St Kilian's Community School Wellbeing Policy (2024/25)

Introductory Statement

St.Kilian's Community School's Wellbeing Policy is a structured document that describes the school Wellbeing Programme. It is an integral part of the school's overall development plan.

Relationship to the School's Mission Statement

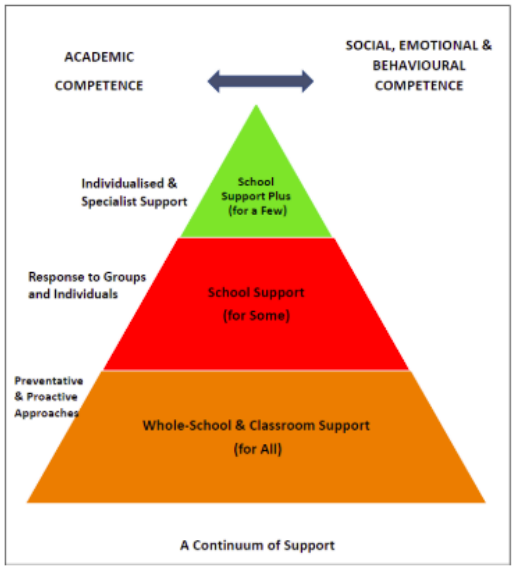
St. Kilian's C.S operates on the philosophy that each student deserves "the best possible quality of education … regardless of their ability or social and economic background." The school strives to nurture a wide range of aptitudes, boost each student's self-worth, self-esteem, and self-confidence, and offer a supportive and caring environment. The school's Wellbeing Policy reflects this philosophy. The enhancement of self-esteem and life skills and the development of potential – academic, personal, social and emotional – leading to greater autonomy for all students are the programme's central goals.

Rationale

With the Junior Cycle reform, it's crucial to prioritise student wellbeing in school life. To support this, the NCCA (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment) has created Wellbeing Guidelines that now guide our school's objectives. These guidelines aim to enhance students' physical, mental, emotional, and social wellbeing, helping them develop essential life skills and foster a strong sense of connection to their school and community. Wellbeing is achieved when students can realise their abilities, maintain physical health, handle life's usual stresses, and feel a sense of purpose and belonging within a larger community (The Guidelines for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle 2021). According to the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023, by 2023, promoting wellbeing should be central to every school's ethos, with all schools using evidence-based approaches and providing the necessary support to promote the wellbeing of all students. St. Kilian's C.S has devised a programme which will work towards providing Junior Cycle students with 400 hours of wellbeing related learning. This will build on substantial work already taking place in our school in this area.

Wellbeing Policy Framework

- **NEPS**: "Opportunities to promote the health and well-being of young people should permeate all aspects of school life… schools should adopt the NEPS three- tiered continuum for the promotion of mental health." (Well-Being in Post-Primary Schools, H.S.E, 2013)



- **School Self-Evaluation:** By 2023, every school must employ the SSE process to launch a wellbeing promotion, review, and development cycle (Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice, 2019). This approach will concentrate on assessing the wellbeing needs of the school community and establishing structures and procedures to ensure the wellbeing of all members is addressed in a supportive, nurturing environment

- **'Looking At Our Schools' Quality Framework:** Looking at Our Schools Quality Framework " sees students' well-being as intrinsic to this holistic view of learning… It recognises the crucial role of schools in promoting and nurturing students' well-being through their practice in the key areas of school environment, curriculum, policies and partnerships" (LAOS, 2016). At St. Kilian's C.S, we acknowledge the importance of wellbeing practices for all members of the school community. These practices should be accessible to and supported by everyone, promoting a holistic approach to education.

- **Student Voice:** When students are involved in shaping the Wellbeing programme it is more likely to provide the kind of learning that young people need to deal with the world as they find it, rather than the world as adults imagine it to be for them. A key question is how to ensure that their participation is really meaningful. Professor Laura Lundy has developed a model for meaningful participation by children and young people which include these four features:

- ***SPACE:*** Children must be given safe and inclusive opportunities to express their view
- ***VOICE***: Children must be facilitated to express their view.
- ***AUDIENCE***: The view must be listened to by those with decision-making power.
- ***INFLUENCE:*** The view must be acted upon, as appropriate. (Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines, NCCA, 2021)

Wellbeing in Schools

Under the new Junior Cycle Framework, wellbeing is present when "A person realises their potential, is resilient in dealing with the normal stresses of their life, takes care of their physical wellbeing and has a sense of purpose, connection and belonging to a wider community."(W.H.O, 2001)

This policy is grounded in the J.C.T Wellbeing Guidelines and Wellbeing Indicators. The following Wellbeing Indicators are designed to assist schools in planning and implementing a consistent wellbeing program:

- ***Active***
  Being physically active is an important element in staying well.

- ***Responsible***
  Each person must take responsibility for their own choices and make decisions, which promote their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others.

- ***Connected***
  It is important to feel connected and also to appreciate that actions and interactions taken by one person will impact on their wellbeing and that of others.

- ***Resilient***
  Everyone goes through challenges in their life. By building resilience, students learn the skills to cope with life's challenges.

- ***Respected***
  Feeling respected, listened to and valued are key aspects of wellbeing. Positive, respectful relationships are central to maintaining wellbeing.

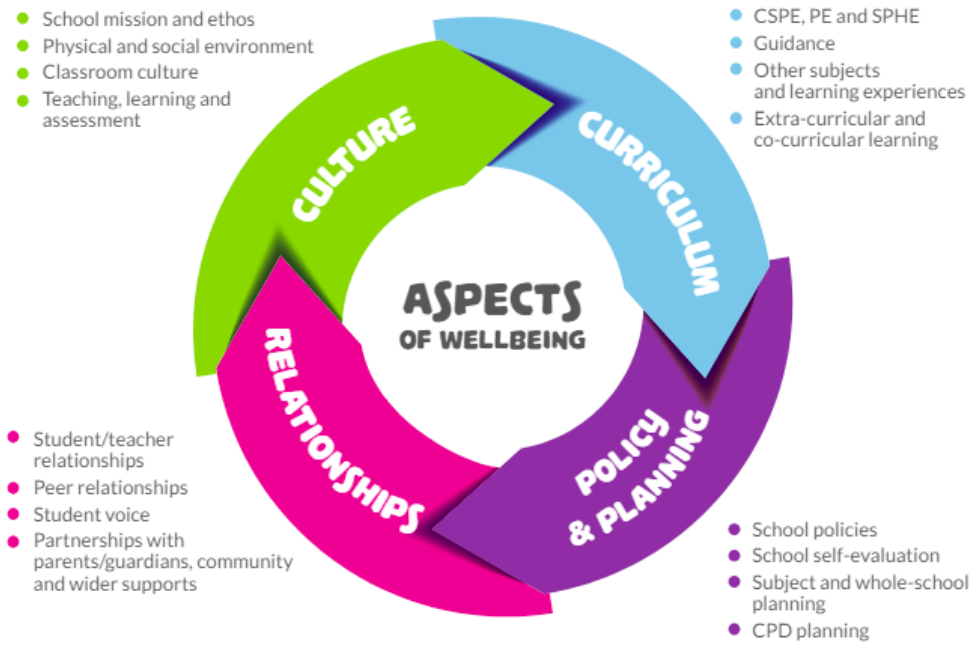
- ***Aware***
  Self-awareness is important for wellbeing, being able to make sense of thoughts, feelings and behaviours and being aware of personal values and personal limitations.



(Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines, NCCA, 2021)

The Wellbeing Guidelines identify four key aspects of wellbeing within the school setting: ***Culture, Relationships, Policy and Planning, and Curriculum***. These four aspects align with the four key areas of wellbeing promotion set out in the Department of Education's Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice. When considering the four key aspects of wellbeing, St. Kilian's C.S takes a whole-school approach and establishes a wellbeing policy which encompasses all members of our school community.

Figure 3: Four aspects of wellbeing in schools



(Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines, NCCA, 2021)

Wellbeing Practice at St. Kilian's Community School

- **Policy and Planning**

In conjunction with the stakeholders; teachers, parents, pupils and the Board of Management, school policies related to wellbeing are evolving according to the needs of the school:

- Critical Incident Policy
- Acceptable Usage Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
- Intoxicants Policy

- **Relationships**

"Much of the research in this area concludes that positive relationships between teachers and students, and students and their peers, along with a sense of connectedness, are the key protective factors for students' sense of wellbeing while in school…Everyone within the school, regardless of the level and frequency of contact they have with young people, can help create a positive ethos and climate of respect and care". (Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines, NCCA, 2021) However, the school's formal structures play a crucial role in facilitating and supporting student wellbeing:

- ***Senior Management Team***

Senior management plays a vital role in supporting student and staff wellbeing, creating an environment where everyone feels valued and supported. By fostering open communication, implementing mental health programs, and encouraging balanced workloads, senior management demonstrates its commitment to the holistic development of students and the wellness of teaching staff.

- ***Year Heads and Class Tutors***

Each class is assigned a class tutor and Year Head, whose roles are vital for the effective implementation of the student support system. The efforts of tutors and Year Heads help to ensure student welfare is maintained and that effective communication is upheld.

- ***Home-School-Community Liaison Co-ordinator***

The HSCL teacher acts as a link between the school, students' homes, neighbouring schools and local agencies and services. The HSCL teacher promotes initiatives and activities which encourage parents and guardians to become more involved in their children's education.

- ***School Completion Programme***

Ballywaltrim School Completion Programme (SCP) provides positive supports to encourage young people to stay in school and complete the Leaving Certificate.

•SENCO

The SENCO is committed to supporting students with additional educational needs in the school. It provides support through early identification, tuition and comprehensive liaison with parents and staff. The department ensures that the diverse needs and learning differences of all students are adequately accommodated and that appropriate structures are put in place to support them.

•Guidance Counsellors

Guidance counsellors assist students to develop self-management skills, which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives. Guidance encompasses the three separate but interlinked areas of Personal and Social Guidance, Educational Guidance and Career Guidance.

•Chaplain

The Chaplain in conjunction with staff and management are central to, and supportive of, the care system and policies which aim to deal with student support issues.

•Care Team

The Care Team meets weekly to discuss individual cases of concern and general school-wide initiatives. The team includes our SENCO, Guidance Counsellors, Chaplain, BFL teacher, SCP Co-ordinator, Deputy Principal and Principal. In the event of a critical incident, the Care Team will convene promptly to determine the appropriate response, following established guidelines. There is a referral system in place and students can refer themselves, as well as being referred by staff members.

•Prefect Team

Each year a selection of students are elected to be prefects, as well as the selection of a Head Girl and Head Boy. They are given leadership training workshops to help support them in their role. They help in the day to day running of the school, supporting staff and acting as role models to the younger students. They ensure that the student voice is heard by being the link between students and management, including the Board of Management.

•SNA Team

The SNA Team play an essential role in supporting the wellbeing of our students by providing tailored care, emotional support, and fostering an inclusive atmosphere. Through their day-to-day interactions, SNAs build trusting relationships with students, helping to create a safe space where individual needs are recognized and supported. Their work not only assists students with specific needs but also promotes a broader culture of empathy and resilience throughout the school.

• Student Council

The school encourages students to play a positive role in the effective running of the school. St. Kilian's C.S has a Student Council made up of 2 elected representatives from each year group. The Head Boy and Head Girl also sit on the council. They meet once a week and the Student Council provides a focus for student opinion, to enable their voices to be heard and to be communicated to the staff, management and the BoM.

•***Wellbeing Co-ordinator***
St. Kilian's C.S has allocated an AP2 post to a Wellbeing Co-ordinator. The co-ordinator will oversee the implementation of the wellbeing programme in the school.

- **Culture**

We foster a cooperative and supportive culture among everyone in the school community to ensure that all members can reach their full potential, both in and out of the classroom. St. Kilian's C.S has an inclusive whole-school culture of wellbeing that is reflected in the following activities:

•Jigsaw's 'One Good School' Programme
•Headstrong Programme
•First Year Induction Programme
• Mind Your Mind Week
• Anti-bullying week
• Stand Up Awareness Week
•Breakfast Club
•Cycle Against Suicide
•Multi-cultural Day
•Sports Day
•Guidance-related activities: CTYI, Future You etc.
•Parent-Student-Teacher Meetings
•Information Evenings eg. TY/LCA Night etc.
•Student Council led events
•Creative Schools Initiative
•Mentor Programme for 6th Year
•Check and Connect
•Parent's Association
•Connections with Past-Pupils
•School Musical
•Extra-curricular Activities: GAA, football, basketball, pickleball, table tennis, chess club, choir
•External Speakers and Workshops

- **Staff Wellbeing**

We cultivate a culture of collaboration and respect to ensure that all staff members feel valued for their unique contributions to our school community.

This is accomplished through regular subject department meetings, whole staff meetings and staff planning committees. Additionally, the school has a staff social committee that organises events throughout the year to strengthen personal relationships among staff members**.** Activities to promote Wellbeing amongst staff include:

•Staff Wellbeing Wednesday (1 per month)
•Staff Bonding Day
•Staff Lunches
•Cake Friday
•Lunchtime Art classes
•Lunchtime choir
•Staff Yoga
•Random Acts of Kindness
•Kris Kindle
•Celebrations of Personal Events
•Compliment wall
•Staff hikes

- **Curriculum**

Our timetable is designed around 40-minute class periods. The Wellbeing programme comprises the 100-hour short courses in CSPE and SPHE and 135-hours of PE. In addition, students engage in short units of learning (10/11 weeks duration), scheduled for one 40-minute class period each week, across the two years of Junior Cycle. Third Year students work on block classes and courses. The units of learning were developed following SSE, where areas of interest included general knowledge on mental health, LGBTQAI+ issues, online safety and study skills.

	First Year	**Second Year**	**Third Year**	**Hours**
PE	Double Period	Double Period	Double Period	135
CSPE	Double Period	Double Period	Single Period	100
SPHE	Double Period	Double Period	Single Period	100
UNITS	Single Period (11weeks)	Single Period (11weeks)	BLOCKS (Wellbeing Week etc.)	66
Term 1	Transitioning from Primary to Post-Primary (BFL)	Let's Talk, Sure Why Not! (Jigsaw)	Managing Exam Stress (Jigsaw)	
Term 2	Learning to Learn (Guidance and BFL)	All Together Now (BelongTo)	Be in CTRL by Webwise	
Term 3	Digital Literacy and Safety (IT & JCSP Library)	Lockers by Webwise (Guidance)	Study Skills (Guidance)	