**Aims**

- To explore current mental health and wellbeing policies and programs for primary-aged students
- To examine primary teachers’ perceptions of school-based social and emotional learning (SEL) practices in relation to wellbeing policies and programs

**Research Questions**

1. What aspects of mental health and wellbeing policies are reflected in the school-based social and emotional learning programs?
2. To what extent do mental health and wellbeing policies and school-based programs shape how primary teachers promote students’ social and emotional learning and development?

**Background**

- Mental health disorders of 1 in 7 school-aged children (Lawrence et al., 2015) exacerbated by pandemic (Price et al., 2022)
- SEL programs have shown to have a positive effect on SEL competencies, academic performance, social behaviour, conduct problems, and emotional distress (e.g., Durlak et al., 2011)
- Teachers often required to implement mental health and wellbeing programs without experience or implementation training (Brackett et al., 2012)
- Social and emotional wellbeing measures have identified differences characterised by external (school, home and community), internal (social, emotional learning skills), feelings, and behaviours (Bernard & Stephanou, 2018)

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**CASEL Framework**

Retrieved from https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework

**Proposed Methods**

- Qualitative multiple-case research design
  - Preliminary policy analysis
  - Minimum 4 cases (primary schools in NSW)
- Data sources
  - School-based program documentation
  - Interviews with teachers and wellbeing coordinators
  - School-wide student surveys

**Preliminary Findings**

Education settings are key for children’s mental health and wellbeing and with SEL development recommended as a national priority (Productivity Commission, 2020)

Various SEL education programs have been developed, yet often lack consistent, standardised formats. Core components of evidence-based SEL programs are being explored (e.g., Lawson et al., 2018)

**Intended Outcomes**

This research will help promote the use of evidence-informed preventative opportunities in student mental health for schools.

**References**