



## Student Wellbeing at The Friends' School

The Friends' School is Australia's only Quaker school. A coeducational school since its founding in 1887, Friends' draws deeply on its Quaker heritage to deliver a holistic approach to education – an approach that puts student wellbeing at the heart of everything we do.

As a learning community we know that students learn best when given the opportunity to explore and understand their personal wellbeing. To support this, the School creates social environments, safe places, and proactive practices known to foster student wellbeing and mental health.

One example of this is the School's weekly Quaker Gatherings for all students, which begin with a period of silence. The silence provides an opportunity for students to experience stillness, a break from the business of life and an opportunity to practise deep inner listening.

After this silence students will often share concerns within the Gathering. These may be about world events, peer issues or other matters they consider important. Some Gatherings proceed in total silence for the duration, while others can include a great deal of sharing. Many lessons also begin with a period of silence.

As a natural extension, mindfulness is expressly taught at various points through the School. It is used extensively in the support rooms to assist students to manage distress and anxiety, and to assist with settling to work and focus.

Friends' proactively supports student wellbeing and mental health through the development of open, honest and supportive relationships. This allows for healthy engagement with wellbeing and mental health issues among peers.

We also implement practices and curriculum programs with an explicit focus on understanding and developing wellbeing – for example, the School's Health Theory class, which is part of Health and Physical Education. Some of the topics covered in these programs include: Harm Minimisation, Resilience, Decision Making, Mental Health, Risk Taking, Sexuality, Values, Relationships and Leadership.

Quakers value the intrinsic worth of all people, the importance of peace, community and environmental stewardship.

Many former students have written of the value they found in applying the Quaker values in later life: "The ethos has been influential in encouraging me to value ideas like social justice and inclusion."; "Appreciation of quiet time for self reflection."; "It reinforced the importance of respect to all people."

An emphasis on student wellbeing helps to define the nature of our school and reinforce our commitment to Quaker practices – connecting to 'that of God' in



everyone, acting with integrity, building community, a desire for peace and justice, living simply and regularly meeting together in silence.

The Friends' School website provides more information about the ways it supports student wellbeing, which can be accessed via the 'Student Wellbeing' link at the bottom of each page on the site.

[www.friends.tas.edu.au](http://www.friends.tas.edu.au)

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