LOCAL NEWS

Taking time to Take 5 can transform your day

Local students are being encouraged to take five minutes a day to recharge.

Waikato has the second-highest participation rate in the Zespri Young and Healthy Virtual Adventure in the entire country, with 3861 students from 36 schools taking part.

This year they've been building a simple new habit that could transform their day.

The Take 5 initiative encourages classrooms to use breaks for good, and pause for at least one five-minute wellbeing break during the school day, boosting focus, mood and readiness to learn.

Young and Healthy Trust founder Kim Harvey said the new initiative was about empowering tamariki to make small, sustainable changes. "These Take 5 moments may begin the day with movement, help reset after transitions, or reconnect students with nature and mindfulness before key learning blocks.

"It's about slowing down and taking moments to do less which enable students to do more down the track."

For the past six years the Zespri Young and Healthy Virtual Adventure has been inspiring tamariki to embark on wellbeing journeys in the virtual world with real world outcomes.

Students create online avatars and earn points for making healthy choices in the real world, such as moving regularly, drinking water, eating fruit and vegetables, and reducing screen time.

The points are entered online, and the more they earn the more they'll move through the adventure – visiting global destinations alongside their sporting heroes ASICS Ambassadors Ardie Savea, Ameliaranne Ekenasio and Kane Williamson.

"A five-minute movement break or a shared mindfulness moment can completely change the tone of a classroom." - Kim Harvey.

Over the years, the programme has reached more than 120,000 young people and their families, encouraging healthier habits that last well beyond the classroom.

With the Take 5 element, Harvey said schools have an extra wellbeing tool designed to stick beyond the programme.

"Sometimes it's the smallest actions that make the biggest difference. A five-minute movement break or a shared mindfulness moment can completely change the tone of a classroom. That's what Take 5 is all about – giving tamariki time to reconnect with themselves, to feel good and focus better, every day."

Harvey said the initiative draws on a growing body of research that shows that short, regular movement or mindfulness breaks improve cognitive performance, emotional regulation, classroom behaviour, attention span and memory, as well as connection and self-esteem.

"We trialled the Take 5 approach with a class during last year's program. The impact was so great that it was implemented across the whole school, every day of the year. There is a tangible difference in the school, from improved attendance, a more positive start to the school day due to better communication and teamwork amongst students, and better regulation and focus in class creating an improved learning environment."