

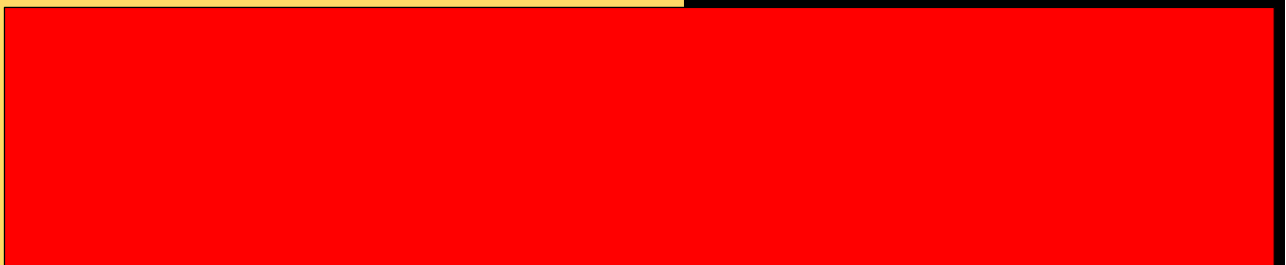
Yoorrook Submission – The Pavilion School

February 2024



Artwork by Rex Hudson-Stewart

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Executive Summary

The Pavilion School is a flexi school located on Wurundjeri Country, which enrolls students who have been excluded from the mainstream system of education. Due to the ongoing process of colonisation, First Nations young people are disproportionately likely to be excluded from school and therefore engage with flexi schools like the Pavilion. As such, 41% of the Pavilion cohort identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, almost 20 times higher than the Victorian Public School average of 2.4% (Department of Education, 2021) and almost 25 times higher than the Victorian School average of 1.7% (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2021).

Beyond the mainstream school exclusion of First Nations students, the Pavilion's cohort can also be explained by the extensive work by staff, students, and community to create and maintain a culturally safe schooling environment. This began with the founders Josie Howie and Brendan Murray, who combined their teaching and social work knowledge with Brendan's experience as an Aboriginal man. Since 2007, the Pavilion School has relied on relational and community based practices to inform their teaching and wellbeing models, while straddling the responsibilities and obligations of being a government school. Therefore, this organisation, comprising of staff, students, families, and community members, have extensive knowledges about the historical and current injustices in the education system. Through these knowledges, we have co-constructed an educational model which we believe to be leading the state in terms of First Nation schooling.

This report has two key sections. The first section tells the story of the Pavilion School, overviews the historical precedents to its existence, and discusses the effect of colonisation on the identities of its students. This section was constructed largely from the work of Mes Mitchelhill, a non-Indigenous education support worker at the Pavilion, who is currently undertaking their PhD on the Pavilion School. The second section responds to the key prompts in the Yoorrook Issues Paper on Schooling and Education, which comes from a group discussion between Pavilion staff members.

Throughout the construction of this report, there was several key themes which emerged. Firstly, the ongoing injustices that exist in the schooling system, especially the mainstream system. First Nations students are continually subjected to harm through their schooling experiences, especially through their many experiences of school exclusion in all its forms. There is much to change about the schooling system before it can be considered culturally safe, and the possibility of that safety is

by no means guaranteed. However, the present reality of colonial harm necessitates educators, policy makers and community members to strive towards a better and more just system.

Secondly, there is a need for systematic change accompanied by adequate and accountable funding and the reshaping of school evaluation processes. The Victorian School System has been an active and culpable tool within the colonisation of this continent, and therefore, reshaping this system will require significant overhaul. Despite policy documents such as Marrung Education Plan, the Mparntwe Declaration, and the National Schools Reform Agreement, the funding and evaluative structures of schools have not changed significantly to account for the broad ranging need for greater cultural safety. Educators across the school system should be adequately supported to improve the cultural, material, and educational conditions of all their students, especially their First Nations students. These restructures should be led by First Peoples and their deep and complex knowledges of education practices, which have sustained them for thousands of generations.

Finally, these changes require a deep and sustained understanding of history and story. The history of colonisation affects every aspect of contemporary life, especially education. The Department of Education must acknowledge and reckon with its colonial legacies, as there will be no meaningful change without truth-telling. As an extension of this, there needs to be strong consideration for the stories of First Nations young people, for their wisdom and hope will guide the education system into the future. In the current arrangement, these young people's knowledge is being actively undermined and excluded from the organisation of the education system. Student voice must lead the practice of schooling, and schooling must be directed to "the full extent of development of the human personality and to the strengthening of human rights and fundamental freedoms" (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948). All young people deserve access to education, and the way to ensure this is to construct an education system that meets the needs of its young people, rather than trying to adapt the young people to the needs of an education system. We as educators must deeply listen to young people because they are the future.

For this report, the terms First Nations, First Peoples, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Indigenous and Koori will be used interchangeably. When possible, specific Nations will be used to describe areas or people. However, the above descriptors will be used depending on context to refer to the collective of First Peoples who make up the many Indigenous Nations across this continent.

As well, much of the information from this report has been compiled from an ongoing PhD project, authored by Mes Mitchelhill. While this information, and the data referenced within it, is accurate as of February 8th, 2024, this project is ongoing and will not be published until 2025. Therefore, the data collected about Pavilion students may change in the time after this submission and should not be taken out of proper context.

Throughout the report, illustrations by various Pavilion students will be used to illustrate the strength, resilience and brilliance of the young knowledge holders that attend the school.



Artwork by Shanarra Braybon

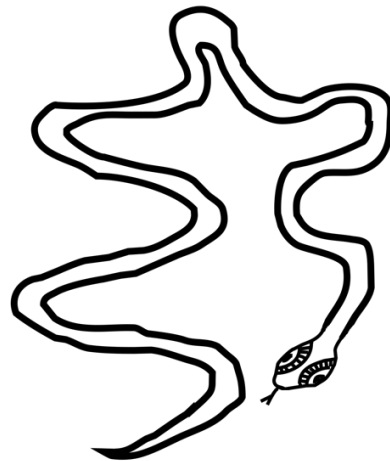
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1. The Pavilion and its Context

1.1 The Story of the Pavilion

In 2007, two teachers with social work experience, Josie Howie and Brendan Murray, established a pilot program in Heidelberg West for 21 young people who had been completely disengaged from secondary school. Murray wrote about the first class in a 2009 article (see [Appendix 1](#) for full article) “most of these young women were homeless. Their accommodation was neither safe nor stable and many relied on the goodwill of friends or their current boyfriends to provide a temporary home. Our first literacy task was then dictated by the needs of these young women.” The name Pavilion stems from the sports Pavilion that Howie and Murray ran these first classes in, one of the only available spaces in the council district. Murray reflects on the embarrassment of bringing students and families to this sports Pavilion which often had cricketers changing in the next room. However, the community’s need for the Pavilion became clear immediately, with enrolments growing exponentially from word of mouth. The central framing of the Pavilion was evident from its first class: the school must adapt to the needs of its students, rather than try to adapt its students to the needs of the school.



Drawing by Rex Hudson-Stewart

Previously, students from this area may have been serviced by the Preston East Technical School, also known as Northlands Secondary College, which had a pioneering Koori Education Program based on relational pedagogy and engaging schooling. As such Northlands was cited as exemplary in the Royal Commission of Deaths in Custody. However in 1992, then Premier Jeff Kennett shut down the school, citing budget cuts. There was a two-year fight to resist school closure, which included the establishment of a “rebel school” which continued despite the closure order, and a complaint to the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (Knight, 1998; Tamiru, 2021). The Commission

ruled that Northlands' closure was racially motivated and impinged on the community's rights to education, leading to the re-establishment of the school. However, by the mid-2000s the school had pivoted its focus from Koori programs to arts and technology, formally adopting the name Northern College of Arts and Technology (NCAT). This school restructure displaced many of the engagement programs at Northlands, leaving many students, especially those from a First Nations background without access to adequate and relevant schooling. As such, there was demand for a school like Pavilion.

Through the Pavilion founders' experience with social work practice and trauma informed teaching, as well as Brendan Murray's perspective as a First Nations educator from the community, the school grew in numbers and received both the Federal Government's 'Closing the Gap' Award for Indigenous Education and The Victorian Outstanding Secondary Teacher Award. After a period of sustained growth, the Pavilion is now a Victorian Government School with two campuses across Preston East and Epping and an enrolment of 220 students. The school describes itself as having "relationship-based teaching, student-directed learning, and the combined Education and Social Work model" (te Riele, 2014) with a focus on small classrooms, individualised learning programs and a supportive, wrap around environment.

The Pavilion School has a strong connection to Parkville College, the flexi school located within Parkville Youth Justice Centre, which was established by Brendan Murray, and which Josie Howie was principal until 2023. As such, the Pavilion services many students who are in and out of the justice system and have a myriad of experience of intergenerational practices of incarceration, racial vilification and abuse by both police and justice workers. While this report refers specifically to the Pavilion school, the knowledges of our students and staff cannot be untangled from the work that has been done previously by educators in Northlands Secondary and by the ongoing work done in Parkville college in providing education to young people who are at the margins of Australia society, largely as the result of the continual and wide-ranging effects of colonisation.

As such, the Pavilion exists a place where there is extensive knowledge held about the process of colonisation and the experience of racism, especially within our student cohort

and family community. Much of the work in this space can be contributed to the Koori Programs Coordinator, Ash Luttrell and a Koori Programs Worker, Travis Varcoe, who continue the tradition of excellence in in-school Koori programs, building from the tradition of such pioneers as Diedre Bux in Northlands College. However, the staff cohort of the Pavilion is not representative of the student cohort, with only 4 Aboriginal staff members. Despite this, the Pavilion's staff, students and community have much to offer to the broader education space, and to the process of truth-telling that Yoorrook undertakes.

1.2 Histories of Schooling on Wurundjeri Country



Artwork by Talisha Edwards-Young

This section of the report will describe the history of how the system of schooling was imposed through colonisation and thus cannot be removed from the colonial process. In doing so, this will give context to the work of the Pavilion school, and lead into a discussion of the mechanisms through which the Pavilion students experience structural violence.

On the continent now referred to as Australia, individualised forms of educational practice “has been occurring on/in/with/for this Country for tens of thousands of years” (Bishop, 2021, p. 421). Gamilaroi researcher, Michelle Bishop (2021) uses multiple prepositions to articulate the intertwined relationship between education and Country, a word which refers to more than just the physical land, but also the relationships between all entities on

Country: people, plants, animals, and spirits. Wurundjeri-wilam researcher and artist Mandy Nicholson describes “‘Country’ (Biik), as distinct from a Western ‘landscape’” as it “contains all its physical tangible and intangible elements, but is dominated by overarching spiritual elements, a living ‘cultural landscape’” (Nicholson & Jones, 2019, p. 509). Aboriginal people in Australia have “one of the oldest continuous cultures”, with cultural connection to Country spanning thousands of years (Nagle et al., 2017, p. 1). In discussion with Wurundjeri elder Uncle David Wandin (personal communication, December 17, 2021), this ongoing transmission of Wurundjeri culture is predicated on a robust educational system. Narungga, Kurna and Ngarrindjeri scholar Lester-Irabinna Rigney (in Bishop, 2020, p. 2) also argues that “curriculum didn’t arrive on a boat, pedagogy didn’t arrive on a boat, it was always here.” First Nations education did not and does not presuppose the colonial institution of schooling as is commonplace in education research (Bishop, 2021). Instead, it builds from an “epistemological method that sought wisdom from a variety of sources to help define, give meaning to, and celebrate their world” (Morgan, 2019, p. 113). While First Nations forms of education have been and continue to be disrupted and discredited through the process of colonisation, they continue in various school and non-school contexts.

The beginning of colonisation on this continent brought with it the institution of schooling, which was and continues to be used as a tool in the process of colonisation, despite simultaneous attempts for First Nations people to use schooling to their advantage. On Wurundjeri Country, the first school was the Merri Creek Aboriginal School, located at the meeting of the Merri creek and the Birrarung/Yarra River, as colonists observed Wurundjeri people performing ceremony and education in that location (Clark & Heydon, 2004). From 1842 until 1851, the Merri Creek Aboriginal School “became the focus for the debate over the ‘civilising’ or colonisation of...Wurundjeri people” (Clark & Heydon, 2004, p. 63). All the first schools on this continent were for Aboriginal young people, as schools were explicitly attempting to “civilise First Nations people and to rescue them from their heathen ways” (Partington, 1998, p. 33). Despite schooling being so tied to colonisation, Wurundjeri people understood the power of education and worked to adapt schooling to their needs. In an analysis of Wurundjeri people’s use of scribes in colonial negotiations, Van Toorn (1999, p. 333) argues that “for Aboriginal children and their families, formal schooling was both oppressive and potentially empowering.” Such as at the Coranderrk Mission, which

operated from 1863 to 1924, where the schoolhouse was instrumental in creating the many petitions written by Coranderrk residents (Nanni & James, 2013). This interplay between the colonial forces in schooling and the active harnessing of education by First Peoples remains present in the work of the Pavilion.

The Education Act of 1872 saw the Colony of Victoria pave the way for the national system of state education, however, this shift to education as a public good extended the colonising reach of schooling and began an ongoing legacy of school exclusion of First Nations students. While the department of education will cite the Education Act as a sign of great progress, contemporary reports demonstrate the extent to which the civilising forces practices on First Nations people was then expanded to include working class non-Indigenous people. Victorian Lawmaker George Higinbotham, in discussing the Education Act in Parliament, speaks directly to the working class to whom this act applies, saying “you have accepted the vote; now in the national interest you must accept middle class culture. Maybe you will find this difficult, but at least give us your children” (Victoria, 1867, p. 906). As well, the architects of public education such as Frank Tate, were renown for their eugenicist beliefs, leading to education researcher Ross Jones (2018, p. 14) arguing that public schooling “was planned and implemented a by a group committed to eugenic theories of the biological inferiority of a significant proportion of the population”. First Nations people were the test subjects for which the coloniality and paternalism of public education was born.

There is a direct connection from the industrial schools of the late 19th century to contemporary flexi schools like the Pavilion and Parkville College, which demonstrates the interaction between schooling, colonisation and the carceral system. The Royal Park Industrial School began operations in 1875. In 1877, it enrolled 200 girls who were recruited as “inmates” alongside an unnamed number of boys, providing half days of schooling and half days of manual labour, including housework and farming (Pearson, 1878, p. 154). Education researcher David McCallum (2018, p. 28) argues that the category of “neglected child” connects the colonial mistreatment of Aboriginal people to the criminalisation of vulnerable young people, as all Aboriginal people were considered “neglected” and within state care. In Commissioner Pearson’s (1878, p.155) report, he highlights the various

reasons young people were sent to industrial schools: some were sentenced of crimes such as petty larceny; some were found to engage in sex work; some were orphans, including those from “respectable parents” and “street vagabonds”; and many were boys who came from a prison hulk in Williamstown. Under the Neglected and Criminal Children’s Act of 1864, there was little distinction by the state between criminalised and neglected young people (Jones, 2018). In the 20th Century, the Royal Park Industrial School became the depot for all young people in state care in Melbourne. Therefore, this industrial school made little distinction between young people who were neglected, criminalised, Aboriginal, or disabled. The legacy of this industrial school continued with Turana, a Victorian government establishment on the same site which held “more than 3000 children and young people annually” who were state wards as well as “offenders in custody”, with the separation of young people who were meant to be “protected” and “young offenders” not occurring until 1989 (Department of Health and Human Services, 2019). The Melbourne Youth Justice Centre now operates from this site, including Parkville College, which operates substantially differently to the Industrial schools of the past, adopting a pedagogy underpinned by trauma-informed and culturally responsive practices. However, the history of the Royal Park institutions demonstrates the blurry lines between criminalised, neglected, and Aboriginal young people in the eyes of the state and demonstrates a clear connection between incarceration and schooling.

To end this history section, it is relevant to look to the past successes in education, particularly the one most of relevance to Pavilion students, that of the Cummeragunja Schoolhouse. This example is relevant due to the pre-eminence of Yorta Yorta students and the excursions they have led for Pavilion students to visit Cummeragunja. The Cummeragunja mission school demonstrates the success of culturally responsive flexible school practices, especially when connected to community. Cummeragunja was an Aboriginal reserve established in the 1880s by Yorta Yorta people in protest of their mistreatment at nearby Maloga Mission. The scholar’s hut was a schoolhouse at Cummeragunja run primarily by Tamil educator Thomas Shadrach James until he was forced into retirement by the Board of education in 1922 (Nelson & Nelson, 2014). Shadrach James provided school education to young and old members of the Yorta Yorta community, learning the language, and marrying Yorta Yorta woman Ada James (nee Cooper) (Nelson &

Nelson, 2014). The classes at Cummeragunja went far beyond the level of education the state prescribed for Aboriginal people, was taught with awareness of the cultural context, and was explicitly tied towards improving the material and cultural conditions of its students (Atkinson, 2017; Nelson & Nelson, 2014). Shadrach James' work as an herbalist and pastor also combined his schoolwork with pastoral care and service provision (Atkinson, 2017). Students of the Cummeragunja Scholar's Hut included William Cooper and Jack Patten, Margaret (Lilardia) Tucker, Bill Onus, and Sir Doug Nicholls. Through the wrap-around support and culturally responsive classroom of Shadrach James, Yorta Yorta people were empowered to achieve various high distinctions, demonstrating a blueprint for flexible schoolings engagement with First Nations people.

The history of colonisation shapes the present and the future, a reality often missed by the workings of the Department of Education. While schools like the Pavilion are a relatively new phenomenon, they combine a long history, which entangles the sovereignty of First Peoples, the civilising aims of colonial governments, the right to education and the need to ensure that education is culturally enriching. Through the knowledge held within the Pavilion community, in students, families and staff, these histories of schooling are essential to understanding the present-day work of the school. As well, understanding these histories of exclusion demonstrates the long-standing injustices of the colonial system of education in Victoria, a reality which shapes the quotidian at the Pavilion, through students' and families' mistrust of schools, to the shape and nature of our educational practice. While the Pavilion cannot escape its relationship to the colonality of education, we can at least investigate and acknowledge it, as a means of reducing and rectifying it.

1.3 Students' Identities Shaped by Colonisation

Every student at the Pavilion has been excluded by the mainstream system of schooling in some form, and school exclusion is not a “socially neutral phenomenon” (Mills & McGregor, 2014, pg. 93). As such, this following section will outline the nature of identity at the Pavilion and demonstrate the clear connection between colonisation and the exclusion present in the mainstream schooling system.

1.3.1 Flexi School Students

The broad terminology for students that attend flexible schooling varies across different research, with differing terms bringing with them their own power dynamics, consideration of personhood and discursive position. Education researcher Kitty te Riele (2006, p. 129), in a largely influential paper on the language of flexible schooling, describes how these students have been “described as deprived, disadvantaged, poor, alienated, marginalized and at risk”, with each of these labels being interpreted differently by researchers and politicians based on their epistemological position and “preferred explanation of educational inequality.” Te Riele (2006) highlights how policy discourse regularly refers to the students at flexible schools as at-risk without describing what they are at-risk of. While there is much evidence to describe the higher likelihood of negative employment and health outcomes if a young person doesn't finish school (Thomas et al., 2018; Wilson and Tanner-Smith 2013), discourse about ‘at-risk’ status can continue to marginalise young people and exacerbate deficit discourses (McGregor & Mills, 2012; Vass, 2012). Tuck and Yang (2012, p. 22) articulate the discursive power of this ‘at-risk’ label when applied to First Nations people, where it implies that First Nations people are “culturally and economically bereft” and “engaged or soon-to-be engaged in self-destructive behaviors”. By framing the individuals as “at risk”, systemic barriers to education such as the high rates of racism in schools (Moodie et al., 2019), the dearth of First Nations curriculum in most schools (Maxwell et al., 2018) and the historical role of schools in child removal (Robinson & Paten, 2008) can be obscured from discussion. Therefore, this section on the cohort of flexible schools will remain critical about the discursive framing of young people.

A consistent theme in the literature is that flexible school students self-assess and recognise themselves as ‘different’ to their peers: “not fitting in”, “not (being) normal” or “not belonging” (Lewthwaite, et al., 2017, p. 395). Te Riele (2006, 2010) highlights how most students at flexible schools’ experience complex interactions in their family lives and their relationship to the institution of schooling, as well as having low academic confidence and a sense of hopelessness due to past experiences of schooling.

In one of the only studies of the Pavilion, Borrell et al. (2011) noted that learning difficulties, low numeracy and low literacy were common characteristics of students enrolled in that programme. Deficit discourses about flexible schooling often present the students as disaffected and uninterested in education. However, in contrast to deficit discourses, students at flexible schools do value education and want to learn (Graham et al., 2015). Many attendees of alternative schools travel long distances to attend these types of schools, demonstrating a substantial desire to engage with education despite previous experiences in mainstream schooling (Thomas et al., 2017). On average, a Pavilion student will travel 43 minutes each day to attend school, often passing other closer schools. Some students travel more than an hour and a half each day to school. Building from the work of Thomas et al, 2017, this demonstrates the commitment of Pavilion students to their education. 44.4% of Pavilion students believe that education is “very important”, and another 25% label it “extremely important”. While students at flexible schools are made to feel different to their mainstream peers using persistent deficit discourses, they continue to demonstrate ongoing commitment to education.

1.3.2 Indigeneity

First Nations students are disproportionately represented in flexi education (Lamb et al., 2015; Mills & McGregor, 2014; Wallace, 2018) as they are disproportionately represented in suspensions and expulsions from mainstream schools (Mitchell, 2016). Despite recent attempts to improve the curriculum priorities, First Nations students are still likely to experience racism in school environments and find the content of their education unrepresentative of their epistemology and cultural background (Moodie et al., 2019).

At the Pavilion school, 41% of students identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, including students from Nations such as Wurundjeri, Yorta Yorta, Bangarang, Wamba Wamba, Gunditjmara, Wadawurrung, Wotjobaluk and Noongar. Many other of the First Nations students have been disconnected from their culture through histories of stolen generations reaching back generations and continuing with the high rates of out of home care. This results in many students not knowing their mob and feeling displaced.

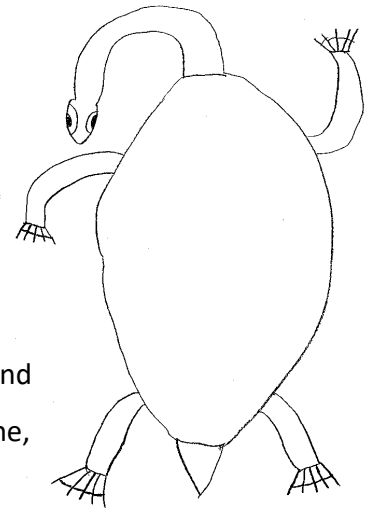
According to data collected by Mes Mitchelhill for their PhD, which sampled enrolled Pavilion students, we can understand aspects of the school experience that are particularly relevant to First Nations students. On average these students have attended 6 schools including the Pavilion, which speaks to the interrupted nature of their schooling, and in most cases the continual exclusion from schools. On average, they spent 9 months out of school before attending the Pavilion school. 55% of these students also identify as queer, and 44% identify as neurodiverse, which speaks to the overlapping nature of their identities. Despite the deficit discourses that continue to be imposed on these students, they hold high expectations for themselves, expressing the goals of achieving university, TAFE, raising families as well as diverse projects such as learning the piano, writing rap album, learning to draw manga, and becoming a competitive gamer.

Former student and proud Wamba Wamba, Wotjobaluk woman Talisha Edwards-Young describes her experience as such:

“at my primary school I was the only Aboriginal person at the school for five years. In my last year a whole Aboriginal family came, and it was amazing. My high school had a Koori program for a while, until its funding was cut. Whenever anything Aboriginal came up, everyone would always look at me to be the expert, but I wasn't raised up in my culture that much, so it just felt like pressure. This was the time that I stopped going to school... When I came to the Pavilion it was clear that it was a completely different space. I was shy at first, but I connected with all the students through our families and our mobs. It was just the vibe, it felt so safe.”

1.4 The Pavilion: A Model of Culturally Safe Schooling

While the Pavilion School is by no means perfect, we argue that it is one of the schools leading the way for culturally safe and pedagogically responsive education within the Victorian Context. From its inception, the school has prioritised First Nations knowledges and students as an active decision. In doing so, we have constructed a model for education which relies of relational conceptions of education, foregrounding First Nations knowledges and prioritising cultural safety. There is a mountain of work yet to be done, however, in comparison to the schools in our local area and beyond, particularly mainstream schools, it appears that our practice is leading the state. However, the staff cannot claim credit for this work nearly as much as the students and families themselves, who maintain a high level of expectation for what schooling should be and require the Pavilion to meet their needs.



Drawing by Rex Hudson-Stewart

The overarching framework of the Pavilion model argues that the school must adapt to the needs of its students, rather than adapt the students to the needs of the school. This seemingly common-sense understanding is transformative. As referenced in [the historical context section](#) earlier, since the establishment of schooling on this continent, schools have aimed to shape students to meets the needs of the colonial project. As such, the position of the Pavilion comes in direct contrast to the harmful history of schooling on Wurundjeri country. Leading from this understanding, the Pavilion asserts that students are not disengaged from school, instead they are actively excluded from schooling by structural forces, which are reified and administered through the Department of Education and the current schooling system. We adopt a radical proposition of belief in our students; that what they say about their previous schools is worth listening to and acting upon. On average, Pavilion students have attended over 6 schools, making them experts in the day to day administration of schooling and the experience of school exclusion.

In Pavilion founder Brendan Murray's 2009 article ([Appendix 1](#)), he describes the Pavilion school model stems from two UN Declarations of Human Rights:

1. Everyone has the right to education.
2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Building from this, Murray describes how the school has a no suspensions or expulsions policy, which ensures that no student will be excluded from their fundamental right to education (further discussion of this in the [Suspensions and Expulsions](#) section). He argues that wellbeing and education are inseparable, and therefore the school employs a class team that includes teachers, youth workers and support workers, all in the classroom together. While Murray describes the use of Bowlby's theory of attachment, the Berry Street calmer classrooms model and Freud's theories of transference and counter transference, these theories are no longer key principals of the school environment.

Being a public school, the Pavilion has extensive experience justifying its practice using the current language and theories of the Department of Education. This is necessary to ensure that the school remains open and funded. However, the practice of the school relies far less on psychological models of understanding than it does on relationality, a concept that stems from the Pavilion's First Nations community. Such a notion of relationality, to each other, to students and to Country, was not able to be described within the language of the Department of Education, as it requires a fundamentally different epistemological and ontological preconception. In recent years, the value of Indigenous knowledges within the education landscape is growing, thanks to the continuous and tireless work of First Nations educators. Therefore, we are beginning to articulate this guiding principle more openly.

Relationality is a broad and complex concept which cannot be articulated within the scope of this report. However, for the Pavilion it begins with the responsibilities that everything present on Wurundjeri Country have: to look after Country and to not bring harm to the children of Bunjil. For example, this year, the school began with a smoking ceremony by Wurundjeri educator Mandy Nicholson, who welcomed all staff onto Country at the

beginning of the student free days. Then for the first day of students, Wurundjeri traditional owner Colin Hunter welcomed all students through a smoking ceremony. Within these practices, the responsibilities of the school to its students and Country are strongly articulated.

Within the relation practice, there are many adjustments that the Pavilion makes. Each class at the Pavilion is started with a “circle time” whereby students and staff acknowledge Country and then discuss their emotional states together. In doing so, all present in the classroom come into relation together within a less hierarchal structure. While initially this practice was justified with psychological notions of co-regulation, it is more accurately an extension of the First Nations practice of Yarning Circles. As well, First Nations art and flags are displayed publicly and prominently to ensure a visual representation of cultural safety. The leadership of the school are committed to the professional development of its staff profile, investing in training programs with First Nations storytelling organisation Garuwa, who articulate the practice of decolonisation, racial literacy, and anti-colonial education. As well, the Koori Programs Coordinator Ash Luttrell leads a myriad of cultural programs which attend to the needs and dreams of First Nations students, as well as including non-Indigenous students to increase their understanding and cultural safety, reducing the risk of them engaging in racist behaviours (a summary of Ash’s work can be seen in [Appendix 2](#)).

Another key difference within the Pavilion model is the universal positive regard and radical belief practiced by the wellbeing team. Firstly, universal positive regard ensures that at all points in times, staff must maintain a positive regard to the students in minimise their susceptibility to the deficit discourses which surround Pavilion students. The key mechanism for which this is achieved is through a critical and robust understanding of systematic oppression within the staff team, led by Wellbeing Coordinator Justine Makdessi and fostered by Garuwa trainings. While students regularly display behaviours that could be described as anti-social or harmful, the staff necessarily understand such behaviours as expressions of their material conditions. Instead of a “behaviour management program”, the Pavilion practices “behavioural support”, exemplified in the one-on-one process. Instead of punitive measures such as suspensions or expulsions, the one-on-one process is grounded in transformative justice practices. After a student has compromised the safety of

the school environment, they will undertake a one-on-one process with a member of leadership or staff. The main aim of the process is to construct a plan which ensures the safety of all members of the Pavilion community, including the staff, peers, and student in question. The one-on-one template is attached at [Appendix 3](#) and this practice is elaborated in [Section 2.8](#).

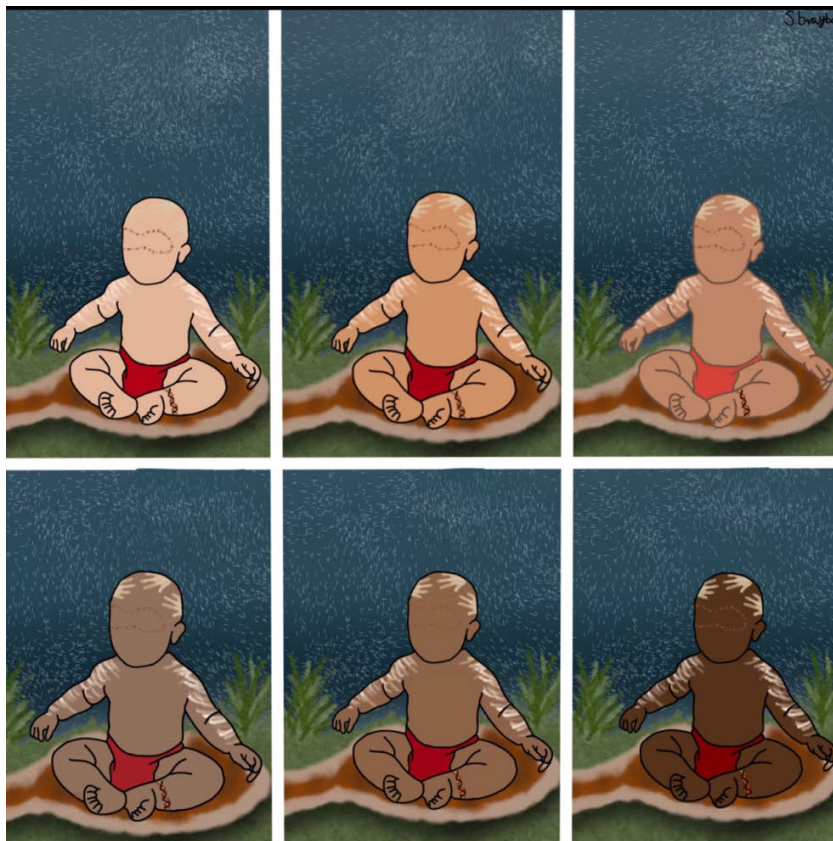
Secondly, a similar key concept is the active belief that wellbeing practices in the accounts of its students. Most students of the Pavilion have not been believed by previous school staff when describing their life experiences, including racism, targeting, police involvement and more. A simple but radical concept at the Pavilion is to believe the accounts of the students and work from them. This stems from our relational understanding, and the belief that students are knowledge holders about their lives and experiences. In doing so, students can build trust with an institution or organisation like a school, often for the first time in their lives. The staff's critical understanding of the process of colonisation supports this work, as many of the students' stories are about racism within schools, the justice system and their day-to-day. While these stories may appear unreasonable if the staff are unaware about the ongoing harms of colonisation, the cultural training provided to Pavilion staff ensures a high level of understanding. Therefore, through universal positive regard and radical belief, the Pavilion allows its students to build trusting relationships with staff, the school, and their peers.

For further work on the Pavilion model, see the attached [Appendix 5](#) which describes it at length.

2. Issue Paper Prompt Responses

The following responses have been constructed through discussions that involved 6 staff members of the Pavilion:

- **Ash Luttrell** – Yorta Yorta and Taungurung – Koori Programs Coordinator
- **Mes Mitchelhill** – Non-Indigenous – Education Support Worker and PhD Candidate
- **Josie Howie** – Non-Indigenous – Principal
- **Travis Varcoe** – Narungga, Ngarrindjiri – Koori Education Support
- **Justine Makdessi** – Non-Indigenous – Wellbeing Coordinator
- **Talisha Edwards-Young** – Wamba Wamba, Wotjobaluk, Dja Dja Wurrung – Education Support Worker – Former Pavilion Student



Artwork by Shanarra Braybon

2.1 Racism and Cultural Safety

The Pavilion School has a strong emphasis on minimising racist behaviours, while acknowledging the structural racism in society, and in doing so the school creates a culturally safe environment. As described in the above [Pavilion Model section](#), the school uses a variety of strategies to create cultural safety. In addition to those described previously, the Pavilion maintains a strong emphasis on: Koori programs that celebrate the resilience and brilliance of First Nations people; raising the cultural and racial literacy of non-Indigenous staff and students; taking a critical approach to Department of Education data; protecting the data sovereignty of students to the extent possible within current school collection requirements; and practicing radical belief.

The Koori programs at the Pavilion are central to the schools' operations. A large space within the school's common area at the Preston campus is designated as the Koori Hub, which has been decorated by local First Nations artist, accompanied by artworks created in the weekly Koori art program. In 2023, the Koori program runs 5 days a week. On Monday at the Epping Campus and Tuesdays at the Preston Campus, Ash and Travis run the "Yarning on Country" program which involves bringing all First Nations students into the Koori Hub for 1.5 hours to make art, eat lunch and yarn. On Wednesdays, Travis works the students who attend are least engaged in school, in what is called the "engage class" and then runs a men's Didgeridoo program. On Thursday, Ash runs the women's weaving program. Both these gendered spaces allow First Nations students to engage in women's business and men's business in culturally appropriate ways – which do not rely on biological constructions of gender. On Friday, Ash, Travis, and another co-worker Doug run the Ascend program, which is a student led adventure program that allows students to propose and design excursions outside of the school grounds. These weekly programs are also supplemented by various excursions and First Nations courses co-run with Dardi Munwurro (see [Appendix 2](#)). All these programs are designed in collaboration with the families and community around the school. A key strength is Ash's strong connection to this local area, attending Northlands Secondary School for her education and being well connected in the community. While these programs are designed for First Nations students, they are also inclusive to respectful non-Indigenous students and any students who are unsure about their heritage, which is

common with students in out of home care or whose family may have been affected by the stolen generations. These Koori programs are effective on ensuring the rich and present nature of First Nations cultures throughout the school and help raise the level of understanding for non-Indigenous students as well. When combined with the staff cultural training with Garuwa, they work to ensure that the school is a culturally safe space.

Secondly, the enrolment and intake processes are enacted with a critical lens towards the data collection methods of the Department of Education and the data sovereignty of First Nations people. Through community consultation it is understood that the intake and enrolment period is invasive to many First Nations students, relying on outlining deficits in students to ensure funding and support. This process is not culturally safe in its construction. For Flexible Learning Options (FLOs) like The Pavilion, there is an extensive referral process set out by the Department of Education, which compiles medical, psychological, and school records of any potential student.

To mitigate the damaging effects of this invasive process, the Pavilion enacts three strategies. Firstly, school and psychological records are read with a critical lens, as they often include medicalised and racialized language which is predominantly written by non-Indigenous practitioners who perpetuate harmful deficit discourses (see [Intersections of Disadvantage](#)). Secondly, the Pavilion is deliberate and strategic in the information it releases to the Department of Education. For example, the current “Multi-Agency Panel to Prevent Youth Offending” (MAPs) include Department of Education, Justice, Family Services and Police. While these MAPs are ostensibly about preventing youth crime, the Pavilion school takes the position that the information shared through MAPs is often used to criminalise young people and increase their likelihood of interactions with Police and Youth Justice. As such, the Pavilion provides only enough information to fulfil its duties to the Department of Education, aiming to shield its students from the work of MAPs. Thirdly and finally, at intake wellbeing staff practice radical belief in the experiences of students, such as their negative experiences with Police and MAPs and structures the student’s participation in the school around their experiences. Through these many attempts, the Pavilion aims to bolster the cultural safety of its students to the extent possible with the frameworks of the Department of Education.

2.2 Funding adequacy and accountability

Adequate funding and accountability are essential to the proper practice of school-based education, especially within the public system. The key issues from the Pavilion school perspective are the proper allocation of per-student funding for First Nations students, the accountability of any First Nations specific funding in mainstream schools and the cultural blindness that prevents many First Nations students from accessing Program for Student with Disabilities (PSD) funding.

At a secondary school level there is no per-student allocation of additional funding for First Nations students, despite existing at a primary level. Therefore, there is no additional funding for First Nations students, which should be required to meet the expectations of the current Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan, the Mparntwe Education Declaration, or the National Schools Reform Agreement. Transforming the structures and practice of schooling to ensure cultural safety requires funding changes to substantiate policy goals, and while the Pavilion School works to achieve these goals, it is primarily despite, rather than because of, the current funding arrangements. The current system of equity funding is unclear and unaccounted for in many, if not most schools; and the experiences of our students at previous school demonstrate that those schools are not using their funding in the manner of which it should be. However, we at the Pavilion ensure that all equity funding is tracked and justified based on equity goals and expectations. A complication to this arrangement is that administratively the Pavilion School is a campus of Charles La Trobe P-12 College, despite existing almost entirely separately. This arrangement is a result of the Department of Education's mistrust of flexi schools and requirement for them to be attached to mainstream schools. In practice, this arrangement has seen Charles La Trobe College previously misuse Pavilion student equity funding for students at the mainstream campus. While this funding arrangement has been reconciled, after persistent intraschool advocacy, it speaks to the ease for which equity funding can be misappropriated. As such, the Pavilion advocates strongly for dedicated funding for First Nations students and clear accountability measures to ensure that any funding is justified in the needs of First Nations students.

As will be elaborated in the section on [Intersections of Disadvantage](#), the interaction between Indigeneity and disability is complex and fraught, often ending up in the misdiagnosis of Indigenous neurodiversity as “behavioural issues” due to the lack of cultural safety and racial literacy in non-Indigenous teachers and allied professionals. In relation to funding, however, the lack of recognition for First Nations diversity in ability and neurodiversity results in many of the students of the Pavilion not receiving PSD funding, despite the professional opinion of Pavilion workers that they should. The process of demonstrating need for PSD funding is invasive and often culturally unsafe, leading to First Nations families rejecting its process. As well, many neurological conditions such as ADHD are diagnosed based on symptomatic behaviours, which are subject to stark cultural differences and often missed in First Nations young people. Therefore, it is very common at the Pavilion to be supporting First Nations students who display examples of neurodiversities which require additional needs, without adequate funding based on their cultural or neurological requirements.

As articulated by Koori Programs Coordinator Ash Luttrell in her own experience with her children and the children in her extended family, diagnosis of neurodiversities is almost always constructed around behavioural issues, framed as deficit, and often used as punishment. The decision whether to work towards a diagnosis or funding application is rarely shared with First Nations families, with little consultation or cooperation from the schools. While this issue of providing adequate schooling for First Nations students with varying abilities is complex, it is clear from the profession and personal experience of Pavilion staff that the current funding arrangements and consultation programs are not working.

2.3 IEPs and SSGs

As a flexi school, all students must have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and regular Student Support Groups (SSGs). Despite doing so many of them, they remain a labour intensive and imperfect process. The purposes of allowing students the ability to set and explain their own educational goals is worthwhile and valuable, however, with almost all aspects of education, they are reliant on the cultural competency of the staff involved to ensure the proper facilitation. Many students, families and staff members report other schools IEPs being constructed hastily with little contribution, and SSGs that last less than ten minutes. The Pavilion's approach is far more involved; however, this labour remains a constrain on teachers and wellbeing worker's time, alongside the rest of the duties of a school.

Staff members Ash and Travis attest to the low expectations that Aboriginal families have of school SSGs and describe how the process often relies on Aboriginal people protecting the feelings of non-Indigenous staff members. They are typically viewed by mainstream schools as a box ticking exercise, where positive aspects are highlights but any serious concerns are avoided. They rely heavily on the competency of non-Indigenous educators, who due to the lack of departmental focus and funding, are not providing culturally safe spaces for discussions. Even at the Pavilion, the behaviour of non-Indigenous staff members has been called out by Aboriginal family members for not providing a culturally safe space. While the Pavilion has strong enough ties with community to hear these complaints and concerns (see [section 2.9](#)), many schools do not, and therefore the SSG process rarely achieves its assigned aims of including the students families and support groups into active deliberation with educators. At the Pavilion, the proforma provided from the Department of Education must be adapted and amended significantly to fit the needs of First Nations students and families.

Finally, effective IEPs and SSGs are reliant on assuring the data sovereignty of First Nations people. As is continually the case, the collection of personal, deficit focused and invasive data about First Nations people underpins much of the Department's understanding of IEPs and SSGs. To ensure proper collaboration between educators and families, there must be a

system of collective data management, where families can easily access and control the data produced about their young person and ensure that the management and distribution of that data is done with prior consultation.



Artwork by Talisha Edwards-Young

2.4 Intersections of disadvantage

There are various intersections of disadvantage which stem from colonisation and play out in the work of the Pavilion. Indigeneity and ability overlap in various forms, especially as both are discursively framed by broader society as “pathologies”. This section will describe at length the Pavilion’s perspective on disability and Indigeneity, while also discussing out of home care.

Building from academic research, we can see that the phenomena oft referred to as “disability” (a term that frames difference as lesser than), interacts heavily with the deficit discourses applied to First Nations young people. In [section 1.2](#), we describe the overlapping histories of child removal between First Nations and disabled young people. As well, they both exist within deep deficit discourses. Goenpul academic Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2009) describes how patriarchal white supremacy “deploys a discourse of pathology as a means to subjugate and discipline Indigenous people”, especially using deficit discourses. Similarly, the medical model of disability “sees impairment as abnormality, a tragic problem to be fixed—establishes professional power and control over people with disability.” (Clifton, 2020; Siebers, 2008). Mills and Lefrancois (2018), p. 503) deconstruct the metaphor of colonised people, intellectually disabled and mad people being “child-like”; whereby such a discourse is deployed to “reproduce multi-systemic forms of oppression that, ostensibly in their ‘best interests’, govern children and all those deemed child-like.” Cooms (2023 p. 7) argues that “in the Australian context is that Aboriginality itself was considered as a disability.” When a young person presents with both Indigeneity and varying ability, they are broadly understood to be lesser than human. Evidence shows that students with a disability are especially vulnerable to school exclusion (Mitchell, 2016; Preece & Howley, 2018), therefore they are highly likely to interact with flexi schooling.

The Pavilion cohort demonstrates how inadequate the current medical model of disability is for representing the diversity of First Nations students. Approximately a quarter of all Pavilion students are on a program for students with disability, and over 78% of surveyed students self-report as having neurodiversity. Despite this, of the 48 students who identify

as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, only 2 are on a program for students with disability. In the experience of staff at the Pavilion, that this number is highly undervaluing the true breadth of ability within the First Nations cohort, especially as 44% of First Nations students self-report as neurodiverse. Therefore, it appears that First Nations students are not receiving diagnoses and funding for their additional needs based on their neurodiversity or ability. A potential explanation for that is the racialised discourse of Aboriginal people as “angry” or “aggressive”, where any young person who present with varying ability or neurodiversity is understood by the predominately white teacher population as having behaviour problems. It is a common narrative at the Pavilion that young First Nations people come to the school with various records of “behavioural challenges” or “oppositional disorder”, whereby it is very clear to the Pavilion staff that these students simply require additional needs that weren’t being met. At the Pavilion, the wellbeing program understands resistance not as a sign of opposition or negativity, instead it is understood along the lines of Tuck and Yang (2013). Youth resistance and refusal is a productive and illustrative practice, whereby students harness the only tools available to them to articulate their needs, thus placing the responsibility on school staff to interpret and cater to their needs.

In contrast to the medical model of disability, First Nations peoples had a relational conception of difference which did not presuppose the hierarchies of abilities but rather foregrounded care and responsibility to Country and one another. This is articulated best by the work of Samantha Coombs (2023) in *Decolonising disability: weaving a Quandamooka conceptualisation of disability and care*. A key quote from one of Coombs’ participants demonstrates this perspective:

“It was big shame if you hurt someone with a disability, you would be punished. Anyone with a disability was given respect always because they gave in ways others couldn’t. Diversity is good for mob, it keeps us true to our oneness.” (Cooms, 2023, p. 12).

At the Pavilion, our attempts to understand disability, especially for First Nations people stems from this same belief, though far less established than the work of Quandamooka

Mob, where we have a responsibility of care and understanding for Country and the people on it. Disability is not to be viewed as a disadvantage but rather a natural expression of human diversity.

Finally, a key aspect of the intersection between Indignity and disability in education appears in the findings of the recent Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (2023). In the report, the commissioners acknowledged the “ongoing impacts (of colonisation) are evident in the over-representation of First Nations people with disability in child protection and criminal justice systems, and the high rates of child removal, poverty and unemployment”. This statement rings far too true for the Pavilion. A key finding of the Royal Commission was the plan to close all specialist schools down within the next few decades, citing them as segregationist. However, in the Final Report (2023, p. 106), the commissioners acknowledged that “with one exception, no one (who was First Nations) advocated or supported the phasing out of non-mainstream schools”. Through discussions at Pavilion, we argue that the history of colonisation has demonstrated to First Nations people that mainstream schooling is not to be trusted, and while non-Indigenous Disabled people may believe in the possibility of school reform, First Nations people acknowledge it is unlikely that mainstream schools will ever cater adequately to the needs of First Nations people with disabilities, therefore, specialist locations are needed.

In the Pavilion context, Indigeneity is also closely linked to experiences of out-of-home care and the process of stolen generations. The impact of colonisation on Indigenous families is immense, and the histories of the stolen generations are present in the local community. However, the current rates of Indigenous child removal remain extremely high, leading the Pavilion to not consider the stolen generations merely a historical process, but one which remains embedded into the welfare system of Victoria. Firstly, Indigenous students of the Pavilion are often unable to connect fully to their cultural practice due to the ongoing trauma that exists in their families. A reality which is also present for Indigenous staff members, who attest to the sad reality that elders are often unable to share their knowledge because of the immense trauma which exists in their childhoods.

18% of Pavilion students experience housing insecurity or homelessness and 10% are in Out of Home Care. Many of these students are First Nations. Within the Pavilion community, interactions with Child Protection are far too common. While child abuse and concerns for children's safety are of the utmost important for the Pavilion staff, it is also clear that the system of child protection remains racially and culturally biased against Indigenous people. The culpability of schools in the process of child removal is not acknowledged broadly enough, being one of the most common sites of "reporting" which led to Indigenous families being split up. Please refer to the bottom section of [Racism and Cultural Safety](#) for a larger discussion of the use of government reporting to target young people.

2.5 Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-2026

The Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan has largely failed in its efforts to address key areas. Its implementation has been piecemeal, without adequate funding, and significantly disrupted by the Covid-19 era, which has substantially affected school engagement and participation.

The scope of the plan is extremely broad, which speaks to the problems that exist for First Nation's students within the Victorian schooling system, however, the implementation of that plan has been underwhelming. The particular focus on school engagement and participation is fraught for two reasons: firstly, the school environment is often not safe for First Peoples, and therefore engaging students into an unsafe environmental can itself be harmful; and the engagement targets seem to be combined with the Department of Education's general distrust by of flexi school settings, whose primary purpose is engaging young people in education. As described by Gamilaroi education research Michelle Bishop (2021, p. 419), "under the pretence of 'getting a good education', many Indigenous students feel coerced into compliance, with schools used as vehicles of institutionalisation, indoctrination and assimilation." School must be adapted to become culturally safe places before it is expected that all Indigenous students must attend. Since the establishment of schooling, it has been an institution for assimilation (see [section 1.2 Histories of Schooling](#)). Engagement into such a violent system is harmful for young people, and many of the students of the Pavilion have deliberately chosen to protect themselves from this violence by refusing school. Secondly, the position of Flexi schools within the public system remains precarious, despite flexi schools being essential to the engagement of disengaged students. The department should refer to flexi schools as sources of knowledge for the culturally safe practice of school engagement, which can be used to adapt mainstream schools. Instead, the independence of flexi school is constantly impinged, and they are required to continually substantiate their place under threat of funding cuts.

2.6 Effective Engagement and Cultural Safety

The Pavilion operates as a flexible school, and the following section will outline the relevant literature that underlies out effective engagement policies. In [section 1.4](#) and [section 2.1](#), we have discussed cultural safety practices, therefore, this section will focus on engagement practices. The primary understanding of this section is that the primary purpose flexi schools is engagement, and therefore, their practices should be viewed as highly relevant to improving broader school engagement.

The most prevalent trend in the literature was the connection between staff and student relationships and best practice in flexible education. In all school environments, mutually respectful relationships are key to success; however, in flexible learning centres the genuine and caring connection between staff and student is essential (Bills et al., 2020; Smyth & McInerney, 2013; te Riele, 2014; Waters, 2017). A key reason for students to disengage from mainstream school is because the young person has had negative experiences with teachers or school staff previously (Hobbs & Power, 2013; Mills & McGregor, 2016). In contrast, positive relationships with a staff member correlates with a feeling of connection to the school and more likelihood to continue attending (Thomas et al., 2020). Strategies to deliberately cultivate these relationships include encouraging the use of first names and humour (Johns, 2014; McGregor & Mills, 2012) to present themselves as “more equal” (te Riele et al., 2014, p. 19), which help to avoid power struggles that can be more prevalent in an authoritarian setting (Mills & McGregor, 2016). Young people who feel cared for are more likely to be motivated, to show improved learning outcomes and academic self-efficacy (Cahill et al., 2014). Mills and McGregor (2016) argue that effective pedagogy should flow from a positive relationship between student and teacher, as these allow the curriculum and delivery to be personalised. Despite their importance, Dadvand (2021, p. 350) describes how these relationships must consider the ways in which schools and school staff are “implicated in reproducing the conditions of possibility for (the students’) predicaments”; they must be considered with a critical eye for structural determinants. Relationships are the basis for quality flexible education as they engage students and promote effective pedagogy.

Related to these interpersonal relationships is the sense of community that exists in flexible schooling. Wilson et al. (2011) suggest that the ideal flexible school would have less than 100 students, as to foster a sense of intra-school community. While we don't believe the specific number is important, the literature is clear about the importance of school community in contributing to student success; "building a sense of community was fundamental to ensuring that the young people remained in the educational programmes" (Mills & McGregor, 2012, p. 855). In a study by Lewthwaite et al., (2017), young people recounted how much they valued the sense of home at the school, regularly using metaphors of homeliness and familiarity to describe the strong connection to the school community. For students who have inconsistent or traumatic family lives, the notion of feeling a sense of home at school is significant. This was highlighted as the key difference between their experience of mainstream school and flexible school. A feeling of connection to the school environment contributed to affective engagements, with feelings of safety and comfort at school (Lewthwaite et al., 2017). A key part of providing meaningful education is maintaining a sense of consistency in the staffing profile, allowing consistency and predictability, which is particularly relevant for students who attend with ASD, but relevant more broadly (Preece & Howley, 2018). Therefore, on top of individual relationships, the connection to a sense of community at school is important in providing best practice in alternative schooling.

Small classrooms and individualised support are important to establishing relevant and meaningful teaching (Smyth & Robinson, 2014; Preece & Howley, 2018). Compared to the larger sizes common in mainstream school, a strength of flexible schooling is the ability to provide small student numbers in each classroom, which allows each student to be supported more effectively and have closer relationships to the adults in the classroom (Smyth & Robinson, 2014). The impact of class-size reduction is also greater in students from low SES and culturally diverse backgrounds (Zyngier, 2014), which makes class size particularly important to flexible schools where these students are more prevalent. Class times are often more flexible and shorter to allow students to engage for a timeframe that suits them better, as well as accommodate other aspects of their lives such as childcare or work (Bills et al., 2020). Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are another expression of this personalised schooling experience (Mills & McGregor, 2014; Thomas et al., 2020). ILPs are

written statements which “describes the adjustments goals and strategies to meet a student’s individual educational needs” (The Department of Education, 2022). They are required in a Victorian context for all students in a Flexible Learning Option. ILPs represent an administrative expression of the personalization at alternative schools, however, their smaller class sizes afford them greater space for staff to engage with students in academic and wellbeing support more generally (Mills & McGregor, 2017).

Flexible schools work best when they comprise interdisciplinary staff teams with varied skill sets. Various health and well-being workers can work within the school community either as staff or as in-house members of external organisations, which allows alternative schools to provide a “wraparound” service (McGregor et al., 2015). In this way, students are supported to reduce the conditions that prevent them from learning, such as their mental health conditions, youth justice arrangements, housing situations, childcare and more (Lewthwaite et al., 2017). Student support workers are also common and allow for greater individual academic and well-being support, especially when provided by members of the local community. By increasing the number of adults available to support in the school environment, students can build more relationships and receive more personal attention.

A key issue with the engagement practices of flexi schools is their interaction with local mainstream schools. While the Pavilion argues that flexi practices should aim to be incorporated further in mainstream schools, often the opposite is true. From reports of young people at the Pavilion, the existence of a flexi school in the local area leads mainstream schools to put far less focus on wellbeing and engagement. As described by Mills et al. (2018), mainstream schools use flexi schools as “dumping grounds” for “undesirable students”, a category that is often defined on racial and cultural grounds. The current neoliberal push in education, which ties school success and funding so heavily to academic results, means schools are incentivised to exclude and expel low achieving students, instead “dumping” those students with flexis. The mainstream system needs to improve its engagement practices, rather than rely solely on sending students to flexi settings.

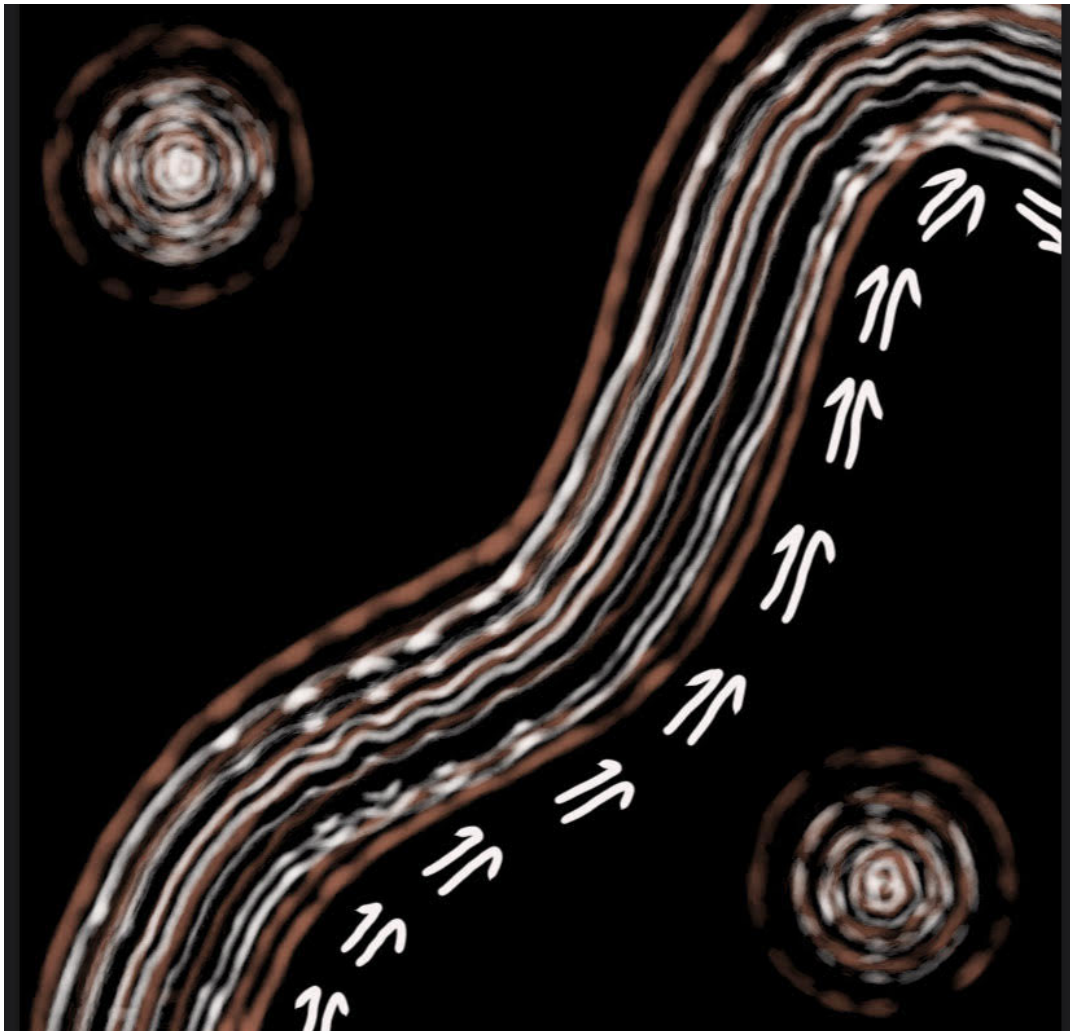
2.7 Attendance and Absenteeism

The key issues for attendance and absenteeism are the accountability of schools for absent students; the shifting from school non-enrolment to enrolled absenteeism; and ineffectiveness of comparison of school attendance across schools rather than considering individual attendance growth.

Firstly, most of the Pavilion students have experienced high levels of school refusal, missing on average of 8.7 months out of school before attending the Pavilion school. A common in both the professional experience of Pavilion staff and Mes Mitchelhill's research has been student reporting that schools "gave up on them". While schools would often attempt to re-engage students for 1-3 weeks, the common experience is that after that time the schools drop off. The Pavilion strongly believes the responsibility for engagement lies with the school and not the students. It is clear from all our research that Pavilion students are committed to their education and have goals for their future, however, it has consistently been their previous schools who have excluded students from education. Therefore, Schools should have greater accountability for their engagement measures because disengagement is a phenomenon that particularly affecting First Nations students.

Recently, the Department of Education has prioritised enrolling students into education, to promote attendance; however, in our experience, this has not affected that actual attendance rates of disengaged students. In previous years, many of the Pavilion students, who are school age, would not be enrolled in any school at all. This was a particularly bad situation, which led to students being lost in the system and missing out on their right to an education. While in the last ten years, the Department of Education has worked to ensure that almost all students at school age are enrolled somewhere, this has done little to change the attendance rates of students. Students who are technically enrolled in mainstream schools are still not attending for large swaths of time. Therefore, current enrolment rates should not be seen as a success without adequate improvement on engagement process and school accountabilities.

Finally, attendance rates are used as a key measure of school success, as one of only a few wellbeing measures. In the current system of school evaluation, schools are compared to state averages and evaluated as such. For example, the attendance rate of the Pavilion school has stayed relatively stable at 55%, which ranks us in the bottom quartile of school attendance. However, the system of evaluating schools against state averages is devoid of context and historical analysis. The average self-reported attendance of Pavilion students at their last school is 0-10%, with most not attending for almost a year before enrolling at the Pavilion. As a result, the improvement of attendance at the Pavilion school is significant, however, it is not represented in any of the school evaluation markers. The constant comparison of school and student success across state metrics decontextualises and delegitimises the successes that are occurring in flexi schools like the Pavilion.



Artwork by Talisha Edwards-Young

2.8 Suspensions and Expulsions

The existence of suspensions and expulsions in school environments is outdated, unnecessarily punitive and culturally biased, as such the Pavilion does not engage in any suspensions or expulsions, including informal expulsions. These informal expulsions appear to be ubiquitous within the Victorian schooling system, hiding the carceral and punitive nature of most schools behind declining official suspension rates. Most Pavilion students have experienced at least one informal expulsion from a mainstream school, and they are particularly relevant to First Nations students, who are likely to be undiagnosed and misunderstood by the predominately white education system. A particularly heinous example of one such informal expulsion can be read in the Victorian Ombudsman's 2017 Investigation into Victorian government school expulsions (see [Appendix 4 – Case study of Informal Expulsion](#) for an excerpt of Case Study 11, a Pavilion Student).

Since the institute of schooling was ratified into a “public good” by the introduction of public education, white educators have used formal and informal expulsions to impinge on First People's right to an education, and this practice continues to this day. On arrival at Pavilion, a the most important point of difference that this school can articulate is its lack of expulsions, often being the point in which students decide to enrol here. The academic work of Sophie Rudolph (2023, Rudolph and Thomas, 2023) further demonstrates the carceral logics of school systems and their racialised implementation.

Instead, the Pavilion adopts a behavioural support process which includes the one-on-one process that has also been articulated within [section 1.4](#) . The one-on-one process involves working with students who have compromised the safety of the school environment to co-construct a safety plan which attends to their needs and the needs of their peers and Pavilion staff. This process centralises the needs of the student and works on the model of relationality which prioritises “rupture and repair”, acknowledging that the strongest connections to the school are often fostered within the most intense or disruptive periods of a students' lives. These principles are based on trauma-informed pedagogy, transformative justice, and community-building tenets. Student outbursts do not appear from nowhere, they are an expression of needs by students, such as the need for more

mental health support, a differing approach to learning or greater support with social skills. By treating such outbursts with carceral logics such as suspensions and expulsions, schools are criminalising children, and often leading them to disengage with school and worsening their mental and material conditions. Instead, students need to be given greater support with their educational needs, and assisted in the process of repairing relationships with staff and students who may have been affected by their actions. This is particularly relevant to First Nations students, who are likely to be criminalised and demonised based on their Indigeneity and misunderstood in their needs.

Finally, the Pavilion advocates for the closure of all “teaching units”, which rely on historical conceptions of “reforming students” which are inaccurate and ineffective. Teaching units are school-based programs which remove students from their usual school and place them in an alternative school environment for 6 months, after which they are returned to their previous school. At the Pavilion, many students have been placed in such programs and we are yet to hear of any success to come from it. The 6-month programs provide students with the safety and security they need to access education, after which they are returned to their unsafe and unsupportive mainstream school. This jarring process is more likely to accelerate disengagement once students return to mainstream school. The focus on adapting the child rather than the school practices continues to persist at the very core of teaching unit programs and it remains outdated and ineffectual.

2.9 Complaint mechanisms and outcomes

A robust complaints mechanism for First Peoples cannot rely solely on bureaucratic and institutional processes, it must be underpinned by a strong connection with local communities and an involvement of the informal, relational practice of information sharing that exists within First Peoples communities, affectionately referred to as the “Blakfella Grapevine”. The process of colonisation has systematically eroded Indigenous communities’ trust and belief in colonial institutions such as the Department of Education, therefore, they will often refuse to engage with the bureaucratic practices that have been established through those institutions.

One such example is the school complaints process. The official process involves families going to Department of Education, whereby they will be heard by a staff member who is almost always a white former principal, who has strong ties to other principals and the Department. As such, First Peoples’ complaints are often not received or elicited within a culturally safe process and there is little belief in the community that any complaints will be acted upon. Indigenous family members of Pavilion staff have been assaulted by their teachers in school environments on multiple occasions with little to no repercussions. There is little to no faith in the just proceeding of the Department of Education’s complaints process.

However, the Pavilion retains access to that process, but particularly with First Nations students, our emphasis is on relational connections within community that foster trust and thus feedback. Families who feel their young people have not been treated unfairly will often go directly to Ash or Travis (Pavilions Koori Support team) or will use conduits such as friends and family to alert Ash and Travis of the concern. It is a priority of the Koorie Support Team to not disregard any complaints and ensure they are addressed within the school. This informal process of complaints is often the best system for testing the cultural safety of the Pavilion school, where we must demonstrate that we are able to acknowledge fault and repair any issues. This process is essential to our functioning and essential to ensuring enrolments, which almost exclusively come through word of mouth. Therefore, this informal complaints process is significant within the operation of the school.

2.10 Curriculum Success and Failures

It is the professional responsibility of all Victorian teachers to embed Indigenous knowledges and histories into all aspects of a student's learning, however, the implementation of this responsibility is patchwork and underwhelming. At the Pavilion the Koori programs are integrated into the planning and delivery of lessons, to ensure that students receive culturally appropriate learning. While the Pavilion's curriculum planning and delivery still requires significant improvement, student and staff experiences at other schools suggests it is further along than almost all schools.

The weekly structure of the Pavilion school allows a full day of teacher planning allocation on Fridays, where students engage in alternative programs led by support workers, youth workers and partner organisations. As such, the teaching and learning team are given adequate time to plan and structure curriculum that can reach the varying capacities in any Pavilion classrooms. Pavilion classes are not segregated by age, and academic ability varies dramatically between each student, therefore, teaching is extremely differentiated. For example, in the new VCE-VM curriculum, a Pavilion teacher may run a lesson which includes the same initial content or theme but has entry points for learning at 4 cascaded levels. This allows students to engage with resources and work that is aligned to their capacities and is decided through various diagnostic tools and student choice. This unique teaching model allows Pavilion staff to fill the many gaps in students' knowledge and rebuild confidence in academic capacity while destigmatising varying abilities.

Regarding Koori programs, all curriculum materials that relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are approved by the Koori Programs Coordinator, which minimises the provision of inappropriate or unsafe materials. However, this process is not perfect. The Pavilion aims to have a Koori Curriculum Consultant who can join the Friday planning and be a part of the early stages of curriculum planning. Unfortunately, within the current funding constraints of the school this is not possible. The Pavilion is aware of the success of such pilot programs such as the Culture, Community and Curriculum Project (Bishop et al., 2019), which "was a three-year 'pilot' study that accepted from the outset that Aboriginal parents and community members should have a genuine and meaningful role in education-related

decision making and practices.” Curriculum should be developed alongside community and family members to ensure its relevance and cultural safety. However, the funding to ensure that First Nations people will be compensated for their knowledge does not exist, leading the school to work with its imperfect current system.

In the teaching team at the Pavilion there is a strong emphasis on Indigenous knowledges, however, there are certain constraints that exist for the entirely non-Indigenous teaching team, which are illustrative of broader teaching practices. Firstly, teacher confidence and capability in First Nations histories and knowledges varies, and it is common that non-Indigenous teachers will lack the confidence to teach First Nations materials for fear of “getting it wrong”. While these concerns are well-meaning, they often result in the omission of key materials or the shying away from sensitive topics that are necessary to discuss. For example, there was extensive civics education around the 2023 Referendum as many of the Pavilion students are of voting age. However, it is a concern of the Koori support team that the follow up after the failed Referendum was piecemeal or absent, likely because teachers lacked the confidence to discuss this hard reality for the First Nations community. Similarly, the process of sourcing learning resources authored by First Nations people is labour intensive. This process is extremely necessary but is only made possible with the extensive planning time afforded to Pavilion teachers. As well, in classrooms, there is often an assumption that First Nations students are knowledgeable about their histories and culture, however, the implications of the historical and ongoing removal of First Nations children means that students can be made to feel ostracised for not knowing about their culture. Similarly, the extensive wellbeing program at the Pavilion allows First Nations students to be adequately supported if any unsafe materials or discussions appear in class, which is not the case at most mainstream schools. While these are some of the key constraints in providing culturally safe curriculum, they do not undermine the importance of this work.

At this point, it is important to note that previously the Pavilion employed a Bundjalung Teacher, who was the only First Nations person in the teaching time. In discussion for this report, she wanted it known that the cultural burden that exists for First Nations teachers is immense, and her experiences at a regional mainstream school as well as the Pavilion were overwhelming and difficult. She found the additional work that was placed upon her to be

onerous and outside the scope of her job description. As such, she is no longer an active teacher, instead opting for a career change, a story far too common in the education space.

2.11 Decision making authority, hierarchy, and structure of the First Peoples education workforce.

For this section of the report, it needs to be made clear that non-Indigenous members of leadership, Josie Howie and Justine Makdessi were asked to leave. This was a deliberate attempt to allow the Koori staff to reflect on their perspectives on authority and hierarchy. Mes Mitchelhill, the non-Indigenous staff member and researcher remained in the room as scribe and compiled this section based on Ash, Travis and Talisha's responses.

The key reflections from this discussion were that the role of Koori Educators is underpaid, multifaceted and overwhelming at times. While the role can be very satisfying, none of the three First Nations staff viewed their position as sustainable long-term careers, largely due to the ceiling on their salaries being so low and the inability to "clock off" from a community role. Before being Pavilion staff members, Ash, Travis, and Talisha are Aboriginal people who deal with the exact same colonial forces that the students they are supporting do. This inevitably plays into their roles as staff members, while they often feel unable to acknowledge it.

In a lot of different workplaces, there has been this underlying assumption that Aboriginal people are not able to bring their personal lives to the role as they must remain "professional". However, a large portion of their profession involves connecting and liaising with the community they exist within in their personal lives. When one deals so intimately with families in their own community, it is impossible to "clock off" and escape the work. As well, in their own lives as parents, they experience the same colonial harms of schooling again through their children. The cultural burden of this process can be immense.

Amongst non-Indigenous staff, there is often an assumption that the work of the Koori Programs Team is not as valid or demanding as other roles in the school. This belief emerges from the ingrained deficit discourses that exist for First Nations people, as well as the lack of cultural awareness about relational and community building work. Both Travis and Ash

describe their roles as “wearing so many hats”. While these roles are multifaceted, significant, and necessary, the low salary ceiling for a Koori education gives these roles a shorter lifespan.

In their experience at various schools and youth organisations, the Koori Education team have often been consulted late into the decision-making process, reflecting how non-Indigenous colleagues believe their input not to be central to the decision-making process. At its worst times, this process feels highly tokenistic. Alongside this, there is a tendency for First Nations people to be micro-managed within their roles, which makes them feel as if they do not have decision-making power. Finally, there is a regular belief that those in power are aware that the Koori support roles are “meaningful”, and therefore, the Department of Education relies on people staying in these roles despite the low pay. In the worse times, Ash has been made to feel like she “should be grateful” for the role, especially as she is a single mother. While this has never been made explicit, it a present power dynamic which exists with the educational hierarchy.

Later, in discussion with leadership, they raised the constraints they have within the structure of the Department. Even when there is an awareness of cultural load and cultural burden, the tools to assist the load often come in opposition to the operation of the Department. As well, Justine Makdessi raised her concern that there exists a lack of mentor roles for people within the department from culturally diverse backgrounds. Both Justine and Ash are in leadership roles at the school, however, there are no examples of people from their own or similar backgrounds who they can consult with in the Department of Education.

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Appendix

Appendix 1 – Pavilion Founder Article

Appendix 2 – Koori Programs 2023 Slideshow

Appendix 3 – Paviloin One-on-One Document

Appendix 4 – Case Study of Informal Exclusion

Appendix 5 – The Pavilion Model

Appendix 1 – Pavilion Founder Article

The Pavilion School: Under One Roof

**By Brendan Murray,
Coordinator,
the Pavilion, Banksia,
La Trobe Secondary College**

The Pavilion School opened in West Heidelberg in 2007 with 21 young people who were completely disengaged from education, employment or training. Of the 21 students, a staggering 17 of them were young women. Most of these young women were homeless. Their accommodation was neither safe nor stable and many relied on the goodwill of friends or their current boyfriends to provide a temporary home. Our first literacy task was then dictated by the needs of these young women. We filled out General Public Housing Applications and sent many of these young women through to Front Yard or Home Ground to seek suitable interim accommodation.

For many young people, this remains the first literacy task that they undertake when they recommence their education at the Pavilion. And while all learning tasks are skilfully aligned with the State Education Curriculum, this is just one example of how the core focus of the school is to meet the complex and multiple needs of disenfranchised adolescents during their transition towards adulthood.

The Pavilion School was set up by the Victorian Department of Education in the Northern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne as an educational setting for young people who have been disengaged from education, training and employment.

It is classed by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development as an Alternative Secondary School. It is, however, important to distinguish the fact that the curriculum is not 'alternative', but it is the school environment and the largely social work approach at the school that locates the school within the 'alternative' category. This 'approach', based closely

upon attachment and relationship building, has seen enormous success within the Victorian State Education System. In a mere two years of existence, 140 young people within the northern metropolitan region of Melbourne who were totally disconnected from education have returned to school at the Pavilion.

As a result of the successful outcomes of the school, both Federal and State Governments are taking notice and paying tribute to the Pavilion school.

In June 2009, the Pavilion received two significant awards from both Federal and State Governments. The joint Coordinators of the Pavilion, Josie Howie and Brendan Murray received the inaugural 'Closing the Gap Award' for their contribution to building trust and partnerships between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians. The award was presented by Jenny Macklin, the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs in recognition for the way in which the Pavilion School has assisted a large population of Indigenous students return to school, to succeed at school and to accept the necessary social, physical, emotional and psychological supports necessary to succeed at school.

Another significant accolade was bestowed upon the Pavilion in May 2009 when Brendan Murray received the prestigious Outstanding Secondary Teacher Award as part of the Victorian Education Excellence Awards. The award was presented by the Victorian Minister for Education Bronwyn Pike to recognise as the most outstanding secondary teacher in Victoria for 2009.

Both Brendan Murray and Josie Howie, who have vast experience in both social work and education, are the managers of the Pavilion School. They enrol students at a 'host school' which is Banksia-La Trobe Secondary College, but the students only attend the Pavilion, which is located offsite in a community setting in West Heidelberg.

Their school is designed as a transition and re-integration centre for up to 70 young people between the ages of 14–20 who wish to access educational support that is tailored to meet individual needs. And they oversee a small staff team at the Pavilion that is deliberately and strategically constructed with an equal number of social workers and teachers and, importantly, classes contain no more than 14 students.

The Pavilion provides a holistic approach to each young person's needs, offering an intensive literacy and numeracy programme. As well as this, social work support is provided to each student. This includes counselling, advice and referral and educational pathways support. The Pavilion staff provide a student-centred and flexible form of education that maintains a strict adherence to both the Victorian Essential Learning Standards as well as the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning and the Victorian Certificate of Education.

The Pavilion has two mission statements, both drawn from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which are the starting point for the school and for each interaction between staff and students:¹

Everyone has the right to education.

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Pavilion school does not discriminate against young people who have had troubles with the education system, or who have proved too challenging for the education system. Rather, the Pavilion offers young people a secure and safe place to many who have not been afforded such a basic opportunity, without the threat of exclusion. Upon acceptance into the Pavilion, students voluntarily agree to a 'no suspension and no expulsion' policy whereby if a student is struggling with the learning environment or





is exhibiting behaviours adverse to the maintenance of an optimum learning environment, then extra supports will be provided by the school.

Further to the fundamental idea that everyone has the right to education, the Pavilion believes that all education should be directed to the full development of the human personality. Therefore, the Pavilion operates a social work program in tandem, and completely interwoven, with the education program.

Every student who enrolls at the Pavilion is case managed by the programme's Social Work staff. It involves hearing a student's situation from their perspective, assessing the student's needs and making plans with them to improve their situation. All students meet with Pavilion staff during the intake period and from here, decisions are made with the student about what level of support that student requires. Some students require minimal coordination while others need to meet regularly with the Pavilion Social Workers for counselling, referral or crisis management. If a student is being case managed by a welfare agency then the Pavilion Social Workers focus only on the student's needs at school and liaise regularly with the student's case manager.

The Pavilion School model ensures that the school operates in a way that is conducive to the principles of Psychosocial Rehabilitation. The school aims to equip students with the educational skills needed to function effectively in the broader community. In addition to this, staff members are committed to student engagement, committed to student self determination and focus on student strengths, not their pathologies or problematic behaviours.

The relationship between staff member and student is a critical aspect to the Pavilion model. The Pavilion model is based in the knowledge that a student's capacity to form secure attachments with staff members directly relates to their ability to make personal and academic progress at school. As many Pavilion students have experienced abuse, neglect and trauma to various degrees, the Pavilion staff use Bowlby's *Theory of Attachment* to understand the needs of the student and the behaviours they might display.² Bowlby stresses the need for reliable, consistent and predictable approaches in a structure that is known and expected by students and staff members.

For this reason, Pavilion staff members maintain clear and consistent boundaries with students at all times.

At the Pavilion Freud's theories of *Transference and Counter-Transference* are used as a good guide to monitoring both student and staff members' sometimes strong emotional reactions.³ Staff members understand that students sometimes relate to staff in ways that effect other relationships in their life, whether they be positive or negative relationships or behaviours. Staff members accept that transference is a normal and everyday occurrence within relationship-based work and seek to fully understand student behaviour in light of this. Similarly, staff members at the Pavilion are conscious of their own feelings and reactions to students and situations and seek to address any such issues within supervision.

From the first time a student meets with staff at the Pavilion there is a focus on building a positive relationship with them. In terms of a theoretical base for understanding this relationship between staff member and student the Pavilion model reflects the writings and theories of Carl Rogers, who believed that significant learning happens when students feel understood and respected. From the outset, staff members show empathy respect and unconditional positive regard for the student and seek to learn about the student's life, their history and what they wish are for the future. Pavilion staff aim to create a positive relationship with the student and use that relationship to create positive change. Staff members do this initially by meeting with each student a number of times before they start in a class and then by continuing to meet students one on one throughout the year.

One resource that encompasses many of the above ideas is called *Calmer Classrooms — A guide to working with traumatised Children* and was developed by the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner and Berry Street Victoria.⁴ This resource is well used by staff at the Pavilion as it summarises an approach to working with students who have been traumatised or neglected. It covers the impact of abuse and neglect on learning and offers insights into creating "calmer classrooms" via relationship-based practice.

The Pavilion classes are run in a quiet, safe

and secure environment. It is believed that Pavilion students learn better in a low stimulus, small group environment where they feel safe to express themselves and develop as individuals. Most Pavilion students have had negative experiences of larger mainstream schools and some have displayed negative behaviours at these schools. Many have previously been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Most Pavilion students have experienced trauma in their past, have a significant mental health issue or behavioural difficulties. The Pavilion aims to create a therapeutic environment whereby students are safe from being bullied or from being a bully and where they have little distractions to their learning.

The school environment is non-threatening; the Pavilion environment is very different to that of a mainstream school. The entire school space is open-planned. There is no division of staff and student space. There are no whiteboards and there are no rows of desks. There are comfortable clusters of learning areas that are a mixture of office-like furniture and lounge room-like furniture. There is a kitchen that staff and students can access at anytime, and there are bowls of fruit on the tables alongside plant pots. Also, very importantly for the school environment, the school building is an old sporting pavilion that was first used by visiting Olympians in 1956. The pavilion is situated in the low-stimulus and tranquil parkland environment beside the Darebin Creek in West Heidelberg. Students can easily access wide, open space outside in the park if they need time out from their study. And counselling is available in a separate room which is set up in a student friendly relaxed way. Upon first entrance into the school, students have an immediately different approach to their education within this new and vastly different environment.

It is this new and vastly different education environment combined with a sound theoretical approach rooted in Social Work and Counselling Theory that is having an enormously beneficial effect on the wellbeing of adolescents in Northern Melbourne. Students do not only learn how best to succeed in the education system, but they also learn how to access necessary supports to be as successful as possible during their adolescence. Finally, these young people are supported to learn how to successfully negotiate the health, welfare and education sectors so that they can confidently access available services immediately and in the future, if such supports are then required. ■

Footnotes

1. *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Article 26, 1948
2. Bowlby, John A *Secure Base — Clinical Applications of Attachment Theory* Routledge 1988
3. Kahn, Michael *Basic Freud — Psychoanalytical Thought of the 21st Century* Basic Books 2002
4. *Calmer Classrooms — A guide to working with traumatised children* Victorian Child Safety Commissioner and Berry Street Victoria, 2008

Appendix 2 – Koori Programs 2023 Slideshow







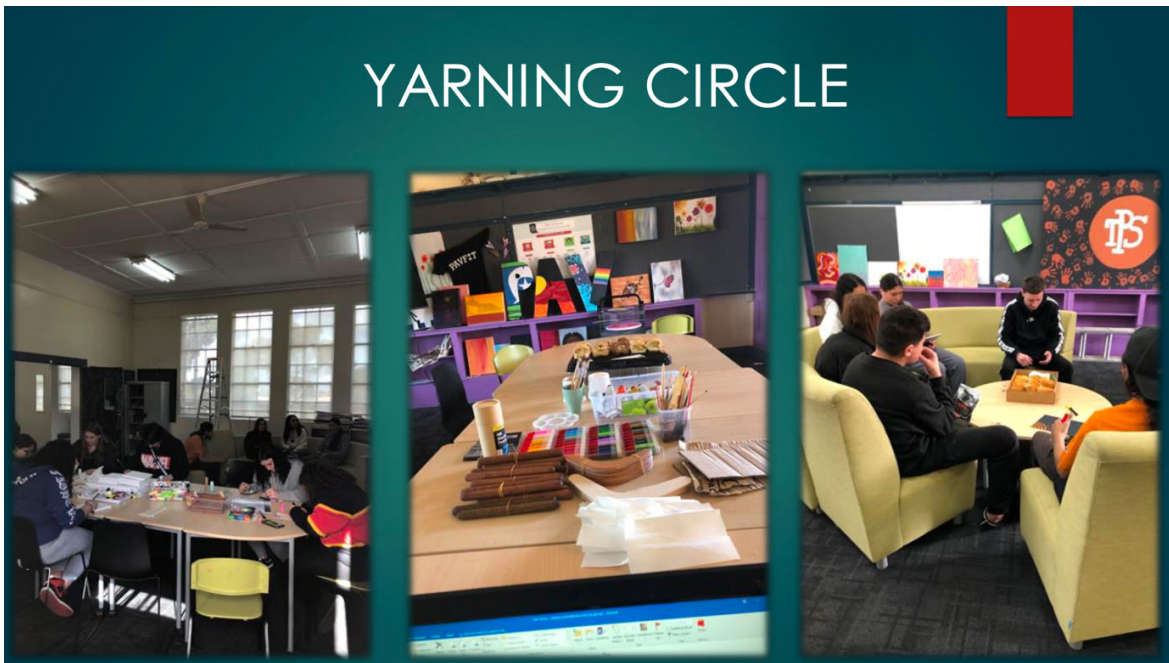


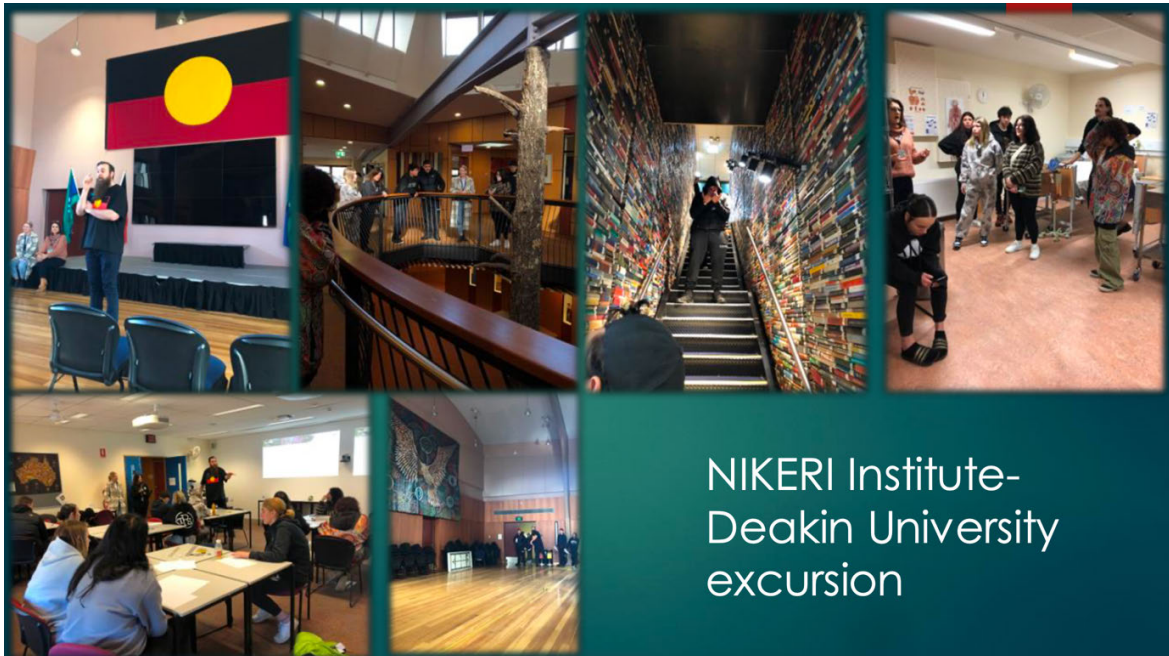












Appendix 3 – One-on-One Document

Session 1: Collaborative Problem Solving

Student:

Worker:

S T U D E N T R E F L E C T I O N	<p>In your own words, describe what happened?</p> <p><i>(Why do you think you're in one/one?)</i></p>	
	<p>What expectations were broken?</p> <p><i>(safety/respect, productivity, disruption)</i></p>	
	<p>What impact might these behaviours have had on the class group?</p> <p><i>(Effect on whole group)</i></p>	

	<p>Who might have been directly impacted by these behaviours?</p> <p><i>(Effect on individuals)</i></p>	
E M O T I O N C O A C H I N G	<p>Share adult observations and concerns about what happened</p>	<p><i>Empathise with their underlying feelings</i></p> <p><i>Validate their feelings</i></p> <p><i>Avoid providing solutions or problem solving</i></p>
	<p>What was happening for you that day and at the time?</p> <p><i>(triggering events, feelings, environmental factors in classroom)</i></p>	
	<p>How were you feeling? What might you have needed? [or.. What did you really wish for when this happened?]</p> <p><i>(space, new activity, a break, food, acknowledgement etc)</i></p>	
	<p>In what ways did those behaviours help you to get your needs met/or not?</p>	

Emotion Coaching

Step 1: Be aware of child's emotions

Step 2: Recognize emotion as an opportunity for connection and teaching

Step 3: Help child verbally label emotions

Step 4: Communicate empathy and understanding

Step 5: Set limits and problem solve

Questions to create connection

- What are you feeling? Are there some other feelings too? What are they?
- What happened? What did you need when this happened?
- What did you really wish for when this happened?
- What would you like to say?
- What are the things that make you (afraid / angry / frustrated etc)?
- What was the worst part about it for you?
- What was that like for you?
- What were the highs and lows of your day?
- What are you feeling right now?

Exploring statements to create connection

- Tell me the story.
- I want to understand everything you're feeling.
- Talk to me. I'm listening.
- Nothing is more important to me right now than listening to you.
- We have lots of time to talk.
- Tell me what you need right now.
- I think you're being very clear. Go on.
- Tell me about your feelings.
- Help me understand your feelings a little better. Say more.
- Tell me what you're most concerned about.

Communicating empathy

- You must feel so (helpless, hopeless, frustrated, happy etc)
- I wish you didn't have to go through this
- Oh, wow, that sounds really tough
- You probably felt really
- No wonder you're upset
- That would scare me too
- I'd be so mad if I had to go through that
- That sounds so embarrassing
- I would have been disappointed by that too
- I would have trouble coping with that
- Wow! That must have really hurt your feelings
- That would make me feel insecure

Setting limits

- All feelings are acceptable, but not all behaviours are acceptable. If student's actions are not acceptable then it is important to set limits on those unacceptable behaviours
- Address the student gently, give choices, and give a reason for limit setting. The limits set be connected to the misbehaviour. When giving the reason for the limit setting, emphasize the specific positive behaviour that are needed, rather than only stating the negative behaviour that should be stopped. Kids learn how to make better choices by first making poor choices, then assessing the consequences, and in the future, making different choices
- State the rules/expectations and your knowledge of what happened
- State the consequences for misbehaviour. The consequences should be fair and naturally aligned with the misbehaviour
- If punishment is necessary (ie One-on-Ones), the content should include developing and scaffolding the behaviour you want to see, if possible
- Problem solve to develop alternatives for future

Example: John you just threw scissors across the room and that is very unsafe. We behave safely at The Pavilion School. I know that you feel frustrated by (maths work, group activities, being asked to sit quietly etc), but I need you to use your words and not throw things.

Problem solving suggestions

A key to problem solving is that understanding must precede advice. If you don't understand what is happening for the student, then you may be solving the wrong problem.

- Ask student to list alternative solutions to his or her problem

- Be patient.
- As student presents possible solutions, try to use them, so that student can learn that they are part of the solution, not just the problem.
- Small successes are ok – empathise with challenges student is having, validate their feelings
- Together with student, evaluate the pros and cons for each solution
- Help student to select a solution to try out
- If it is appropriate, try role playing with your student the solution the two of you have come up with
- Before leaving the discussion, agree upon a check point (the next day, next week) to talk about how things are going and to decide if the solution is working.

Excerpt from: Gottman, J., & Schwartz Gottman, J. (2015). *Emotion Coaching: The Heart of Parenting*. The Gottman Institute, Inc: Seattle

Appendix 4 – Case study of Informal Expulsion

331. Another example of a student being effectively forced into an alternative education setting through an informal expulsion is contained in the following case study. It is worth reiterating at this time that alternative or flexible education is primarily aimed at students who are disengaged from education.



Case Study 11

The investigation was put in contact with Luke's mother by a teacher at an alternative school. Luke was a student at the alternative school since being informally expelled from a vocational college. Luke's mother was interviewed to give her account.

Luke was in his final year of a VCAL program during which he would alternate between trade school off site and his VCAL program at the college. His mother attended the college to pick up some work for him and was called into a meeting with the principal. She said that, at this meeting, the principal told her Luke had been overheard talking to another student about buying marijuana.

Luke's mother stated the principal told her 'it's in my best interest for [Luke] to pull him out and move him on so that he does not have a criminal record. She asked if his locker had been searched or if the police had been contacted and was told that neither had occurred. No marijuana was ever found in Luke's possession.

Luke's mother was told that he was suspended for four days until she decided if she was going to 'fight' or withdraw him from the school. She sought assistance from the department and another meeting was held with two departmental officers in attendance.

Luke's mother wanted him to stay at the school. At this meeting Luke's mother was told that if she would not withdraw him from the school he would continue to be suspended and would fail on attendance.

Luke's mother made the decision to withdraw her son feeling the school was not going to allow him to return.

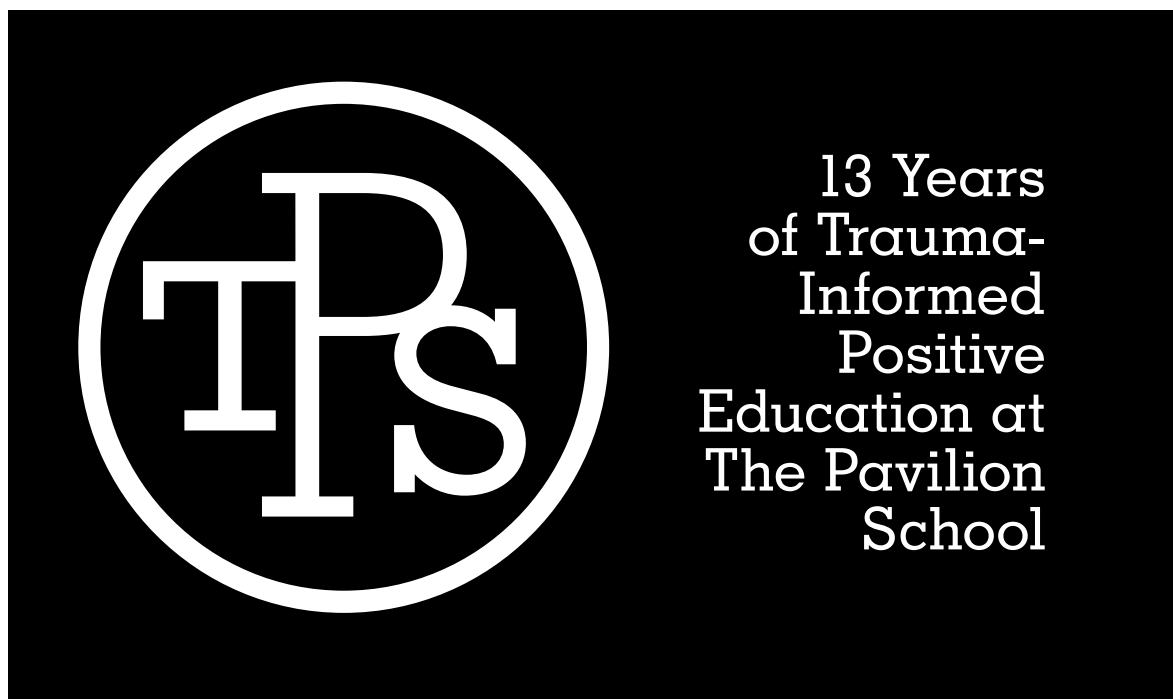
The investigation interviewed one of the departmental officers who attended the meeting. The officer confirmed that the principal had told Luke's mother to move him to another school but Luke was never formally suspended or expelled. The officer involved said that she reminded the principal of the procedures that needed to be followed:

...as regional officers it was my role and [other officer's] role to talk to the school about process, about how the situation was being handled, but it kind of fell on deaf ears... 'zero tolerance on drugs' that's all he [the principal] had to say.

When asked if she thought the situation was fair on Luke the officer said 'I think it was completely unfair.

Appendix 5 – The Pavilion Model

The Pavilion Model



The Pavilion Model

The Pavilion School

Est. 2007

The Pavilion School (Epping Campus)
Building M 415 Dalton Road
Epping VIC 3076

The Pavilion School (Preston Campus)
1-3 Sylvester Grove
Preston VIC 3072

(03) 9401 3900

(03) 9470 2023

 <http://www.pavilionschool.vic.edu.au>

 @pavilionschool

 The Pavilion School

The Pavilion School acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the Wurundjeri People as the traditional custodians of the lands on which our school is located. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging. The Pavilion School is committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.



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The Pavilion Model

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Our Model, Our Impact	6
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Our Wellbeing Model	14
Trauma Informed Practices	18
Embedding Expectations	19
Our Pathways Model	20

The Pavilion Model

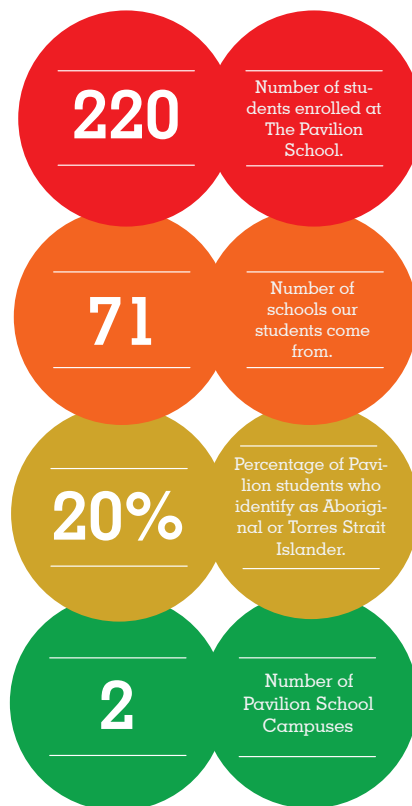
The Pavilion Model Our Story

The Pavilion School is a state secondary school that was founded in 2007. We enrol students who, for a variety of reasons, have been excluded from the mainstream school system. It is an unfortunate reality that in Victoria there are thousands of kids out of school, many of whom desperately want to finish Year 12 but require additional support, care and a flexible learning environment.

At the Pavilion we believe that every child and young person should have access to high quality teaching and learning programs. We believe that students learn best when they feel safe, respected and are supported by caring, consistent adults.

Over the past 13 years we have experienced great change and growth and I'd like to highlight three things in particular. Firstly, since opening its doors, The Pavilion has not been able to meet the demand of students wanting to get into the school – a clear sign that schools like ours are needed. In 2010 we moved out of our sporting Pavilion (yes we started in a cricket pavilion in a park) and moved into the former Preston East Primary School site. This move allowed us to expand and offer more students, more classes.

In the same year we opened a second



campus in Mill Park to help meet the demand of students in the ever expanding Whittlesea growth corridor. In 2017 our Mill Park Campus moved into a new building at Melbourne Polytechnic in Epping. We now have 220 students across two campuses in Epping and Preston and operate with a wait-list of 20-30 students.

The second important shift has been

our improved student transitions. In 2020, 100% of our students entered pathways including TAFE, Apprenticeships, employment and employment support programs. This is due to a tightly structured pathways program that gradually exposes students to industry, work experiences, builds motivation and self-esteem and gives students the opportunity to experience failure, pick themselves

004



up and try again, all while remaining enrolled at school and attached to a support network.

Third, over the past 12 years The Pavilion model, philosophy and approach has come to be accepted as a best practice approach to educating vulnerable students. Our school hosts up to 8 professional learning visits each term. During these visits, staff from schools around Victoria and Australia embed themselves in Pavilion classrooms for observations and discussions with teachers and school leaders. This has become a critical way to share both our successes and what we have learnt

from our failures.

The Pavilion's program has always flexed and bulged to reflect the capacity and interests of the staff and students currently engaged in the school, but its strength lies in the core principles that underpin its operation. Importantly, throughout all of these changes, each time we have set the bar for what we expect of our students, and what our students should expect of themselves higher and higher. Without fail, our students have both risen to and exceeded those expectations.

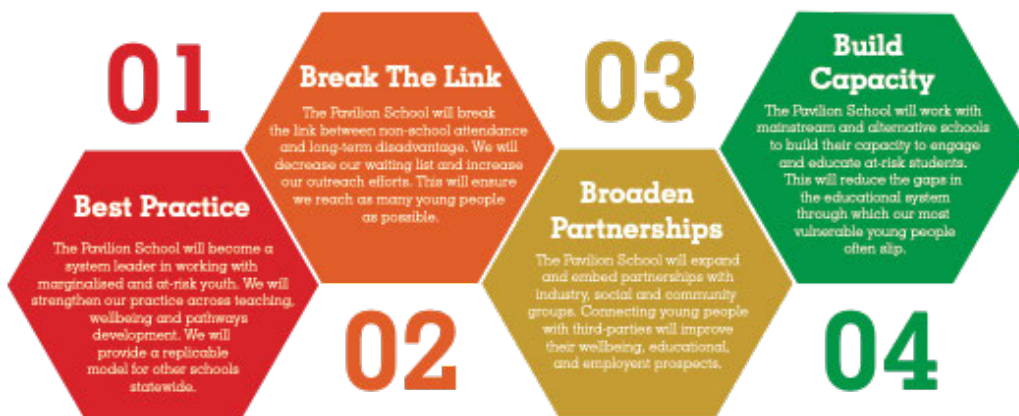
Looking to the future I hope that the

Pavilion model will continue to be a site of influence, to better support Victoria's most marginalised young people. We hope that we can be a part of a broader cultural change in schools that sees all students remaining engaged at their local high school. We hope that state schools receive the funding and resources required to do this and that the demand for schools like ours



Michael Scicluna
Principal

Our Vision



The Pavilion Model

The Pavilion Model Our Model, Our Impact

Bringing Together Best Practice Teaching, Wellbeing & Pathways

Since its founding in 2007, the Pavilion School has gradually refined its model to maximise its meaningful impact for our young people.

The Pavilion School put a powerful wellbeing model at the heart of its operations. This model drawing on best practice research in neuroscience, positive psychology and trauma practice.

Over time the School came to recognise the importance of putting rigorous teaching practice at its core. We began this journey by recruiting an outstanding instructional coach, developing a whole school instructional model & establishing professional learning communities.

Finally, the school recognised a deficit in providing meaningful pathways support to our young people to ensure they continue to be successful after leaving the school. Our highly structured pathways

model was developed in answer to this shortfall.

Since then, the three core aspects of The Pavilion Model: teaching and learning, wellbeing and pathways have become the bedrock of everything we do within the school.

Importantly, The Pavilion School takes a clear eyed view of the evidence around what works best in education, wellbeing and pathways and has adjusted and refined its model based on this evidence. As such, the Pavilion School has a strong research base behind its model.

Having established a whole school approach to teaching, wellbeing and pathways, which can be constantly road-tested and refined, has seen dramatic improvements in the success of our young people at school and beyond.

The Pavilion School will continue to tweak and flex our model to ensure our students are able to come to school and receive an outstanding education and achieve long lasting success in their schooling and life.

This handbook forms a comprehensive guide to the core aspects of The Pavilion Model, their rationale and their practical application. The handbook also connects our model with FISO, we align ourselves strongly with the Education State priorities & take the journey of whole school improvement seriously.

Our hope is this guide can offer a practical means of understanding and operationalising trauma informed - positive education across Victoria, Australia and beyond.

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Our Students



Our Model

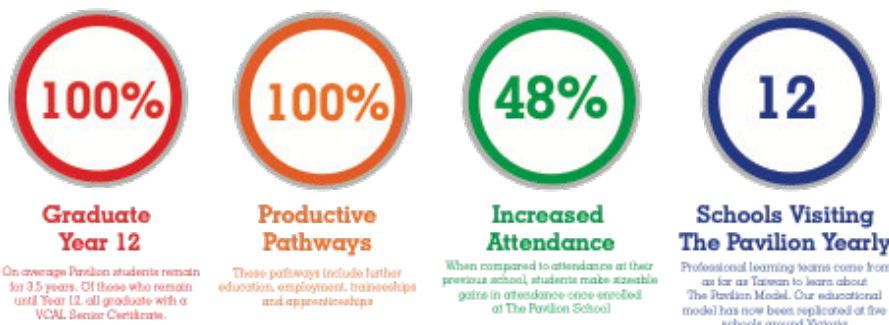
Rigorously recruit the best teachers. Commit to constant improvement. Use evidence based, high impact teaching strategies and a whole school instructional model



Develop and maintain a highly structured, multi-year pathways programme to ensure students can successfully transition into post-secondary pathways.

Ensure all students develop the social & emotional skills to participate fully in their communities and transition successfully into further education and employment.

Our Impact



The Pavilion Model

The Pavilion Model

Our Instructional Model

To guide our teaching and learning the Pavilion School has developed a well articulated Learner Profile, whole school instructional model and embedded professional learning communities. Trauma informed education requires a sound understanding of the cognitive dimensions of learning, well structured and consistent teaching programmes, and well-regulated professionals who can build positive relationships while setting and maintaining limits and boundaries.

Our Learner Profile

The Pavilion School's Learner Profile articulates the five core attributes we aim to foster in students who attend our school. We see the Learner Profile's five domains as integral in helping our students achieve lifelong success as individuals and members of their community. The Pavilion School implements its learner profile explicitly within the class and all staff model the five domains throughout their professional conduct.

We situate the acquisition of knowledge as the primary driver of our Learner Profile. Knowledgeable learners are better able to develop and apply new

knowledge and skills because they possess the contextual understanding needed to meaningfully practice and reinforce skills.

Collaboration, resilience and self-awareness are core competencies for young people, particularly those with trauma history, to develop positive problem solving and regulation strategies. These domains are centrally situated in both our teaching and learning and wellbeing models to ensure they are well embedded across our whole school practice.

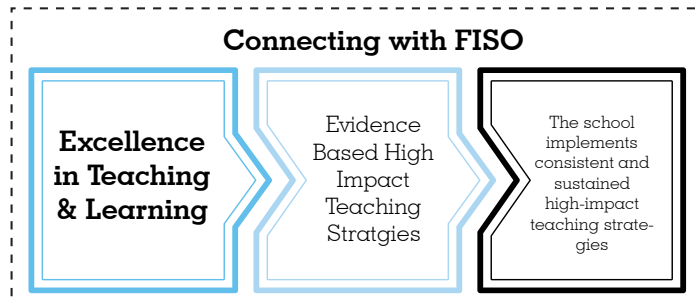
Open mindedness is crucial for a culturally safe and responsive educational space. Developing a healthy sense of affiliation with one's community and culture is crucial for success in school and life. We explicitly embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and knowledge into our curriculum,

and are working towards developing meaningful cultural plans for all of our young people to help them develop their knowledge and connection with self and others.

Our Instructional Model

At the Pavilion School we are strongly aligned in our belief of how we do teaching and learning. This is clearly presented in our instructional model. This framework not only guides and aligns the overall practice in the school, but also allows us the flexibility to adapt to the individual students' needs and interests.

Similar to other models, The Pavilion's instructional model is designed to explicitly outline a clearly structured process for teaching and learning guided by best practice, research and our professional understanding of our stu-



2022 —



1 KNOWLEDGEABLE
We gain and master new content knowledge across literacy and numeracy. We link what we know with what we are learning. We can express new knowledge in different ways.

2 COLLABORATIVE
We communicate respectfully and effectively. We work well with others toward shared goals. We value teamwork and leadership.

3 RESILIENT
We are able to manage challenges with confidence. We adapt to change. We don't give up.

4 SELF-AWARE
We reflect on our thoughts, feelings, strengths and weaknesses. We take responsibility for our actions and learn to regulate our behaviour. We understand how our experiences shape how we view ourselves and the world.

5 OPEN-MINDED
We are always developing knowledge of our own and other cultures. We respect diverse ideas, people and perspectives.

THE PAVILION SCHOOL

2010 —

The Pavilion Model

The Pavilion Model Our Instructional Model.

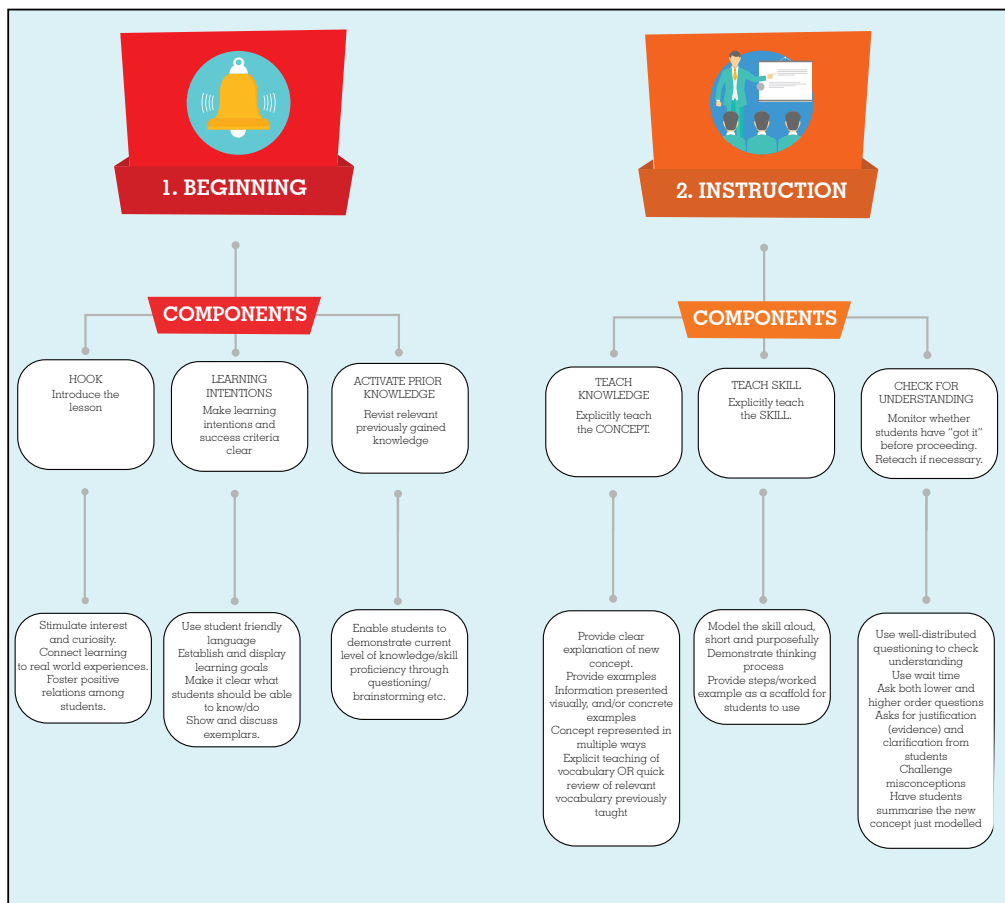
dents needs. The Pavilion's instructional model breaks up the lesson into distinct phases.

First, all classes begin and end with circle time, where staff and students sit facing each other to discuss the learning goals. At the beginning of the lesson, teachers hook students

into the topic with an activity or artefact to stimulate their interest, and connect the new content with prior knowledge. Research shows that clear learning intentions correlate with increased focus, motivation and ownership of learning.

In the second phase of the lesson,

we move to instruction, drawing on teaching strategies that we know are high impact: explicit instruction, modelling and analysing worked examples and providing multiple exposures to develop knowledge and practice skills. Questioning and feedback are essential here to check for understanding.



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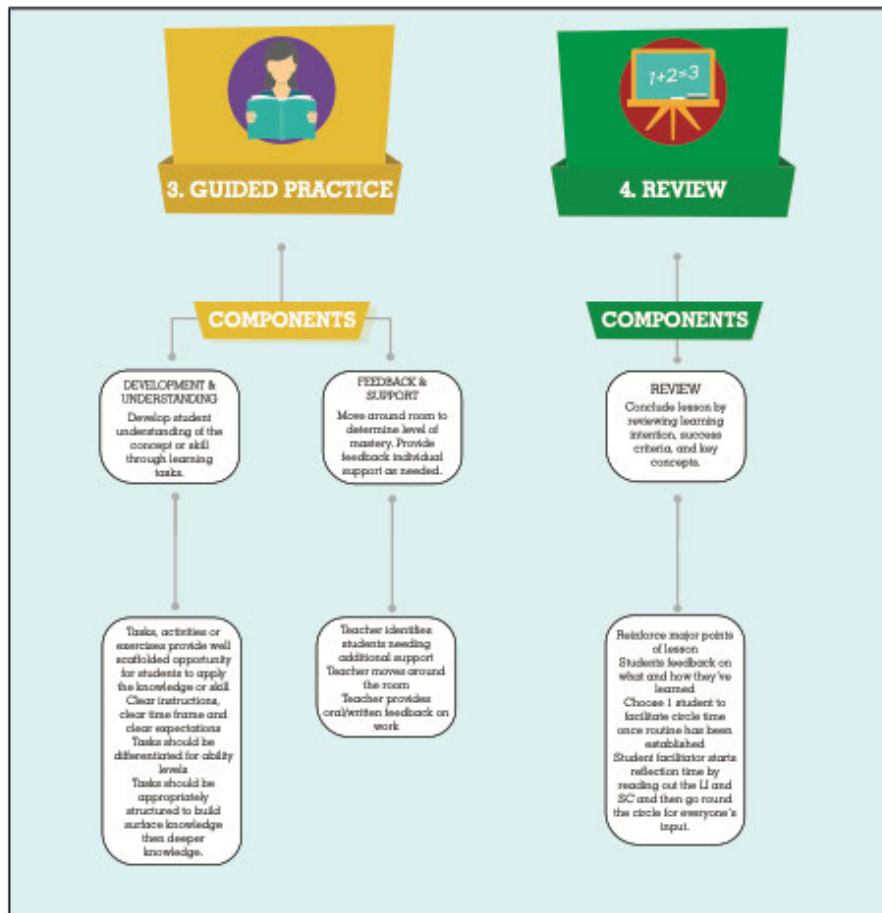
In the third phase of the lesson, students apply their new knowledge or skills to a learning task. Many of our students have had poor learning experiences in the past so before starting independent work, we want to check that we have pitched our instruction at the right level and have given them every chance to practice

new knowledge or skills and be successful. We incorporate best practice around managing cognitive load to ensure our students are able to engage and learn well.

At the end of the lesson, everyone returns to the circle space to review and reflect on the learning and engagement in class.

Beyond the classroom, a consistent whole school approach to collaborative planning, supporting the development of high quality lessons and classroom practice – which is evident in our student outcomes year on year.

Research and experience tells us that high impact schools must have

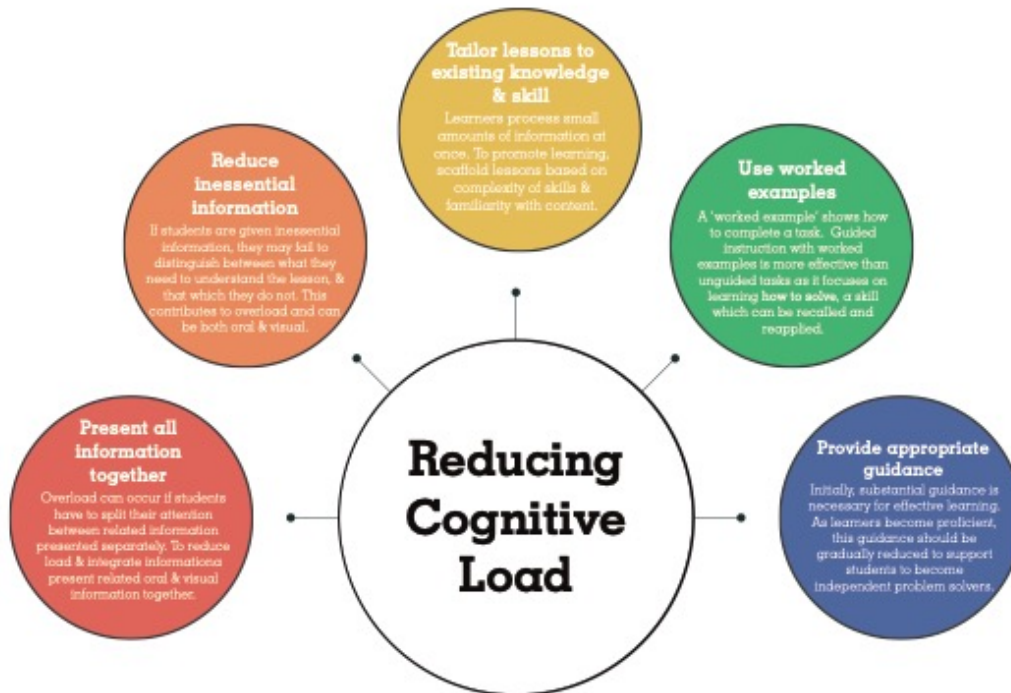
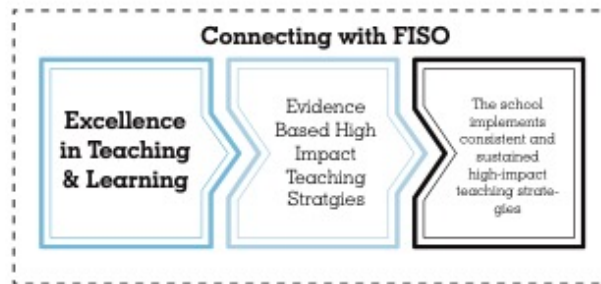


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The Pavilion Model

The Pavilion Model Our Instructional Model

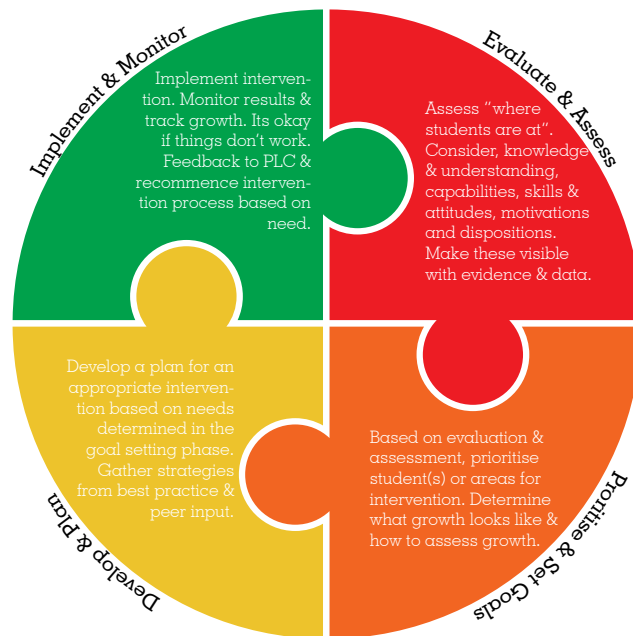
a well thought out, clearly articulated and consistently implemented instructional model. The Pavilion is committed to consistent whole school practice across teaching and learning we will continue refining our model in the journey to achieve even greater outcomes for our students.



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The Pavilion School Professional Learning Communities



Since 2010, The Pavilion School has embedded a culture of meaningful Professional Learning Communities (PLC) into its structure. Both the Pavilion's teacher and wellbeing team attend regular PLCs guided respectively by an Instructional Coach and Wellbeing Coordinator.

The Pavilion's PLCs are based on best practice process around evaluating, setting goals, intervening and monitoring outcomes. This cyclical process allows for ongoing reflection and refinement of practice.

The Pavilion's teaching team make use of both quantitative and qualitative data to make decisions around areas to prioritise and additional support for students. In turn, the PLC structure gives teachers the opportunity to share practice, advice and support to plan

meaningful learning interventions and, in turn, monitor and learn from the outcomes of these interventions.

The Pavilion School's wellbeing team follows a similar structure, but looks at student risk factor data and shares strategies for mitigating these factors. In turn, this allows for targeted therapeutic interventions for our young people.

Additionally, PLCs are used for professional reading and discussion of evidence based practice and are valuable spaces for peer learning and support.



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The Pavilion Model

The Pavilion Model Our Wellbeing Model

Alongside exceptional teaching and learning, The Pavilion School is committed to supporting the developmental, mental health and wellbeing needs of our students. We do this in a number of ways including providing a safe, consistent, nurturing, and research informed whole-school approach to teaching, learning and wellbeing; and, investing in the professional development of our staff.

The Pavilion School's wellbeing framework was developed through a combination of clinical experience and evidence-based practice on child and adolescent development, mental health, trauma-informed practice, and wellbeing. We integrate these knowledge areas with student observation and professional reflection.

Healthy brain development occurs within the context of safe, nurturing and secure relationships. In these relationships, we learn to regulate and coordinate internal processes, develop empathy and emotional attachment to others, become curious and eager to explore, and develop brain architecture and functions that help us to relate, learn and thrive. Conversely, when children experience events and situations that are perceived as unsafe,

overwhelm their capacity to cope, and are persistent and unpredictable, this can have negative effects on brain development, relational health, emotional regulation, behaviour, self-concept, and learning.

Sitting alongside attachment- and trauma-informed philosophies, we also believe strongly in the inherent capacities of our students to do well, to have healthy relationships and successful futures. Through incorporating Positive Psychology, we understand the important elements for wellbeing and integrate opportunities for positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment into our school-wide programming. Further to this, and perhaps foundational to our whole approach, is that staff members are supported to practice self-reflection and engage in professional supervision to maintain unconditional positive regard for students, their families, and broader communities.

Utilizing trauma and developmental theories, primarily attachment theory, and positive psychology, we follow a trauma- and attach-



ment-informed positive education and wellbeing framework. Our core aims are to help students develop and promote psychological strengths & skills, develop regulatory processes and build and maintain healthy, nurturing relationships.

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With this in mind, our focus is to meet each student where they are at, to understand that behaviors often have developmental meaning, and to provide a safe and nurturing developmental environment. We do this through a variety of mechanisms including assessing individual developmental needs, maintaining predictable classroom routines, being consistent and reliable, managing classroom environments and sensory input, modeling pro-social behaviours, setting and maintaining realistic limits, providing opportunities for fun and skill development, and holding high expectations for learning and growth, to name a few.

Promote Psychological Strength & Skills

This is a strengths-based and solution focused approach to help students to develop the necessary skills to self-regulate, have healthy relationships, learn, and participate effectively in society. Students are supported to experience positive emotions, identify and develop character strengths, and enhance psychological skills and functioning.

In addition, students receive expli-



cit teaching and skill development around planning, prioritising and problem solving. We provide multiple opportunities for students to apply these skills in various contexts of differing complexity. Developing psychological strengths and skills fosters positive coping abilities, resilience and an ability to seek-help in a constructive manner from a variety of sources.

Develop Regulatory Processes

The brain is continually monitoring and responding to the needs of the body. When something is wrong, in-

“ At The Pavilion School we stand on the shoulders of giants in the fields of education, neuroscience, psychology, traumatology, and child/adolescent development

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The Pavilion Model

The Pavilion Model Our Wellbeing Model.

ternal alarm systems are activated to help the body to get what it needs. Many of these processes occur outside of our awareness, however, as we get older the brain requires us to actively participate in our regulation, in other words, to self-regulate.

Internal processes requiring active regulation include behaviour, cognition, emotions, stimulation, attention and arousal. Students who have experienced developmental adversity often exhibit difficulty with one or more of the above regulatory processes. This can make it difficult for students to engage effectively with educational tasks, with others in the classroom, and develop self-efficacy.

The Pavilion's model is built from the ground up to adequately support young people to develop their capacities to self-regulate and respond to the expectations of a well regulated environment. In order for this to work effectively, it is vital to be intentional and consistent in our practice. We have found that many students tend to come to us from educational and environmental settings that, for many reasons, were not adequately supporting the development of healthy self-regulation.

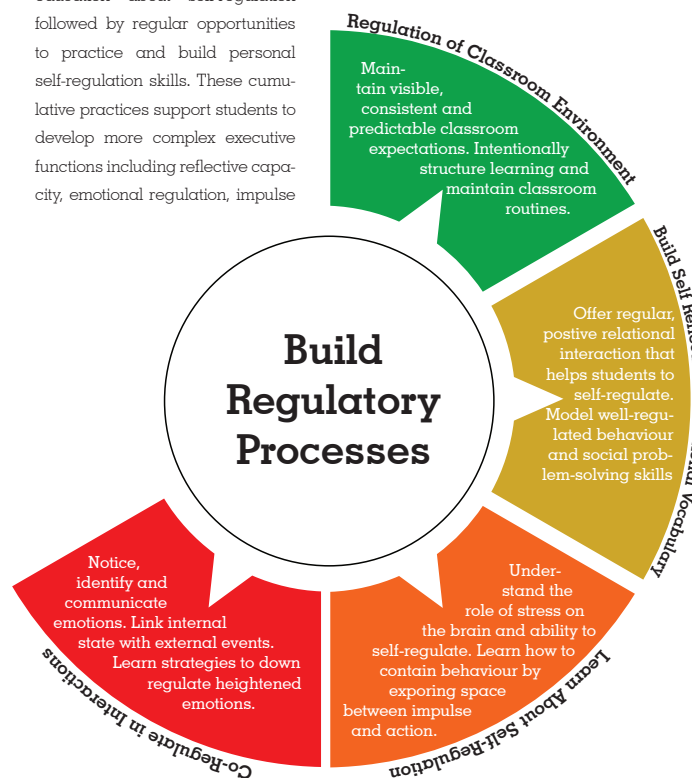
Promoting the development of self-regulatory processes involves a number of steps. Firstly, it is important to build strong relational foundations in

the classroom where students feel safe and contained, underpinned by a school-wide culture of structure, consistency, and predictability. Expectations and routines work are visible, understood, and maintained. It is important that teaching, both oral and written, is prepared and delivered in a manner that recognises, develops, and optimises cognitive load and capacities. Staff are supported to provide explicit education about self-regulation followed by regular opportunities to practice and build personal self-regulation skills. These cumulative practices support students to develop more complex executive functions including reflective capacity, emotional regulation, impulse

control, and cognitive strategies for planning. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, staff are encouraged and supported to practice and model co-regulation in all interactions.

Build Relational Strength

The Pavilion School model is underpinned by attachment theory and upholds the ideals of restorative justice and unconditional



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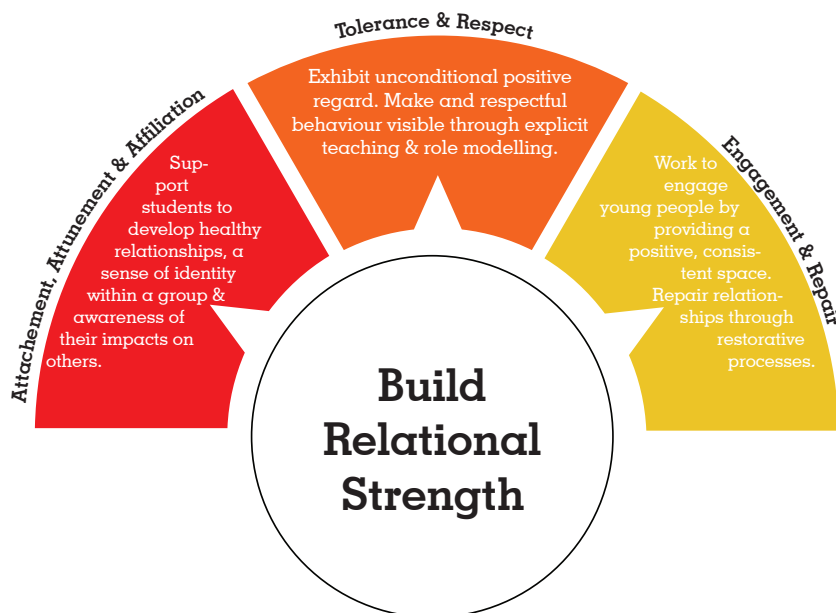
positive regard. We recognise that, for many of our students, the school community may be the most stable relational connection in their lives. Staff are supported to create strong relational foundations in the classroom to create a shared sense of safety and belonging, and to build healthy, prosocial connections with the school, staff, themselves and their peers. From a developmental perspective, we understand the tasks of adolescence, and aim to support these by setting and maintaining consistent limits, and incorporating natural consequences in a structured and restorative manner. Students are given opportunities to reflect on their emotional needs, be-

have in ways that help them to get their needs met, develop respect and tolerance of self and others, to be playful and have fun, and to repair relationships when needed.

In summary, The Pavilion School wellbeing framework provides a systemic (school-wide, classroom, individual) structure that helps students (and staff) to promote psychological skills and strengths, develops regulatory processes, and build relational health. Our multi-modal approach helps us to assess, consider, and plan for both the positive skills and strengths that can be fostered and built upon for health and wellbeing, as well as the deve-

lopmental struggles and needs that each student may have. Everything that we do across teaching and learning, wellbeing, and vocational programming, right down to day-to-day interactions with students are designed to help students learn to self-regulate, to build and maintain healthy relationships, and enhance psychological skills and strengths.

At The Pavilion School we stand on the shoulders of giants in the fields of education, neuroscience, psychology, traumatology, and child/adolescent development including Bruce Perry, Dan Siegel, Bessel van Der Kolk, Martin Seligman, Leah Waters, Carol Dweck, and Carl Rogers.



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The Pavilion Model

The Pavilion Model Trauma Informed Practices

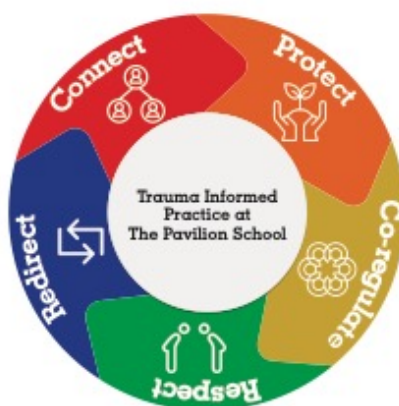
Achieving the aims of the Pavilion School's model requires a whole school model for trauma informed practice. Trauma informed practices refer to the way in which we as professionals operate in the school space to ensure our students are able to gradually build psychological strengths and skills, regulatory processes and relational strength. The Pavilion School's approach to trauma informed practice stems from five interconnected domains: protect, co-regulate, respect, redirect and connect.

Protect

Diffuse dysfunctional behaviour through structure and consistency. Set firm limits on disruptive behaviours. Determine logical consequences rather than punishment. Provide structured choices to allow student autonomy and control.

Co-Regulate

Staying calm will help the young person calm themselves. Maintain classroom expectations to prevent escalations. Use de-escalation strategies: lower your voice, give simple instructions, slow your pace, relax your posture. By regulating our own emotions we can help to contain dysregulated presentation.



Respect

Learning tasks and interpretations of behaviour should be developmentally matched. Reflect on behaviours with compassion, empathy and an understanding of underlying causes. Structure consequences that are proportionate and humane. Maintain 'unconditional positive regard'

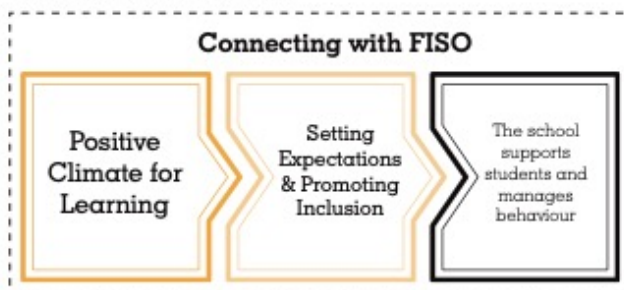
for students and families

Redirect

Set limits for behaviour AND teach positive cognitive, emotional and social skills. Teach and model a resilient mindset and coping skills. Provide ways for students to practice new skills in the classroom and school grounds

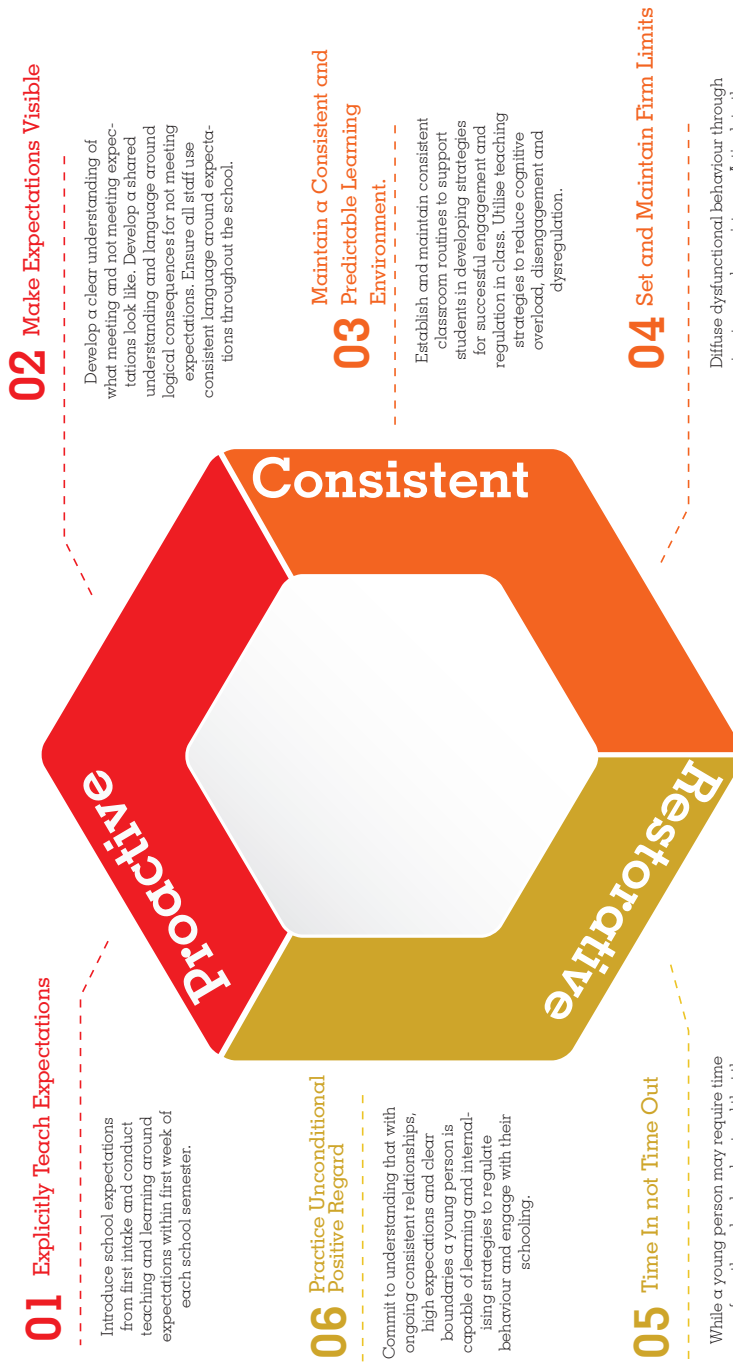
Connect

Build strong relationships through consistent interactions. Establish strong relational foundations in the classroom to develop a sense of safety and belonging. Teach emotional intelligence competencies to understand self and others.



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The Pavilion School Embedding Expectations



The Pavilion Model

The Pavilion Model

Our Pathways Model

Pathways forms the third keystone of The Pavilion School Educational Model. Research shows that students who disengage from school prior to Year 12 are twice as likely not to find full time employment, or access further education and training. This disengagement can lead to long term unemployment and disadvantage. Our aim at The Pavilion School is to minimise the risk of young people failing to find a productive pathway and ending up in a cycle of unemployment, disadvantage and social exclusion.

To achieve this aim our Teaching and Learning Model builds our students' academic know-how to participate in the community, our Wellbeing Model helps students build and internalise strategies for leading healthy, happy lives, and our Pathways Model equips students with the experience needed to enter and flourish in the workforce.

At The Pavilion School we believe that the world of work should be thoroughly integrated into a young person's time with us. Our Pathways model is built around three strands: Exploration, Exposure and Engagement.

Exploration

The Pavilion School's Pathways Model

is couched in the Exploration phase of Donald E. Super's career development theory. Super provides a life-long view of career development across four major stages: Growth, Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance.

The Exploration phase of career development sees individuals attempt to understand themselves and find their place in the world of work. In the 21st Century, Super's Exploration phase tends to stretch much further into a person's lifetime. On average, young people will change careers every five years, at the same time the nature of work in the 21st Century is becoming increasingly knowledge based, flexible and automated. This means students will require transferable skills, and considerable resilience and grit to navigate an increasingly dynamic labour market.

As such, the initial exploration a young person undertakes at The Pavilion involves reflecting on and developing a sense of self-concept: who they are and how they situate themselves in the world, as well as unpacking their skills, interests and character strengths.

Additionally, we teach and model the



five elements of The Pavilion's Learner Profile: Knowledge, Collaboration, Resilience, Self-Awareness and Open-Mindedness. These five traits are crucial for experiencing success in a 21st Century workforce.

This initial exploration is undertaken

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