

Wellbeing and Health In-reach Nurse Coordinator Program

Operational Guidelines

December 2022

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Glossary

Term	Definition
Carer	A primary carer for the student
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	NSW Health specialist mental health service providing assessment, education and treatment for children and young people experiencing emotional, behavioural and social difficulties.
Child Wellbeing Unit (CWU)	Units in NSW Health, Department of Education and Police that support their mandatory reporters to better respond to concerns relating to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people.
Clinical Nurse Specialist Grade 2	A Registered Nurse with relevant post-registration qualifications and at least 3 years' experience working in the clinical area of their specified post-graduate qualification.
Delivery Support Team	A team of non-school based roles such as the Learning and Wellbeing team, Networked Specialist Facilitators and NDIS Coordinators, as well as school-based roles, including Assistant Principal, Learning and Support, Senior Psychologists Education and itinerant teachers.
Director Educational Leadership	Leader of a network of school principals provide management support to principals and ensure the work of schools is evidenced-based and responsive to the needs of students.
Electronic Medical Record (eMR)	An online record where client details are entered and accessible to NSW Health clinicians
Full Time Equivalent (FTE)	The number of total hours worked by a health practitioner in a standard working week. A standard working week of 38 hours is equivalent to 1 FTE.
Gillick competence	A Gillick competent child or young person has a sufficient level of understanding and intelligence to enable them to fully understand their healthcare needs and proposed medical or healthcare treatment. If a child or young person is assessed as being Gillick competent, parental consent is not legally required.
HEEADSSS	Home and Environment, Education and Employment, Activities, Drugs/Substances, Sexuality and Suicide/Depression, and Safety. This is a psychosocial health assessment that can be undertaken on high school students.

Health Entity Registration On-line (HERO)	A register of all health establishments and service units within NSW Health
Local health districts	NSW Health organisations which manage public hospitals and provide health services to communities within a specific geographic area. Eight local health districts cover the Sydney metropolitan region, and seven cover rural and regional NSW.
My Health Learning	NSW Health eLearning system providing self-managed online learning for NSW Health staff.
National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)	A national system of disability support focused on the individual needs and choices of people with disability, their families and their carers. Provides access to support services and funding support
Network Specialist Facilitator	Facilitators employed by NSW Department of Education to establish and maintain interagency relationships and build a sustainable network of specialist support services for schools and an access point for other agencies to connect with Education about complex matters.
Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE)	A learning area in the NSW syllabus to develop the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes needed to take action to protect and enhance student and others' health, safety and wellbeing in varied and changing contexts.
Psychosocial support	Support given to help meet the mental, emotional, social, and spiritual needs of clients and their families.
Registered Nurse	A nurse registered by the Board as a Registered Nurse
Risk of Significant Harm (ROSH)	A child or young person is at risk of significant harm if the circumstances that are causing concern for the safety, welfare or wellbeing of the child or young person are present to a significant extent. This means the concern is sufficiently serious to warrant a response by a statutory authority (such as NSW Police Force or Community Services) irrespective of a family's consent.
School learning and support and wellbeing team	A team of key school personnel involved in supporting students with disability and additional, learning and support and wellbeing needs.
Student	Primary or secondary school student
Triage	A method of prioritisation of the provision of health care

Introduction

Background

The Wellbeing and Health In-reach Nurse (WHIN) Coordinator program is a partnership between NSW Health and the NSW Department of Education. The program establishes a wellbeing nurse to work with selected NSW public primary and high schools to identify health and social concerns for vulnerable school students and their families and facilitate their access to health care. The aim of the program is to contribute to improved education, health, and wellbeing outcomes of children, young people and families.

Wellbeing nurses are employed by NSW Health local health districts and by Albury Wodonga Health. They are located in a base school and provide outreach services to approximately three or four other selected schools, depending on the number of students at a school and the geographic location of the schools. The placement of the wellbeing nurses is determined by student, family and community need, and is based on evidence and local knowledge. Factors considered include social disadvantage, child and family vulnerability, health and mental health risk factors, educational outcomes, bushfire and drought affected communities and remote communities.

Wellbeing nurses work closely with the school's learning and support and wellbeing teams. They also work closely with local health and social services to support students and their families on a wide range of health and wellbeing issues. Issues may include mental health, social and behavioural support, physical health, and peer or family relationships.

The first WHIN Coordinator program sites were established in 2018 in Young, Tumut and Cooma and extended to a further three sites in Deniliquin, Murwillumbah and Lithgow.

The program sites in Young, Tumut and Cooma participated in an independent formative evaluation that was completed in December 2020. The evaluation found the wellbeing nurses were contributing to improved health and education outcomes for students. The wellbeing nurses were integrated into school wellbeing systems, and students and families were supported and connected to health and wellbeing services. Recommendations for improving implementation of the program included:

- improving program governance at state, site and school level
- enhancing integration of the wellbeing nurse in the school environments
- refining the service delivery model
- developing a monitoring and reporting framework for quantitative evidence of the wellbeing nurse's impact on education and health outcomes.

Following this pilot, the NSW Government committed a further \$46.8 million in the 2020/21 budget to provide 100 additional wellbeing nurse positions to work in schools in regional and metropolitan NSW over four years. The findings and recommendations from the formative evaluation of the three sites were used to guide the establishment of the additional sites. When fully implemented the program will be operational in over 400 schools across NSW.

Purpose of the Operational Guidelines

The Operational Guidelines outline:

1. the roles and responsibilities of the wellbeing nurse and key stakeholders who work closely with the wellbeing nurse
2. the [Wellbeing and Health In-reach Nurse Coordinator Program Service Delivery Model](#) and governance.

The Operational Guidelines are for:

- wellbeing nurses
- managers of wellbeing nurses
- school principals, school learning and support and wellbeing teams, school mental health and wellbeing teams and school counselling services
- Directors of Educational Leadership
- NSW Department of Education Delivery Support teams, including Network Specialist Facilitators, Learning and Wellbeing Coordinators.

This operational guidance underpins strong relationships and collaborative practices between the wellbeing nurse, school-based staff and staff that support students and their families.

Roles and Responsibilities

Wellbeing nurse

The wellbeing nurse role is a Clinical Nurse Specialist Grade 2 (CNS2) role with required qualifications and experience as specified in the [Public Health System Nurses' and Midwives' \(State\) Award](#). A Registered Nurse (RN) with experience and skills relevant to the role who commits to completing required CNS2 qualifications within two years of their employment can be employed as a wellbeing nurse.

The wellbeing nurse has high-level specialist skills associated with child and family health, youth health and/or psychosocial support and provides a leadership role in providing health care coordination and navigation. A wellbeing nurse works across public primary and high schools and health and community settings, establishes relationships with key service providers, accesses health resources and medical record systems, supports students and families to access services, and participates in case conferences to coordinate their care.

The wellbeing nurse will:

- identify health and social needs of students and families
- coordinate access to appropriate early and therapeutic intervention, assessments and referral of students and families to services and programs, including support to attend health appointments where appropriate
- contribute to care coordination and case management of students and families
- build trusting relationships with students and families to identify and assess their health and social needs and address barriers to accessing services
- support access to health promotion to improve health literacy and engagement of students and families
- develop networks with health providers to build strong relationships and effective referral pathways
- work with families, the school principals, school learning and support and wellbeing teams, the local school counselling service, NSW Department of Education Delivery Support teams, school staff and local health and community services, as appropriate, to assist students and their families access the health and wellbeing services and supports they need
- attend local governance committee meetings with the wellbeing nurse manager, the principals and the Directors of Educational Learning or delegate and report on their service activity and issues and concerns affecting delivery of the service.

Activities out of scope are:

- delivering lessons on health and wellbeing
- undertaking individual or group mental health interventions with students and providing counselling to students
- providing population screening for health and development
- providing any direct therapeutic intervention for students who require health care procedures while at school, including tube feeding, tracheotomy suctioning, diabetes management and first aid.
- providing personal care procedures such as toileting.

Wellbeing nurse training

NSW Health mandatory training

- My Health Learning modules Child Wellbeing and Child Protection Parts 1 and 2
- Mandatory training determined by local health districts

NSW Department of Education mandatory training

- Mandatory training for school based staff as listed on the [NSW Department of Education website](#)

NSW Health training relevant to the role, including:

- My Health Learning Child Protection targeted training
- My Health Learning modules: Child Wellbeing and Child Protection Part 3
- My Health Learning module: Sharing Information to Support and Protect Vulnerable Children and Young People
- NSW Health Education Centre Against Violence (ECAV) course DV-607 Domestic Violence and Child Protection – developing good practice responses
- ECAV course AB - 44 Developing culturally safe trauma informed practice in Aboriginal communities
- My Health Learning module HEEADSSS Assessment – Get the conversation started
- My Health Learning modules HEEADSSS assessment – working effectively with young people
- Essential Youth HealthCare Skills
- My Health Learning modules CAMHS and Youth Mental Health
- My Health Learning module NSW Health Gatekeeper Training for suicide prevention.

Induction for new wellbeing nurses

- NSW Ministry of Health and NSW Department of Education Wellbeing and Health In-reach Nurse Coordinator Program Induction session
- School site inductions at each participating school prior to delivering the service.

WHIN Coordinator Program Service Delivery Model

The wellbeing nurse will implement the WHIN Coordinator program Service Delivery Model. Key features of this model are to:

- operate in accordance with legal responsibilities, NSW Health policies and procedures
- abide by agreed local working protocols and partnership arrangements with schools and other services
- work with the school learning and support and wellbeing team and attend (either in person or remotely) team meetings and other meetings that are deemed appropriate
- develop relationships and referral pathways with relevant internal and external health and social service services
- abide by local health district policies and protocols when conducting a home visit as part of a wider engagement strategy
- if required in exceptional circumstances to transport students to medical appointments, follow risk management processes and consult the wellbeing nurse's line manager and the school principal.

In responding to a child protection matter the wellbeing nurse will:

- comply with NSW Health child protection policies:
 - [Child Wellbeing and Child Protection Policies and Procedures for NSW Health \(PD2013_007\)](#)
 - [Responding to Sexual Assault \(adult and child\) Policy and Procedures \(PD 2020_006\)](#)
 - [Integrated Prevention and Response to Violence, Abuse and Neglect Framework \(PD2019_041\)](#)

- inform the school principal when a student is reported to the Child Protection Helpline or NSW Health Child Wellbeing Unit (CWU) for suspected Risk of Significant Harm (ROSH) and provide the report reference number
- be aware of NSW Department of Education policies relating to child protection and wellbeing.

Reporting requirements

The wellbeing nurse will:

- inform the school principal/s and the wellbeing nurse's line manager of any operational issues that may impact the delivery of the wellbeing nurse service such as changes to their days at the school, sick or annual leave
- in accordance with school processes, communicate to relevant school staff the wellbeing nurse's whereabouts when not at school on appointed days (for example, via an electronic calendar that can be accessed by the wellbeing nurse and relevant school staff), and if their return is delayed for any reason
- use the NSW Health patient administration system to record and maintain activity data
- use the school's record keeping system to provide information to the school principal, school learning and support and wellbeing team and school staff when a student is accessing the wellbeing nurse, including:
 - student name
 - dates of consultations with student
 - date student is discharged from the service
- complete mandatory reporting for children and young people at suspected ROSH
- provide de-identified service level progress reports for the wellbeing nurse's line manager, school principal and program local governance committee, when requested
- report work safety incidents to the wellbeing nurse's line manager and school principal
- report the occurrence of adverse events or incidents that results in, or has the potential for injury, damage or loss including near misses in local health districts incident management system in accordance with the [NSW Health Incident Management Policy \(PD2020-020\)](#) and the [NSW Health Policy Work Health and Safety: Better Practice Procedures \(PD2018_013\)](#)
- inform the school principal of adverse events or incidents to enable the school to comply with their own incident management procedures.

NSW Health local health district¹

The local health district is responsible for:

- employment of the wellbeing nurse
- management and support of the wellbeing nurse, including performance management, rostering, payroll, leave management, and disciplinary/grievance functions
- providing clinical supervision for the wellbeing nurse
- approving the wellbeing nurse's activities during school holidays, including where the nurse works and who provides day-to-day support
- ensuring wellbeing nurses deliver services according to the [Wellbeing and Health In-reach Nurse Coordinator Program Service Delivery Model](#)
- monitoring the implementation of the [Wellbeing and Health In-reach Nurse Coordinator Program Service Delivery Model](#) in collaboration with the school principal
- consulting with the school principal about the performance of the wellbeing nurse and services provided by the wellbeing nurse at their school
- communicating with school principals about any operational issues impacting on the delivery of program
- ensuring the wellbeing nurse completes all NSW Health mandatory training

¹ NSW local health district responsibilities apply to Albury Wodonga Health.

- supporting the wellbeing nurse to access training to enhance their skills and knowledge relevant to their role
- ensuring wellbeing nurses understand and comply with NSW Health child protection policies and procedures²
- following up on relevant incidents occurring on the school sites reported by the wellbeing nurse in the local health district incident management system in accordance [with NSW Health Incident Management Policy \(PD2020_047\)](#) and [NSW Health Policy Work Health and Safety: Better Practice Procedures \(PD2018_013\)](#)
- ensuring the wellbeing nurse is up to date with documenting the service events in a child or young person's electronic medical record (eMR) in line with local health district processes³
- working with Directors of Educational Leadership or delegate to establish and coordinate the local WHIN Coordinator Program Governance committee
- ensuring an appropriate NSW Department of Education delegate is represented on the recruitment panels for the wellbeing nurses, in consultation with the Director of Educational Leadership
- registering the WHIN Coordinator service location in HERO according to NSW Health [IB2017_044 HERO: NSW Health service location registration requirements](#)
- providing reports on request to the NSW Ministry of Health and Department of Education representative on WHIN Coordinator program achievements and 'good news' stories.

School principal

The school principal is responsible for:

- providing a furnished room or space at their school site that, if shared by other staff, can be booked by the wellbeing nurse to deliver their services to students and their families in privacy. The room should be clearly signed indicating the availability of the wellbeing nurse
- ensuring the wellbeing nurse has access to printers, photocopiers, scanners and stationery supplies that assist them in their day-to-day role
- ensuring the wellbeing nurse is given relevant school policies, procedures and guidelines
- ensuring the wellbeing nurse receives a general local induction to the school site, including information about available facilities, contact details, first aid arrangements, emergency responses (evacuation, lockdown, lockout), reporting injuries, illnesses or safety hazards in the workplace
- supporting the wellbeing nurse to build strong professional relationships with the members of the school's learning and support and wellbeing team
- supporting the wellbeing nurse to integrate with the school's learning and support and wellbeing team, including clarifying roles and responsibilities and referral pathways
- providing day-to-day support while the wellbeing nurse is working in the school
- supporting the setup of processes to enable the wellbeing nurse to communicate their whereabouts when travelling outside of the school (for example, via an electronic calendar that can be accessed by the wellbeing nurse and relevant school staff), and if their return is delayed for any reason
- providing information to the wellbeing nurse's line manager regarding the wellbeing nurse's performance and any issues impacting the delivery of the WHIN Coordinator program at their school
- using the communication tools created by the NSW Department of Education to communicate information about the WHIN Coordinator program to the school's students, their families, school staff and school stakeholders

² The wellbeing nurse is a mandatory reporter and has a legal responsibility to report suspected child abuse and neglect to the relevant government authorities in accordance with Child Wellbeing and Child Protection Policies and Procedures for NSW Health (PD2013_007).

³ The Ministry of Health extracts non identifiable aggregated data on service events from the NSW Health Enterprise Data Warehouse for Analysis Reporting and Decisions (EDWARD) to generate quarterly reports.

- promoting the wellbeing nurse role to the school staff and school community, including referral pathways to the wellbeing nurse within the school
- informing students and parents/carers that the wellbeing nurse is employed by NSW Health and operates within the consent and confidentiality requirements of NSW Health.

School principal in the base school

The school principal in the base school is responsible for ensuring the wellbeing nurse is:

- is provided with a dedicated work space with a desk and chair
- is provided with the NSW Department of Education's [Code of Conduct](#), [Controversial Issues in Schools Policy and Procedures](#) and [Allegations Against Employees Policies and Procedures](#), security and safety, policies, procedures and guidelines
- receives relevant mandatory NSW Department of Education training.

Local health district and school principal

The local health district and school principal are responsible for supporting the wellbeing nurse to commence in a new school. Prior to commencement of the role in the school setting, the local health district and school principal discuss and agree on the arrangements for the wellbeing nurse to work in the chosen school. These include:

- the days and hours the wellbeing nurse is expected to be on school site, taking into consideration:
 - the wellbeing nurse's contracted hours, leave allowance and flexible work arrangements with the local health district, including flexible work hours and working remotely
 - travel time between school sites
 - required attendance at health appointments with students and families
 - required visits to local health district services, health and community services to access health resources, information and medical records
 - redeployment to other areas of health, for example to support the COVID response, flood and bushfire response, or other health emergencies
- a furnished space at the school for the wellbeing nurse to perform the service and any specific considerations that may apply (for example times of access to the space and privacy)
- remote working arrangements for times the wellbeing nurse is unable to be on the school site, for example linking via phone or video into meetings with students, families and school staff
- access to the school internet and basic office equipment such as printer, scanner and stationery
- access the school data system for retrieving and recording relevant student information, as appropriate
- access to a school computer to install 'remote access' to the local health district system, if required.

The local health district provides the wellbeing nurse with a laptop, mobile phone and access to a local health district fleet vehicle. Fleet vehicles may occasionally be unavailable to a wellbeing nurse to travel to schools when there is an unscheduled emergency clinical need in the local health district. When this occurs, the wellbeing nurse can continue to deliver the service to students and families through virtual care (email, phone or video communication) and virtually attend key meetings at the school.

NSW Department of Education Director of Educational Leadership

The Director of Educational Leadership who provides management support to school principals of participating schools is responsible for:

- informing school principals about their allocation of a wellbeing nurse
- ensuring school principals receive a copy of the WHIN Coordinator Program Operational Guidelines prior to wellbeing nurses starting in the school
- identifying an appropriate NSW Department of Education delegate to be represented on the wellbeing nurse interview panel, in consultation with the local health district
- introducing the wellbeing nurse to school principals
- working with the local health district and school principals to help resolve issues regarding the implementation of the program
- working with the local health district to establish and coordinate the WHIN Coordinator Program Governance committee
- escalating issues to the NSW Department of Education that cannot be resolved by the WHIN Coordinator Program Governance committee.

WHIN Coordinator Program Service Delivery Model

Referral

All students attending a school with a wellbeing nurse, and their families, are eligible to access the WHIN Coordinator program.

Direct referral

Any child or young person attending a school with a wellbeing nurse can be referred into the program by their parent or carer. Students 14 years and older can refer themselves to the program. The referral can be made directly to the wellbeing nurse in person, by email, telephone or videoconference.

Indirect referral

The school learning and support and wellbeing team and school staff can refer a student at the school of any age to the WHIN Coordinator program using the *Referral and Consent Forms* (Appendix 1). Parents/carers can ask the learning and support and wellbeing team to refer their child to the program. Students aged 14 years and over can also ask the learning and support team to refer them to the program. The school learning and support and wellbeing team is responsible for determining when a referral by this team to the WHIN Coordinator program is appropriate.

The wellbeing nurse assesses each referral and determines if the referral is accepted and informs the referrer of the referral outcome. The wellbeing nurse informs the parents/carers that the referral has been accepted. If a student is 14 years and older and is assessed by the wellbeing nurse to be Gillick competent, the student can request that their parents/carers are not told about the referral (refer to Consent section).

The wellbeing nurse can directly contact the parent/carers or can use an introduction letter that explains the WHIN Coordinator program and provides the wellbeing nurse's contact details (Appendix 2). The wellbeing nurse schedules appointments with the student and when appropriate, their family.

Consent

The wellbeing nurse obtains written or verbal consent from the parent/carers using the *Referral and Consent Forms* (Appendix 1) before undertaking any formal assessments, referral to other services or providing support. Written consent is preferred. The consent given is documented in the electronic medical record (eMR) system.

The wellbeing nurse as an employee of NSW Health must comply with the [NSW Health Consent to Medical and Healthcare Treatment Manual](#).

If a student 14 years or older requests that their parents/carers are not informed of the referral to the WHIN Coordinator program, and/or referral to another service by the wellbeing nurse, and they are assessed as having a sufficient level of understanding and maturity to enable them to make an informed decision, parental consent is not required. The wellbeing nurse uses clinical judgement to apply the criteria of Gillick competence and assess the student's maturity and level of understanding of the proposed care.

Service

The wellbeing nurse explores issues identified in the referral and conducts a health assessment to identify the health and social needs of students (and their families as appropriate). The wellbeing nurse aims to build a trusting relationship with students and their families and help them to overcome any barriers to accessing services. They can provide relevant information and service referral and linkage with health and wellbeing services.

Depending on the identified needs of the student and/ or their family the wellbeing nurse can:

- coordinate access to appropriate early and therapeutic intervention, assessments and referral to other services and programs
- support them to attend health appointments
- contribute to care coordination and case management
- support access to health promotion to improve health literacy and engagement.

If a student suffers a medical or mental health emergency when seeing the wellbeing nurse, the wellbeing nurse initiates and follows the school's medical emergency response procedure.

Mental health and wellbeing

The wellbeing nurse does not provide mental health diagnostic assessment or treatment.

The wellbeing nurse should apply the [Mental Health Continuum](#) to determine level of mental health needs and refer accordingly.

The wellbeing nurse develops and maintains referral pathways and connections so they can appropriately refer students for mental health services and supports. Their referral network includes:

- School staff:
 - school counselling staff
 - Student Support Officers
- Department of Education:
 - Networked Specialist Facilitators
 - Delivery Support Teams
- NSW Health:
 - School-Link Coordinators
 - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Other non-Government and private providers.

The wellbeing nurse can use mental health and wellbeing triage tools such as the *Ages and Stages Questionnaire*, *Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire* and [Youth Health and Wellbeing Assessment Guideline](#) to assist decision-making on the need for mental health services and supports.

Documentation

Referrals, clinical information and care plans are documented in a child or young person's eMR, in line with local health district processes.

The wellbeing nurse can document that the student is seeing the wellbeing nurse in the school's centralised record keeping system. In accordance with NSW health privacy legislation⁴, this information must not contain specific details of identified issues or referrals made to the wellbeing nurse or referrals made by the wellbeing nurse to other services.

Discharge

Once the student and/or parent/carer have been linked to any required or recommended service/s and no longer requires active support and coordination from the wellbeing nurse the student is discharged from the service.

The wellbeing nurse holds a meeting or phones the student and/or family prior to discharge from the WHIN Coordinator program to ensure their needs have been met before formally exiting them from the service.

The discharge is recorded in eMR and the school record system. The school learning and support and wellbeing team is informed that the student is no longer seeing the wellbeing nurse.

Privacy and confidentiality

The wellbeing nurse must make students and parents/carers aware of their right to confidentiality and the exceptions to this right which includes:

- intention to self-harm
- intention to harm someone else
- they are being harmed by someone else (including circumstances of abuse or neglect)
- know someone else who may intend to harm themselves or someone else.

Students and parents/carers must be informed that the child's referral to a wellbeing nurse will be recorded in the school's central records. Any details of the health assessment, health care or referrals made following the health assessment will not be recorded in the school's records. This health information will be included in the student's medical record held by the local health district.

Students and parents/carers must also be informed that if they disclose any information that relates to the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person, the wellbeing nurse as a mandatory reporter will need to respond. This may involve sharing the information disclosed with other agencies.

Consent is not necessary for exchange of information under Chapter 16A of the [Children and Young Persons \(Care and Protection\) Act 1998](#) provided that the information exchanged relates to the safety, welfare and/or wellbeing of a child and fulfils the objects and principles of the legislation. Chapter 16A recognises that the protection of confidentiality or of an individual's privacy must be balanced against another form of the public interest, which is ensuring the safety, welfare and/or wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people.

The wellbeing nurse can use Chapter 16A of [Children and Young Persons \(Care and Protection\) Act 1998](#) to share a student's information with the school's learning and support and wellbeing team, when appropriate to ensure their safety, welfare and/or wellbeing.

The wellbeing nurse encourages students to talk with their parents/carer about their health concerns and/or provide permission for the wellbeing nurse to do so on their behalf.

⁴ [Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002](#) and [Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998](#)

At the first appointment, young people and parents/carers should be provided with NSW Health confidentiality resources [We keep it zipped](#) and [Privacy Leaflet for Patients](#) brochures. These resource outline:

- how personal health information is kept private
- when young people can make decisions about their own health
- situations where information needs to be shared.

The wellbeing nurse is responsible for checking that the student and/or parent/carer reads and understands the information contained in the resources they provide.

Child wellbeing and child protection

Responding to disclosures

If a child or young person discloses abuse and/or neglect to the wellbeing nurse, the wellbeing nurse must record the time and date of the conversation and, as far as possible, the exact words used. It is important to be clear that it is the wellbeing nurse's role as a health worker to support a child or young person's health, safety and wellbeing. The wellbeing nurse must be careful not to ask leading questions, but to gather enough information to determine whether the child or young person is at suspected ROSH by using the [NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide](#).

If an outcome of suspected ROSH is reached, the wellbeing nurse makes a report to the Child Protection Helpline for an investigative response. Once a report is made, the wellbeing nurse's role returns to working with children to support their psychological and physical health, address the impact of the abuse and maintain a strong supportive relationship.

The wellbeing nurse should reassure the child or young person that they have the right to disclose abuse and/or neglect so that steps can be taken to help them and keep them safe.

As NSW Health employees, wellbeing nurses have a responsibility to promote the health, safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people. As a mandatory reporter, the wellbeing nurse must identify and appropriately respond to child wellbeing and child protection concerns.

In accordance with the [Child Wellbeing and Child Protection Policies and Procedures for NSW Health \(PD2013 007\)](#), the wellbeing nurse must:

- Identify:
 - signs of possible child abuse, neglect, family violence and prenatal harm and/or
 - relevant parent/carer health issues that may affect parenting capacity
 - any contextual information that may inform the concern.
- Respond by:
 - applying the online [NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide](#)
 - consulting other professionals working with the child/young person/family if required to gather further information about the family and explore strategies to support them, in line with Chapter 16A information sharing provisions detailed in Section 6 of the [Child Wellbeing and Child Protection Policies and Procedures for NSW Health \(PD2013 007\)](#)
 - reporting suspected ROSH to the Child Protection Helpline or the NSW Health CWU
 - contacting the NSW Health CWU if required for advice and assistance with child protection practice, processes, interventions, referral options, including whether a ROSH report is needed
 - informing the school principal (or delegate) of the ROSH report in writing and provide the reference number
 - keeping the school principal (or delegate) updated on response progress when appropriate and consistent with Chapter 16A information sharing provisions detailed in

Section 6 of the [Child Wellbeing and Child Protection Policies and Procedures for NSW Health \(PD2013_007\)](#)

- continuing to provide support to the child/young person/family and referring them to relevant services.

The wellbeing nurse must advise school principals when they identify any child wellbeing or child protection concern or when they identify a ROSH using the information exchange provisions of Chapter 16A of the [Children and Young Persons \(Care and Protection\) Act 1998](#). The wellbeing nurse works collaboratively with school staff as appropriate to plan any actions to address child safety, welfare or wellbeing concerns.

When a suspected ROSH report is indicated and both the wellbeing nurse and the school principal are aware of the same information, they both must ensure a report is made. The wellbeing nurse and school principal must agree:

- who will make a report
- when the report will be made
- the information to be reported.

The wellbeing nurse and school principal should only make separate reports if they have different or additional information to report or when views on the need to report differ.

The wellbeing nurse and school principal can contact their respective CWU to confirm whether a ROSH has been made about a student, or to receive assistance in planning a response after a ROSH report has been made.

Child Wellbeing Unit support for the wellbeing nurse and school principal

The NSW Health CWU supports NSW Health staff and the NSW Department of Education CWU supports NSW Department of Education staff. The CWUs help them to fulfil their child protection and wellbeing responsibilities. This includes assistance in deciding when concerns need to be reported to the Child Protection Helpline. The NSW Health CWU can make a report on behalf the wellbeing nurse based on who has the most relevant, direct information and is best placed to have the reporting conversation with the Child Protection Helpline.

When a child protection concern is identified, the wellbeing nurse can:

- contact the NSW Health CWU if required to consult with a NSW Health child protection professional for practice or procedural advice about any safety, welfare or wellbeing concern for a child, young person or unborn child
- to seek background health, child protection or wellbeing information about a child, young person or vulnerable family
- for advice about where to gain further information regarding services and supports available for children, young people and families
- if unsure whether a report to the Child Protection Helpline is warranted.

Child Related Allegations

If the wellbeing nurse has concerns about child related allegations, charges or convictions, the NSW Health Policy Directive, [Managing Child Related Allegations, Charges and Convictions Against NSW Health Staff \(PD2020_044\)](#), must be followed. This includes advice on what to do if it is known that the alleged perpetrator works in a non-NSW Health organisation.

If there are concerns about a Department of Education staff member (paid or unpaid), they must immediately inform the school principal.

WHIN Coordinator Program Governance

Governance roles

The NSW Ministry of Health is responsible for funding and delivering the WHIN Coordinator program across NSW. The NSW Ministry of Health oversees the design and statewide implementation and evaluation of the program. NSW Health local health districts and Albury Wodonga Health are responsible for the employment and management of wellbeing nurses and the implementation and performance of the program in their area. The NSW Department of Education partners with NSW Health to deliver the program in over 400 NSW public primary and high schools.

The NSW Department of Education and NSW Health have agreed how the program is delivered in schools. The NSW Department of Education is responsible for communicating this to NSW Department of Education staff, families and the community.

Governance framework

Health and Education MOU Wellbeing Partnership Governance Group

Final decision makers and escalation point for initiatives under the MOU

NSW Ministry of Health and NSW Department of Education Deputy Secretaries/Executive Directors

Health and Education Wellbeing Strategic Group

High level planning, coordination and monitoring of initiatives under the MOU.

NSW Ministry of Health and NSW Department of Education Executive Directors/Directors

Statewide WHIN Coordinator Program Implementation Group

Oversight of statewide implementation and evaluation of WHINC Program

NSW Ministry of Health, NSW Department of Education, local health district representatives and other key stakeholders

Local Governance WHIN Coordinator Program Committees

Oversight of local implementation and monitoring of WHINC Program

Local health districts, wellbeing nurse managers, wellbeing nurses, Directors of Educational Leadership, school principals

Local governance

Joint local WHIN Coordinator program committees meet at least once a quarter to oversee and review local delivery of the WHIN Coordinator program and manage local issues. The committees consider aspects of program delivery, including planning, program performance, program issues and strategies to improve delivery. Membership includes school principals from the participating schools (or delegate), NSW Department of Education Directors Educational Leadership (or delegate), wellbeing nurses' line managers and wellbeing nurses. Meetings are jointly organised and co-chaired by the local health district wellbeing nurses' manager and Director of Educational Leadership or their delegate.

The local WHIN Coordinator program committees report to the *Statewide WHIN Coordinator Program Implementation Group* on implementation and delivery of the WHIN Coordinator program. Issues that cannot be resolved by the local committee can be escalated to the *Statewide WHIN Coordinator Program Implementation Group*.

Statewide WHIN Coordinator Program Implementation Group

The *Statewide WHIN Coordinator Program Implementation Group* meets once per quarter to oversee the statewide implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the WHIN Coordinator program. Membership includes representatives from metropolitan and rural/regional local health districts, the NSW Ministry of Health Mental Health Branch, the Office of Regional Youth, Department of Communities and Justice, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation from Health and Education, and Primary Health Networks. The Group is co-chaired by NSW Ministry of Health and the Department of Education.

The Group reports quarterly to the *Health and Education Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Student Wellbeing Partnership Strategic Group* on the progress of the program implementation. Issues that cannot be resolved by the group are escalated to the *Health and Education MOU Wellbeing Partnership Strategic Group*.


Health and Education Student Wellbeing Partnership Strategic Group

There is a *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)* between NSW Health and NSW Department of Education that details the collaborative approach the departments take to maintaining and strengthening student health and wellbeing across NSW. The *MOU* consolidates governance across many Health and Education programs, including the WHIN Coordinator program. The Strategic Group's membership includes Executive Directors and Directors responsible for programs included in the *MOU* and reports to the *Student Wellbeing Partnership Governance Group*.

The *Health and Education MOU Wellbeing Partnership Governance Group* is the final decision maker and point of escalation. Members include Deputy Secretaries from NSW Health and NSW Department of Education and relevant Executive Directors leading priorities under the *Health and Education Supporting Health and Wellbeing MOU 2021 - 2024*.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Referral and Consent Forms

 NSW Health	FAMILY NAME		MRN
	GIVEN NAME		<input type="checkbox"/> MALE <input type="checkbox"/> FEMALE
Facility:	D.O.B. ____/____/____	M.O.	
ADDRESS			
WELLBEING NURSE REFERRAL			
LOCATION / WARD			
COMPLETE ALL DETAILS OR AFFIX PATIENT LABEL HERE			
<p>The Wellbeing Nurse is employed by NSW Health to work with schools to help students and their families to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify their health and well-being needs • Connect to health and community services they need • Understand information about their health care to make decisions and how to act on it. 			
Student Details			
Family name		Given name	
Preferred name		Alias(es)	
Current family name		Previous family name	
Date of birth		Sex	
Address		Phone/mobile number	
Living with: _____			
Contact Person 1		Contact Person 2	
Name		Name	
Address		Address	
Phone No.		Phone No.	
Email address		Email address	
Relationship to student		Relationship to student	
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent / Guardian has been informed about the referral <input type="checkbox"/> Student has been informed about the referral			
Student Information			
Sex: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Indeterminate <input type="checkbox"/> Not stated			
Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Nonbinary <input type="checkbox"/> Not stated			
Different identity (specify): _____			
Pronoun: <input type="checkbox"/> He <input type="checkbox"/> She <input type="checkbox"/> They <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____			
Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/> Yes-Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Yes-Both <input type="checkbox"/> Neither <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown			
Aboriginal Liaison officer offered? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Preferred language		Interpreter required? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Name of school		Student is currently in Out of Home Care (OOHC)	
Year level		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<p>The Wellbeing Nurse does not provide an EMERGENCY service. If you or someone is at immediate risk of harm call TRIPLE ZERO (000) immediately OR Go to the nearest Hospital Emergency Department OR alert School Staff (if on school grounds).</p>			



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 BINDING MARGIN - NO WRITING

14/10/2023A 0708/23

WELLBEING NURSE REFERRAL

SMR010270

NO WRITING



NSW Health

FAMILY NAME

MRN

GIVEN NAME

MALE FEMALE

Facility:

D.O.B. / / M.O.

ADDRESS

WELLBEING NURSE REFERRAL

LOCATION / WARD

COMPLETE ALL DETAILS OR AFFIX PATIENT LABEL HERE

Reason for referral

- Accommodation/homelessness
- Behavioural
- Family/peer relationship
- Mental/emotional health issues
- Physical health
- School non-attendance
- Social support
- Other (specify)
- Alcohol and/or drugs
- Bullying
- Learning difficulty
- Personal safety
- Not meeting developmental milestones
- Sexual health

List relevant history/diagnosis/assessments that might relate to this referral.

Is the child/family receiving any health/social services supports that may be relevant to this referral (e.g., school counsellor, NDIS, Department of Communities and Justice)?

What supports/outcomes are being requested from the Wellbeing Nurse?

Referrer Details

Full name:

Position:

School / Organisation:

Phone number:

Email address:

Signature:

Print and Sign

Date:

DD / MM / YYYY

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BINDING MARGIN - NO WRITING

SMR010270





NSW Health

FAMILY NAME	MRN
GIVEN NAME	<input type="checkbox"/> MALE <input type="checkbox"/> FEMALE

Facility:	D.O.B. ____ / ____ / ____	M.O.
ADDRESS		

WELLBEING NURSE CONSENT

LOCATION / WARD

COMPLETE ALL DETAILS OR AFFIX PATIENT LABEL HERE

The Wellbeing Nurse helps students and their families to:

- Identify their health and wellbeing needs
- Connect them to health and community services they need
- Understand information about their health care to make decisions and act on it.

The Wellbeing Nurse requires consent from the parent/guardian/carer/student before help can be given. (A student must be aged 14 years and older to give consent).

To be completed by a parent/guardian/carer/student (Please tick and print clearly)

I give consent for the Wellbeing Nurse to:

- Carry out health and wellbeing assessments on my child/me as required Yes No
- Refer my child/me to other health and/or social services for support as required Yes No
- Share information about my child/me with school staff involved in my child's/my support Yes No
- Share information about my child/me with prescribed bodies (agencies or organisations that have responsibility for the provision of services to children) to assist in my child's/my care. Yes No

I have viewed the NSW Health Privacy leaflet (<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/patients/privacy/Pages/privacy-leaflet-for-patients.aspx>)
 or **We keep it Zipped** (<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/kidsfamilies/youth/Pages/confidentiality-resources.aspx>)
 and understand my child's health/my information will not be shared unless needed to help in my child's/my care

Full name: _____

Signature: **Print and Sign** Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Relationship to student: Parent/guardian/carer I am the student

Student Details

Family name: _____ Given name: _____

Date of birth: ____ / ____ / ____ Medicare number: □□□□□□□□□□/□

Home address: _____

Name of school: _____ Year level: _____

Telephone/mobile: _____

Parent/Guardian/Carer Details

Family name: _____ Given name: _____

Home address: _____

Telephone/mobile: _____ Email address: _____

To be completed by Wellbeing nurse (Please tick and print clearly)

I have obtained verbal consent from the parent/guardian/carer student Yes No N/A

I have provided them with the information contained within this consent form Yes No N/A

I have assessed the student to be a minor with the capacity to give consent (mature minor) Yes No N/A

Full name: _____ Signature: **Print and Sign**

Designation: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____



SMR020280

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14-170295AA 15/01/23

NO WRITING

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WELLBEING NURSE CONSENT

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Appendix 2: Wellbeing nurse introduction letter and information leaflet

Dear [name of parent/carer]

My name is [wellbeing nurse's name]. I am the wellbeing nurse at your child's school.

***** INSERT A

I am writing to you because [child's name] has been referred to me [name/role etc] about [insert reason]. I would like to discuss with you your child's health and wellbeing, and if needed, support you to connect them to services.

Please contact me on [telephone number] to make an appointment to [meet/talk] with [me/me and the school learning and support and wellbeing team]. I am available at [name of school] on [days of week].

I am employed by NSW Health as part of the joint NSW Health and Department of Education Wellbeing and Health In-reach Nurse Coordinator program to work in NSW public schools. I work with the schools' learning and support and wellbeing teams and local health and community services to support students and their families on a wide range of health and wellbeing issues.

Attached please find some information about wellbeing nurses and the work that I do.

Yours sincerely

[Full name]
Wellbeing Nurse,
[Name of LHD]

OR

***** INSERT B

I am writing to you because [child's name] has approached me about [insert reason]. I would like your permission to meet with [child's name] to discuss their health and wellbeing and connect them with health and community services.

Please complete the enclosed consent form and return it to me as soon as possible in the self-addressed envelope provided.

If you have questions or wish to discuss your child's concerns, please make an appointment to meet or speak with me. I can be contacted on [telephone number]. I am available at [name of school] on [days of week].

I am employed by NSW Health as part of the joint NSW Health and Department of Education Wellbeing and Health In-reach Nurse Coordinator program to work in NSW public schools. I work with the schools' learning and support and wellbeing teams and local health and community services to support students and their families on a wide range of health and wellbeing issues.

Attached please find information about wellbeing nurses and the work that I do.

Yours sincerely

[Full name]
Wellbeing Nurse,
[Name of LHD]

Wellbeing and Health In-reach Nurse Coordinator program

The Wellbeing and Health In-reach Nurse Coordinator program is a partnership between NSW Health and the NSW Department of Education



Wellbeing nurses

What are wellbeing nurses?

Wellbeing nurses are high skilled and experienced nurses. They are employed by NSW Health to work in selected schools as part of the joint NSW Health and Department of Education Wellbeing and Health In-reach Nurse Coordinator program.

Wellbeing nurses work closely with school learning and support and wellbeing teams and local health and community services to support students and their families with a wide range of health and wellbeing concerns. This may include concerns about mental health, social and behavioural support, physical health and peer or family relationships.

How do wellbeing nurses support students and their family members?

Wellbeing nurses help students and their families to:

- identify their health and wellbeing needs
- connect to appropriate health and community services
- understand and use information about their health needs and healthcare options.

Wellbeing nurses do not administer medications, provide first aid medical interventions such as tube feeding or diabetes management.

Who can get support from a wellbeing nurse?

Any student enrolled at a school with a wellbeing nurse and their family members can get support from a wellbeing nurse.

How to get support from a wellbeing nurses?

Parents, carers or guardians can contact the school and ask to speak to the wellbeing nurse if they have concerns about their child's health and wellbeing and need information or support.

The school's learning and support team and school staff can also refer students and their family to the wellbeing nurse.

Students aged 14 years and older can approach the wellbeing nurse directly to talk confidentially about their health and wellbeing concerns.

A wellbeing nurse is not at a school every day. Parents, carers, guardians and students may need to make an appointment.

Do wellbeing nurses need parental consent to see a student?

Primary school students

Wellbeing nurses will seek permission from a parent, carer or guardian if their child is referred to them or comes to them with health and wellbeing concerns.

Parents, carers or guardians can give their permission to a wellbeing nurse either verbally or by completing and signing a consent form given to them by the wellbeing nurse or school.

High school students

Wellbeing nurses will seek permission from a parent, carer or guardian if their child under 14 years is referred to them or comes to them with health and wellbeing concerns.

High school students aged 14 years and older can speak to a wellbeing nurse confidentially if the wellbeing nurse assesses a student mature enough to fully understand their health problems being discussed, and the support being offered.

If a wellbeing nurse assesses the student as not mature enough to understand their health problems and needs, the wellbeing nurse will seek consent from the student's parent, carer or guardian.

Wellbeing nurses always encourage and offer to support students to talk to their parent, carers or guardian about their health and wellbeing concerns.

Do wellbeing nurses keep health information confidential?

Unless there is a safety concern, wellbeing nurses will get permission from the student's parent, carer or guardian, or the young person aged 14 years and older assessed as having the maturity required to provide permission, before passing on the student's information.

If a wellbeing nurse is concerned about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a student or the student's family, they may need to share the details about the concern with other services. This is required by law. The wellbeing nurse may also need to discuss the concern with the school principal.

Further information

Further information about wellbeing nurses and the Wellbeing and Health In-reach Nurse Coordinator program can be found at

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/kidsfamilies/youth/Pages/whin-coordinator-program.aspx>