

Scoil Chormaic Wellbeing Programme Policy

Introduction:

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. It is a fluid way of being and needs nurturing throughout life. (World Health organisation 2001)

As a school community we reviewed the NCCA guidelines on wellbeing to ensure that we as a school were prioritising this area of learning in line with our SPHE/PE/RSE policies and programmes. Wellbeing of our students will be nurtured in all subjects by all teachers and staff.

Our Wellbeing programme aims to foster happy, confident, responsible and resilient students who feel connected to Scoil Chormaic. We have embraced a whole-school approach and aligned the design and planning for our Wellbeing programme with School Self-Evaluation, School Policies and Practice. Our Wellbeing programme is anchored in the following subject areas: SPHE, PE, RSE Personal Care and other Units of Learning.

What is Wellbeing?

(As per NCCA Guidelines P9).

Student wellbeing is present when students realise their abilities, take care of their physical wellbeing, can cope with the normal stresses of life and have a sense of purpose and belonging to a wider community.

Aims:

- To enhance the physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing of students.
- To enable students to build life skills and develop a strong sense of connectedness to their school and their community.
- To increase ability to cope with stress and manage anxiety and emotions through improved confidence, self esteem and communication skills.
- To ensure students are supported in order to achieve their potential and that they actively participate in making informed decisions.

There are 6 key indicators of Wellbeing.



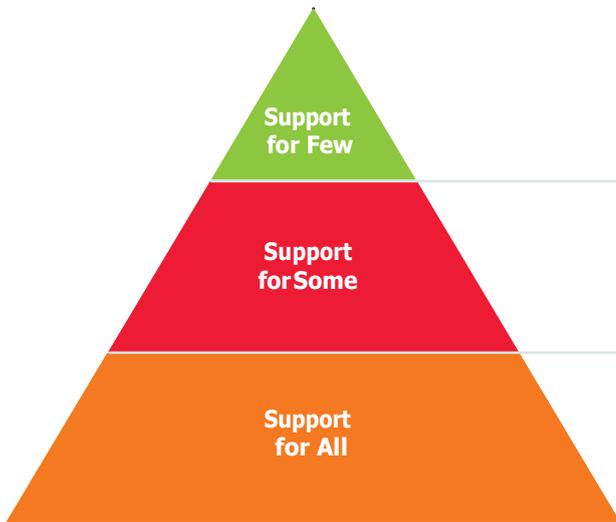
Wellbeing contributes directly to students' physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing and resilience. There is overwhelming evidence that students learn more effectively, including their academic subjects, if they are happy in their work, believe in themselves, their teachers and feel school is supporting them.

Scope of the Wellbeing Policy

- Explore current and future avenues for fostering happy, confident, responsible and resilient students who feel connected to Scoil Chormaic.
- Reflect on how we are currently addressing the area of Wellbeing in our school through curricular and extra-curricular provision.
- Comply with DES Circular 0015/2017 which mandates 300 hours of Wellbeing to be included on the timetable over 3 years and building to 400 hours of Wellbeing by 2020.
- Consider the voices of key stakeholders, namely staff, parents, students, trustees and Board of Management. Engage in consultation to ensure that the voices and input of the whole school community are valued.
- Demonstrate an awareness of our unique school context, our characteristic spirit and the values underpinning our mission statement.
- Conduct an audit of the current timetable provision for 28 classes. Consider alternative curriculum plans which incorporate Wellbeing
- Adopt an open, transparent and consultative approach to the implementation of a Wellbeing Programme. We are cognisant of the necessity to constantly plan, review and reflect, three premises also inherent in School Self Evaluation (SSE).
- Support the consultation process and use feedback to inform the curricular plan for Wellbeing. Explore the full spectrum of innovative curricular possibilities for Wellbeing, aligned to the identified subject areas, PE, SPHE and other units of work.
- Build staff awareness through the provision of CPD and planning time for Wellbeing during the consultation, implementation and review phases.

A whole school Approach

In line with the Department's Continuum of Support, a whole school approach focuses on promoting wellbeing for all members of the school community and includes preventative approaches and recognises that members of the school community can have different needs at different times. This is especially true of special schools where those at greater risk and with greater needs may require more specific and targeted support, in addition to the support provided to all members at a universal level.



School Support Plus for Few:

Individualised, targeted intervention for children and young people with more complex and enduring needs.

School Support for Some:

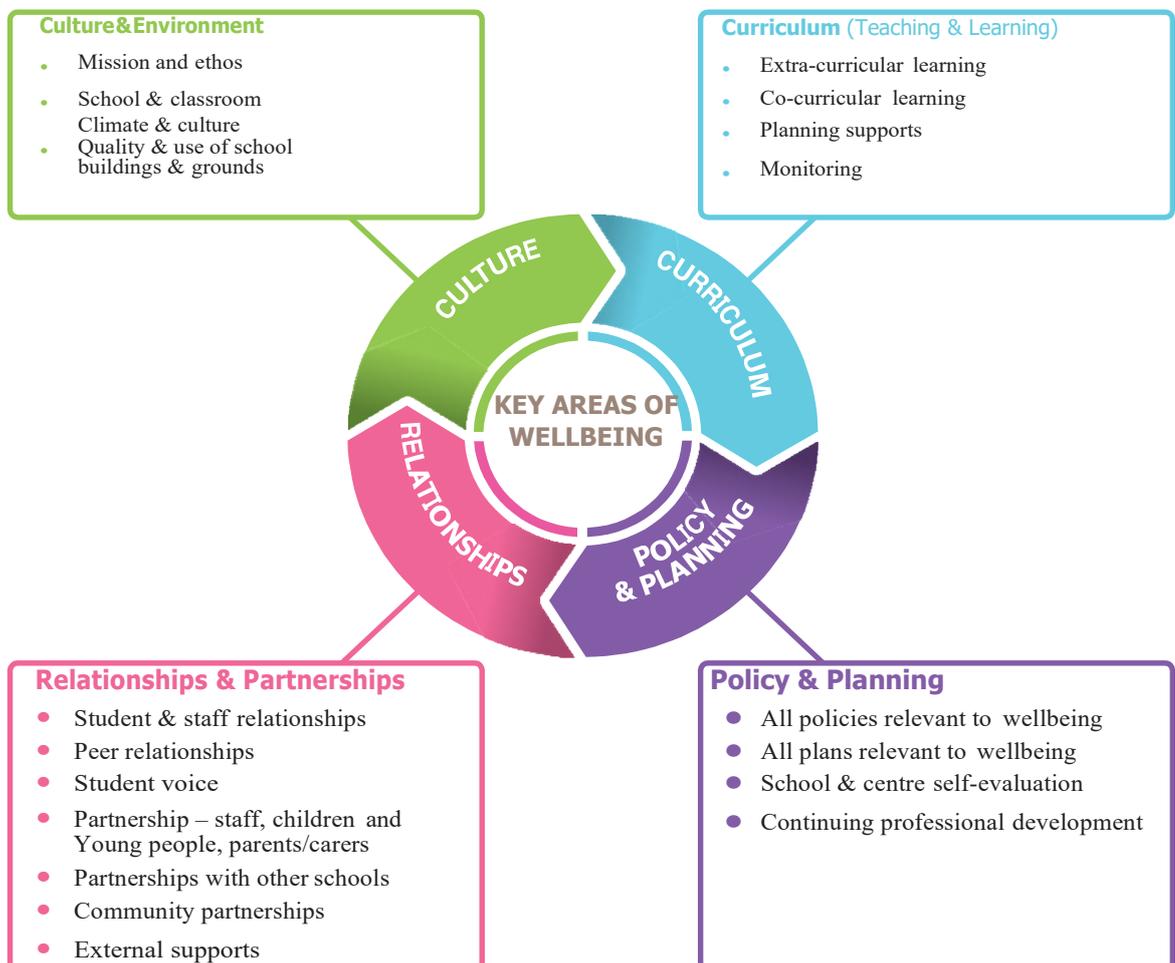
Identification, targeted prevention and early intervention for those at risk.

Whole School and Classroom Support for All:

Whole school support for wellbeing promotion that includes prevention and development of social and emotional competence & coping skills for all.

In designing this policy for Wellbeing promotion we at Scoil Chormaic must ensure that all of the key areas that contribute to wellbeing promotion in schools are given a focus. The four key areas for action are outlined in the figure below and can be referred to in statements of effective practice and indicators of success.

Whole School Approach: Four Key Areas of Wellbeing Promotion



Our School Context and the Four Aspects of Wellbeing

We in Scoil Chormaic recognise that we have a central role to play in supporting and promoting students learning about wellbeing. All students have the right to feel cared for and students who have a sense of personal wellbeing have a greater degree of success in realising their potential. We believe that learning and wellbeing are inextricably linked. A happy student is able to apply themselves to their learning programmes in school. Through a variety of learning activities students can acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for successful social inclusion in their families and communities.

In line with our school Ethos and Mission Statement it is our vision that our students will be 'Enlightened' and develop awareness of their personal wellbeing and that of others. Students will be 'Empowered' to make good choices for themselves and be able to seek support and guidance if and when they need it. Also 'Enjoyment' underpins all learning and our students school experience should be fun, positive and respectful (School Motto - Enlightenment, Empowerment, Enjoyment).

Students feel safe, secure and respected in Scoil Chormaic There is a positive discipline policy where discipline issues are resolved with care, respect and consistency.

Scoil Chormaic endeavours to foster the unique talents of all students. Student learning and wellbeing are inextricably linked; students learn best when their wellbeing is optimised and they develop a strong sense of wellbeing when they experience success. We have a highly dedicated teaching staff with huge expertise, all of whom are committed to maintaining excellence in teaching and learning. All staff contribute to promoting a caring and inclusive environment within the school that is supportive of student wellbeing.

We provide a broad and balanced curriculum to afford students' opportunities to achieve success in accordance with their talents, aptitudes and interests.

Wellbeing in the Context of the Framework for Junior Cycle

The Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines (2017, p.44) state that when planning a programme, the starting point must be the shared vision and values of the school alongside consideration of the principles and statements of learning set out in the Framework for Junior Cycle (2015).

A Junior Cycle programme that builds the foundations for Wellbeing:

- is broad and balanced
- provides choice
- has meaning and relevance
- is enjoyable and engaging
- provides opportunities to experience challenge and success
- equips students with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to develop as learners and build positive relationships.

The vision for Junior Cycle places students at the centre of all endeavours "*Junior cycle places **students** at the **centre** of the educational experience, **enabling** them to **actively participate** in their communities and in society and to be **resourceful** and **confident** learners in all aspects and stages of their lives*", (Framework for Junior Cycle, 2015, p.6).

Wellbeing is one of the eight principles underpinning the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA)



24 Statements of Learning

"The learning at the core of junior cycle is described in twenty-four statements of learning. They are central to planning for, the students' experience of, and the evaluation of the school's junior

cycle programme” (**Framework for JuniorCycle, 2015, p.**).

The purpose of learning statements

- To ensure a rich educational experience for students.
- Learning that has both breadth and depth and is varied.
- To enable development of the key skills.
- To give access to a varied curriculum of knowledge

The following Statements of Learning are particularly applicable to Wellbeing:

- The student has an awareness of personal values and an understanding of the process of moral decision making (SoL 5)
- The student values what it means to be an active citizen, with rights and responsibilities in local and wider contexts (SoL 7)
- The student has the awareness, knowledge, skills, values and motivation to live sustainably (SoL 10)
- The student takes action to safeguard and promote her/his wellbeing and that of others (SoL 11)
- The student is a confident and competent participant in physical activity and is motivated to be physically active (SoL 12)
- The student understands the importance of food and diet in making healthy lifestyle choices (SoL 13).

Staying Well is one of the 8 key skills for the JCPA.



Elements of the Key Skill Staying Well are:

- Being healthy and physically active
- Being social
- Being safe
- Being spiritual

- Being confident
- Being positive about learning
- Being responsible, safe and ethical in using digital technology

Elements of other Key Skills also relate to Wellbeing

- Developing good relationships and dealing with conflict
- Respecting difference
- Contributing to making the world a better place
- Knowing myself
- Making considered decisions
- Setting and achieving personal goals.

“Key skills will be embedded in the learning outcomes of every junior cycle subject and short course” (Framework for Junior Cycle, 2015, p.15). Key skills help learners develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to face the many challenges in today’s world. They also support students in learning how to learn and take responsibility for their own learning.

See attached linkage document JCL2 linkage to Wellbeing

Indicators of success through effective practice

Key Area 1 - Culture and Environment

Effective Practice:

The wellbeing of the whole school community is central to the school’s ethos/mission statement and school leaders and management actively promote wellbeing.

- The school will communicate with parents about the supports that are in place regarding the promotion of the wellbeing of children and young people.
- It is recognised by school leaders and management and all members of staff that the entire school community has a role to play in supporting learning for and learning about wellbeing.
- The relationship between academic achievement and a child/young person’s wellbeing is understood by all children and young people and staff in the school.
- There is a positive approach to discipline where issues are resolved with care, respect and consistency.

- The school recognises that wellbeing is as important for the staff as for the children and young people. Appropriate supports are available for staff wellbeing.
- Opportunities for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) are provided to teachers to ensure that they have the relevant knowledge and understanding to promote wellbeing and to create a positive classroom environment.
- Opportunities are provided for children and young people, staff and parents to have an active voice in decisions relating to school improvement.
- The school building, grounds, classrooms, bathrooms and work spaces are well maintained and appropriately furnished, creating a welcoming, safe and warm environment.
- The indoor space displays the work, talents and accomplishments of children and young people.
- The school building is accessible for all children and young people and accommodation is modified to meet the needs of all.
- School leaders and management understand the link between physical activity and wellbeing and facilitate physical activity and movement breaks within the school environment.
- Indoor and outdoor space is provided to facilitate social interaction and physical activity and quiet time.
- The school environment is conducive to promoting healthy eating choices. Drinking water is freely available and rewards other than food are used to motivate children and young people.
- Scoil Chormaic is committed in identifying and providing targeted supports for children and young people experiencing barriers and challenges to wellbeing and learning.
- We are welcoming and inclusive of those from different cultural backgrounds, those with additional needs and all sexual orientations.
- We are proactive in meeting the professional development needs of teachers, who attend relevant CPD and can identify

signs and triggers in vulnerable children and young people, and recognise the need for interventions.

- The physical environment is modified to meet the needs of children and young people with additional and/or complex needs. The following are available if applicable:
 - Sensory room/sensory gardens
 - 'Safe' room/space for distressed/anxious children and young people
 - Room(s) for meeting with parents, visiting professionals
 - Room(s) for individuals and small groups requiring targeted intervention and support
 - Lifting equipment
 - Specialist technology
 - Jacuzzi
 - Ball pool/Trampolines

Key Area 2 - Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

- Teachers' preparation for teaching and learning explicitly references teaching, learning and assessment approaches that promote collaborative learning, peer and self-assessment and a sense of achievement.
- Teachers design and prepare for differentiated teaching methods and assessment of learning outcomes for children and young people at risk or with additional and/or complex needs so that they experience a sense of achievement.
- Teachers use various teaching and assessment methods that promote a sense of achievement and differentiate their expectations to promote full participation and achievement for all children and young people.
- Teachers are encouraged and facilitated to attend relevant CPD to meet the needs of the school population and are encouraged to incorporate and model learnings in their practice and engage in collaborative working.
- Teachers will use opportunities to promote wellbeing across the curriculum.
- Throughout primary, and in post primary up to Junior Cycle,

the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum is implemented on a mandatory basis. An SPHE Programme will be sourced to teach to every class up to Junior Cycle, in accordance with the required time allocations.

- There is an integrated curriculum planning approach to the provision of Physical Education (PE) and SPHE as part of the 400 hour curricular wellbeing programme at Junior Cycle (post primary only).
- programmes are chosen to teach core social and emotional competence and to help children and young people develop coping skills to manage challenges.
- A broad range of children and young people's success is rewarded and celebrated to demonstrate the value the school places on all types of achievement.
- Children and young people's enjoyment in learning is evident and is linked to a sense of making progress and of achievement. Children and young people are motivated to learn, and see themselves as learners, demonstrating this in their positive approach to classwork and homework.
- Wellbeing promotion within Scoil Chormaic develops children and young peoples' awareness of mental health difficulties and information is shared about when to seek help and who to go to when distressed.
- Teachers attend CPD and deliver specialised and targeted programmes, selected in line with best practice and grounded in research and evidence, to individuals and/or small groups.
- The school deploys resources based on individual learning, behavioural, social and emotional needs under the Special Education model.
- Appropriate strategies are implemented for children and young people with additional and/or complex needs, including those recommended in professional reports.
- There are opportunities for training and on-going practice support and guidance for SNAs to further build their capacity to support children and young people with additional needs.

Key Area 3 - Policy and Planning

- The wellbeing of the whole school community underpins all school policy and plans.
- The voice of children and young people, parents and staff informs the development, review and updating of school policies.
- Schools have appropriate wellbeing policies in place (for example, Anti Bullying Policy, Child Protection Policy, Critical Incident Policy) and are made available to staff, children and young people, parents and relevant school community partners.
- Policies and plans set out how inclusive practice will be implemented in a way that fosters school connectedness, acceptance and celebration of diversity.
- There is a comprehensive CPD plan to ensure all teachers have the necessary training to incorporate wellbeing promotion in their teaching practice to meet the particular needs of the school population.
- School leaders and management recognise the importance of staff wellbeing and the particular challenges that can occur in a school environment and have systems in place to support all members of staff.
- We give regard to the Department's policies and circulars that outline how to support children and young people with additional and/or complex needs.
- School-based information is used, in conjunction with reports from external professionals, to set guidelines and recommendations for individualised supports for children and young people with additional needs.
- The school engages in a collaborative problem-solving process to support a child/young person's needs, identified through the school's continuum of support.
- A student support file/Individual Education Plan is used to plan, record and review progress.
- The school ensures that children and young people with complex needs will be supported to understand and follow

school policies such as bullying and the school code of behavior.

- The school has mechanisms in place for identifying and supporting vulnerable children and young people in the event of a critical incident.
- Appropriate structures are in place so that early intervention is promoted for children and young people who are 'at risk' e.g. those who do not attend school regularly or those at higher risk of developing mental health difficulties.

Key Area 4 - Relationships & Partnerships

- All of our staff at Scoil Chormaic endeavour to model openness, respect and listening in their interactions with each other, children and young people and parents.
- Relationships and partnerships are supported through a range of agreed formal and informal structures, such as, assemblies, newsletters, student journals and through teaching and learning.
- School management acknowledges the importance of staff wellbeing and promote this in a variety of ways including recognition of the value of staff contribution and their work.
- The school establishes links with other schools and fosters strong working relationships to engage in sharing of best practice.
- The school promotes professional networks for principals and teachers.
- The school establishes good links with Department support services, community-based statutory and voluntary support services and other external agencies.
- Mentoring systems are in place whereby more senior teachers offer practical and social support to Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and/or new staff members.
- Staff receive individualised support from school leaders and management in times of difficulty or during personal crisis.
- Systems are in place whereby more senior young people are

supported in mentoring younger children.

- Opportunities and supports are in place for children and young people who require support to interact with peers.
- Through Parent-teacher meetings, children and young people and their parents are invited to engage in collaborative problem solving and decision-making with regard to their individual needs and the interventions to support them.
- Children and young people have access to one to one or small group support as appropriate with qualified members of staff to support their personal and social, educational and career development, and at moments of personal crisis.
- At times of transition schools link with other education settings, including early childhood care and education settings, crèches, other primary/post-primary schools, Youthreach, Community Education Centres/Adult Centres to ensure successful transfers.
- The school promotes teachers' engagement in networks for teacher collaboration.

Policies related to Wellbeing

The following wellbeing-related policies are in place and are regularly reviewed:

Code of Behaviour

Health and Safety Policy

Intimate Care Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Attendance Strategy

Dignity in the Workplace

Child Safeguarding statement

Anti-Bullying Policy

School Gender Equity policy

Data Protection Policy

Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE)

Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE)

Substance Use

Internet Acceptable Usage Policy

Admissions Policy

Ratification & Review

The Board has ensured that the necessary policies, protocols or practices as appropriate are in place in respect of each of the above listed items. This policy will be made available to school personnel and is readily accessible to parents on request. A copy of this policy will be made available on the school website

www.scoilchormaic.ie

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed regularly by the Board of Management. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and the patron if requested.

References:

Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines

Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023

Handbook for Special Schools and Further Education Sector (JCPA)

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on *16/11/2020*

Signed: *Lorraine Lowry* (Principal)

 Monica Shannon (Chair)