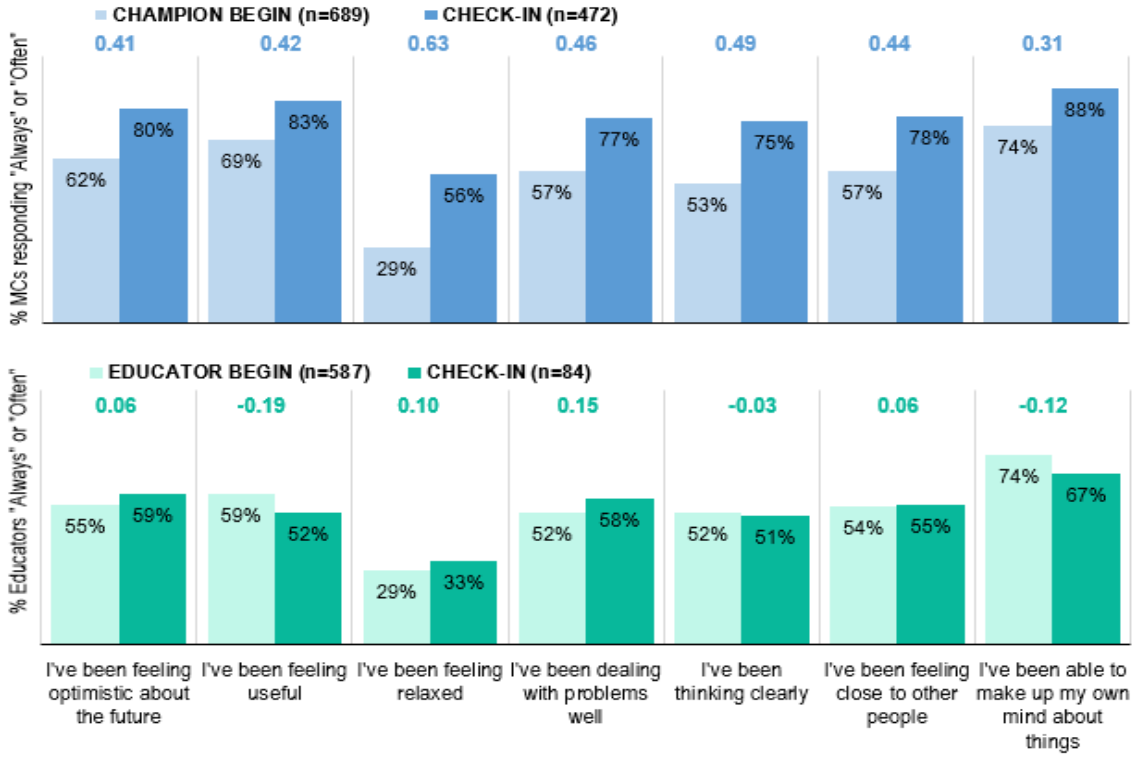
For the purposes of the Smiling Mind Student survey we selected six items from a recently trialled instrument (Bird, 2018) developed by Peter Hart to measure child **mindfulness**.

Assessing school **connectedness**, social **engagement** and a sense of inclusion has been based on items sourced from the Young Minds Matter survey (Goodsell et al., 2017). The Young Minds Matter (YMM) survey was developed to determine the prevalence of mental disorders and their impact, and the services used by Australian children and adolescents with mental health problems and disorders (Goodsell et al., 2017). The survey uses the school connectedness and engagement type items for measuring children and young people's perception of their school environment such as safety, belonging, feeling included and respected at school.

Educator measures

To assess **educator wellbeing**, seven items from the widely used Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS: Tennant et al., 2007) were included in the Check-in survey. The pre-post results for each item are presented in Figure 47.

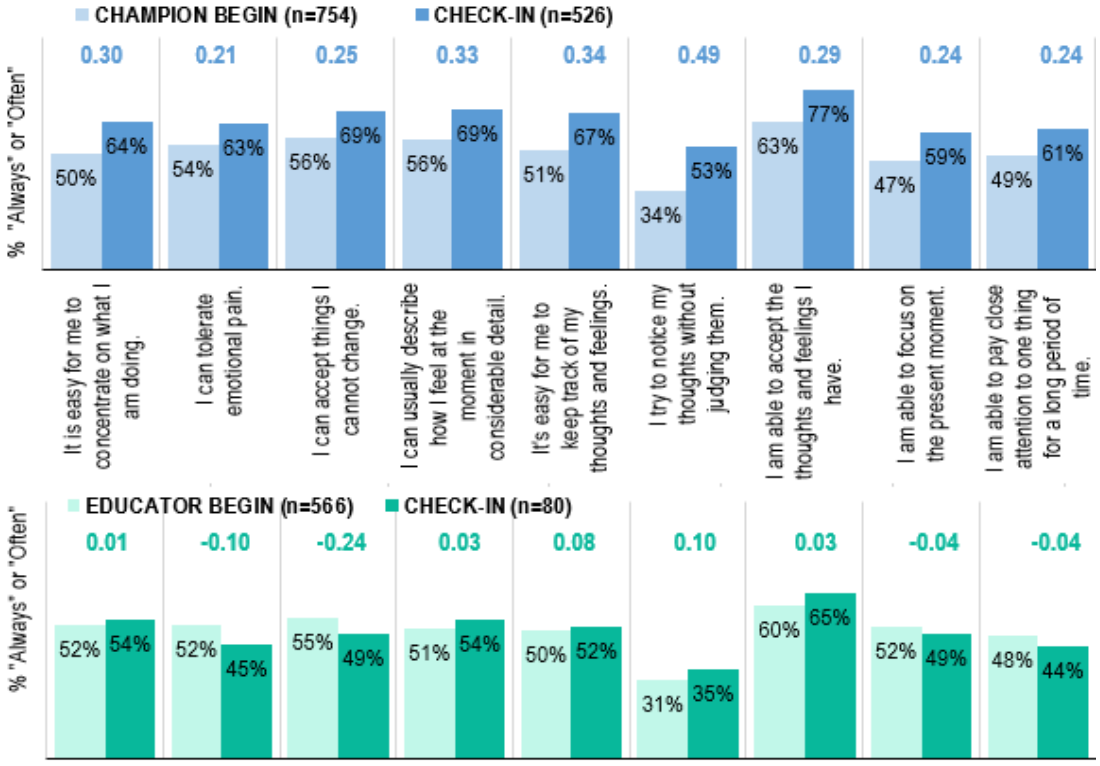
Figure 48. About your wellbeing – what have you experienced over the last 2 weeks?



Items sourced from the 7-item Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale, rated on Never to Always.

To assess **adult mindfulness**, 9 adapted items from the Cognitive Affective Mindfulness Scale (CAMS-R: Feldman et al., 2007) were included, as shown in Figure 48.

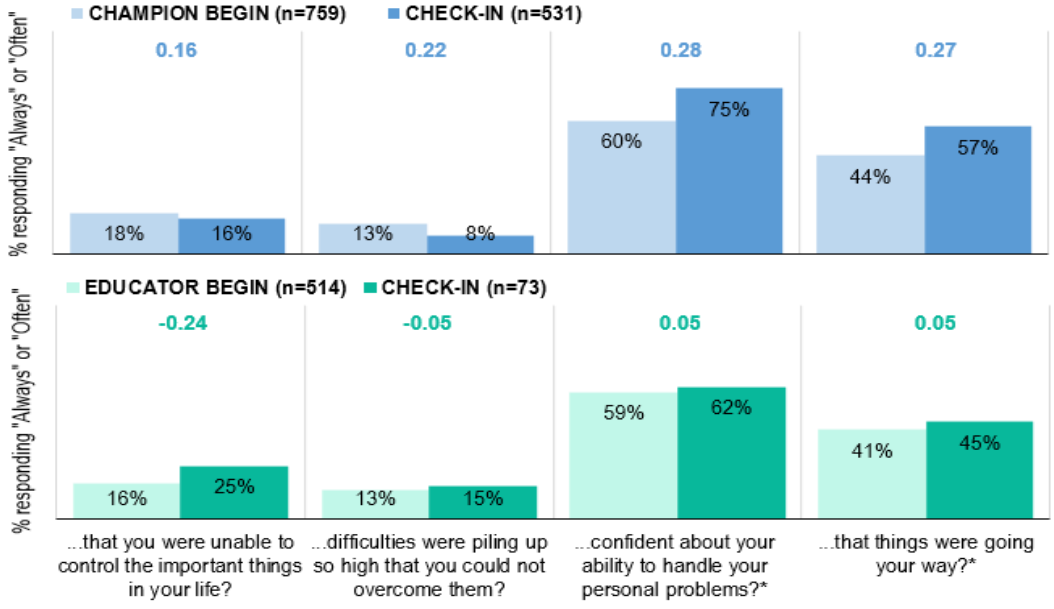
Figure 49. People have a variety of ways of relating to their thoughts and feelings. How much does each of these ways apply to you?



Items sourced from the Cognitive Affective Mindfulness Scale (CAMS-R), rated on Never to Always.

Four items from the **Perceived Stress Scale** (PSS: Cohen, Kamarck & Mermelstein, 1983), shown in Figure 49 were also included in the educator Check-in survey.

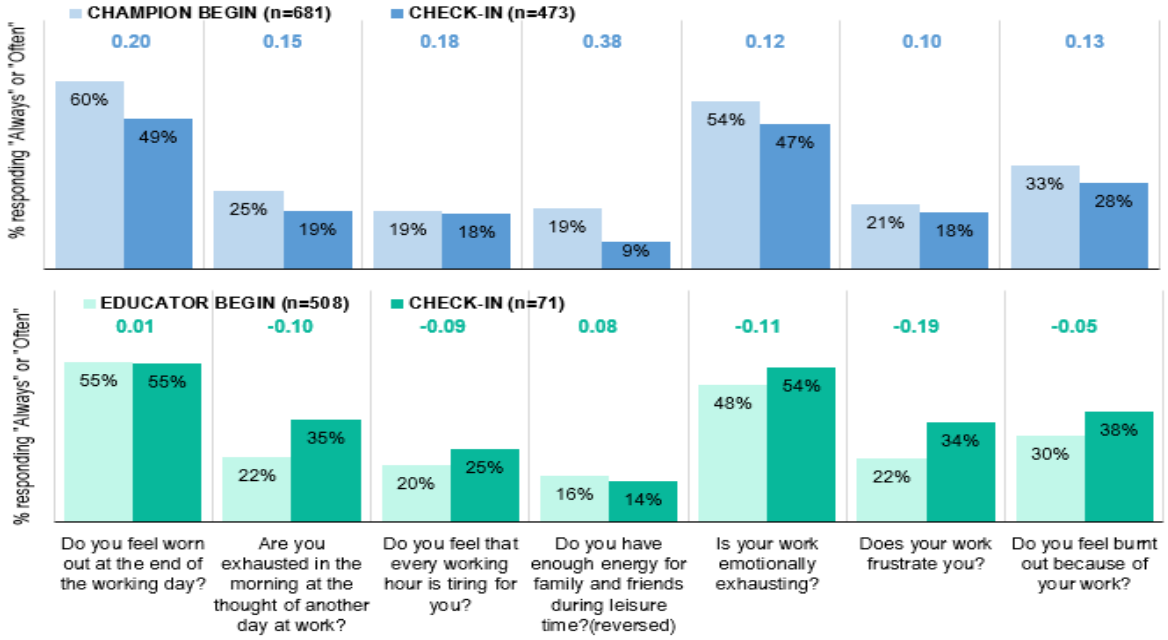
Figure 50. Workplace stress: In the last month, how often have you felt…



Tthe 4-item Perceived Stress Scale (PPS), rated on Never to Always, with *reversed before scaling.

Burnout refers specifically to phenomena in the occupational context and should not be applied to describe experiences in other areas of life. Four items in the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire II (COPSOQ II: Moncada et al., 2014), shown in Figure 50, were used.

Figure 51. Workplace burnout: How have you recently been going at work?



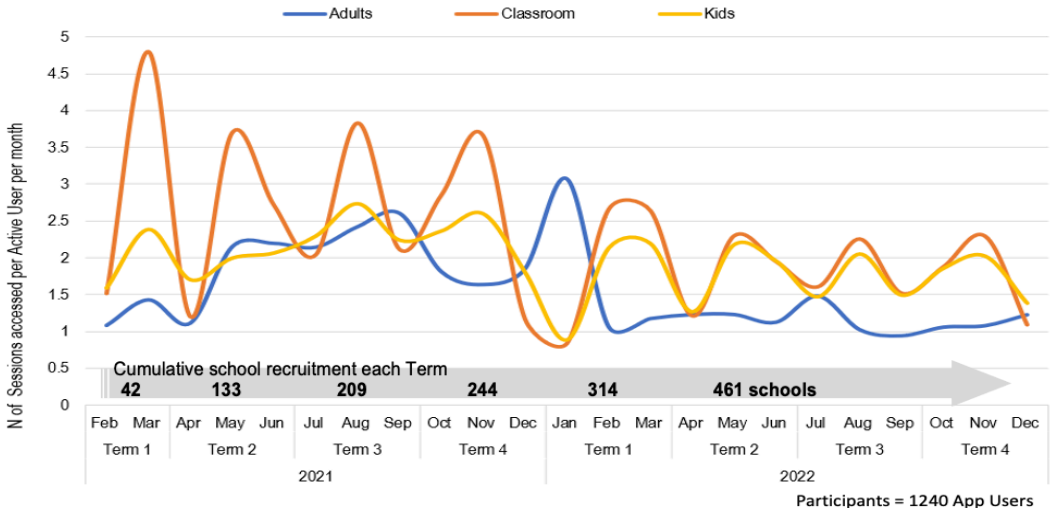
Items sourced from the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire II (COPSOQ II) Scale, rated on Never to Always.

In addition to these validated scales, items from the Survey of School Promotion of Emotional and Social Health (SSPESH: Dix et al., 2019) were used to measure the implementation context of **whole-school mental health promotion**. Other items were purpose designed or carried over from Smiling Mind standard metrics or previously used items.

Additional app usage metrics

Average number of app sessions: Figure 52 presents the **Adult**, **Classroom** and **Kids** sessions accessed by participants per month during the evaluation period, reflecting term usage.

Figure 52. Number of app sessions completed within the Adult, Classroom and Kids programs



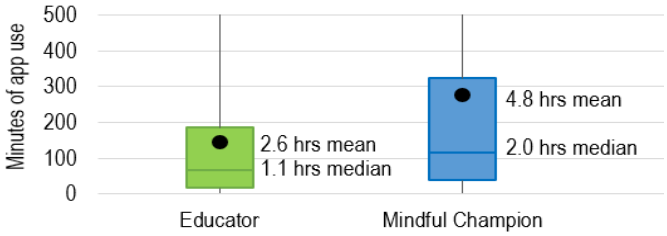
App usage by number of components: More than a third of educators only use one component (38%), while a third use two (34%) and 28% use all three app components (Classroom, Kids and Adult). Figure 52 presents the results.

Figure 53. Percentage of educators who use one or more components of the app

App usage by duration: Educators and Mindful Champions accessed the app 32 times, on average. Figure 54 shows that Mindful Champions accessed the app more frequently (average 43 times) and for longer (average 6.7 minutes per use), compared to educators (average accessed 26 times for 6.1 minutes each time). In general, Mindful Champions engage with the app about twice as much as educators. Three-quarters of educators use app sessions from the Classroom component for around 15-30 minutes a session.

Figure 54. Average cumulative duration of app usage

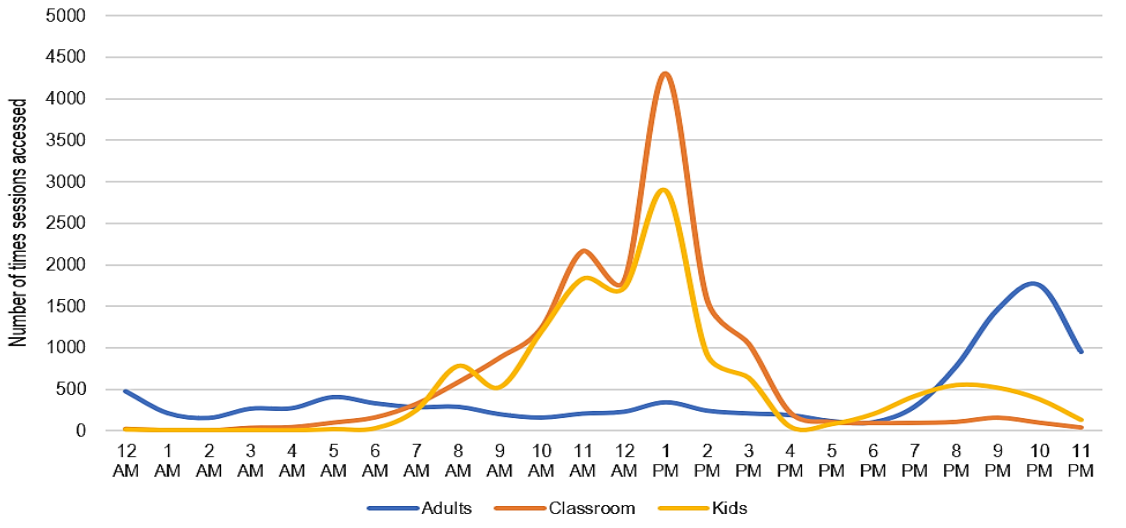
Participants: 417 Mindful Champions; 820 educators



App usage by time of day: The peak times in app usage during the day vary for educator's personal use and use with students. Educators mainly use the app to improve their sleep or to help re-focus their students after lunch.

Figure 55 considers session usage by time of day. Appropriately, it reflects higher use of the Classroom and Kids app sessions during school hours, with an after-lunch spike in usage between 12-2pm. The highest use of the Adult app sessions occurs during the evening from 8-11pm, where the most popular sessions naturally relate to sleep.

Figure 55. The time of day when Smiling Mind sessions are used



Participants = 1240 App Users

Appendix D: Surveys

Smiling Mind Check-in for educators

Smiling Mind Check-in Test online preview

Thank you for joining Smiling Mind to support not only your own wellbeing, but those of your students. Whether you're a teacher or the Mindful Champion, we want you to be able to see what difference the program is making by completing this survey now and later in the year.

This survey is about school, your teaching and how you feel about life at the moment.

- *There are no right or wrong answers.*
- *Please answer honestly about how you think and feel about these things.*
- *Your responses are private – no one will know how you have answered and only summarised results will be used to monitor change and improve the program.*

Thank you for your cooperation and support.

Are you a Mindful Champion or training to become a Mindful Champion for your school?
A Mindful Champion has completed, or is completing, a multi-week course offered by Smiling Mind. There are usually only one or two Mindful Champions at each school. If you are unsure, please select 'No'.

◯ Yes₁ <MC filter>
◯ No₀

Please provide your school and email
Remember, your answers are confidential within ACER and you will not be able to be identified in any reporting.

Find your school:
<School list delimits as you type – includes postcode>

Enter your email:
This is the same email that you use to login to the Smiling Mind Learning Hub and App.

What would you like to do? <This triggers the show/hide logic>

◯ **BEGIN** pre
I'm new to Smiling Mind and have not completed any of these surveys in the past

◯ **CHAMPION CHECK-IN** mid <show if MC filter = Yes >
I've just done the 6-week Mindful Champion Course

◯ **EDUCATOR CHECK-IN** post
I have completed a Smiling Mind survey in the past and would like to check-in with how things are going with me and my classroom

---

Background

1. **What is your role at school?** <pre, post>
Please select all that apply.
☐ Classroom teacher
☐ Principal or Assistant Principal
☐ Wellbeing coordinator
☐ Other member of staff
☐ I am implementing Smiling Mind in my classroom <post only>

2. Which Year levels do you currently teach? <pre only>

Please select all that apply.

- ☐0 Foundation/Prep/Reception
- ☐1 Year 1
- ☐2 Year 2
- ☐3 Year 3
- ☐4 Year 4
- ☐5 Year 5
- ☐6 Year 6
- ☐7 Year 7
- ☐ I am not a teaching staff member <exclusive>

3. Have you previously done any formal mindfulness-based training for the classroom? <pre only>

Please select all that apply.

- ☐0 No, I haven't done any formal mindfulness-based training yet <exclusive>
- ☐1 Yes, I have done mindfulness-based training
- ☐2 I have also used mindfulness-based training in my teaching
- ☐ The training was called or involved the following: _____

How often do you currently worry about the following extreme events directly affecting you? <pre, mid, post>

	Never4	Some of the time3	Half the time2	Often1	Always0	
4. Virus pandemics like COVID-19	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Not worried
5. Bushfire	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Not worried
6. Drought	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Not worried
7. Extreme weather like floods, storms and hail, or cyclones	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Not worried

Whole-school wellbeing activities

We would also briefly like to find out about your school's current practices in the following areas. Please select the stage that best describes your school. <pre & MC only>

Source: SSPESH selected items	Not yet in place0	Getting started1	Taking hold2	Completely in place3	
8. There is an effective leadership team in our school that has responsibility for student mental health and wellbeing (this may be one key person in very small schools).	◯	◯	◯	◯	Positive community
9. Decision-making is informed by critical analysis and evaluation of school data that responds effectively to the changing needs of students and families.	◯	◯	◯	◯	Positive community
10. Social, emotional and resilience skills are explicitly taught at all year levels to all students in formally structured sessions.	◯	◯	◯	◯	Student SEL
11. All students experience inclusive and interactive learning environments that encourage active participation and foster a sense of connectedness.	◯	◯	◯	◯	Student SEL
12. Activities that specifically engage parents, particularly those from diverse backgrounds, are regularly offered (e.g. multi-cultural events).	◯	◯	◯	◯	Engaging families
13. We promote a wide range of information on student mental health to all parents and carers in a variety of ways (e.g. newsletters, website, forums).	◯	◯	◯	◯	Engaging families
14. We are actively implementing a whole-school wellbeing framework (e.g. Be You/KidsMatter, the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework, School Wide Positive Behaviour).	◯	◯	◯	◯	Overall

Personal Mindfulness Behaviour

15. In the past month, how frequently have you deliberately practised mindfulness or meditation? <pre, mid, post>

- ◯ 0 Not at all
- ◯ 1 A few times a month
- ◯ 2 Once a week
- ◯ 3 Several times a week
- ◯ 4 Daily
- ◯ 5 More than once a day

Training Quality and Improvement

Thinking about the six weeks of Mindful Champion training you recently completed, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. <mid/MC only>

Source: ACER *use 1-5 score to match similar data*	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5	
16. The training was informative.	○	○	○	○	○	quality
17. The training was engaging.	○	○	○	○	○	quality
18. The language used in the training was easy to understand.	○	○	○	○	○	quality
19. The instructions in the training were easy to follow.	○	○	○	○	○	quality
20. The Facilitator was knowledgeable and helpful.	○	○	○	○	○	quality

Please rate the quality of the learning modules and resources in terms of... < mid&MC only,post>

Source: ACER	Needs improvement 1	Good 2	Excellent 3	
21. Content: relevant and useful to your role.	○	○	○	quality
22. Structure: number of sessions, how topics and activities are organised, duration, pace.	○	○	○	quality
23. Format: how it is presented, quality of audio and visuals, functionality, interactivity.	○	○	○	quality
24. Meeting the needs of Indigenous communities.	○	○	○	quality
25. Meeting the needs of disadvantaged communities.	○	○	○	quality
26. Meeting the needs of rural and remote communities.	○	○	○	quality

27. If you answered 'Needs improvement' to any of the above question, please let us know how we can improve the training or program in general. < mid&MC only, post>

About teaching mindfulness

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? <pre, mid, post>

Source: About You MC; About You Educator; MC Session 6; Termly Follow up ** standardised metric – using 1-5 score to match previous data*	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5	
28. Establishing a mindfulness practice is important for me.	○	○	○	○	○	attitude
29. Mindfulness is an effective tool to support mental health.	○	○	○	○	○	attitude*
30. Implementing mindful practice in the classroom promotes a positive classroom culture.	○	○	○	○	○	attitude
31. I am confident about discussing and teaching concepts of mindfulness.	○	○	○	○	○	attitude

32. What are you hoping to achieve by participating in the Smiling Mind program? <pre only>

Training impact – Mindful Champion capacity

Thinking about the six weeks of Mindful Champion training you recently completed, please rate the extent you agree with the following statements. <mid>

Source: About You MC; About You Educator; MC Session 6; Termly Follow up – using 1-5 score to match previous data	Strongly disagree1	Disagree2	Neutral3	Agree4	Strongly agree5	
33. I can explain the definitions of mindfulness and meditation in a clear and easy to understand manner.	O	O	O	O	O	capacity
34. I can explain the evidence-based benefits of mindfulness to members of the broader school community.	O	O	O	O	O	capacity
35. I can support the development of teachers in my school in implementing mindfulness practices in their classroom.	O	O	O	O	O	capacity
36. I can incorporate mindfulness into the school's broader approach to social and emotional learning.	O	O	O	O	O	capacity
37. I have learnt effective strategies for engaging the parent/carer community to support student social and emotional learning through mindfulness.	O	O	O	O	O	capacity
38. I have developed a personal mindfulness practice as a result of the Mindful Champion training.	O	O	O	O	O	capacity

About your wellbeing

Wellbeing

Please select the option that best describes your experience over the last 2 weeks. <pre, mid, post>

Source: The 7-item Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS); Note: Summed scale. Transformation needed for norm comparison, so that total raw scores (7-35) is converted using conversion	Never0	Rarely1	Sometimes2	Often3	Always4	
39. I've been feeling optimistic about the future.	O	O	O	O	O	Wellbeing
40. I've been feeling useful.	O	O	O	O	O	Wellbeing
41. I've been feeling relaxed.	O	O	O	O	O	Wellbeing
42. I've been dealing with problems well.	O	O	O	O	O	Wellbeing
43. I've been thinking clearly.	O	O	O	O	O	Wellbeing
44. I've been feeling close to other people.	O	O	O	O	O	Wellbeing
45. I've been able to make my own mind about things.	O	O	O	O	O	Wellbeing

No burnout

How have you recently been going at work?<pre, mid, post>

Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire II; *negatively worded items – will be reverse scored; Note: Averaged scale. Recode to 100 (always), 75, 50, 25, and 0(never) for norm comparability.	Never4	Rarely3	Sometimes2	Often1	Always0	
46. Do you feel worn out at the end of the working day?	O	O	O	O	O	No burnout
47. Are you exhausted in the morning at the thought of another day at work?	O	O	O	O	O	No burnout
48. Do you feel that every working hour is tiring for you?	O	O	O	O	O	No burnout
49. Do you have enough energy for family and friends during leisure time?*	O0	O1	O2	O3	O4	No burnout
50. Is your work emotionally exhausting?	O	O	O	O	O	No burnout
51. Does your work frustrate you?	O	O	O	O	O	No burnout
52. Do you feel burnt out because of your work?	O	O	O	O	O	No burnout

No perceived stress

Perceived Stress Scale - 4 item (PSS); Note: Summed scale.

In the last month, how often have you felt…	Never4	Rarely3	Some times2	Often1	Always 0	
53. that you were unable to control the important things in your life?	O	O	O	O	O	No Stress
54. confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?*	O0	O1	O2	O3	O4	No Stress
55. that things were going your way?*	O0	O1	O2	O3	O4	No Stress
56. difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	O	O	O	O	O	No Stress

Mindfulness

People have a variety of ways of relating to their thoughts and feelings. For each of the items below, rate how much each of these ways applies to you. <pre, mid, post>

Source: Cognitive Affective Mindfulness Scale – Revised 10 items (CAMS-R)
Note: change from 4pt to 5pt scale to align with others
*negatively worded items – reverse scored; Note: Sum all values on 0-5 scale

	Never0	Rarely1	Some times2	Often3	Always4	
57. It is easy for me to concentrate on what I am doing.	O	O	O	O	O	Mindful
58. I can tolerate emotional pain.	O	O	O	O	O	Mindful
59. I can accept things I cannot change.	O	O	O	O	O	Mindful
60. I can usually describe how I feel at the moment in considerable detail.	O	O	O	O	O	Mindful
61. It's easy for me to keep track of my thoughts and feelings.	O	O	O	O	O	Mindful
62. I try to notice my thoughts without judging them.	O	O	O	O	O	Mindful
63. I am able to accept the thoughts and feelings I have.	O	O	O	O	O	Mindful
64. I am able to focus on the present moment.	O	O	O	O	O	Mindful
65. I am able to pay close attention to one thing for a long period of time.	O	O	O	O	O	Mindful
66. I am easily distracted.*	O4	O3	O2	O1	O0	Mindful

67. Overall, the Smiling Mind program has improved my mental health and wellbeing. <mid, post>

- O5 Strongly agree
- O4 Agree
- O3 Neutral
- O2 Disagree
- O1 Strongly disagree

Implementing Smiling Mind in class

In the past school term, how often have you done the following? <post>

<if 'not at all' only selected, skip to 'hindered' question>

	Not at all0	Once this term1	Several times this term2	Once a week3	More than once a week4	Daily5
68. Classroom meditations	O	O	O	O	O	O
69. Classroom lessons (including verbal debriefing)	O	O	O	O	O	O
70. Student journaling or writing activities	O	O	O	O	O	O
71. Take home activities	O	O	O	O	O	O
72. Completed an online course through the Smiling Mind Learning Hub	O	O	O	O	O	O
73. Mindfulness Curriculum hard copy manuals	O	O	O	O	O	O
74. Reviewed the results of the student Impact Survey	O	O	O	O	O	O
75. Attended an online 'Special Topics' workshops run by Smiling Mind	O	O	O	O	O	O
76. Used the online Primary Classroom Program (accessible through the Learning Hub)	O	O	O	O	O	O

77. **Which of the Smiling Mind meditations did you use the most, recently?**
<post ><hide if 'not at all' selected for all 9 implementing questions above >

78. **What has <u>helped</u> you to implement the Smiling Mind program in your classroom/school?**
<post><hide if 'not at all' selected for all 9 implementing questions above>

79. **What has <u>hindered</u> you in implementing the Smiling Mind program in your classroom/school?**
<post>

Program impact - Student benefits

80. **What has improved in your classroom/school as a result of the Smiling Mind program?** <post>
Please select all that apply
- ☐ Social and emotional skills development
- ☐ Readiness & engagement with learning
- ☐ Improved relationships
- ☐ More positive learning environments (e.g. settled and more focused, reduced disruption)
- ☐ Academic performance
- ☐ None of the above <exclusive>
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

81. **Overall, my students have benefitted from the Smiling Mind program** <post>
- ◯5 Strongly Agree
- ◯4 Agree
- ◯3 Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ◯2 Disagree
- ◯1 Strongly Disagree

Program quality

*Source: Smiling Mind - Standardised Metrics**

82. **Overall, how satisfied were you with the Smiling Mind program?** < mid&MC, post>
- ◯5 Very Satisfied
- ◯4 Satisfied
- ◯3 Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- ◯2 Dissatisfied
- ◯1 Very Dissatisfied

*Source: Smiling Mind - Standardised Metrics**

83. **Overall, how beneficial was the Smiling Mind program for you?** < mid&MC, post>
- ◯5 Extremely beneficial
- ◯4 Very beneficial
- ◯3 Moderately beneficial
- ◯2 Somewhat beneficial
- ◯1 Not at all beneficial

84. In your own words, please describe the benefits, if any, that you experienced. < mid&MC, post>

*Source: MC Session 6; Educator Satisfaction with Q & A and Special topic - Standardised Metrics**
Note: following NetPromoterScore protocol we will treat 0-6 as program detractors, 7-8 as passive (ignore), and 9-10 as promoters.

85. How likely is it that you would recommend the Smiling Mind program to a friend or colleague?
< mid&MC, post>

Not at all likely										Extremely likely
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

86. Is there any other feedback that you'd like to share with us? <post>

[SUBMIT]

Thank you for checking-in!

Your confidential results will be kept safe, along with the next time you 'check-in'.
At the end of the year you will receive your personal report to see if your wellbeing and mindfulness has improved!

Smiling Mind Student Survey

This is a survey about you and how you feel about school!

- *There are no right or wrong answers.*
- *Please answer honestly about how you feel about these things.*
- *Your responses are private – no one will know how you have answered.*
- *Select **Go**, if you consent and are happy to complete the survey.*

Thank you

Go

Please select the current Term: <ACER will add and hide options as needed>
[DROP DOWN: Term 1 2021; Term 2 2021; Term 3 2021; Term 4 2021]

What Please enter the name of your school: < school list delimits as you type>
Note - We can't identify you from this or any other question

Please select your Year level:

- O Year 7$_7$
- O Year 6$_6$
- O Year 5$_5$
- O Year 4$_4$
- O Year 3$_3$

What is your gender?

- O Female$_1$
- O Male$_2$
- O Other/Prefer not to answer $_{\text{no-score}}$

What is the name of your classroom teacher?
This is the teacher you do mindful activities with.
<open text>

About You

EPOCH (Perseverance, Optimism, Happiness); Mindfulness Measure (HART); School Connectedness (SC); YMM Engagement
(Note that items in online survey are in mixed order and random groupings)
We would like to know how often you think or feel this way.

	Never$_0$	Some of the time$_1$	Half the time$_2$	Often$_3$	Always$_4$	
1. I am aware of my own thoughts or feelings.	O	O	O	O	O	HART
2. I pay attention to what is happening around me.	O	O	O	O	O	HART
3. I can describe how I am feeling.	O	O	O	O	O	HART
4. I am able to tell others about how I am feeling.	O	O	O	O	O	HART
5. I accept my thoughts and feelings whether I think they're good or bad.	O	O	O	O	O	HART
6. I am able to calm myself down when I get angry or upset.	O	O	O	O	O	HART

EPOCH (Perseverance, Optimism, Happiness); Mindfulness Measure (HART); School Connectedness (SC); YMM Engagement
(Note that items in online survey are in mixed order and random groupings)

We would like to know how often you think or feel this way.

	Never$_0$	Some of the time$_1$	Half the time$_2$	Often$_3$	Always$_4$	
7. I feel happy.	O	O	O	O	O	H
8. I have a lot of fun.	O	O	O	O	O	H
9. I love life.	O	O	O	O	O	H
10. I am a cheerful person.	O	O	O	O	O	H
11. I am optimistic (feel positive) about my future.	O	O	O	O	O	O
12. I expect the best, even when bad things are happening around me.	O	O	O	O	O	O
13. I think good things are going to happen to me.	O	O	O	O	O	O
14. I believe that things will work out, no matter how difficult they seem.	O	O	O	O	O	O
15. I finish whatever I begin.	O	O	O	O	O	P
16. I keep at my schoolwork until I am done with it.	O	O	O	O	O	P
17. Once I make a plan to get something done, I stick to it.	O	O	O	O	O	P
18. I am a hard worker.	O	O	O	O	O	P
19. I am happy to be at this school.	O	O	O	O	O	SC
20. I feel like I belong at this school.	O	O	O	O	O	SC
21. I look forward to going to school.	O	O	O	O	O	SC
22. I feel proud about being a student at this school.	O	O	O	O	O	SC
23. I feel close to people at my school.	O	O	O	O	O	YMM
24. I feel safe at my school.	O	O	O	O	O	YMM
25. The things I am taught are worth learning.	O	O	O	O	O	YMM
26. I get excited about the work that we do.	O	O	O	O	O	YMM
27. I get completely absorbed in what I am doing in class.	O	O	O	O	O	YMM
28. The things I learn at school are important to me.	O	O	O	O	O	YMM

How often do you <u>currently worry</u> about ...	Never$_4$	Some of the time$_3$	Half the time$_2$	Often$_1$	Always$_0$	
29. Germs and viruses like COVID-19	O	O	O	O	O	Not worried
30. Bushfire	O	O	O	O	O	Not worried
31. Drought	O	O	O	O	O	Not worried
32. Extreme weather like floods, storms and hail, or cyclones	O	O	O	O	O	Not worried

33. **What do you really like about school at the moment?**
<u><open text></u>

34. **Have you recently done Smiling Mind activities in your class? <if Yes branch to post survey items; if No go to end>**

If you are not sure what this is, please ask your teacher.

- ○ Yes$_1$
- ○ No$_0$

About Smiling Mind activities

<post survey only items>

Please think about the Smiling Mind activities that you have been doing in class. If you are not sure what this is, please ask your teacher to explain.

35. **How often do you do Smiling Mind activities in the classroom?**
    - ○ Every day$_3$
    - ○ Most days each week$_2$
    - ○ Once a week$_1$
    - ○ Rarely or never$_0$

36. **How enjoyable or fun are the Smiling Mind activities?**
    - ○ Always fun$_3$
    - ○ Mostly fun$_2$
    - ○ Sometimes fun$_1$
    - ○ Never fun$_0$

37. **Which part of Smiling Mind do you like best?**
    - ○ The lessons – Learning and discussing different Smiling Mind topics$_1$
    - ○ Meditations – Doing the meditations$_1$
    - ○ Talking after the meditations – Sharing what I noticed and how I felt$_1$
    - ○ All of it$_1$
    - ○ None of it$_0$

38. **Do you talk to your friends about Smiling Mind?**
    - ○ Yes, a lot$_3$
    - ○ Sometimes$_2$
    - ○ Not much$_1$
    - ○ Never$_0$

39. **Has doing Smiling Mind been helpful?**

Tick those you agree with.

- ☐ Nothing seems different or has changed$_0$ <exclusive>
- ☐ I am more focused when I do school work$_1$
- ☐ Play-time at school seems more enjoyable$_1$
- ☐ I am less worried about my school work$_1$
- ☐ I have been able to solve friendship problems more easily$_1$
- ☐ I can calm down more easily when I feel worried$_1$
- ☐ I can recognize my emotions more easily$_1$
- ☐ I can manage my emotions better$_1$
- ☐ Life seems easier$_1$

40. **Have you done any of these things at home?**

Tick those you agree with.

- ☐ I have talked to my family about Smiling Mind$_1$
- ☐ I do Smiling Mind meditations by myself$_1$
- ☐ I do Smiling Mind with someone in my family$_1$
- ☐ Nothing yet, but I plan to$_0$ <exclusive>
- ☐ No, and I don't plan to$_0$ <exclusive>
- ☐ Unsure$_0$ <exclusive>

41. **How do the Smiling Mind activities make you feel?**

<open text>

[SUBMIT]

Thank you for doing this survey!