

TRAVELLERS

× PROGRAMME

NAVIGATING LIFE'S JOURNEY

A group programme for young
people that builds resilience and helps
them face life and its challenges



SCHOOL BROCHURE

SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE TO NAVIGATE LIFE'S JOURNEY

Travellers is a school-based wellbeing programme that helps young people make sense of what they're feeling, build practical life skills, and develop the confidence to navigate life's journey, including change, stress, and everyday challenges.

Delivered by trained school staff, Travellers is primarily for students in their first year of secondary school. It has been running in Aotearoa since 2001 and has been developed in association with Health New Zealand and Victoria University of Wellington.

It is made up of two core components: a confidential wellbeing survey for your Year 9 cohort, and a 10-week small-group programme for students who may benefit from additional support. This gives schools a clear picture of student wellbeing and a practical way to respond.

TARGET AUDIENCE

- Designed for early secondary (Year 9) students
- Wellbeing survey and 10-week small-group programme
- Delivered in school, by trained staff
- Practical, interactive, relevant content
- Developed in Aotearoa, for Aotearoa



BUILD RESILIENCE AND EMOTIONAL AWARENESS IN YOUR STUDENTS

UNDERSTAND WHAT YOUR STUDENTS NEED

Gain a deep, real-time picture of your Year 9 cohort's mental health, emotional wellbeing, resilience, self-regulation, and life events through a short, confidential online survey.

Schools consistently tell us they receive a wealth of meaningful information – including early insight into students who may be at higher risk – within the first few weeks of the school year. This allows wellbeing and pastoral teams to be proactive rather than reactive.

DELIVER A PROVEN, RESEARCH-INFORMED PROGRAMME

Run a programme with over 25 years of delivery in Aotearoa, refreshed with the latest research and developed in partnership with Victoria University of Wellington.

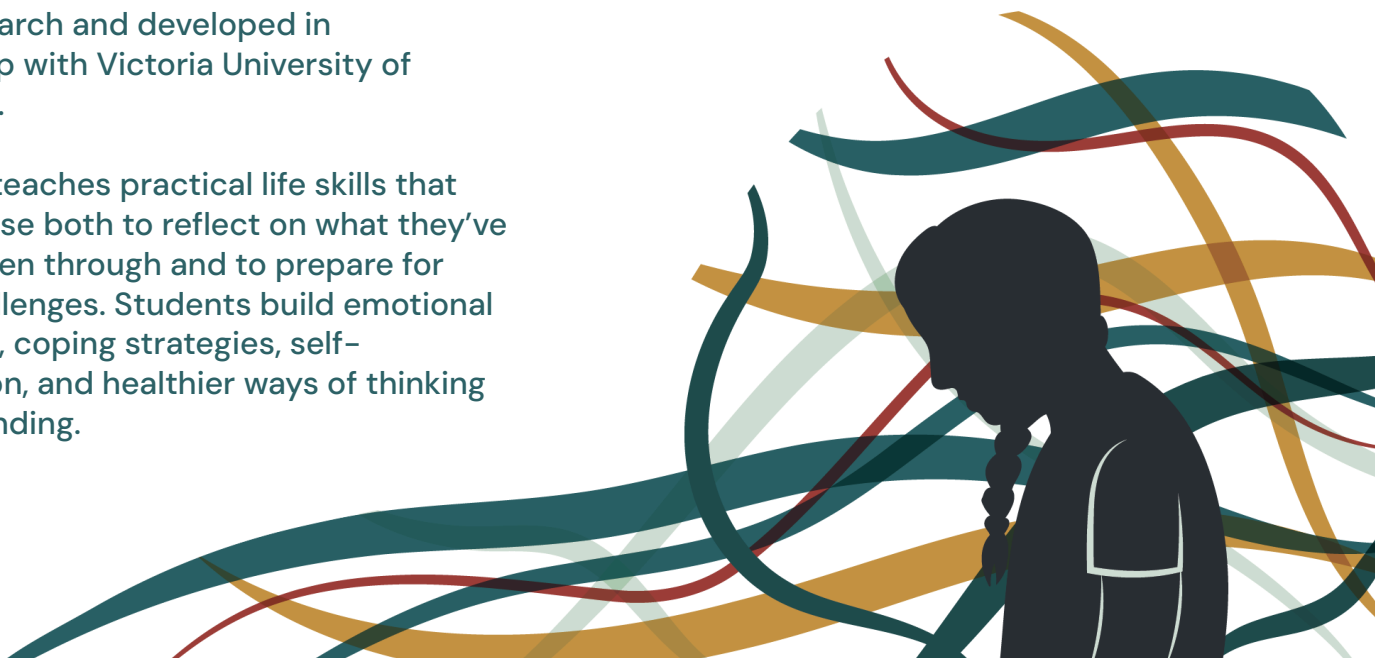
Travellers teaches practical life skills that students use both to reflect on what they've already been through and to prepare for future challenges. Students build emotional awareness, coping strategies, self-compassion, and healthier ways of thinking and responding.

CREATE EARLY CONNECTIONS THAT LAST

Travellers doesn't just teach skills – it builds relationships.

Students form trusting connections with facilitators and peers in a safe, small-group setting. This means they know who to go to when something happens, are more likely to ask for help, and often encourage others to seek support too.

For many schools, Travellers becomes a gateway into stronger pastoral relationships across the whole of secondary school.



WHAT TO EXPECT

RICH, MEANINGFUL WELLBEING DATA

- Developed in partnership with Victoria University of Wellington
- Aotearoa informed measures
- Clear, school-level reporting on areas such as belonging, emotional distress, sleep and device use.
- Benchmarking to support interpretation.

IDENTIFY STUDENTS WHO NEED EXTRA SUPPORT

- Screens students for levels of distress using multiple wellbeing indicators
- Groups students into low, medium, and high support categories
- Helps ensure students with higher needs are not overlooked
- Supports informed decisions about group invitations

PRACTICAL TEACHING THAT MAKES SENSE TO STUDENTS

- Turns complex wellbeing concepts into simple, relatable ideas
- Begins with a life map exercise
- Ten weekly sessions, usually 90 minutes, or 60 minutes if needed
- Teaches skills drawn from ACT, CBT, and nervous system informed practice
- Focus on skills that are accessible and easy to apply

It has honestly made me the better person today and I would like to thank my facilitator for all the support. I feel like now I can be very open to talk about my feelings and what's happening in my life. Also doing it with a bunch of others is even better cause they were in the same shoes as me at the beginning and now we've all become really good mates.

Student (anonymous)

ALL THE RESOURCES YOU NEED

- Designed to be easy for schools to run
- Starter kit with core materials provided
- Access to self serve, printable resources
- Extra materials available from Skylight on request

HIGH-QUALITY, EXPERIENTIAL TRAINING

- Comprehensive two-day facilitator training
- Participants experience the programme before learning to deliver it
- Training is experiential, practical, and supportive
- Builds staff confidence to run small group wellbeing programmes in schools



WHY SCHOOLS CHOOSE TRAVELLERS

PROVEN OVER TIME

Travellers has supported young people since 2001, with regular updates and a major refresh in 2026. Hundreds of schools across the country use the programme, and approximately one in every six Year 9 students complete the Travellers wellbeing survey each year.

RESEARCH-INFORMED AND CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVING

The programme is informed by contemporary research and developed in partnership with Victoria University of Wellington. It draws on evidence-based approaches and is supported by ongoing evaluation to ensure content remains current, credible, and effective.

DEVELOPED IN AOTEAROA, FOR AOTEAROA

Developed in Aotearoa by Skylight Trust, a non-profit, Travellers is grounded in the realities of New Zealand schools and young people, with Te Ao Māori and Te Whare Tapa Whā woven throughout the programme, recognising the interconnected physical, mental/emotional, relational, and spiritual dimensions.

This creates space for young people to reflect on who they are, where they come from, what matters to them, and the people and places that support them. All survey data is stored securely on New Zealand servers, supporting privacy, sovereignty, and data protection.

BUILDS INTERNAL SCHOOL CAPABILITY

It is designed to build long-term capability within schools. Staff are trained to facilitate the programme and can continue delivering it year after year. Activities can be adapted to suit each school's context within a clear, evidence-informed framework.

CONTENT THAT RESONATES WITH TODAY'S STUDENTS

Travellers uses creative, embodied, and interactive activities rather than relying only on worksheets or discussion. Content is accessible for neurodiverse learners and culturally responsive for Māori and diverse students, and reflects real issues such as social media, screen use, identity, body image, relationships, and pressure.

WHY SCHOOLS CHOOSE TRAVELLERS

SAFETY FIRST

Student safety is central to both the wellbeing survey and the programme. Questions are carefully designed, facilitators are trained to respond appropriately, and clear guidance supports safe, ethical delivery.

EARLY SUPPORT THAT PREVENTS ESCALATION

Travellers strengthens early identification and early intervention, supporting proactive, preventative wellbeing care rather than waiting until issues reach crisis point.

TYPICAL DELIVERY

- 10 sessions per group
- 60–90 minutes per session
- Small groups of 8–10 students
- Co-facilitated by two trained school staff (preferably counsellors)
- Delivered during school hours



STUDENTS LEARN TO

Make meaning of their experiences

- Use life maps and reflection to explore personal journeys
- Build a sense of agency about the future

Understand feelings better

- Notice, name, and understand emotions
- Recognise how feelings show up in the body
- View emotions as helpful signals

Express emotions safely

- Practise healthy expression through talking, movement, creativity, and reflection
- Learn validating ways to respond to self and others

Notice and challenge unhelpful thinking

- Understand links between thoughts, feelings, and behaviours
- Identify and rethink unhelpful thought patterns

It has helped me approach situations differently and I notice that when talking to others I use some of the things that I learnt. For example when my friend was talking to me about friendship problems I was able to think back to our spiral thinking lesson and help her then. Travellers has also been a safe space to share and relieve some of the weeks stress by laughing and spending time with people other than my friends, people I don't usually spend time with.

Student (anonymous)

Develop coping strategies

- Learn grounding, self-soothing, problem solving, and help seeking skills

Build self-compassion and self-esteem

- Identify strengths and values
- Practise supportive self-talk

Strengthen relationships and help seeking behaviours

- Build communication skills
- Learn about boundaries and respect
- Identify trusted support people



SESSION OUTLINE

	THEME	WHAKATAUKĪ	CONCEPT	SLOGAN
SESSION 1	Welcome			
SESSION 2	Connecting	<i>He waka eke noa</i> We are all in this together	We have more in common than we think	Life is a journey
SESSION 3	Life maps	<i>Titiro whakamuri, kōkiri whakamua</i> We look back and reflect so that we can move forward	Everyone's journey has ups and downs, and that's normal	Your story can change
SESSION 4	Feeling	<i>Whāia te mātauranga hei oranga mō te katoa</i> Pursue learning for the sake of everyone's wellbeing	I can trust my feelings to tell me what I need	Feelings are clues
SESSION 5	Expressing	<i>Hurihia tō aro ki te rā, tukuna tō ātārangi kia taka ki muri i a koe</i> Turn your face to the sun and the shadows will fall behind you	I feel better when I express my feelings in safe and healthy ways	Express yourself
SESSION 6	Thinking	<i>Ko au te waiora o aku whakaaro</i> I am the wellbeing of my thoughts	I can't always change the situation, but I can choose how I respond	Thoughts can be challenged
SESSION 7	Self-esteem	<i>He aroha whakatō, he aroha puta mai</i> If kindness is sown, then kindness you shall receive	The way I talk to myself affects my confidence and mood	Be your own best friend
SESSION 8	Wellbeing	<i>He oranga ngākau he pikinga waiora</i> Positive feelings in your heart will enhance your self-worth and overall wellbeing	The little things I do each day matter	Travel with care
SESSION 9	Relationships	<i>Nā tō rourou, nā taku rourou ka ora ai te iwi</i> With your offering and my offering the people will thrive	Support can come from people, places, and activities – not just one person	Build your support team
SESSION 10	Celebration	<i>Ko te pae tawhiti whāia kia tata, ko te pae tata whakamaua kia tīnā</i> Strive to overcome challenges and celebrate successes	I decide what my next step is from here	You've got this!

THE STUDENT WELLBEING SURVEY

The Travellers Student Wellbeing Survey is a short, confidential online questionnaire that gives schools a clear picture of how their students are really doing.

It explores students' experiences of change, stress, and everyday challenges, alongside their sense of wellbeing, belonging, and connection. The survey is designed to be practical, age-appropriate, and easy to administer at scale.

Schools receive accessible, school-level reporting that provides a snapshot of wellbeing across the year group, highlights common stressors and patterns, and supports the identification of students who may benefit from additional support. This information helps schools move from guesswork to informed, proactive planning.

Survey data is used to guide invitations to Travellers groups, inform pastoral and wellbeing conversations, and support targeted resourcing. Over time, schools can also observe trends and patterns that strengthen their long-term wellbeing strategy.

The survey has been used by over 250,000 students nationally and continues to evolve alongside the Travellers programme. Each school accesses its own data through a secure digital reporting platform, with information presented in a clear, practical format to support everyday use by school staff.

We love the survey. We have 500 students in our Year 9 intake! We can get an awful lot of valuable information, (particularly on the High Risk Group), within 3 weeks of starting school. The programme teaches valuable life skills that the students apply both backwards, (to what has happened in their lives to date), and forwards. They are being made more resilient and armed for the future. We build relationships, but in particular, they build a relationship with the facilitators. They know where to come in the future when something happens, they bring friends or tell me about people in trouble, they help me recruit into Travellers, and they provide me with lots of valuable information. For me, the 8 weeks of the programme is an investment that pays a dividend for 5 years and sometimes longer.

**Terry McCain School Guidance
Counsellor, Auckland Boys Grammar**



PROGRAMME MATERIALS

Each school receives a Travellers kit containing all the resources to deliver the programme. Programme materials to replenish the kits can be readily ordered through Skylight, including student Travellers diaries, sets of stickers and student, school and parent pamphlets.



We see Travellers as a very valuable addition to the work that we do and that early identification is really valuable. We see it as very effective. It allows counsellors to engage with a the young people in a more positive way to begin with and then if they need to unpack some of their concerns, they've already got the relationships.

**Graeme McCann Principal,
Rosehill College**

WHAT SCHOOLS RECEIVE

Schools participating in Travellers receive everything needed to deliver the programme with confidence. Onboarding is designed to build school capability and support sustainable, long-term delivery. For a small participation fee, each school receives a Travellers kit containing core resources, along with training for two staff members at an in-person Travellers facilitator training. Additional programme materials can be easily ordered through Skylight, including student travel diaries, sticker sets, and student, school, and parent pamphlets.

FACILITATOR TRAINING

- Two-day facilitator training for school staff, preferably counsellors
- Led by experienced Skylight trainers
- Covers the foundations of Travellers, group facilitation, and session delivery
- Highly experiential, practical, and supportive

TRAVELLERS KIT

- Facilitator manual and session plans
- Student travel diaries and activity resources
- Tools, games, and creative materials

DIGITAL TOOLS

- Access to the Student Wellbeing Survey
- Secure digital reporting platform for school-level data

ONGOING SUPPORT

- Implementation guidance and advice
- Access to updates and refreshed resources
- Ongoing connection with the Travellers team at Skylight

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Student (anonymous)

PROVEN TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Travellers has been delivered in schools across Aotearoa since 2001 and is supported by ongoing evaluation and research, in partnership with Victoria University of Wellington.

The programme is funded by Health New Zealand, enabling Skylight to deliver Travellers across hundreds of schools nationwide.

An impact assessment by ImpactLab in 2024 found that Travellers delivers a \$3.30 return for every \$1 invested, through improved mental health, increased academic achievement, and reduced risky behaviour.

Independent evaluations and facilitator feedback indicate that students who participate in Travellers commonly experience:

- Increased confidence and self-belief
- Improved ability to cope with stress and change
- Greater emotional awareness and healthier expression
- Increased willingness to seek help and talk about feelings
- Stronger peer relationships and connectedness

Schools report that Travellers supports:

- Earlier identification of wellbeing needs
- More targeted and timely support for students
- Stronger relationships between students and staff
- Improved engagement in learning and school life

NEXT STEPS

Getting started with Travellers is simple and supported at every step.

Step 1 – Register interest

Contact the Travellers team or submit an enquiry through the website.

Step 2 – Identify facilitators

Schools identify at least two staff members to be trained as Travellers facilitators.

Step 3 – Book training

Facilitators attend the two-day Travellers facilitator training.

Step 4 – Receive resources

Schools receive the Travellers kit, programme resources, and access to the Student Wellbeing Survey and digital reporting platform.

Step 5 – Run the Student Wellbeing Survey

Schools administer the confidential online survey with their Year 9 cohort and review school-level reports to inform group invitations and planning.

Step 6 – Schedule delivery

Schools schedule and run Travellers groups within their timetable.

For more information or to register interest:

www.travellers.org.nz
programmes@skylight.org.nz





SKYLIGHT TRUST

Skylight Trust started in 1996 to support children and young people through grief, loss, and trauma. After a local bereavement service closed, a group of professionals created a trust to fill the gap—starting small in Wellington with donated space and community backing.

We quickly grew into a national organisation, offering counselling, resources, and training. Programmes like Travellers brought support into schools, and we responded to major events like the Christchurch earthquakes with practical tools and immediate care.

Today, we continue helping people of all ages navigate tough times, with a focus on community partnerships, cultural respect, and making support accessible to anyone who needs it.

24K+ HOURS OF THERAPY EACH YEAR

400+ FAMILIES SUPPORTED PER MONTH

130+ SCHOOLS RUNNING
OUR PROGRAMME

Visit www.skylight.org.nz to
learn more





www.travellers.org.nz