

# MHiPS Research Update

Mental Health in Primary Schools



## Thank you!

Once again, we would like to say a big thank you to all parents and carers who completed surveys for the Mental Health in Primary Schools (MHiPS) initiative over the past year, and a thank you in advance to those who will participate in our upcoming surveys. We really value your support, and your feedback has helped us understand the impact MHiPS has in schools and in the broader community.

Since our last research update, results from the evaluation of the 2022 MHiPS Pilot have been released. A summary of those results is provided in this update. We have been so pleased to see the impact of MHiPS in these pilot schools and are keen to see if these results continue as MHiPS expands to more schools across Victoria.

We are also excited to announce that a trial of MHiPS will start later this year in South Australia. We look forward to seeing if an adapted model of MHiPS can help support students and families in one of our neighbouring states.

Our team continues to collect and analyse feedback from Mental Health and Wellbeing Leaders and other school staff, and – of course – you, our participating families, so that we can adjust the MHiPS model where needed. Your contribution is invaluable to helping us provide the best support to teachers and wellbeing staff so that they can in turn support your children's mental health and wellbeing.

**Prof Frank Oberklaid, Director**  
**Dr Simone Darling, Program Manager**

### In this edition:

**THANK YOU!**

**WHAT IS MHiPS?**

**WHAT WE'VE LEARNT  
ABOUT MHiPS**

**MORE VICTORIAN  
SCHOOLS GET MHiPS!**

**MHiPS LAUNCHES IN  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

**PARENT/CARER DATA  
COLLECTION 2024**

**MEET THE 2024 DATA  
COLLECTION TEAM**

**FIND OUT MORE!**

## What is MHiPS?

MHiPS places support in primary schools (a Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader, or MHWL) to identify mental health and wellbeing concerns early.

**GETTING SUPPORT EARLY IS THE KEY TO BETTER MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING.**

The MHWL provides training to teachers and other school staff about student mental health and wellbeing.

**THE MHWL ALSO HELPS TEACHERS SUPPORT STUDENTS WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS.**

The MHWL creates links between schools and other mental health and wellbeing services in the community.

**THEY CAN HELP STUDENTS FIND EXTRA SUPPORT OR SERVICES IN THE COMMUNITY IF NEEDED.**

Each MHWL receives training and support to do their job well. Other school staff can also attend training.

**MORE THAN 2000 MHWLS AND SCHOOL STAFF HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE MHiPS TRAINING TO DATE.**

## What we've learnt about MHiPS

Results from an evaluation of the MHiPS Pilot (MHiPS in 100 Victorian schools) are now available to the public. You can find the full report and a summary report on the [Victorian Government Department of Education website](#).

Results showed that MHiPS helped to:

- ✓ **REDUCE STIGMA AROUND CHILD MENTAL HEALTH (IN SCHOOL STAFF AND FAMILIES)**
- ✓ **INCREASE THE CONFIDENCE OF TEACHERS TO SUPPORT STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING**
- ✓ **INCREASE THE FREQUENCY OF CONVERSATIONS ABOUT STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING**
- ✓ **INCREASE SCHOOLS' PRIORITISATION OF STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING**
- ✓ **IMPROVE STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING**

## More Victorian schools get MHiPS!

As part of the Victorian Department of Education's commitment to expand MHiPS to every government and low-fee non-government primary school in Victoria by 2026, all primary government and non-government schools in Mallee, Ovens Murray, Southern Melbourne and Western Melbourne joined the program in 2024. When the statewide expansion is complete in 2026, more than 1,800 school campuses will be participating in the program.

## MHiPS launches in South Australia

We are excited to commence a new research project in South Australia, where an adapted model of MHiPS will be implemented in up to 20 schools over a 2-year period, starting in Term 3 of this year. This project is being conducted in partnership with the South Australian Department for Education.

The South Australian Government has been impressed by the results they have seen in Victorian schools and would like to test an adapted model to see if positive results can also be achieved in South Australia.

Again, we thank all of you who have participated in our Victorian research – your contribution has allowed us to share the impact of MHiPS with other states and means more children will receive high quality mental health and wellbeing support in schools.



## Parent/carers data collection 2024

Last year, more than 2,200 caregivers - from 130 different schools - responded to our 2023 long term follow-up survey. This means around 60% of caregivers we approached agreed to participate - an incredible result!

We would love to achieve a similar (or better!) response rate from caregivers during our 2024 data collection.

This is the final year that surveys are planned to take place for caregivers. We would love to take this last opportunity to hear your thoughts and use your feedback to make MHiPS the best it can be for your children and for schools.

If your child started highschool this year, we are still interested in hearing from you.

Our data collection team will be reaching out to you via email from Week 2 of Term 3.



## Meet the 2024 data collection team



As we commence the next round of data collection, we wanted to introduce you to some of the members of our friendly data collection team; you may hear from some of them shortly.



**Carla Pozo Jeria**  
Evaluation Manager



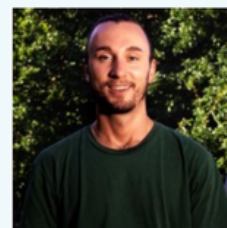
**Katy Anderson**  
Project Officer



**Louise Crossley**  
Qualitative Evaluation  
Coordinator



**Nicole Biggs**  
Survey Coordinator



**Jason Cooper**  
Project Assistant

## Find out more!

You can keep track of our progress by:

- visiting our website: [mhips.org.au](https://mhips.org.au)
- following our LinkedIn page: <https://bit.ly/ccchLkdIn> (Centre for Community Child Health)
- following us on X: [@MCRI\\_for\\_kids](https://twitter.com/MCRI_for_kids) (Murdoch Children's Research Institute)  
[@EduMelb](https://twitter.com/EduMelb) (Faculty of Education, University of Melbourne)
- subscribing to CCCH news: [ccch.org.au](https://ccch.org.au)

You might also be interested in reading more about our research. Since our last research update, we have published the following paper:

**Barriers to supporting children's mental health in Australian primary schools: Perspectives of school staff.**

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mhp.2024.200323>



Mental Health in Primary Schools, or MHIPS, is a partnership between the Centre for Community Child Health at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, the Faculty of Education at the University of Melbourne, and the Victorian Department of Education.

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