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Keynote Speech by Mr. Charlie Scudamore, Vice-principal of Geelong Grammar School, Australia

Positive Education: Learn it, Live it, Teach it and Embed it

Mental health problems among youths are common in Australia. Around 160,000 young Australians aged 16-24 live with depression each year. Suicide is one of the leading causes of death among youths in Australia. Research is now beginning to show that Positive Education programmes decrease stress and anxiety as well as increase self-efficacy, self-esteem and optimism. Research findings also showed that an effective Positive Education programme can improve the wellbeing and mental health of students.

Geelong Grammar School in Australia has been conducting research to improve the wellbeing and mental health of youths in Australia and conducted programmes to promote the mental health of them. Mr. Charlie Scudamore, the Vice-Principal of Geelong Grammar School, believes that the mental health issue is not unique in Australia. In fact, he thinks that the situation is similar in many other well developed countries and cities like Japan, Britain and Hong Kong. Students who live in developed countries are full of stress and anxiety. Through Positive Education, it offers a promising solution to improve the mental health of students which promotes the 4Rs - Reflection, Resilience, Relationships and Responsibility.

Positive Education brings together the science of positive psychology with best practice teaching to encourage and support individuals, schools and communities to flourish. It focuses on specific skills that assist students to strengthen their relationships, build positive emotions, enhance personal resilience, promote mindfulness, and encourage a healthy lifestyle.

All schools have the potential to significantly impact the wellbeing of young people by implementing an effective Positive Education programme. The successful experience of Geelong Grammar School in implementing Positive Education can provide an example for other schools to model.

The following introduces the Positive Education model and reflects on how these concepts can be applied in Hong Kong context.

Positive Education

Positive Education is found on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves and to enhance their experiences of love, work and play.

The Positive Education Model

It comprises six wellbeing domains:

- **Positive Relationships** – increasing social and emotional skills in order to create and promote strong and nourishing relationships with self and others.
- **Positive Emotions** – experiencing a broad range of positive emotions and developing skills and knowledge to anticipate, prolong and build positive experiences.
- **Positive Health** – practising sustainable habits for optimal physical and psychological health that are developed from a sound knowledge base.
- **Positive Engagement** – promoting complete immersion in activities through the nature of engagement, the pathways to it and the function it has in individual wellbeing.
- **Positive Accomplishment** - developing individual potential through striving for and

- achieving meaningful outcomes.
- **Positive Purpose** - understanding, believing in, and serving something greater than yourself and deliberately engaging in activities for the benefits of others.

Reflections on Positive Education at schools in Hong Kong

With an introduction of the model of Positive Education, in order to develop the wellbeing of students in Hong Kong, it is important to reflect on whether these concepts can be applied in Hong Kong schools and what changes should be made to suit the situation in Hong Kong schools for the betterment of students.

(Synopses and reflections contributed by Ms. Jane Or