

## WELLBEING – THE INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL KILLORGLIN

Four aspects of Wellbeing are interconnected in our school:

### CULTURE:

- School Mission and Ethos
- Physical and Social Environment
- Classroom Culture
- Teaching, learning and assessment

Our former manager and principal, Mr. Joseph A. O' Dwyer, was a pioneer in education and recognised the importance of the physical and social environment, decades before its impact was generally fully understood. His insistence that the school should move to higher ground when it was first built is testament to his awareness of the influence of the mountains and nature on the wellbeing of humans. The 'Forum', social spaces and meditation room reinforced the nature of the physical and social environment he envisaged. School walls adorned with art and the presence of a grand piano heightened this vision. The school endeavours to nurture this legacy and provide a welcoming, healthy and safe environment for all its students. The outdoor seating, healthy food options, the Cubbie booth (offering a multi-sensory space), murals and student garden is testament to our wish to honour the founding principle, mission and ethos of the school.

Reports from the Inspectorate have often commented positively on the classroom culture that has been nurtured in the school and the productive nature of student/teacher relationships. The school has high expectations of its student in every domain. It's our experience that students respond positively to this ethos and are eager to reach their potential. Teaching and learning is a collaborative process and anxiety in relation to assessment can be managed by good preparation, application and organisation. Self-efficacy is at the centre of our educational vision.

### CURRICULUM:

- CSPE, PE and SPHE
- Guidance
- Other subjects and learning experiences
- Extra-curricular and co-curricular learning

It's important to recognise the overlap of all these particular domains. Recent studies in

Italy have emphasised the correlation between nature and human wellbeing. Extra-curricular activities involving tours, hill-walking, trips to Cappanalea, etc. combine with other sporting activities to offer students opportunities to explore different outlets. This begins in First Year where we attempt to create solid foundations for relationships by having particular days dedicated to group bonding. For example, one such day, is the annual trip to Seefin, where students have the opportunity to get to know their new classmates outside the classroom.

In a more formal context certain subjects offer a more obvious platform for wellbeing. Guidance, for example, is an important element in offering support to students. The school embraces a growth mind-set rather than a fixed mind-set. Everyone can change and grow through effort and experience. Management, teachers and staff endeavour to embody this philosophy and regularly remind students of the untapped potential that can be released by work and effort.

#### RELATIONSHIPS:

- Student/teacher relationship
- Peer relationships
- Student voice
- Partnership with parents, community and wider supports

Since listening, respecting and accepting others are at the core of our ethos this should emanate from the microcosmic setting of the classroom into the school community. The importance of small, authentic and everyday acts of interest should not be underestimated. This must be at the centre of each class so that peer relationships are influenced by these values. In fact teaching and learning within the classroom provides the greatest opportunity to contribute to student wellbeing. The same level of respect and dignity should be offered to all stakeholders. After Covid-19 there have been sustained attempts to redevelop and nurture connections with parents. A Parent's Council has been re-established as well as the Student Council. A proactive partnership with parents is central to providing a meaningful Wellbeing programme. Teachers can learn from students and the Student Council is just one vehicle that can be used to allow students a safe and inclusive opportunity to express their views. It works best when positive initiatives are acted upon and students are encouraged to 'find their voice' and influence appropriately the ethos of the school.

#### POLICY & PLANNING:

- School policies

- School self-evaluation
- Subject and whole-school planning
- CPD planning

School policies outline the template for relationships in the school. S.S.E. offers a mechanism for review - taking the initiative in improving the quality of education, affirming areas of success, identifying limitations, reporting to the whole school community and ultimately prioritising areas of development. Each policy should be developed in partnership with all the stakeholders. They should reflect our shared set of values and should be accessible to all. Subject planning, Whole School planning and CPD incorporates Wellbeing. Policies such as the behaviour policy, SPHE policy, internet safety policy, anti-bullying policy, dignity in the workplace policy, child protection policy and critical incident policy are crucial. Each subject plan also includes Wellbeing. Our shared vision is based on six indicators – Active Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected and Aware. Wellbeing isn't just about policies - that is just the starting point. The enacted curriculum is central to everything. Ultimately it is important for schools that teachers are supportive of the Wellbeing programme and understand how they can contribute to it. Policies and plans developed collaboratively will always be easier to implement.

## WELLBEING IN THE SUBJECT AREAS

There are three pillars to our Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme; CSPE, PE and SPHE.

Our allocation is set out as following:

PE: 135 hours (distributed over First, Second and Third Year)

CSPE: 100 hours (distributed over First, Second and Third Year)

SPHE: 100 hours (distributed over First, Second and Third Year)

There are two Wellness classes in First Year and one in Second Year. The specification for these units of learning are outlined in the appendices.

The risk that wellbeing can feed into individualism should be combatted by emphasising links between individual wellbeing and collective wellbeing, between the personal and the political and ultimately between our wellbeing and the state of our planet.

## TEACHER WELLBEING

It is difficult for teachers and Special Needs Assistants to be genuinely motivated to promote the emotional and social wellbeing of students if they themselves feel uncared for and burnt out. An inclusive whole-school culture, with positive and affirming leadership is important in this context. Also self-care is important for every individual before they can reach out and help others. The Wellbeing of all stakeholders is central in the life of the school.