

Young people in New Zealand face many significant health issues. Life Education provide tamariki and rangatahi with knowledge and strategies to help them make positive choices for their health and wellbeing. Along with our mobile classroom lessons and theatre programmes in schools, we provide professional development to teachers to support tamariki and their whānau.

TODAY'S CHALLENGES



OBESITY

"One in nine children (aged 2 to 14 years) are obese and a further 20% of children are overweight. 15% of Māori and 28% of Pacific children are obese."¹

The effects of being overweight for a child include low self-esteem, bullying, eating disorders, chronic ill health and even suicide.

We teach food and nutrition

Children learn how food gives them energy, how it helps them grow and how their body digests it. They explore the variety of nutrient-rich foods needed every day, what a balanced diet looks like and how to read packaging. Lessons may include science and human biology.

We teach human biology

Children learn about body systems and how they work to carry food, water and oxygen around their body. Children explore their brain and the nervous system as the control centre for their body. They learn that stress affects people in a variety of ways.

SUBSTANCE USE

"Approximately 11% of New Zealand high school students use substances at levels that are likely to cause them significant harm and may cause long-term problems. Students with very high substance use (including binge drinking) have more challenging family and school lives than others."²

More than one in four NZ secondary school students vape at least once a week. Of the nearly 20% vaping daily, 86% feel they are addicted. Those vaping several times a day are using high doses of nicotine.³

We teach about substances

We focus on the effects of alcohol, nicotine and other drugs. Young people learn how to identify the difference between helpful and harmful substances, how substances can change the way the mind and body works, and how they can impact brain development. We teach about the consequences that substances can have on people's lives and explore different situations that young people may get into when taking them. Young people explore the power of advertising, peer pressure and social influences.

We want to provide young people with knowledge so they are empowered to make positive choices as they enter their teenage years. Our reach is wide in this teaching strand as we educate through our Healthy Harold programme in primary and intermediate schools, SMASHED in secondary schools and through our website www.gbr.org.nz which provides online support for young people.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

"The proportion of young people with symptoms of depression has increased markedly from 13% in 2012 to 23% in 2019."⁴

"New Zealand has the worst teen suicide rate in the developed world."³

"90% of primary school leaders see anxiety as an issue for school children and of those, 38% see it as a significant issue."⁵

We teach about relationships and communities

We focus on connecting and relating to others, with lessons looking at friendships and relationships as well as the need to show respect and consideration for others. Children learn about leadership and teamwork, coping with change, pressure and conflict, and digital citizenship. Bullying and cyber safety are often subjects schools request our expertise and support with.



BULLYING

"Rates of school bullying in New Zealand are among the worst worldwide. About one in three Year 4 students report being bullied on a weekly or more frequent basis. 94% of New Zealand teachers believe that bullying occurs in their school and 68% believed it begins very early in a child's life (between pre-school and Year 4)."⁶

"Nearly one in ten students have been afraid that someone would hurt or bother them in the past year."²

We teach about identity and resilience

Confidence in their own identity and where and how they fit in are challenges that come with growing up. Children learn about feelings and emotions, and that they are special and unique and it is okay to be different. Value is placed on the idea that each individual's personality makes them unique and it shapes how they make decisions and respond to situations.

1. New Zealand Health Survey 2018/19.
2. The Youth '12 National Health and Wellbeing Survey of New Zealand secondary school students.
3. The ARFNZ/SPANZ vaping in NZ youth survey 2021

4. The Youth '19 Rangatahi Smart survey
5. Life Education Trust report
6. Bullying in New Zealand Schools: A Final Report, Victoria University of Wellington. Vanessa A. Green et al. (2013).

