

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Acting Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Mental Health



Thursday, 24 December 2020

MORE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT IN MORE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

More primary school students will get the mental health support they need when they need it in 2021.

Minister for Education James Merlino today announced an additional 15 primary schools will join the Mental Health in Primary Schools pilot - a partnership with the Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

The pilot, which began this year in ten schools, provides evidence-based training and resources to support school staff to better understand and respond to mental health issues affecting primary school students.

Participating schools can employ a Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator with teaching qualifications. This new role will complement and build on existing school approaches to social and emotional learning and mental health.

Schools are also being supported to build strong connections with local health services so that students and families are getting the support they need.

The additional schools are located around Thomastown, in Melbourne's north, as well as in Ararat, Stawell, Hoppers Crossing, Wyndham, and Barwon.

The expansion of the pilot is part of a \$28.5 million package of mental health initiatives announced in August to help make sure students can work through any mental health challenges they face due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Andrews Labor Government established a landmark Royal Commission into Mental Health and will implement every one of its recommendations.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

"We are committed to ensuring our kids are happy and healthy, so they can focus on learning and have the best opportunity to succeed in education and in life."

"We know there is a growing need for more mental health supports in primary schools following this year, which is why this project will be so important in determining what supports will be required going forward."