

An introduction to ReLATE:

Reframing Learning &
Teaching Environments



A research and evidence informed model supporting schools
to create the preconditions for improved teaching, learning
and wellbeing

mackillopinstitute.org.au



About Us



MacKillop Family Services

At MacKillop Family Services, we believe every child deserves the best. And the best place for children is in a safe and supportive family, where they are nurtured to heal from past trauma and develop to their full potential. We're a rights-based organisation that supports some of the most vulnerable children, young people and families in our community.



The MacKillop Institute

The MacKillop Institute delivers a suite of evidence-informed programs to government, community, educational and corporate organisations across Australia and internationally. Our aim is to build the capacity of these organisations to deliver best-practice, trauma-informed services to support children, young people and families.

Through the MacKillop Institute, we are sharing our experience of supporting vulnerable children and families to support you to strengthen your practice in your community. We're committed to continuous improvement, which is why we foster strong partnerships with universities, rigorously externally evaluate our initiatives and always strive to further our impact.



MacKillop Education Services

For many children and young people, circumstances including family violence, neglect or living out of home can make engaging in school a struggle. MacKillop Education Services supports children and young people to remain engaged in our specialist school setting to then transition back into mainstream education. We support young people aged 6 -18 years with diverse and complex needs, to ensure that learning is a positive experience that offers not only academic success, but also nurtures their social and emotional wellbeing.

Our education services include specialist schools, outreach and teaching resources. By adopting a more personalised, flexible approach to learning, we support young people to transition back to mainstream or access vocational training or further education.

Contents

What is ReLATE?	4
Our foundations	5
Benefits and outcomes	6
Equipped for change	7
Our three year implementation plan	8
What's involved in year one?	9
What's involved in years two and three?	11
Our personalised approach sets us apart	13
Let us support you	14

MacKillop Family Services acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Peoples and as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we live, work and play. We pay our deep respects to Elders past and present and acknowledge all Aboriginal children, young people, families and staff who are a part of MacKillop Family Services. We embrace and commit to the spirit and work of self-determination and reconciliation.

We welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, gender diverse and intersex (LGBTIQ+) people at our services. We pledge to provide inclusive and non-discriminatory services to LGBTIQ+ clients and are working towards obtaining the Rainbow Tick accreditation.

What is ReLATE?

ReLATE is a model that supports a school or system to create the preconditions for improved teaching, learning and wellbeing

ReLATE recognises the impact that Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) have on the developing body and brain of a child and the lasting impacts into adulthood. It gives education professionals tools, knowledge, skills and resources that enable them to be cognisant of the impacts of adverse experiences on engagement, learning, health and wellbeing.

Combining educational research, social science, behavioural theory and neuroscience, ReLATE supports teachers to implement practical strategies in their classrooms.

Our skilled consultants work directly with you and your team, to provide bespoke implementation based on your individual school or systems' needs. ReLATE follows a three year implementation cycle, with annual professional learning to deepen and embed staffs' understanding of adversity and trauma-informed practice.

Our team provide school level reports, baseline assessments and ongoing impact assessments, so that efforts are translated into real outcomes.

The ReLATE model is a commitment, as a school community or system, to sustainable and positive cultural change

ReLATE was developed in Australia by MacKillop Family Services, drawing on the practice model implemented in our schools and delivered by The MacKillop Institute. At its core, ReLATE promotes transformational relationships, not only for students, but also for school leaders, teachers and other staff working with vulnerable children, young people and families.

Within ReLATE, wellbeing is understood as an essential pre-condition for quality teaching and learning. Safe, predictable and supportive learning environments are created and maintained in classrooms where students are not just known, but deeply understood.

Since the seminal Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) study, it has been understood that trauma affects schooling and educational outcomes.

Anda et al., 2005; Cole et al., 2009.

Our foundations

Drawing together a robust body of research, the ReLATE model has four foundational concepts:

1. Safety

ReLATE recognises safety as an essential pre-condition for quality teaching and learning.

Safety is defined as having both the internal and external resources to cope with life's challenges. Safety is not only physical, but also cultural, psychological, social, moral and ethical.

ReLATE mirrors evidence showing us that safety is achieved through relational trust, where teachers and other adults create emotional safety and security for students and colleagues. This supports their engagement in learning and creates environments that embrace innovation, collaboration and have clarity of purpose.

2. A counter-stress school environment

ReLATE fosters wellbeing by actively counteracting stress, through congruent, trauma-informed policies and practices, that empower communication and promote self regulation. By counteracting stress, ReLATE supports schools to create improved learning environments and enables schools' strategic initiatives to flourish.



3. Enhanced teaching and learning

ReLATE is guided by neuroscience and enhances teaching and learning and encourages staff to use repeated, supportive actions. These actions are designed to promote the state of mind required for quality teaching and learning to take place.

4. Sustainable whole school culture change

ReLATE is guided by trauma-informed research and evidence that integrates our understanding of organisational culture change, resilience, adversity, mindset and collective efficacy. ReLATE supports schools to embed cultural change, resulting in greater inclusion, improved wellbeing and enhanced teaching and learning outcomes.

Benefits and outcomes

What changes can we expect?

Through ReLATE schools can expect to see happier, more connected and engaged students, staff and school communities, as is measured throughout implementation. Schools and systems can expect a shift in their culture and attitudes and strengthened responses from teachers to student behaviour- all of which create the pre-conditions for improved learning and wellbeing outcomes.

ReLATE will support your school or system to create change by:

- Drawing out the unique strengths and needs of school communities, and capturing the voices of students, teachers and parents
- Developing every teacher's understanding of stress, adversity and trauma and its influence on their ability to function at their fullest
- Supporting the wellbeing and professional growth of teachers and school leaders, and providing them with enhanced skills to face adversity
- Supporting teachers and school leaders to develop relationships that are based on trust, are authentic by nature and engage the heart
- Facilitating respectful connections between parents, guardians, care teams and staff
- Building a school's capability and capacity to engage respectfully with Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities and other cultures
- Supporting schools in developing high quality policies that drive improvement and help to meeting statutory obligations and professional learning requirements (in alignment with AITSL Australian Professional Standards, Child Safe Standards, the Australian Wellbeing Framework and the Australian Curriculum).

"There has been a positive shift in our school culture and the way teachers view daily challenges. We're no longer saying how frustrating and difficult days can be, instead we are approaching challenging behaviours with a positive mindset and ReLATE strategies are practical and applicable to every child not just those with trauma backgrounds"

- Teacher

Equipped for change

Access to professional learning and a suite of tools for education professionals

Through ReLATE, education professionals will have access to four full days of professional learning, run by our highly skilled trainers.

Your staff will also be equipped with practical tools to implement in the classroom, including:

- Self-regulation plans to de-escalate challenging behaviours for both students and staff
- Traffic light identification enabling us to discuss critical incidents, proactively and with a degree of urgency and priority order
- Debriefing and communication strategies, giving staff a process to mitigate abusive behaviours or mistreatment
- ReLATE Circles, framed around four questions:
 1. How are you feeling about school or work today?
 2. What is one thing you want to achieve today?
 3. If you need support, who will you ask?
 4. Why is what you want to achieve important to you?

Benefits for school leaders

ReLATE walks leaders through cultural change processes, supporting them to translate knowledge into meaningful action.

Through the implementation cycle, our consultants support school leaders with school level data, building transferable capabilities to answer to critical questions, such as:

1. Are we truly making a difference in the teaching, learning and wellbeing domains?
2. How do we know?
3. What is the evidence of meaningful impact?

Benefits for students

Within the ReLATE model students are cared for and mentored in a safe environment, where they feel understood and their thoughts and feelings are validated.

Through ReLATE students are empowered to be part of the change and growth. Strengthened relationships and high gain teaching strategies support students to develop insight and resilience and enrich their wellbeing and their engagement in learning.

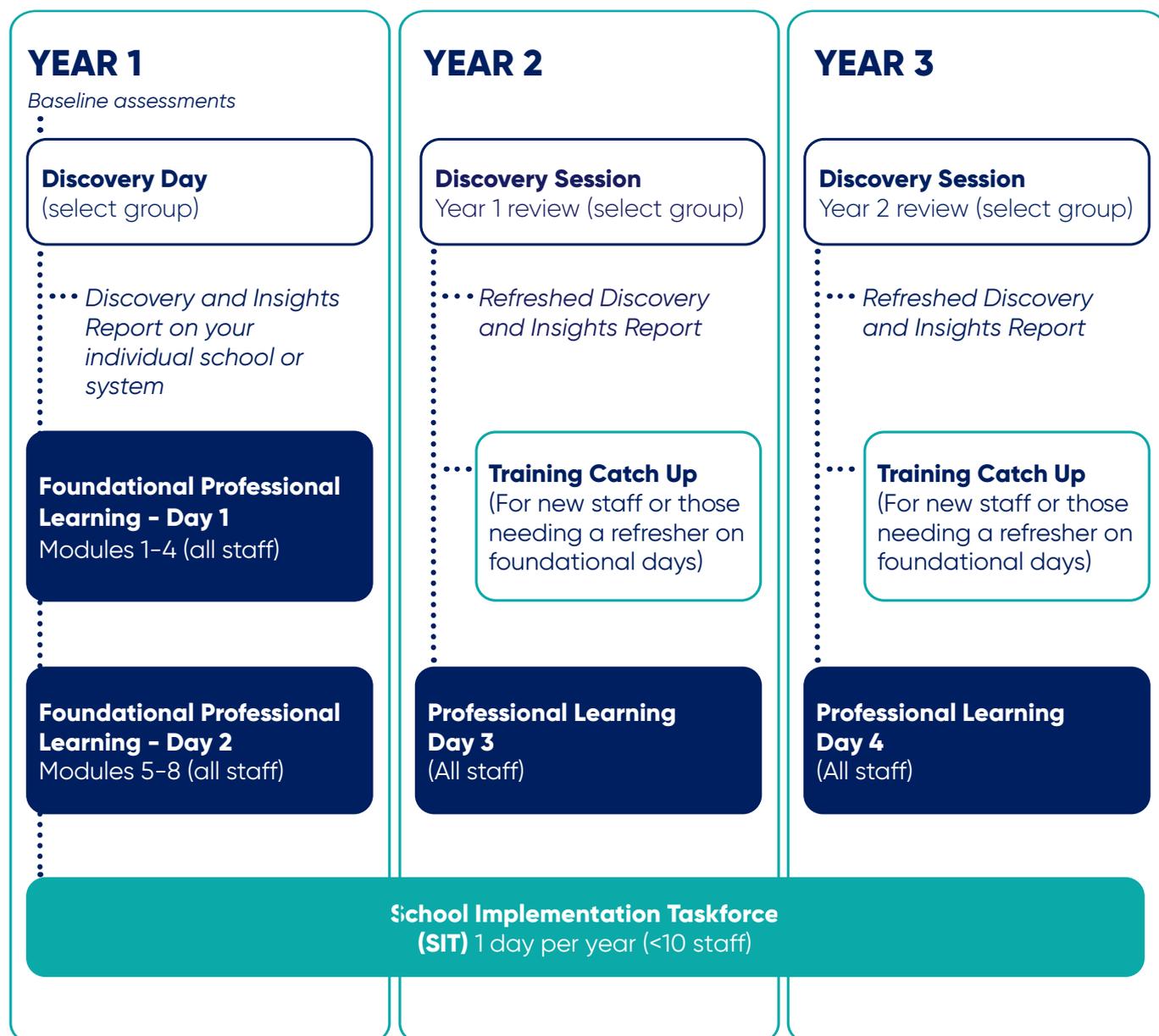
Benefits for education systems

ReLATE supports schools to reduce behavioural incidents, shifting the focus from reactive to aspirational. Calm environments translate to improved wellbeing for students and staff and free time to focus on new areas for growth and improvement.

Through ReLATE your school or system will become trauma aware and best positioned to meet the diverse needs of your community.

Our three year implementation plan

Our implementation approach is agile and can be modified to suit your community and your starting point. In general, ReLATE is implemented across an individual school or a network of schools, over three-years. We can accommodate multiple sites participating in the same professional learning sessions to suit your budget and needs.



What's involved in year one?

Throughout the ReLATE implementation our skilled consultants come to you. They take time to get to know your school community. Our consultants support to your leaders and prepare insightful school level reports to guide your implementation and track your progress.

Engaging in a partnership approach, the ReLATE program commences with a Discovery Day. This provides an opportunity for your school and our skilled consultants to understand the 'where your school or system is currently at' and 'where you would like to be'. The day culminates in the delivery of a Discovery and Insights Report, which presents baseline data and informs the implementation approach.

Your Discovery Day is followed by a two-day Initial Professional Learning training consisting of eight modules:

Day one and two initial professional learning - Year one

Module 1

Laying the foundations for an inclusive professional learning community

Key learning topics

- Safe space
- ReLATE Circle
- Relational trust
- Courage & vulnerability



Module 2

ReLATE Model introduction

Key learning topics

- What is ReLATE?
- Why a trauma informed whole school change model?
- Foundational concepts
- What does the research tell us?



Module 3

Foundational concept 1: Safety

Key learning topics

- Concept of safety
- Internal and external resources
- Self-regulation



Module 4

Foundational concept 2: A counter-stress school environment

Key learning topics

- Staff and student wellbeing
- Brain development
- Trauma theory (chronic stress responses)
- Secure attachment
- Positive behaviour support



Module 5

Foundational concept 3: Enhanced teaching and learning

Key learning topics

- Neuroscience
- Impact of toxic stress on learning
- Internal working model
- Teacher-led relationships

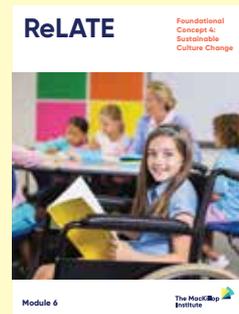


Module 6

Foundational concept 4: Sustainable culture change

Key learning topics

- Organisational change
- Cultural safety and culturally appropriate responses
- Resilience and adversity



Module 7

Behavioural insights

Key learning topics

- Function, triggers and our response
- Responding to challenging behaviours
- De-escalation



What's involved in years two and three?

Building on the four foundational concepts, years two and three provide your school or system with an opportunity to customise your learning journey.

Years two and three will include:

- an annual online or face to face refresher, embedding learning from previous years and enabling new staff to be brought up to speed on ReLATE's four foundational concepts
- an annual professional learning day for all staff, where elective modules can be selected each year to support participants to develop the necessary changes to mindsets, behaviours, practices and pedagogy to lead sustainable change
- two further annual three-hour discovery day sessions with our skilled consultants, who will review and check in on your progress and also refresh your Discovery and Insight Report

A sample of the elective modules for years two and three

Module 1

Digital wellbeing

Key learning topics

- Technological stress and changes to the brain
- Positive technology
- Health promoting strategies



Module 2

Student perceptions of teacher feedback

Key learning topics

- Traditional vs contemporary perspectives
- Influence on achievement
- Influences on emotions
- Strategies to support teachers and students



Module 3

Mindset and collective efficacy

Key learning topics

- Personal values and work-life integration
- Growth and adaptability
- Cognitive distortions
- Reframing our negative thoughts

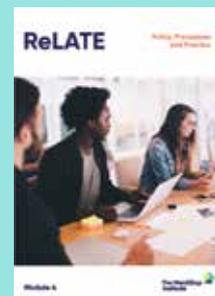


Module 4

Policy, procedures and practice

Key learning topics

- Shared language
- Policy implementation for sustained practice
- Behaviour change

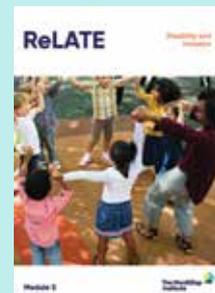


Module 5

Disability and inclusion

Key learning topics

- Legislation and definitions
- Mental health and disability
- Prevention vs intervention
- Inclusive cultures

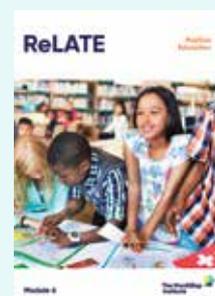


Module 6

Positive education

Key learning topics

- Why we all benefit from positive psychology
- The science of lasting and sustainable happiness in schools
- Practical strategies in the classroom and daily work



Our personal approach sets us apart

We take the time to get to know you and your community

We work hard to ensure that we understand your needs and the unique strengths and challenges within your community. During the Discovery Day sessions we meet with members of your school community including leadership, staff, parents and students (where appropriate) to gather data.

We provide you with Discovery and Insights Reports, drawing out your school or system's unique characteristics and informing an implementation approach that is designed to drive the desired change.

We work with you to gather and explore:

- existing knowledge and beliefs about trauma and trauma-informed practices
- opportunities and barriers to improving safety and wellbeing
- baseline data, unpacking the story behind this data.

We deliver more than professional learning. We provide direct and ongoing support for implementation

With ongoing support from our skilled consultants, each school or system will establish a School Implementation Taskforce (SIT). The SIT represents an integral group of staff who will lead implementation. They are supported to develop short-medium and long term outcomes, clear guidelines, detailing each of the key tasks needed to create a lasting change in schools to better the teaching, learning and wellbeing.

Through this process your school or system will be supported to:

- implement planning days
- use data to inform thinking
- examine values, beliefs and assumptions
- contextualise resources for your community.

Our skilled consultants are available to provide support and check in with SIT members answering questions and providing further guidance to address implementation challenges and explore new aspirations.



Let us support you to make real and lasting change

We'll genuinely measure your success

At the commencement of ReLATE, your school or system will be invited to complete two initial baseline assessments. Each assessment has been selected to support the evaluation of the impact of ReLATE on your school or system, and includes:

1. The Attitudes Related to Trauma Informed Care Scale (ARTIC Scale) – a psychometrically valid measure, of a range of constructs, including staff beliefs on the use of trauma-informed practices and their views on the level of school implementation support.
2. Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) – Measuring the professional quality of life you feel in relation to your work as a helper. Both the positive and negative aspects of doing our work influences professional quality of life. For education professionals, understanding the positive and negative aspects of helping those who experience trauma and suffering can improve your ability to help them and your ability to keep your own balance.

These assessments are repeated throughout implementation and our consultants will work with you to interpret the result, so you can measure just how far you and your community have come.

We are committed to improvement as you are

We are committed to continuous improvement and to ensuring that the impact of ReLATE on each school or system is rigorously evaluated throughout the three years of implementation. We ensure that outcomes are made available to schools and systems so that communities can celebrate their successes and focus their efforts.

At the MacKillop Institute we are also personally committed to continuous improvement, which is why we have partnered with leading universities to evaluate our programs and offerings. We love sharing our learning and celebrating our successes with our ReLATE community.

"Strategies introduced through ReLATE integrated with programs that were established in the school so well. It wasn't seen as an 'add on' but rather complemented our current work and supported our thinking about 'where to next?'"

Teacher

Alternative options to our three-year model

If your school is interested in aspects of our ReLATE model but not yet positioned to engage in the three-year implementation, we have alternative options for you. You can choose any of the below components of the ReLATE model and partner with us for impact.

1. Discovery & Insights Report inc. ReLATE baseline assessments.

The Discovery & Insights Report supports schools and systems to establish the preconditions for improved teaching, learning and wellbeing.

The Report sets out your schools' unique strengths, and draws out opportunities, challenges and aspirations for enhancing the culture and teaching, learning and wellbeing. This Report includes recommendations on how to implement the findings, with a view to maximizing efforts and measuring and delivering improved teaching, learning and wellbeing outcomes and an enriched school's culture.

We provide a balanced summary of your school's strengths, challenges and aspirations in three ways:

- **Capturing the voices of your community** through conversations and interviews
- **Establishing a baseline** by implementing baseline assessments so that we know our starting point and can measure real change
- **Reviewing additional data/materials** (e.g., existing policies, review and survey outcomes etc.).

2. Two-day Foundational Professional Learning

Our two-day foundational professional learning draws on a robust body of research, unpacking the ReLATE model's four foundational concepts of **safety, counter stress school environment, enhanced teaching and learning and whole school sustainable culture change**. In addition, your school and system receive access to practical resources and templates to support embedding the strategies daily in the classroom. The foundational days are made up of the modules that sit within the Year 1 professional learning days.

3. Additional Modules

We have a range of two-hour modules perfect for staff meetings or supporting your agenda on student free days. The modules that sit within the year two and three of the ReLATE model can be accessed separately to support staff in their teaching and learning environments.



Testimonials

"We celebrate the ongoing training opportunities and the empowering practical tools that ReLATE offers our whole Diocesan community. This has enabled us to engage in safe and sustainable self-care and emotional literacy for all. We can't wait to bring the whole ReLATE experience to more schools next year and beyond."

Education System, Senior Wellbeing Officer

"We've always been very conscious of the wellbeing of everyone in our school community. Since introducing the ReLATE program we can see it recognises the inter-relationship between the adults and the children within the school community. ReLATE builds community and builds a feeling that people care about each other on a personal level not just colleagues or student peers – it goes deeper than that."

School Principal

"Partnering with MacKillop provided a pathway for consistency of purpose, policy and practice. It was not enough to have structure and strategy. We were determined to invest in building shared meaning, capacity and commitment to improving wellbeing outcomes for all of our staff and students"

Education System, Wellbeing Leader

"The MacKillop facilitators were fantastic, one of the most engaging online professional development sessions I have ever had."

Teacher



Contact us

For more information, or to start your ReLATE journey contact us:

 institute@mackillop.org.au

 03 8687 7584

mackillop.org.au/institute