

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

"13% of children (aged 2 to 14 years) are obese and a further 26% of children are overweight. 18% of Māori and 35% of Pacifica 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

"Substance use is a major cause of health and social harm in adolescents (13-19 years) and is linked to the two leading causes of death in this age group: road crashes and suicide. As well as having immediate risks, substance use at an early age is a predictor of long-term health and social problems including addiction issues, mental health problems and financial problems in adulthood."²

22% of secondary school students reported having five or more drinks in a session (binge drinking) within the last month.³

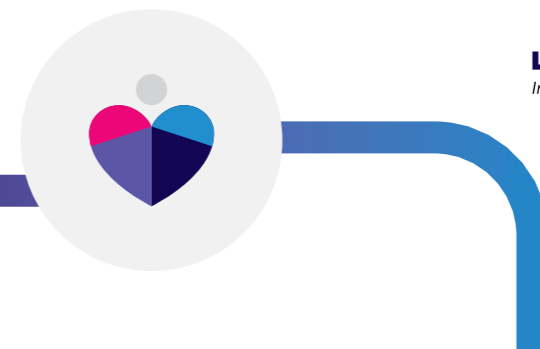
More than one in four NZ secondary school students vape at least once a week. Of the nearly 20% vaping daily, 86% feel they are addicted. Those vaping several times a day are using high doses of nicotine.⁴



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 and Behind the Scenes in secondary schools, and through our website www.gbr.org.nz which provides online support for young people.



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

88% of primary school leaders see anxiety as an issue for their tamariki and of those, 35% see it as a significant issue.⁵

Nearly one in four (24%) young people aged 15-24 years experience high or very high levels of psychological distress.¹

New Zealand youth have poorer wellbeing than those in most OECD countries, ranking 35th of 38 on overall child wellbeing outcomes.⁶

New Zealand has the second highest adolescent suicide rate of OECD countries.⁶

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.



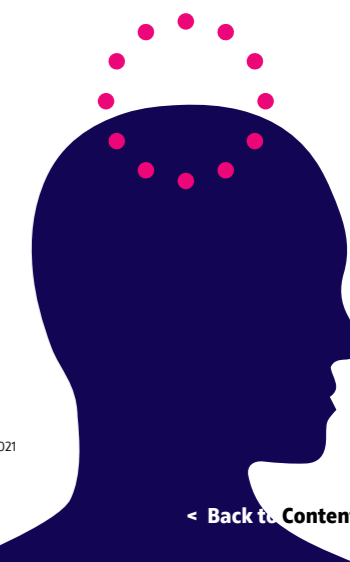
BULLYING

Six in ten tamariki aged nine to twelve say they have been bullied.⁷

Only 33% of 15-year-old students never or almost never experienced any bullying behaviours in the past 12 months.⁸

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. Ministry of Health New Zealand Health Survey 2020/2021
 2. The Youth 19 Rangatahi Smart Survey
 3. Long-term trends in adolescent alcohol, tobacco and cannabis use and emerging substance use issues in Aotearoa New Zealand 2022
 4. The ARFNZ/SPANZ vaping in NZ youth survey 2021
 5. Life Education's Research New Zealand Independent Survey 2022
 6. Mixed progress in adolescent health and wellbeing in Aotearoa New Zealand 2001-2019: a population overview from the Youth2000 survey series 2021
 7. Life Education Children's Health and Wellbeing Survey 2018
 8. Education Counts, PISA NZ Students Wellbeing 2018