



# MPEN

MAROONDAH POSITIVE  
EDUCATION NETWORK

**A School Network  
Building Wellbeing  
Literacy Together**

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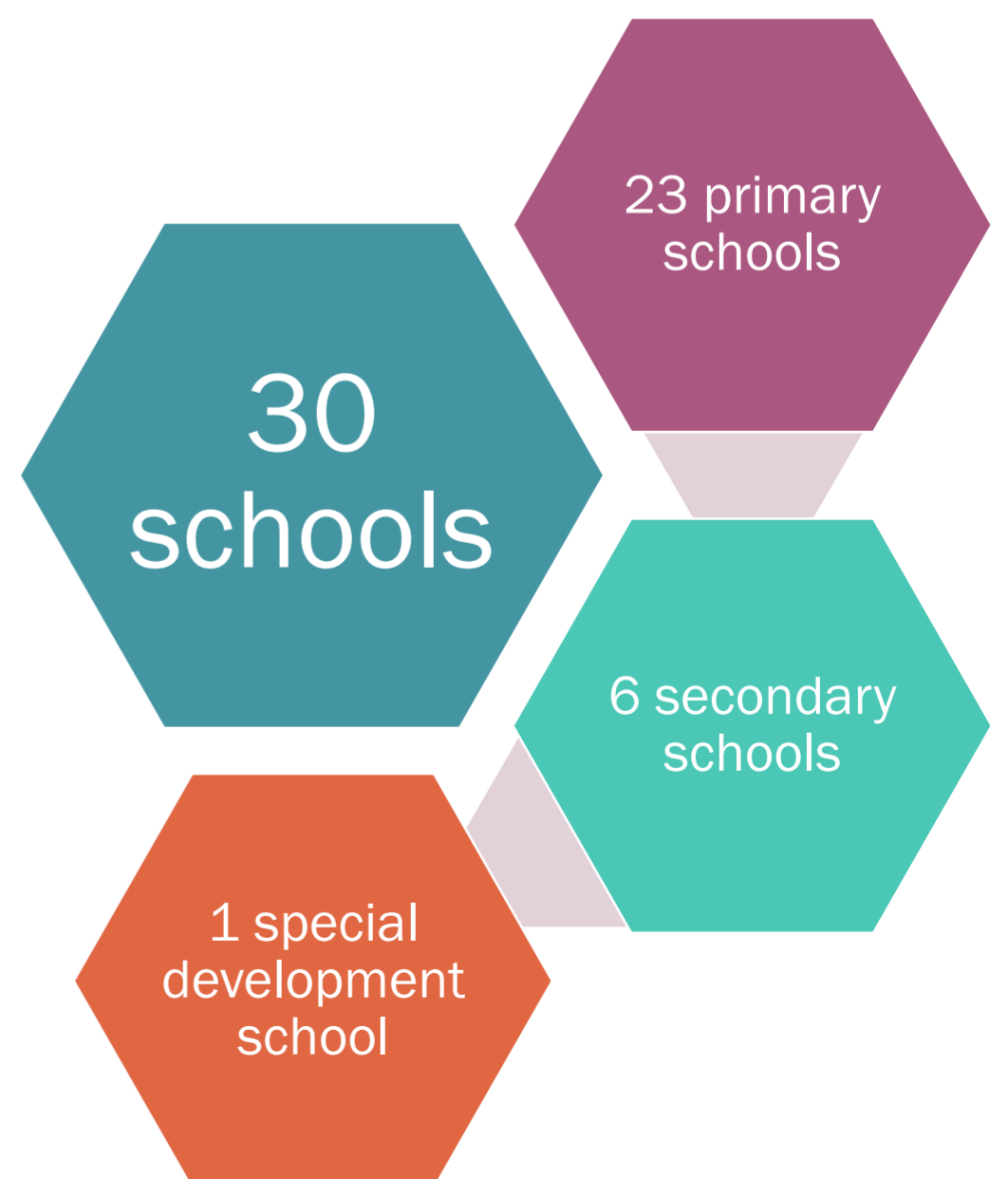
# IMPACT SUMMARY 2024



# Maroondah Positive Education Network

The Maroondah Positive Education Network (MPEN) is a partnership between the Maroondah Principals' Network, the Department of Education and Maroondah City Council.

MPEN seeks to raise the wellbeing, resilience and achievement of Maroondah's students, staff and community across 30 member schools, through the community-wide implementation of positive education.



# Background

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In 2015, Maroondah City Council (Council) began a community engagement process to inform the development of a new Youth Strategy.

As part of this process, Council formed a partnership with the Maroondah Principals Network, Department of Education (DE) and The University of Melbourne (UOM) to use the UOM's Wellbeing Profiler tool to measure student wellbeing and identify local needs.

This partnership was highly successful, engaging 4777 students aged 10 to 18 years and generating a wealth of data for individual schools and Maroondah as a whole.

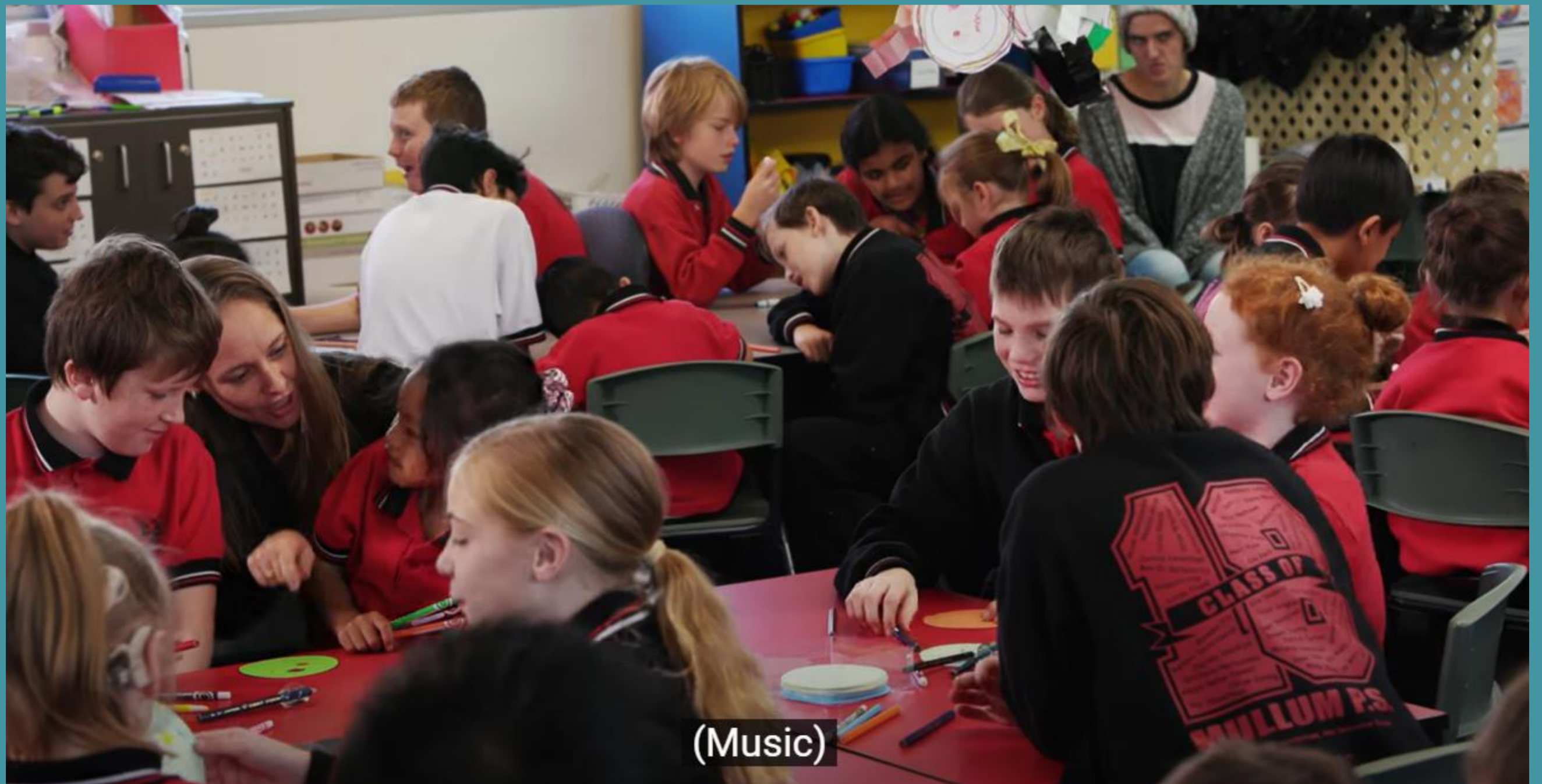
The process gave school leaders valuable insights into the wellbeing needs of their students and motivated leaders to shift their focus towards wellbeing.

From this collaboration, Council and schools joined forces to develop the Maroondah Plus 10 Schools project – now called the Maroondah Positive Education Network (MPEN).

With a shared focus on raising student wellbeing through evidence-based practice, Council and Maroondah schools began a journey of discovery and collaboration that has progressively established wellbeing as a key focus across the Maroondah community.

# What is MPEN?

View a short video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XKktb57oy0E>



*Formerly 'Maroondah Plus 10 Schools'*

# Shared Goals and Collective Impact

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MPEN aims to mobilise the local education system towards the goal of raising the wellbeing of students, staff and community, by partnering in a community-wide implementation of ‘positive education’ – combining the science of positive psychology with best practice teaching to support schools, and the individuals and families within their communities, to thrive.

Working with local partners and wellbeing experts, this ‘systems’ approach aims to:

1. Facilitate collaboration between Council, schools, and the broader community to enable Positive Education and enhance wellbeing
2. Develop a system of sustainable Positive Education leadership
3. Increase schools’ capacity to support student wellbeing
4. Increase the capacity of parents and caregivers to support their children’s wellbeing
5. Improve students’ ability to build wellbeing

MPEN brings together key partners to build capability, connection and community, and enable our schools to create and maintain flourishing learning environments, where relationships are important and other people matter.

# Making an Impact

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1. Building staff capacity
2. Elevating student voice and agency
3. Delivering evidence-based wellbeing
4. Facilitating innovative partnerships

# 1. Building Staff Capacity

## Shared Professional Development

- Annual induction days for graduate teachers and teachers new to the area.
- 3 day 'Discovering Positive Education' course undertaken by 90 staff.
- Professional Certificate in Positive Education completed by over 30 staff.
- Whole-of-network wellbeing day attended by approximately 1000 school staff.
- Tailored professional learning for staff.

## Positive Education Leadership in Schools

- Each MPEN school appointed a HOPE (Head of Positive Engagement) Leader, who is trained to lead and sustain the implementation of Positive Education in their school.
- The HOPE Network was established to enable HOPE Leaders from all schools to work together, support one another, and share practice around Positive Education and Wellbeing.



## 2. Elevating Student Voice and Agency

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By leveraging partnerships between Council, schools and wellbeing experts, MPEN has created opportunities for students throughout Maroondah to express their wellbeing needs and opinions, and empower them to share their ideas on how wellbeing can be improved in their schools and in the broader community.

To date, over 10,000 local students have engaged in student voice tools introduced by MPEN, including The University of Melbourne's Wellbeing Profiler, Resilient Youth Australia's Student Resilience Survey and the VIA Character Strengths Survey.

These tools generate valuable data that schools and Council are then able to use to inform future directions, both at the individual school level and collectively across Maroondah.

### Maroondah Student Voice Forums

MPEN is also a key partner in the Maroondah Student Voice Forums, where students from different Maroondah schools gather to have a say on how their wellbeing can be improved in their schools and communities.

These forums are student driven and co-facilitated, and result in proposed actions for schools that are generated by students, for students.





# 3. Delivering Evidence-Based Wellbeing

MPEN has a proven track record of successfully introducing and implementing high quality, evidence-based wellbeing initiatives for students, families and staff across Maroondah.



## 4. Facilitating Innovative Partnerships

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Partnerships and relationships are at the heart of MPEN. Through the partnership of local government, education, academia, business and community stakeholders, MPEN has been able to leverage a unique and powerful blend of knowledge, skills, strengths and resources in support of the shared goal of building wellbeing.

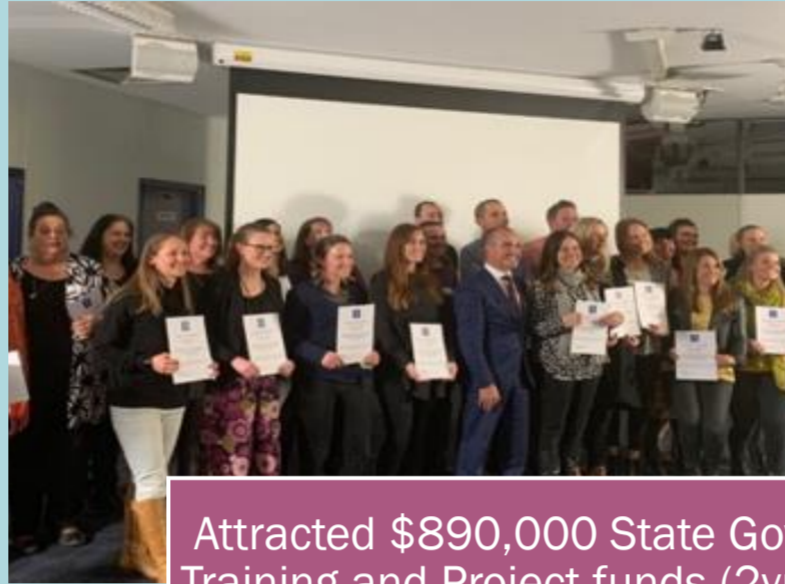
MPEN's success has come from the commitment of its partners and the effective collaboration made possible through the use of the Collective Impact framework.

By using a collaborative systems approach to building wellbeing, MPEN is turning shared goals into effective, positive, real-world outcomes.

# MPEN partnership outcomes:



Wellbeing measurement through  
The University of Melbourne



Attracted \$890,000 State Govt  
Training and Project funds (2yrs)



Friendology program rolled out  
across Maroondah primary  
schools



Friendship Ninja Zone at  
Eastland Shopping Centre



HOPE Leader Network  
established



HOPE Centre established at  
Heathmont College



Friendship Journals for primary  
students



Whole-of-network wellbeing day  
for 1000 school staff



'Language of Friendship' event  
with 600+ attendees

# Turning Shared Goals into Positive Outcomes

## For Students

As part of the 2021 MPEN evaluation, 394 students across 16 schools were surveyed. The results demonstrate the real-life difference MPEN is making!

*I learn about my wellbeing at my school*

**91%**

of surveyed students agreed or strongly agreed

*I have been taught new ways to improve my wellbeing and/or to help cope with stress and sadness*

**77%**

of surveyed students agreed or strongly agreed

*Do you think the teachers understand your own and your classmate's wellbeing needs?*

**78%**

of surveyed students agreed or strongly agreed

*Do your teachers show an interest in your wellbeing?*

**80%**

of surveyed students responded 'Yes'

It is clear to see that we as a school are on the right track based on the data and feedback we have received from both the Attitudes to School Survey and the Youth Resilience Survey – this is something we are extremely proud of.

Leading Teacher, Wellbeing – Primary School

Being a HOPE Leader has made me a better teacher, parent, partner and community member.

HOPE Leader, Secondary School

There's something different about young people in Maroondah... they care about the community and they look out for each other.

Police Officer

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## For Staff

Feedback from staff in schools, Council and the community is equally compelling.

The language of Friendology can be heard consistently across the school both in the classrooms and within the yard with the number of playground incident forms having dropped overall.

We are very proud of the way our students, parents and teachers care for each other, which strongly comes out through all data sets.

Assistant Principal, Primary School

This learning has changed my life forever!

HOPE Leader

Using character strengths has strengthened my capacity to connect with young people and build rapport.

Youth Worker

We were struck by the support provided to the schools through the Maroondah Positive Education Network (MPEN).

It is a remarkable testament to the collective power of schools coming together under a central body to achieve economies of scale and drive shared goals.

Singapore delegate

# Recognised Best Practice

## 2020 LGPro Awards for Excellence – Community Partnerships Initiative

- High Commendation: Maroondah Positive Education

## Maroondah Australia Day Awards – Community Event of the Year 2024

- Winner: ‘Language of Friendship’ event

## National and International Recognition

- EduTECH Conference 2024 – PESA Wellbeing Stage
- International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA) Positive Psychology World Congresses 2019 and 2021
- Positive Education Schools Association (PESA) Conference 2018
- MPEN showcased to over 100 visiting international educators and school leaders across 2023 and 2024.

## Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System (2021)

MPEN was recognised in the Royal Commission’s Final Report, Vol 2:

*“Since 2016, the schools participating in this network have made significant progress, through the development of a positive education network, the appointment and training of positive education leaders at each school, and the delivery of several wellbeing literacy initiatives in schools.*

*In 2018, funding was provided by the Victorian Government to advance the project in Maroondah and investigate the scaling of the work across the state.*

*The Commission encourages the Victorian Government to continue to explore the potential to scale this program.”*

**Source:** State of Victoria, Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System, Final Report, Volume 2: Collaboration to support good mental health and wellbeing (p. 100)

# More information

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Positive Education Network, contact:

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# MPEN Schools

