



WELLBEING FRAMEWORK

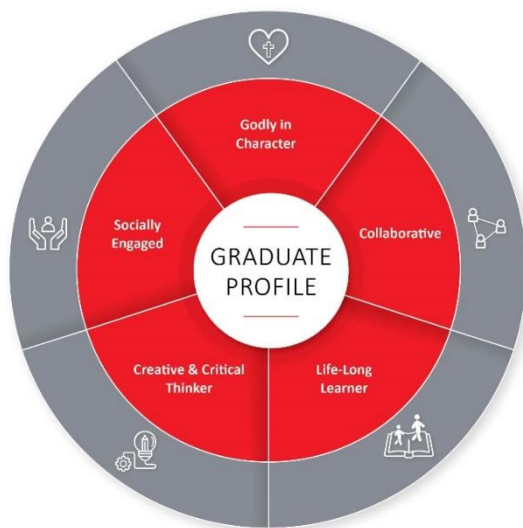
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Equipped for Life

Executive Summary

The purpose of GPCC is to equip students for a life of redemptive action through a holistic education grounded in a Biblical perspective. The mission goals of the College revolve around the formation of students, the development of quality staff, and the support of parents and families. The purpose of this Framework is to outline the College's approach to student wellbeing and engagement consistent with, and informed by, its purpose and mission goals; and to show how the College's approach to student wellbeing helps achieve the purpose and mission goals of the College. In particular, the Framework outlines the way we currently conceptualise the relationship between student wellbeing and student academic engagement in learning, and thus how the pastoral and academic foci of the College should support and reinforce each other. The Framework also refers to teacher wellbeing – although a more comprehensive treatment of teacher wellbeing will need to follow in another document. The Framework is informed by, yet is distinct from, other existing frameworks such as the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework (Education Council, 2018), and Thriving in Community (Christian Schools Australia, 2021).

The College's Graduate Attributes implicate a broader and deeper understanding of the purpose of education at GPCC than the 'simple' attainment of academic results. This broader and deeper understanding underpins the College's commitment to student wellbeing in general, including to its chapels, assemblies, Year group meetings, Equip groups, missional activities, and service-learning focus.



GPCC receives its authority from, and consequent accountability to, government agencies, constituent families and, ultimately, from God through Christ as expressed in the Bible. Governments are responsible for ensuring justice, fairness and safety. Parents expect a high quality Biblical Christian education delivered in, and through, a nurturing environment. The Bible provide us with a foundational understanding of the nature and character of the Triune God, an accurate yet loving view of humanity, and a picture of how God's covenant faithfulness and initiative in redemption will lead to a future where humanity and the rest of Creation is fully restored and, once more, at peace with God

We affirm that the pursuit of student wellbeing is a worthy goal in and of itself – not least because God loves each student and is concerned for their ultimate welfare and wellbeing. However, we also note that research (e.g., Abbott-Chapman, Martin, Ollington, Venn, Dwyer, & Gall, 2014; Dunleavy & Milton, 2009; Hattie, 2009) strongly supports the finding that student wellbeing, and academic progress and achievement, are positively and inextricably linked. Thus, if a culture of wellbeing and support is not fostered, students' engagement and learning will be compromised. Conversely, an intentional and strategic focus on wellbeing will not only support student wellbeing but will also support the academic progress of our students with both wellbeing and academic progress contributing to successful attainment of the Graduate Attributes by each student. It is also true that success in learning is a positive contributor to,

and protective factor in, students wellbeing. Students who succeed in learning are less likely to report compromised wellbeing (Beresnevičiene & Mačianskiene, 2000; Eccles, 2016).

In addition to the published academic literature, the College has recently become involved in a research project investigating wellbeing at GPCC and other schools and colleges. Results of this research will be available at the beginning of 2023, and will assist GPCC to further refine its approach to student wellbeing. Given this internal research, and our commitment to evidence-based practice and Biblical foundations, Green Point Christian College is well positioned to develop both current and future programs and approaches that will make an effective contribution to student wellbeing and engagement.

Wellbeing and Engagement Framework

Green Point Christian College is committed to creating quality learning opportunities for students, and to implementing a College-wide vision and holistic approach to wellbeing. This vision includes strengthening students' *cognitive, physical, social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing and development*. The College community recognises the potential that a focus on student wellbeing holds for positive growth in students, staff and the College as a whole. The College is also developing its understanding of what is required to foster wellbeing, and thus how it can become a constructive force in students' engagement, learning and development. This understanding includes that:

- (a) spiritual wellbeing (i.e., wellbeing of the soul and/or spirit of person before God) both transcends and underpins psychological and wider personal wellbeing. Thus, spiritual wellbeing must be at the centre of the College's approach to wellbeing in general.
- (b) all aspects of students' schooling experiences contribute to their wellbeing and engagement. Yet, given that students spend most of their time in class, what happens in the classroom is of particular importance for student wellbeing and engagement.
- (c) the diversity of the College's student body means that the College's approaches to wellbeing and engagement need to be differentiated. These differentiated approaches need to be coordinated to ensure that their individual and combined impact is maximised.
- (d) several specific challenges currently face students with respect to wellbeing and engagement, not least the possible loss of learning and social connectedness during the COVID 19 Pandemic. Whatever the cause(s), we currently observe deficits in numeracy, literacy, and study/learning skills. A concerted effort in these academic areas, and in the development of social skills and confidence, over the forthcoming period will be crucial to attaining desired levels of wellbeing and engagement.
- (e) change will take time. In some cases, wellbeing and engagement has been significantly compromised, and so a consistent and flexible approach to wellbeing and engagement over time will be necessary.

Given these understandings, the College has developed the present Framework as a means of systematically promoting and directing its wellbeing and engagement approaches and initiatives. The Framework is informed by, yet is distinct from, other existing frameworks such as the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework (Education Council, 2018), and Thriving in Community (Christian Schools Australia, 2021). The distinctiveness of this Framework includes its recognition of:

- (a) spiritual wellbeing as the epicentre of overall personal wellbeing;
- (b) the reciprocal link between wellbeing and engagement, and thus the importance of learning environments in contributing to, as well as benefitting from, student and teacher wellbeing;
- (c) the contribution of wellbeing to attainment of the College's Graduate Attributes;
- (d) existing activities of the College that support wellbeing that may, nevertheless, require further differentiation and integration over time in order to make an optimal contribution to student and teacher wellbeing;
- (e) the role of collaboration between the Primary and Secondary schools in promoting student wellbeing and engagement.

Context

Contemporary social and cultural contexts are hazardous not only to student wellbeing and engagement, but to individual and social wellbeing more generally (Mate, 2022; cf. Brian, 2022). Family and community breakdown, growing economic disparity, sedentary screen-based lifestyles, online bullying and predation, loss of trust in authority and institutions (including schools), entrenched political enmity, and the abandonment of Christian belief and moral values (e.g., Scheitle & Adamczyk, 2010); all potentially threaten the wellbeing and engagement of students. Moreover, the decline of the Christian church may threaten the perceived or actual capability of Christians to make a positive contribution to the lives of individuals, families and communities (Cromartie, 2003).

In this context, however, the Christian school can make a positive contribution. The Christian school cannot solve the problems of the world and, indeed, will often be impacted by such challenges. However, the Christian school can make a positive difference in the lives of young people, and to the families and communities to which students belong. Specifically, the Christian school can:

- (a) locate students in a stable, nurturing and appropriately protective community that genuinely cares for students and their life-outcomes;
- (b) provide students with a range of positive opportunities and activities in which to be involved – including but not limited to formal learning opportunities and activities;
- (c) encourage students to make wise personal choices and decisions based on a firm moral foundation that is modelled and discussed, as well as described, by Christian teachers;
- (d) furnish students with a broader and more conceptually integrated view of the world (broader and more integrated, that is, than that furnished by secular education) that allows students to make sense of the world and their place in it; and
- (e) support the inherent dignity and reflective capacities of each student such that they develop a positive yet humble view of themselves, and an appreciative and compassionate view of others.

Given its current state of development as a long-standing and well-managed College, GPCC is able to deliver these benefits to its students. However, ongoing training and resourcing of teachers and students will be required to ensure these benefits accrue as envisaged.

The College

GPCC is not unlike other schools and Colleges, including other schools and Colleges on the Central Coast. Like other schools and Colleges, GPCC deals with the 'normal' range of student mental health, social adjustment and behavioural issues – and so has students ranging from the settled and productive through to students who are both troubled and troublesome. Also, like other schools and Colleges, GPCC implements a range of strategies, programs and approaches designed to support student wellbeing, and to support student engagement learning and in College life more generally.

Like other *Christian* schools and Colleges, GPCC is motivated by the love of God in Christ, and seeks to model this love to every student. As such, GPCC feels a particular responsibility to nurture students spiritually and morally, as well as physically, cognitively and emotionally. Moreover, like other Christian schools and Colleges, this broader and deeper nurturance is guided and directed both by Biblical norms and understandings, and empowered by the work of Holy Spirit in the lives of Christian students and staff.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing is a multidimensional construct that has been defined as a “positive sense of self and belonging and the skills to make positive and healthy choices to support learning and achievement, provided in a safe and accepting environment for all students” (Runions, Pearce, & Cross, 2021). Well-being implies functioning well in the present with, ideally, the potential to flourish in the future. Wellbeing is associated with concepts such as thriving, flourishing, and health. Research (e.g., Commissioner for Children and Young People, 2020; Runions, Pearce, & Cross, 2021) supports the contention that wellbeing is experienced differentially across a range of contexts, and that several domains comprise students’ overall wellbeing. These domains include cognitive, emotional, social, physical and spiritual wellbeing, and are represented in Figure 1.

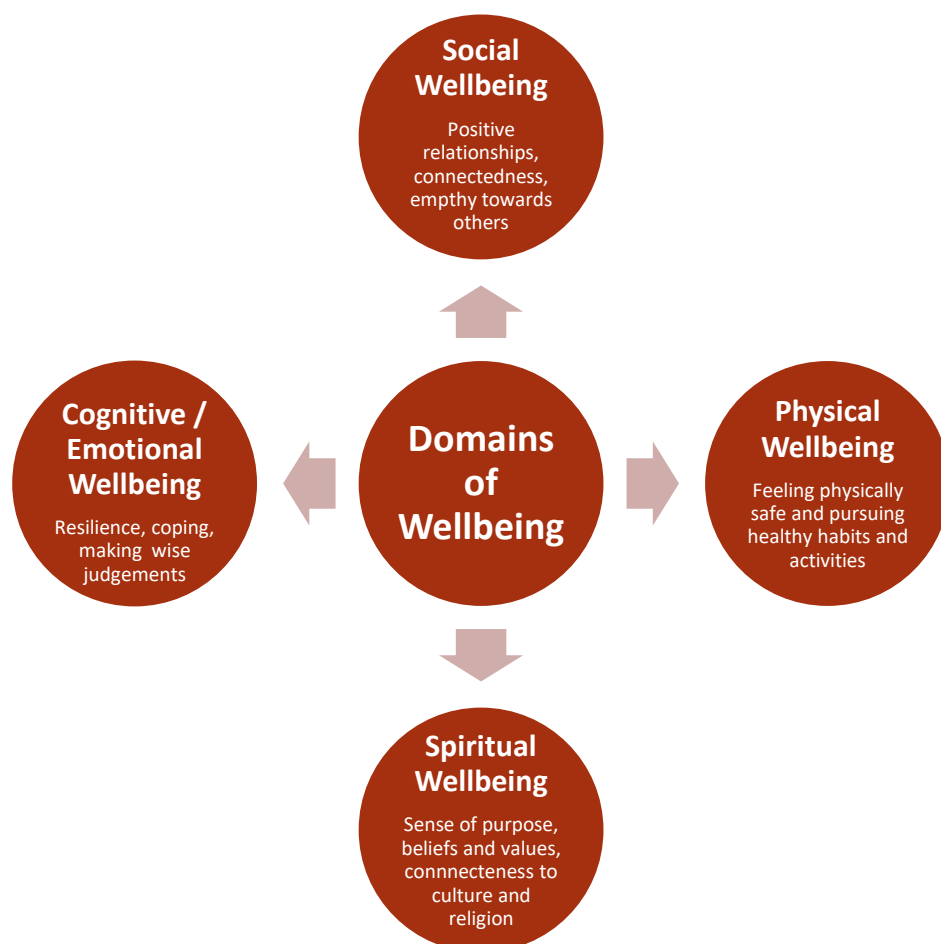


Figure 1: Department of Education and Communities: Domains of Wellbeing (Source: www.dec.nsw.gov.au)

Consistent with an earlier statement of understanding, GPCC would want to modify Figure 1 to emphasise the priority of spiritual wellbeing and its integrative effects on all other areas of wellbeing as represented in Figure 2.



Figure 2: GPCC Domains of Wellbeing

Subjectively, wellbeing refers to a student's personal sense that they are functioning in healthy, satisfying and productive ways at any given point in time and/or in any given context – regardless of actual circumstances. Objectively, wellbeing refers to the actual state of positive functioning of an individual or group at a given point in time and in a given context. This actual state might be called the *wellness* of an individual or group. The subjective/objective distinction is important because (as will be noted shortly with respect to the Biblical context of wellbeing) it is possible for an individual's subjective sense of wellbeing to be quite intact despite their actual circumstances indicating a certain lack of wellness, and vice versa. Put another way, under the same set of objective wellness indicators, some students may experience a subjective loss of wellbeing, while others retain a robust subjective sense of wellbeing. For example, the recent Pandemic has elicited various subjective responses from students, with not all students experiencing a diminution in wellbeing despite enduring (roughly) the same set of objective events and circumstances.

Ideally what we would like is for students (and teachers) to be critically realistic (Edlin, 2022) with respect to their wellbeing i.e., to understand that while our subjective evaluations of our objective wellbeing may not always be entirely accurate, they need not be hopelessly inaccurate either. It is possible, especially if accessing God's wisdom, to come to a more-or-less accurate perception of our current state of wellbeing. This more-or-less accurate perception can allow students and teachers to be both appropriately grateful (things are not always as bad as they might seem) and appropriately concerned (sometimes things are worse than they seem and require intervention).

Student Engagement

As already indicated, there is a strong reciprocal relationship between student wellbeing and student engagement, such that wellbeing supports engagement (particularly academic engagement), and engagement (including but not limited to academic engagement) supports wellbeing (OECD, 2013; Gillen-O'Neel & Fuligni, 2013; Willms, Friesen and Milton, 2009). In this section of the Framework, we first outline some Australian research (taken from Commissioner for Children and Young People, 2020) relating to the relationship between wellbeing, engagement and learning; and then move to more specific description of the interplay between these factors in the GPCC context.

Student wellbeing matters for academic engagement and thus learning. For example, students with persistent emotional or behaviour problems have been shown to fall as much as a year behind their peers in numeracy in the four years between Years 3 and 7 (Commissioner for Children and Young People, 2020). This effect is comparable to the loss in learning observed for students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Even students with more transient poor wellbeing show substantial losses in learning and engagement. Persistent bullying also has damaging effects on learning. Students who are bullied for two or three years in mid primary school fall nearly ten months behind their peers in numeracy by Year 7. In contrast, students with high levels of wellbeing are much less likely to disengage from school, and thus much more likely to succeed in learning. For these reasons, wellbeing can be considered to be a major determinant of learning and, given that many students report emotional and behaviour problems either transient or persistent (Marks, 1998), children experiencing challenges to wellbeing represent a high-risk group with respect to learning.

Student wellbeing also matters for school engagement over time. In the Commissioner for Children and Young People (2020) study, one in six students report disengaging from school during the late primary years and, by Year 7, these students had lost a year's progress in numeracy compared to peers. The transition to Year 7 is also critical. Difficulties with academic studies, peer relationships, teacher relationships or changes in daily routine were encountered by 13% of students in Year 7. However, Year 6 teachers are often good at predicting which students are likely to encounter problems in secondary school, including losses in their learning progress. This finding suggests that indicators of disengagement, if not their underlying causes, are evident to teachers. GPCC would do well to make any indicators and/or causes of disengagement explicit. The finding also implicates the importance, in the GPCC context, of Primary and Secondary teachers working together to support student wellbeing, especially in the transitional phase between schools in the College. Strategies for supporting incoming students from other Primary schools is also critical given large numbers of external students joining GPCC in Year 7.

Not only is there a reciprocal relationship between wellbeing and engagement, but there is a similar relationship between engagement and learning. Poor rates of learning predict later school disengagement, and school disengagement predicts later deficits in learning. In the study previously cited, students who in mid primary school made the least progress in their learning (i.e., those in the bottom third of academic achievers) were almost twice as likely to be disengaged from school compared with students making the most progress (i.e., the top third of achievers) by Year 7. In turn, this disengagement leads to poorer learning outcomes.

Student Engagement at GPCC

Although student engagement in learning at the College is not (perhaps not *nearly*) as problematic as it may be in comparable schools, engagement in learning is still an issue worthy of attention by the College. Student disengagement may present as talking in class, seeking to leave the class for spurious reasons, superficial cognitive and metacognitive engagement with assigned tasks and homework, disorganised study habits, and lack of initiative in seeking teacher assistance and/or feedback.

Factors within the control of the College that may lead to student disengagement include difficulties relating to:

- (a) the enculturation of students (and parents of students) entering Year 7 from other schools;
- (b) communicating to the whole College the wider purpose of education (e.g., to maximise the potential of all students to do good in the world), and the social, psychological, vocational and spiritual benefits of engagement in learning;
- (c) defining, setting, and reinforcing clear expectations regarding students' academic engagement in school;
- (d) tolerance, and perhaps even acceptance, of work avoidant behaviours in-class and with respect to homework and assigned tasks;
- (e) identifying, in Year and other sub-groups, salient cognitive, motivational and practical impediments to engagement in learning;
- (f) teaching relevant skills, attitudes, behaviours associated with cognitive and metacognitive engagement in study and learning; and
- (g) procedures for implementing student management policies if these procedures are too slow to escalate behaviours related to persistent work avoidance.

While not disregarding those factors outside the College's control, this Framework can and should respond to factors within the College's control that are impacting student engagement. Some of these responses may include:

- (a) briefing all, but perhaps especially incoming parents and students, regarding the academic culture of the College;
- (b) regularly communicating to the student body the purpose of education and benefits of engagement in learning;
- (c) clarifying expectations regarding student academic engagement in school;
- (d) expecting high-achievement from students, including encouraging sound work habits and supporting the learning of others;
- (e) systematically identifying and (in an educational not just a disciplinary manner) addressing, barriers to engagement in learning; and
- (f) revising student management policies and/or procedures such that disengagement in learning is quickly and decisively escalated and addressed.

To reiterate: student academic engagement is a wellbeing issue. The interface of the measures just outlined within the broader Framework are discussed later in this document.

A Biblical Context for Wellbeing and Engagement

The College desires that all aspects and activities of the College are informed and directed by the Bible, and this includes our understanding and practices relating to wellbeing and engagement. Not least, our foundation in the Word of God affects our understanding of who God is, that he has created us in his image, that he desires the best for us and that, as a result,

he has gifted us for his service. God is the source of all hope, bringing light and peace into our lives through Jesus Christ. Thus, a relationship with God in Christ is at the centre of our relational, physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Put another way, wellbeing is founded on putting our trust and hope in God who promises in Psalm 46 to be a “present help in times of trouble”. For this reason also, wellbeing implies not being centred on our own will, wants or desires; but rather on the will of God the Father.

At the establishment of the world, God’s creation was untarnished. Everything was good and whole. Creation was absent of sin and mankind was in an unbroken relationship with God, consistently reflecting His image and glory. In terms of this Framework, we could describe life in the Garden as a state of perfect harmony and human wellbeing. As a result of sin coming into the world, however, humanity was cut off from the source of life and order. Without God, the default setting for humanity became death and disorder. Thus, in order to reclaim wellbeing, we need to reconnect with God. Such reconnection has been made possible in and through Jesus Christ.

Given this biblical metanarrative, we understand that our 21st Century lives are located in a world that was created good and in many ways remains good, but that all things have been tainted by the sin of human rebellion, thus negatively affecting the whole of Creation. The words and actions of Jesus Christ provide a pathway to redemption both for humanity and Creation; a redemption, however, that is not yet completely fulfilled. Our desire for harmony, peace (more broadly Shalom – which encompasses peace, harmony, wholeness and completeness) will one day be realised. In the meantime, we live in a world where adversity and struggle are still present. Our lives, therefore, will include joy and pain, delight and grief, celebration and disappointment, anguish and elation, laughter and tears. Thus, we live in the tension of knowing a good, faithful and powerful God whilst continuing to experience sadness and suffering. Yet, in Christ, even our sufferings are redeemed.

Romans 5:1-5 “...since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with *God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

Contentment Despite Circumstances

Given the now-and-not-yet nature of redemption, we will not always experience life as a flourishing existence. Yet, in Christ, these less-than-flourishing experiences need not compromise our underlying wellbeing. From a Biblical perspective, wellbeing is linked to *contentment* rather than to any given experience of flourishing. Contentment implies a peace and satisfaction in God *irrespective of* our circumstances. Happiness implies satisfaction *with* our circumstances. Paul’s letter to the Philippians, for example, includes accounts of his suffering. Yet, he goes on to say:

“... I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” Philippians 4:11-13

In the last sentence of this quote, Paul is saying that the indwelling Christ provides him the strength to be content despite his circumstances and any associated present unhappiness. Thus, Paul's wellbeing is not jeopardised by suffering. Moreover, because suffering does not jeopardise wellbeing, suffering can be openly acknowledged. For this reason, wellbeing can include lament as well as celebration. *Lament is "the honest cry of a hurting heart wrestling with the paradox of pain and the promise of God's goodness"*¹ From a worldly perspective, lament is sometimes thought to preclude wellbeing because it implies the expression of hurt *without* the promise of goodness. However, from a biblical perspective, the promise of goodness makes even the expression of hurt a healing rather than a disabling experience. Specifically, trust in God and his goodness leads to joy and peace (even in the midst of suffering), which in turn leads to hope rather than despair. For this reason, Romans 15:13 provides an apt prayer for our community:

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit".

While not dismissing the very real and painful experiences of suffering, grief, and loss; at least some of what we typically see as adversity is actually God's refining of us.

"...we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us." Romans 5:1-15

A Biblical approach to wellbeing will recognise this truth and its purposeful nature. i.e., suffering heightens our awareness that all is not right, and also our desire to pursue what is right. In response to suffering, we seek to live out the truth that peace is found in God, a truth that brings us to a state of authentic, lasting wellbeing. Therefore, from a Biblical perspective, there is purpose to adversity which, when faced, can strengthen character. For this reason, suffering and adversity should be seen in the light of the total goodness of God, specifically in light of future hope and a promised redemption.

Steps Towards Building True Contentment

True (i.e., genuine, authentic, lasting) contentment comes from aligning our hearts and minds with the teachings of Scripture, and so allowing God's Spirit to transform our attitudes, beliefs, and perspectives. The Bible identifies some key steps towards this alignment. These steps include:

(a) Trusting in God's provision

The Bible encourages us to trust in God's provision and to find contentment in His faithfulness. Psalm 23:1 and Matthew 6:25-34, for example, make it clear that God is our provider and that He cares for our needs. Contentment comes from recognising that God is in control and will supply what is necessary for our well-being.

(b) Expressing gratitude and thankfulness

The Bible emphasises the importance of gratitude and thankfulness as a foundation for contentment. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 and Philippians 4:6, for example, state that we ought to give thanks in all circumstances and approach God with a spirit of gratitude. By focusing on what we have rather than what we lack, we can cultivate lasting contentment.

(c) Detaching from material possessions

The Bible warns against both the moral dangers and the consequences for wellbeing of placing too much importance on material possessions and the pursuit of worldly wealth. Jesus taught us to store up treasures in heaven rather than on earth (Matthew 6:19-21). True contentment is found in our relationship with God and in the eternal treasures we have in Him.

(d) Prioritising the Kingdom

Jesus calls believers to prioritise the kingdom of God and His righteousness above worldly pursuits (Matthew 6:33). Contentment is found in aligning our desires and ambitions with God's purposes and living in accordance with His will. Contentment also comes from understanding that our true citizenship is in heaven, and that our ultimate hope and fulfillment are, and will be, found in eternity with God.

(e) Serving and living well with others

True contentment and wellbeing are achieved when we focus on the wellbeing of all, not only our personal wellbeing. For this reason, the pursuit of true wellbeing includes striving for justice and expressing compassion for all, and is strongly linked to a life of servanthood and redemptive restoration. Wellbeing also involves accepting and fulfilling our corporate and moral responsibilities, and adapting appropriately to the ethos and culture of a range of communities and organisations.

Engagement

The application of Biblical truth informs and inspires commitment to, and engagement in, work and community. Students' schoolwork is their work, and their school is their community (albeit not their only community). Hence, a Biblical understanding of work and community is relevant to student engagement. With respect to work:

- (a) work done for the glory of God, brings glory to God (1 Corinthians 10:31). Thus, work can have ultimate meaning and purpose, as well as being personally meaningful and purposeful.
- (b) work calls for diligence and excellence because, for the Christian at least, work is an act of service to God, not just to a teacher or an employer (Ephesians 6:6-7; Colossians 3:22).
- (c) work is not a punishment. After the Fall, work is *hard* and less productive than before the Fall. Yet, work is not *bad*. Work is a gift and blessing in our lives and to others. (Ecclesiastes 2:24-25).
- (d) 'work' does not just mean paid work. Whether we are being paid or not, God calls us to continue in meaningful work, and to serve purposefully (Acts 20:28).
- (e) work is not for ourselves alone. Work is not to only to provide our own lives, but also to provide for those around us (Ephesians 4:28).
- (f) Work is something to be thankful for. Work teaches us value of being productively employed, and the struggle of work allows us to appreciate the fruits of our labours (1 Corinthians 9:19).

The thrust of Biblical teaching on work is that, despite work being hard and sometimes less productive than we might like, nevertheless work is good in and of itself, and is good because it results in appropriate benefits to self and others (Keller, 2014). Engagement in work, then, should be pursued. From research and perhaps anecdotally, we are aware of the deleterious

effects of unemployment. In the school context, not engaging in work has negative effects on students' emotional as well as their academic wellbeing. Conversely, even though hard, engagement in schoolwork brings all the benefits of work in general, not least the sense of accomplishment that comes from 'a good job well done'.

With respect to community:

- (a) It is not good for us to be alone (in the sense of being lonely, Genesis 2:18).
- (b) Jesus blesses community formed in his name with his presence (Matthew 18:20).
- (c) Community can encourage us to engage in love and good works (Hebrews 10:24-25).
- (d) Spiritual practices (e.g., holding to Apostolic doctrine, breaking bread and prayer) build community (Acts 2:42-47).
- (e) Despite the stresses and strains of living and working together, we achieve more together than apart (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12).
- (f) Communities should be united in love, humility and care for one another (1 Corinthians 12:25-27; Philippians 2:3-16), and this unity is a great good when this happens (Psalms 127:3; 133:1).

The thrust of Biblical teaching on community is that, despite the many ethical, relational and spiritual problems that arise in community; we are nevertheless made to work with, live with, and simply be with others. As such, when we are together with others we not only achieve more, but we are and become better (more settled, more motivated, more empathetic) than when we are isolated from others. These observations do not imply that it is not also good to be alone from time to time and for various purposes. Yet, it is not good to be lonely or isolated, and such isolation can occur even when people are physically proximate to others. Thus, it is possible for students to be isolated and lonely even when at school or, conversely, not isolated even if working alone or not at school for some reason.

The College's Approach to Wellbeing and Engagement

As a Christian community we are committed to a College-wide approach to wellbeing. This College-wide approach is reflected in the breadth of our College's Mission Goals which include students, staff and parents; and (perhaps prospectively rather than entirely presently) in the authentically collegiate nature of the College.

Mission Goals

The College's mission goals can be, and have been here, specifically used to guide GPCC's approach to wellbeing.

1. *Students: The formation of students who display the attributes of the GPCC Graduate Profile*
Attainment of the College's Graduate Profile implies that a student has attained a certain level of wellbeing. Godly character is displayed when a student's internal world is characterised by faith, hope and love. Students are collaborative when they see themselves as belonging to a learning community in which, and to which, they have responsibilities for not only their own learning, but also for the learning of others. Students are on the pathway to a life of learning when they have experienced the enjoyment and enrichment of acquiring knowledge, understanding and wisdom. Students are, and become, creative and critical thinkers when they have successfully navigated between cynicism and scepticism on the one hand, and intellectual apathy and credulity on the other. Students are socially engaged when they are empathetically aware of, and responsive to, the needs of others. In sum, a

student in possession of the Graduate Attributes is likely to be 'holistically healthy' on some level.

The inference to wellbeing from the Graduate Attributes is not meant to imply that students who obtain the Graduate Attributes will always report a subjective sense of wellbeing. However, to the extent that Graduate attributes represent a positive engagement with God, self, learning and the wider world, attainment of these attributes would be expected to be associated with wellbeing, at least to some extent.

2. *Staff: The development of quality staff who serve our students well.*

In a similar way, attainment of the GPCC teacher profile implies wellbeing on the part of staff. The observations above with respect to the Graduate Profile also apply to teachers. Teachers with spiritually settled internal worlds, a sense of belonging to the GPCC community, positive past and present experiences of learning, an informed yet flexible approach to thinking, and empathy, especially for those less fortunate than themselves; are unlikely to experience a pervasive absence of wellbeing, even if they are sometimes unwell mentally or physically.

The same kind of inference to wellbeing can be made concerning other elements of the Teacher Profile. Teachers who have strong presence are likely to have a consolidated sense of their identity both as a teacher and as a Christian. Teachers who create safe and supportive environments are likely to have experienced safe and supportive environments themselves including, hopefully, the GPCC teacher-environment. Teachers with a strong sense of wellbeing will be able to model wellbeing to students, as well as identifying challenges to student wellbeing and offering appropriate support to students. In this way, teachers who are well will contribute to the wellness of students.

Finally, teachers who use a range of strategies are likely to be cognitively and motivationally engaged in their work, again indicating at least some level of wellbeing. Teachers valuing real-world learning are unlikely to have retreated into a narrow scholasticism which can be indicative of burnout and, thus, the diminution of wellbeing.

3. *Parents: the support of families (carers) as the cornerstone of a flourishing society.*

Parents and families are under unprecedented pressures, resulting not least from pervasive economic and social pressures that can potentially dilute parental energies with respect to raising children and adolescents. Parents face complex challenges with respect to schooling and learning, peer-relationships (including sexuality) and risk-taking behaviour (including but not limited to substance abuse), to name a few. GPCC cannot resolve these issues. However, it can make a positive contribution to child, parent and whole family wellbeing through the provision of a range of programs designed to directly support students and, both directly and indirectly, to support parents and families. For example, the College runs various programs (e.g., the Fathering Project) and events that directly support the wellbeing of parents and families. Through its efforts with students, parents and whole families, the College can be a force for good in the community at large.

Wise Choices

Our lives are, to a great extent, the sum total of our choices. Bad choices potentially lead to disrupted and unproductive lives characterised by a lack of wellness and wellbeing. Good choices potentially lead to harmonious and productive lives characterised by wellness and

wellbeing. The current diversity of choices available to young people, along with the absence or degradation of a firm moral foundation and established moral boundaries, leads in many cases to poor choices. These choices may involve ‘hot button’ issues such as sexuality and substance abuse. However, decision making in every arena is potentially compromised by moral degradation.

GPCC wants to avoid moral patronage. However, *teaching* (as opposed to simply exhorting the value of) moral foundations and boundaries will go a long way towards enhancing student wellbeing. By *teaching* moral foundations and boundaries we do not necessarily mean that there needs to be dedicated lessons, or parts of lessons, dealing with morality (although Equip classes, for example, may be an appropriate location for such teaching). Moreover, following Parker & Street (2018), we certainly do not wish to introduce unwarranted distractions or diversions from the business of teaching. However, we do envision that in the context of mainstream classrooms, the normal behaviour management role of *exhorting* students to behave in particular ways will be supplemented by appropriate *explanation* concerning how to behave in these ways.

In somewhat more detail: In any given context, it is not atypical for those in authority (parents, teachers, employers, etc.) to identify what boundaries and behaviours are acceptable, and perhaps even to punish transgressions of those boundaries and behaviours. In a Christian context, it is also not atypical for those in authority to teach the moral foundations (e.g., explicit Biblical teachings or theological principles) that underpin particular boundaries or behaviours. However, even in Christian contexts, it is less common to find examples of those in authority actually teaching *how* to stay within particular boundaries and/or *how* to behave in particular ways. The assumption often made is that people know how to behave, and so misbehaviour must be an example of recalcitrance or, worse, defiance. Moreover, especially in a Christian College, the mandate is to teach – not just to teach the academic disciplines, or moral foundations, but to teach students *how* to think critically, creatively, and conscientiously; and *how* to behave in ways that benefit both self and others. Inevitably, this teaching will involve teaching students both *to* and *how to* choose wisely i.e., how not to choose the bad but choose the good in any given situation.

Teaching and Supporting Wellbeing and Engagement

Given this introduction, the next section of the Framework outlines how attitudes and behaviours leading to wellbeing and engagement might be, and to some extent already are, taught and supported in the GPCC context.

Biblical Literacy

Both a student’s (indeed any person’s) subjective sense of wellbeing and their objective state of wellness, is determined by the way they understand their context and circumstances. This understanding is, in turn, influenced by the concepts and ideas that populate a student’s worldview. If a student through their worldview understands (or interprets) their context and circumstances negatively their subjective wellbeing and objective wellness will be threatened. If, on the other hand, a person interprets their context and circumstances positively, they are likely to experience both wellbeing and wellness.

It is possible that a high-quality program focussing on Biblical Literacy might assist Christian students to interpret their context and circumstances in the light of God’s goodness, and the

fallenness of humanity, such that contentment in Christ might be authentically experienced and humbly accepted. The Biblical narrative points to the lifelong struggle of all people, including the people of God. Yet, the present help and future hope of the Christian, engendered through the Biblical narrative, the work of the Holy Spirit, and participation in Christian community, can sustain the Christian person in the face of adversity and even distress. However, for non-Christian students (and perhaps even some Christian students) the Bible may not be the best starting point for wellbeing. The credibility and authority of religious texts of all kinds (the Bible included) is currently under threat and presuppositional biases against the Bible may impede some students from gaining anything from the Bible (Collier, Goodlet and George, 2017). For these reasons, other strategies that move students towards Biblical literacy over time, rather than requiring direct engagement with the Bible at the outset, may be required for accessing and addressing worldview issues related to wellbeing.

Pastoral Support

In any community, there will be times when the pressures and difficulties of life will overwhelm some community members. In a Christian community such as GPCC, the community is not only able to provide counselling and practical assistance, but is also able to provide a deeper level of pastoral care that draws on and exemplifies the love of God in Christ. Ultimately, it is the love of God that drives out fear and, so, can lead to the resolution of difficulties where fear is salient psychologically and pathologically. For this reason, GPCC seeks intentionally to continue to develop as a supportive community that bears the burdens of others. Within this community, teachers play a special role, which might be construed in terms of the teacher-as-chaplain, in providing support for students and for their parents and families (as exemplified by GPCC's Fathering Project program). This role needs to be attenuated according to the training of each teacher and the circumstances of each student. However, over time it may be that teachers and administrators could receive (or receive further) training in mental health first-aid or similar modalities so that they are equipped to respond to wellbeing issues in lives of students and their families (see, for example, Quinlan & Hone, 2020). The role of the Wellbeing Coordinator in both Secondary and Primary is, in part, to provide or organise training for teachers in the 'everyday' support of students' wellbeing.

Learning Experiences

In a Christian College most of students' time and energy will be directed towards their academic studies. As such, what happens in the classroom, and in the wider context of learning at school and at home, will have a profound effect on students' wellbeing. For this reason, issues pertaining to classroom experiences and practices must form part of a comprehensive wellbeing package.

Academic issues pertaining to wellbeing include those listed below.

- (a) teacher-student and student-student relationships in the classroom;
- (b) proactive and pre-emptive measures designed to minimise actions, events, or content that adversely affects student wellbeing;
- (c) Christian pedagogy and a Christian curriculum – both in 'secular' and Biblical Studies;
- (d) realistic and effective approaches to differentiation;
- (e) assessment practices that encourage and scaffold growth and progress;
- (f) learning that has explicit real-world application and meaning; and
- (g) the application of learning in mission and community service.

Our understanding of the application of these issues in the GPCC context will need to be developed further over time and made explicit in various policy and related documents.

Wellbeing is addressed and developed not only in the context of responding to needs, but also in the context of proactively providing challenges to students in order that they might develop a sense of competence, personal identity and cohesion with others that leads to emotional resilience. Too often in contemporary society, children are shielded from effort that would strengthen them physically, cognitively and emotionally. For this reason, learning experiences should include:

- (a) physical challenges, such as those inherent in sports programs, and the Duke of Edinburgh Awards;
- (b) mental challenges, including appropriately difficult learning and research tasks that involve engaging with differing perspectives and presuppositions;
- (c) social challenges, including conflict resolution (versus conflict avoidance or conflict escalation) and dealing positively with relational issues; and
- (d) service challenges, including those that address sometimes profound and confronting needs in our local communities, region and world.

A model of differentiated learning experiences such as that provided by SEED (Beckett, 2021) may provide a useful model for GPCC as it frames ‘formational’ challenges for students.

Learning Environment

Students are more likely to engage in learning in a manner that supports and facilitates both cognitive development and wellbeing when they are embedded in productive and protective learning environments. We can summarise the key elements of productive and protective environments using the acronym CLEAR – standing for Celebrate, Lament, Encourage, Analyse, and Redeem (i.e., redeem from any context or situation that threatens wellbeing). The acronym CLEAR is intended to delineate understandings and approaches characteristic of Learning Environments that contribute to student wellbeing. In this sense, the acronym provides a guideline for Learning and Teaching policy and programs as these relate to student wellbeing.

Celebrate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We acknowledge that God and all that He has created is good. • We ask: “What is there to celebrate?” “What is there to be thankful about?” • We reject cynicism in favour of gratitude and celebration. • While pessimism and despair are perhaps inevitable on some level in each person’s life, they are not our “dwelling place” as a community. Our communal focus (even if this is not the focus of every individual in the community) is on being thankful for what we presently have and being hopeful about the future.
Lament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every aspect of our world is tainted by sin and, while Christ has removed the penalty for sin, the world is not yet as it eventually, perhaps soon, will be. • In the meantime, we: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ mourn the absence of shalom and cry tears of compassion. ○ acknowledge the presence of brokenness and pain in the lives of students, and ○ are, and learn to be, content in all circumstances trusting in the goodness of God.
Encourage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We relate as the Body of Christ meaning that we: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ seek to encourage one another and build one another up,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep, ○ forgive one another as Christ has forgiven us, not holding people's sins or shortcomings against them, ○ guide each other towards truth, gently correcting others and accepting correction ourselves; and ○ serve one-another in love, bearing each other's burdens wisely such that (ideally) no-one in our community feels isolated, abandoned, or overwhelmed.
Analyse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We critique all things, including ourselves, from the perspective of our developing understanding (whatever point that understanding has reached) of God and His world. • We ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "What is true, what is honourable, what is just, what is pure, what is lovely, what is commendable, what is excellent? What is worthy of praise?" • We also ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "What is distorted? What is untrue? What is harmful? What is unjust?" ○ "Where is there deception or perversion in what I see, hear, think and do?" • We judge and discuss all things robustly, but fairly, having full regard and respect for others.
Redeem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We seek to bring truth into all situations, to exercise leadership, and to initiate positive change. • We graciously confront that which is wrong and courageously support that which is good. • We commit to a life of servanthood and generosity, seeking to be gracious and humble ambassadors for Christ

This acronym can guide the construction of productive and protective learning environments by:

1. identifying elements that may be missing from, or undervalued in, existing learning environments;
2. guiding the construction of new learning environments such that we intentionally build-in each of the CLEAR elements;
3. acting as a check-list for teaching practice that is focussed on wellbeing and engagement; and
4. acting as a cognitive organiser for (at least Christian) students as they understand, evaluate and enhance their current state of wellbeing and engagement.

Wellbeing and Engagement Strategies and Structures

Having outlined the College's overall approach to Wellbeing and Engagement, we can move to the specific strategies and structures that GPCC intends to enact to operationalise this approach. We situate these interventions in the context of the AISNSW *Wellbeing Literature Review* which provides six recommendations for successful wellbeing interventions (which, here, we extend to encompass Engagement). These are:

1. adopt a College-wide approach, including developing a common language and understanding around wellbeing, and the implementation of College-wide initiatives that involve College leaders, teachers, parents/carers and students;
2. focus on interventions with evidence of effectiveness, selecting those interventions most likely in any given context to build social and emotional skills linked to student wellbeing;
3. establish a dedicated leadership team (described later) to drive implementation and oversee reviews of the implementation process through review and feedback;
4. prepare College staff early by delivering professional development and sharing evidence related to wellbeing;
5. provide meaningful engagement with families, not least by informing and engaging families in developments relating to student wellbeing; and
6. create meaningful opportunities for student voice and engagement, not least by undertaking wellbeing surveys that measure current levels of wellbeing so as to ensure students have the best opportunity to reach their full potential.

GPCC supports and is guided by these principles. The specific way in which these principles are enacted in the GPCC context follows.

1. Adopt a Whole-of-College Approach

The College's approach to wellbeing:

- (a) Is informed by staff from both the Primary and High Schools working together to ensure the integration of wellbeing programs and approaches across the College, and promoting collaboration between the Primary and Secondary schools especially in the transition to high school.
- (b) Involves all elements of the College's program such that students' classroom experiences, as well as their experiences in Chapel, Life groups, Year Group meetings, Assemblies, and Outdoor Education (camps, etc.); are both differentiated and coordinated in order to maximise student wellbeing.
- (c) Acknowledges age and stage specific issues pertaining to wellbeing yet, nevertheless, is not silo-ed within Year levels, or within the Primary and Secondary schools. Hence, for example, peer mentoring across Year groups, activities in both schools, and activities in the community are all considered important for the extension and maturation of student wellbeing,

2. Focus on Evidence Based Interventions

While we have not yet benchmarked this approach against other approaches to wellbeing, for the purposes of providing a starting point for this Framework we have initially adapted Noble and McGrath's (2015) PROSPER framework. This framework focuses on seven important strategies that categorise wellbeing interventions. The word PROSPER communicates the purpose of the framework and is supported by reference to evidence-informed school and classroom practices that have been shown to form the building blocks for positive student wellbeing. The PROSPER model is tabularised below, and through the specific examples given, provides a potential framework to guide wellbeing interventions across the College.

Strategies	Examples of College & Classroom Practices
<p>Encourage a Positive Perspective Support students to develop positive and ‘other-centred’ attitudes, and to experience positive emotions grounded in Gospel hope.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and ‘showcase’ truth, beauty and goodness in every context and situation. • In the context of workshops/seminars or other modalities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ develop a Biblical Christian understanding of meaning, identity, purpose, responsibility and hope; ○ explicitly teach and model a positive approach to life that recognises, but is not overwhelmed, by that which is wrong with the world. • Provide opportunities for students to experience genuine contentment and to participate in, and contribute to, positive learning environments. These opportunities can be realised by working collaboratively with peers and by exercising realistic thinking and gratitude.
<p>Build Relationships Facilitate the development of social skills and values that promote productive and harmonious relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model Jesus’ love and grace in every situation. • Foster a relationally supportive College environment that facilitates positive student-teacher, student-peer, family-College and College-community programs and interactions. • Focus on building an emotionally safe College environment, where unity is encouraged, and diversity is accepted and appreciated. • Engage parents formally and informally in the College community.
<p>Facilitate Outcomes Provide an optimal learning environment. Teach skills that enhance student outcomes and accomplishments with respect to wellbeing and engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a well thought out Biblical Christian approach to curriculum, assessment and pedagogy. • Deploy evidence-based approaches and strategies to increasing wellbeing and engagement. • Explicitly teach skills for organisation, goal-setting and self-care. • Model the College’s Graduate Attributes, and providing practical examples for how these attributes may be attained.
<p>Focus on Strengths Adopt a strength-based rather than deficit-based approach to individual and corporate wellbeing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify, explore and apply faith, godly character and God-given gifts and talents. • Adopt a strengths-based approaches to learning and holistic personal development that fosters wellbeing. • Pro-actively support and develop student involvement and leadership, with both formal and informal student contributions to College’s mission and purpose being recognised and celebrated.

<p>Foster a Sense of <u>Purpose</u> Ensure the purpose of Cing and learning, and ethos and culture of the College, is made explicit to students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the Bible and a Christian worldview is central to the College's understanding of itself, its activities and its community. • Explicitly outline the purpose of curricular and co-curricular academic, social and spiritual activities. • Provide opportunities for students to participate in student-owned and student-directed activities. • Develop a commitment to serve within the College, the local community, and beyond. • Provide opportunities for students to identify and work towards their calling in life (at this point in their lives).
<p>Enhance Engagement Intentionally and consistently involve students, parents, teachers, and the wider College community in wellbeing activities and initiatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View the College as a 'village raising children' where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ each person can love and be loved; serve and be served, know and be known, celebrate and be celebrated; ○ each aspect of the village contributes in a holistic and coordinated manner to the development of the child; ○ curriculum differentiation and integration, wellbeing initiatives, and the integration of the two is normal practice; and ○ isolation, disengagement and cynicism in every area of the College's activities are challenged and changed.
<p>Teach <u>Resilience</u> Explicitly teach the skills and attitudes that underpin resilient attitudes and behaviours</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a healthy self-identity, and respect for others, as the bearers of God's image. • Explicitly teach skills for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ calmly evaluating situations and circumstances; ○ acting with courage and faith; ○ acquiring and increasing self-discipline; ○ making wise decisions; ○ positively facing adversity; and ○ identifying, addressing and (where possible) resolving conflict.

3. Establish a Dedicated Wellbeing and Engagement Team

In principle, every teacher is a member of the College's broader Wellbeing and Engagement Team (WET). The purpose of the WET is to: (a) coordinate, consolidate and (if necessary) recommend revision to, or termination of, current wellbeing activities and initiatives; and (b) propose and coordinate the development of new wellbeing activities and initiatives. The WET will also help the wider College community (parent body, teaching staff, counselling staff and students) engage with, and participate in, evidenced based initiatives that support the wellbeing of students. Team members are committed to ensuring that all students are engaged in an ongoing process of developing the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to be "equipped for life" spiritually and psychologically, as well as intellectually and practically.

Members of the WET may include but are not necessarily limited to:

- the Principal (or delegate);
- the Heads of Primary and Secondary (ex-officio);
- the Secondary Wellbeing Co-ordinator (new fractional position);
- the Primary Wellbeing Coordinator;
- a representative of the Counselling Team; and
- the Equip (Secondary) coordinator (or delegate).

An important role of the WET is (with the assistance of personnel such as parents, police, and mental health professionals as required) to prioritise specific wellbeing initiatives and interventions. The WET will address College-wide needs from K-12, as well as the needs of teachers and the concerns of parents. Specifically, the WET will:

- (a) drive the rollout and implementation of the College's Wellbeing Framework;
- (b) continuously review and refine the Biblical basis of all documents and practices relating to wellbeing;
- (c) ensure that wellbeing activities in Assemblies, Chapel, Life groups, Year group meetings, and outdoor education are both differentiated and coordinated;
- (d) ensure that best practices are implemented and outworked in meetings and gatherings of all kinds;
- (e) promote strong connections between wellbeing programs, curriculum, pedagogy and mission/service programs;
- (f) coordinate the provision of wellbeing services between key people and/or agencies within the College;
- (g) establish professional development and other systems that ensure that staff can best support the wellbeing of students in their care;
- (h) facilitate the implementation of a College wellbeing survey (at the beginning of each academic year);
- (i) develop programs and program recommendations that build on the data provided in the survey;
- (j) clarify gender-specific issues that pertain to wellbeing, and ensure that these issues are addressed in appropriate ways;
- (k) identify and research wellbeing resources for potential implementation in the College; and
- (l) provide regular communication to the Principal concerning issues relating to student wellbeing.

4. Prepare College Staff Early

We anticipate the Framework itself will be finalised by the end of Term 4, 2022; that staff (on the Wellbeing Team and more broadly) will be trained in Term 1, 2023; and that the Framework (including any supporting documentation) will be tested in Term 2, 2023 for launch in Term 3, 2023. This timetable should provide adequate time for staff to adapt to new roles and to new patterns of learning and teaching such that Term 3, 2023 will represent a fresh-start for wellbeing at GPCC.

5. Provide for Meaningful Engagement with Families

Parents may be engaged in the College's wellbeing program through:

- (a) positive parenting workshops, seminars, celebrations (e.g., parent-child BBQs), etc.;
- (b) specific communication to parents from the WET about wellbeing initiatives (including the establishment of the WET itself);

- (c) opportunities for parents and families to volunteer or otherwise participate in wellbeing activities and programs;
- (d) support for student learning at home (including specific advice to parents concerning what is being studied, and how it is being studied, at each point in the school year);
- (e) involving parents in College decision making as far as possible; and
- (f) involving parents and families in the community service initiatives of the College (e.g., disaster relief).

6. Create Meaningful Opportunities for Student Engagement

While ensuring appropriate risk-management strategies are in place that minimise any triggering or retraumatising of students, the student voice will be heard through:

- (a) ongoing informal student consultations regarding wellbeing and engagement;
- (b) the College's annual wellbeing survey;
- (c) engaging student leadership in wellbeing planning and discussions including by:
 - (i) extending formal representation of students on College decision making bodies as appropriate,
 - (ii) establishing processes for student input into wellbeing initiatives,
 - (iii) providing resources for training and support of student representatives in wellbeing and related issues.

Specific Wellbeing and Engagement Activities

GPCC already has a number of activities that are specifically directed towards student wellbeing and engagement. These activities should be both differentiated and coordinated such that there is minimal overlap between activities. In order to facilitate this differentiation and coordination we provide a Purpose Statement (effectively a 'job description') for each element of the College's current wellbeing/engagement activity profile. These descriptions are subject to a current (2022) review by SEED and will need to be adjusted according to the College's response to this review.

Chapel and Devotions (Inspirational Focus)

The purpose of Chapel (in both Primary and Secondary) and Devotions (in Primary) with respect to wellbeing and engagement is to inspire trust (both generically, and in the specific sense of having 'faith' in the Christian God) and to oppose cynicism. The purpose of Chapel and Devotions is to show that a life of trust and hope (expressed, not least, in worship, prayer and devotion to the Word of God) can lead to a flourishing life. All students need to see the light of trust and hope in other students, and Chapel is (both prospectively and actually) an ideal venue in which this observation can happen. Chapel is delivered to a mixed audience of Christians and non-Christians, some of whom are hostile towards Christianity. Hence, Chapel cannot legitimately be construed as mid-week church. Nevertheless, even students who do not endorse Christianity can benefit from a positive experience of worship and hearing from God's Word. Thus, Chapel and Devotions can make a positive contribution to the wellbeing and engagement of both Christians and non-Christians.

Ideally, the bible should be used in Chapel to inspire trust in God including, not least, the faithfulness of God; despite challenging, confronting and sometimes tragic personal and communal circumstances. Use of the Bible in Chapel should not, then, be primarily didactic ('educational') – but rather should focus on being *inspirational*, *motivational* and, if possible, even *transformational*. Given that Chapel is not church, and Devotions are not formal Bible Studies, neither are constrained to deliver Biblical teaching in the traditional sense. Rather, the Bible can

be used in more creative and flexible ways than those implied by the traditional sermons or studies.

Equip and Pastoral Care Groups (Practical Focus)

The purpose of Equip/Pastoral Care Groups with respect to wellbeing and engagement is to (within the limits of each teacher's training and experience) to teach students how they might deal with life issues that impact on the wellbeing and engagement of young people in general, and GPCC students in particular. These life issues include 'standing' issues such as:

- (a) mental health,
- (b) identity and sexuality,
- (c) substance use and abuse,
- (d) family and peer relationships (including bullying),
- (e) coping with trauma (including abuse-related trauma),
- (f) learning and other disabilities,
- (g) engaging with study,
- (h) addressing workload pressures, and
- (i) deciding on an initial vocational pathway.

Other issues that may be dealt with on an intermittent basis include coping with the stress, anxiety and perhaps even depression provoked by global conflicts, natural disasters in Australia and overseas, and events in the local and College community (e.g., the death of a student).

Use of the Bible in Equip groups should be primarily *practical* rather than devotional i.e., the focus should be on what the Bible has authentically to contribute to an understanding of mental health, identity, relationships, trauma, etc. In other words, in the Equip group setting, the bible should be specifically applied to the life-issue at hand, rather than being used a more general or devotional way.

Year Group Meetings (Relational Focus)

The purpose of Year Group meetings from a wellbeing and engagement perspective is to build a strong sense of belonging and community amongst students. Research strongly suggests that a sense of belonging / community is a salient protective factor against all manner of other factors that might otherwise negatively impact wellbeing. Even dealing effectively with routine matters concerning the coordination and activities of each Year group can build a sense of community, as can planning for big events such as school camps and mission trips.

Ideally, Year groups meetings (and associated interactions) should engender a spirit of comradery, and Year Group coordinators should be chosen for their ability to (along with others) foster this spirit. From time to time, there may be within any Year group gender-specific issues pertaining to wellbeing that are best handled with the assistance of a staff member of the opposite-sex. Such assistance simply recognises the gender-specific nature of certain issues, and does not reflect negatively in any way on the Year Advisor.

Use of the bible in Year groups should be primarily *relational* rather than devotional or educational. The bible has very much to say about relationships, not least in the often quite specific commands of Jesus, the prophets, and the Apostles. Relationships modelled on biblical teaching are, and will be, more harmonious, productive and empathetic than those modelled on some other basis. Moreover, in the context of morally reprehensible relationship modelling on

television and in social media, the clear voice of the bible in governing relationships is absolutely imperative.

Assemblies (Motivational Focus)

As indicated previously in the document, attainment of Graduate Attributes (which is part of the stated purpose of the College) is critical for student wellbeing and engagement. A key purpose of Assemblies with respect to wellbeing is not just to teach what the Graduate Attributes are, but to teach *how* the Graduate Attributes might be attained and *what* the Graduate Attributes look like in action, sound like words, feel like emotionally, and are represented cognitively i.e., in students' thought-lives. Consistent with statements made previously in this document, Assemblies should assume at the outset that students do *not* know, or perhaps only vaguely know, what Godly Character, Collaboration, Lifelong Learning, Critical and Creative Thinking and Social Engagement look, sound, feel, and are thought about. As a result, Assemblies will, over time, focus on each of the Attributes, and provide examples of the Attributes in action, communication, emotion, and cognition. This provision is, in a sense, an education in studentship (of school-citizenship) at the local level.

Use of the Bible in Assemblies will focus on exemplifying the Graduate Attributes from a biblical, perhaps particularly a Christological, perspective. For example, Jesus exhibited the character of his Father (Christ is in the image of God), collaboration (with his Father, his disciples and others), lifelong learning ('Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and men'), critical thinking (e.g., with respect to traditions of the Pharisees), creative thinking (e.g., with respect to the application of the Law to the Sabbath and to the woman caught in adultery), and social engagement (with Jews and Gentiles of all social standings).

Biblical Studies (Moral and Educational)

Biblical Studies is a critical element of the College's Wellbeing and Engagement Framework. Biblical Studies provides the moral and intellectual foundation for understanding the world from the perspective of God. The perspective is essential in the context of contemporary Australian society which has largely abandoned its Judeo-Christian identity/history and morality. Moreover, this objective and collective identity/history and morality has been replaced with the cult of individuality (my history is the only history that counts) and subjectivity (what I think or feel is right and wrong for me, is right or wrong). In other words, a student's past experiences, and current thoughts and feelings, become their only foundation for moral and intellectual life. In practice, this foundation is not strong enough to support student wellbeing and engagement, with the predictable consequences for psychological and spiritual health, and educational creativity and productivity.

When other of the wellbeing and engagement activities of the College use the Bible as outlined previously in their respective contexts, then Biblical Studies is free to explore the Bible morally and intellectually without overlapping and/or conflicting with (or being diluted by) these other activities. Moreover, when all elements of the College's wellbeing and engagement activities reside more-or-less to within their respective spheres of influence, students not only receive a differentiated experience of the Bible, but an integrated multi-dimensional immersion in the Bible that will help students appreciate the relevance of the Bible to all of faith and life.

Conclusion

Student wellbeing and engagement are critical issues for all schools, including GPCC. This Framework has, with respect to student wellbeing and engagement, sought to outline the basic understandings held by the College, the context in which the College is currently operating, guiding definitions (including a model of wellbeing and engagement), a biblical context, the College's overall approach, and specific interventions including principles guiding those interventions.

As a Framework, the present document needs to be fleshed out in terms of the actual scope and sequence of programs and activities that will follow from various elements of the Framework (e.g., understandings, definitions, context, principles, etc.). This work will, presumably be done by the Wellbeing and Engagement Team (WET) when it is established. However, it is hoped that current Framework provides both a solid basis, and a sound direction, for the WET's work – and thus for wellbeing and engagement activities of the College as a whole, over the forthcoming period.

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The General Structure of the Wellbeing and Engagement Program

This general structure is meant to show how the College's current 'standing' wellbeing and engagement activities (e.g., Chapel/Devotions, Groups, Assemblies, Biblical Studies) contribute to Wellbeing and Engagement.

	Chapel/Devotions (Inspirational Focus)	Equip/Pastoral Care Groups (Practical Focus)	Year Groups (Relational Focus)	Assemblies (Motivational Focus)	Biblical Studies (Educational Focus)
Purpose	Inspiration and motivation (not least through peer-modelling) to trust appropriate authority and abandon cynicism such that the Graduate Attributes might be acquired and displayed over time.	Equipping and empowering students in the practical pursuit of the Graduate Attributes	Developing pastoral student-teacher relationships to facilitate mentoring and guidance in wellbeing and engagement.	Concrete examples, and explicit instruction concerning attainment, of the Graduate Attributes in action, communication, emotion and cognition.	Study of the Bible and development of Biblical literacy to support a coherent worldview that underpins wellbeing and engagement.
Content	'Standard' elements such as worship, preaching and teaching, but with an emphasis on delivery that is appropriate for a mixed audience of Christians and non-Christians	Specific life-issues (both perennial and occasional) relevant to the wellbeing and engagement of each Year group.	Building relationships in each Year group, not least by engaging students in coordinated missional, service and outdoor activities.	Meetings that celebrate student diversity and achievement and seek to motivate students towards the attainment of valued goals across various domains.	Biblical Studies relevant to each Year group as determined by the Biblical Studies staff in consultation with other staff and school leadership.