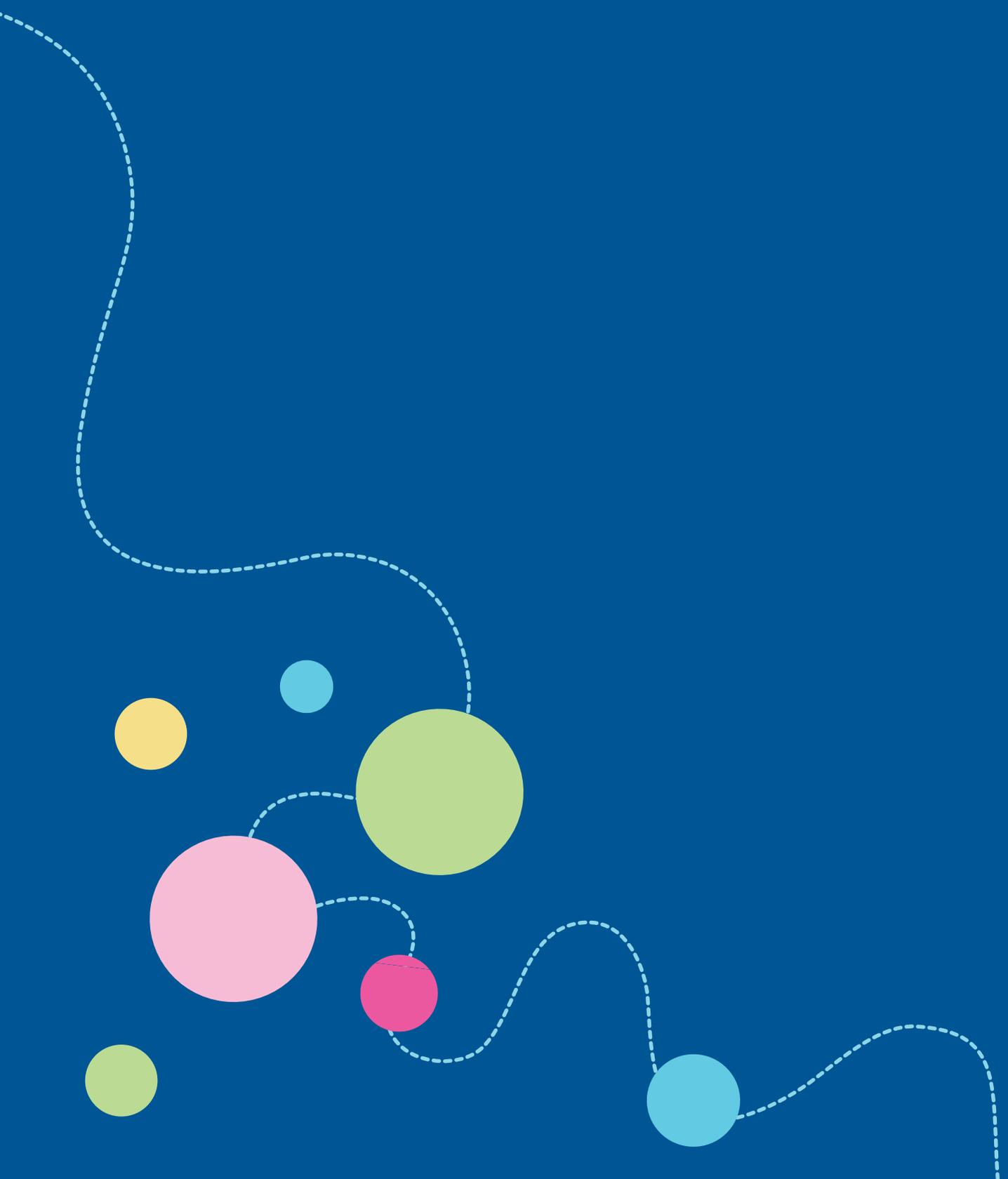


JUNIOR CYCLE WELLBEING GUIDELINES







An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnach
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

GUIDELINES FOR WELLBEING IN JUNIOR CYCLE 2017

1

INTRODUCTION

6

- 1.1 Why does wellbeing matter? 10
- 1.2 The policy context 12
- 1.3 Towards an understanding of student wellbeing in junior cycle 15

2

WELLBEING AND THE FRAMEWORK FOR JUNIOR CYCLE

18

3

WELLBEING-A WHOLE-SCHOOL ENDEAVOUR

24

- 3.1 Four aspects of wellbeing in schools 26
- 3.2 Teacher wellbeing 29
- 3.3 The physical environment and wellbeing 30
- 3.4 Expectations and beliefs and wellbeing 31
- 3.5 Teaching and learning, and wellbeing 32
- 3.6 Student voice and wellbeing 34
- 3.7 Assessment practices and student wellbeing 35
- 3.8 School policies 36
- 3.9 Student support systems 37
- 3.10 Partnerships with parents and guardians 39
- 3.11 Planning 40

4

WELLBEING AND THE CURRICULUM

42

4.1	Indicators of wellbeing	44
4.2	Wellbeing and the curriculum	46
4.3	Guidance	48
4.4	Other areas of learning and wellbeing	50
4.5	Planning principles and steps in developing Wellbeing programmes	52
4.6	Curriculum for a Wellbeing programme	56
4.7	Sample programmes	60

5

ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

70

5.1	Assessment	72
5.2	Reporting on Wellbeing in first and second year	73

6

APPENDICES

76

Appendix A:	NCCA short courses and Wellbeing programmes at junior cycle	78
Appendix B:	How the Wellbeing indicators link to the statements of learning and the Staying well key skill	88
Appendix C:	Getting started–Suggested outline for a staff workshop	89
Appendix D:	Using the wellbeing indicators to review school practice	91
Appendix E:	Using wellbeing indicators to support student self-assessment	92
Appendix F:	Student focus group on developing a Wellbeing programme	94
Appendix G:	Parent focus group on developing a Wellbeing programme	96
Appendix H:	Wellbeing in junior cycle: Self-evaluation questionnaire for school management and staff	98
Appendix I:	Template to support schools in planning shorter units of learning in Wellbeing	104

1





INTRODUCTION

The Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) provides for a new area of learning at junior cycle called Wellbeing. Wellbeing will cross the three years of junior cycle and build on substantial work already taking place in schools in support of students' wellbeing. This area of learning will make the school's culture and ethos and commitment to wellbeing visible to students. It will include learning opportunities to enhance the physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing of students. It will enable students

to build life skills and develop a strong sense of connectedness to their school and to their community. The junior cycle Wellbeing programme will begin with 300 hours of timetabled engagement in 2017 and build up to 400 hours by 2020 as the new junior cycle is implemented fully in schools.

The aim of these guidelines is to support schools in planning and developing a coherent Wellbeing programme that builds on the understandings, practices and curricula for wellbeing already existing in schools.

There are six sections in the guidelines. Section 1 sets out why wellbeing matters as part of junior cycle education and the policy context for considering wellbeing within junior cycle education. Section 2 looks at the connections between wellbeing and the *Framework for Junior Cycle*. Section 3 considers the elements that contribute to a whole-school approach to wellbeing, while Section 4 provides an overview of planning considerations for and some examples of programmes for wellbeing. Section 5 sets out suggestions for how schools can assess and report on student learning in this area of learning. The final section provides tools for planning and evaluating Wellbeing programmes.

The development of these guidelines has been particularly informed by the work of Maeve O'Brien in *Wellbeing and Post-Primary Schooling: a Review of the Literature and Research* (NCCA, 2008) and the background paper *A Human Development Framework for Orienting Education and Schools in the Space of Wellbeing* (NCCA, 2016) by Maeve O'Brien and Andrew O'Shea.

**SCHOOLS
HAVE A CENTRAL
ROLE TO PLAY IN
SUPPORTING AND
PROMOTING STUDENTS'
LEARNING ABOUT
WELLBEING AND FOR
WELLBEING.**





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.

1.1

WHY DOES WELLBEING MATTER?

Wellbeing is gaining increased attention across many education systems. This is influenced by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which emphasises children’s right to achieve their full potential and participate in decisions that affect them. A rights-based approach to wellbeing is useful as it reminds us that wellbeing matters not simply because it leads to better educational outcomes or can influence young people’s outcomes as adults. Wellbeing matters in the here and now. It is important in its own right because all students have a right to feel cared for in school.

That said, we also know that students who have higher levels of wellbeing tend to have better cognitive outcomes in school.¹ ESRI research found that ‘children with higher levels of emotional, behavioural, social and school wellbeing had higher levels of academic achievement subsequently (at ages 11, 14, and 16)’.² Therefore wellbeing and learning are inextricably connected.

It is vital that those who seek to promote high academic standards and those who seek to promote mental, emotional and social health realise that they are on the same side, and that social and affective education can support academic learning, not simply take time away from it. There is overwhelming evidence that students learn more effectively, including their academic subjects, if they are happy in their work, believe in themselves, and feel school is supporting them.³

WELLBEING MATTERS NOT SIMPLY BECAUSE IT LEADS TO BETTER EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES OR CAN INFLUENCE YOUNG PEOPLE’S OUTCOMES AS ADULTS. WELLBEING MATTERS IN THE HERE AND NOW.

There is also a large body of international research showing an association between the quality of relationships between teachers and students and a number of student outcomes, including socio-emotional wellbeing, engagement in schoolwork, feeling a sense of belonging in school, levels of disciplinary problems, and academic achievement.⁴

Headstrong’s *My World* survey identified key risk and protective factors⁵ to the mental health of young people. Among the 12-18-year-olds surveyed (N=7,000) the most powerful predictor of good mental health was the presence in their lives of at least ‘one good adult’—someone who knew them personally, believed in them, and was available to them. Those who could identify such an adult were found to have stronger self-esteem, optimism that they could cope with life’s challenges, and a sense of wellbeing. Those who could not identify any such figure in their lives were found to be at high risk for anxiety, depression, acting out and self-harm. For the majority of the adolescents surveyed, their ‘Good Adult’ was identified as a parent (most likely their mother), but for many it was a grandparent, older relative or teacher.

1 *Student wellbeing: Literature review.* (2015) Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation.

2 Smyth, E. (2015). *Learning in focus: Wellbeing and school experiences among 9-13-year-olds: Insights from the growing up in Ireland study.* ESRI/NCCA p.4.

3 Weare, K. (2000). *Promoting mental, emotional, and social health: A whole-school approach.* London: Routledge.

4 Smyth, E. (2015). *Learning in focus: Wellbeing and school experiences among 9-13-year-olds: Insights from the growing up in Ireland study.* ESRI/NCCA p.3.

5 Protective factors are conditions or attributes in individuals, families, schools or the larger society that, when present, increase the health and wellbeing of children and families.

The philosopher, Nel Noddings, suggests that care is at the heart of human life and flourishing and should be viewed as the ethical ideal of education. She proposes that

The primary aim of every educational effort must be the maintenance and enhancement of caring.⁶

Following on from Noddings, other care theorists have articulated this ethic of care in schools and suggested that the ways in which teachers model an ethic of care for their students strongly influences how students develop as learners and as young people.

Having said this, it must also be acknowledged that many of the factors that shape and affect the wellbeing of a student lie beyond the reach and influence of schools. Economic, political, environmental and social factors all have an impact on student wellbeing. The student's particular family circumstances and context can also have a major influence on their experience of wellbeing. The links between poverty and poor physical and mental health are well-documented. In this context, data from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) shows that the number of families living in consistent poverty almost doubled between 2008 and 2014, rising from 4.2% to 8%, with inevitable impacts on the wellbeing of children.⁷

Whilst acknowledging these external factors, it is important that the role of school in relation to wellbeing should not be underestimated. By optimising opportunities for young people to learn about wellbeing and by being aware of the protective factors that the whole school community can provide to enhance young people's sense of wellbeing, schools can make a significant difference.

Childhood can be seen as a process of 'well-becoming', where young people are gaining knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that will sustain them throughout their lives⁸. This is a lifelong journey, but one where schools play an important part. The goal for wellbeing is human flourishing and flourishing rests on five pillars: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment⁹. When children and young people are 'flourishing', they are not only curious and eager to learn, they are:

- creative and imaginative
- connected and empathetic
- good team players
- confident about who they are
- resilient and persistent
- positive about themselves and see themselves growing into better people.¹⁰

Schools have a central role to play in supporting and promoting students' learning *about wellbeing* and for *wellbeing*. They learn *about* wellbeing through specific areas of the curriculum and various wellbeing events and initiatives that are organised to develop awareness, knowledge and skills *about* wellbeing. They learn *for* wellbeing when their whole experience of school life including all the day-to-day interactions, both within and beyond the classroom, are respectful and caring. Thinking about learning *for* wellbeing requires that we consider not only *what* students learn but also *how* they learn it. Learning *for* wellbeing can be nurtured in all subjects and by all teachers.

6 Noddings, N. (1984). *The challenge to care in schools: An alternative approach to education*. New York. p.172.

7 CSO. (2014). Survey on income and living conditions.

Retrieved from www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/silc/surveyonincomeandlivingconditions2014

8 Awartani, M and Looney, J. (2015). Learning and well-being: An agenda for change.

9 Seligman, M. (2011). 'Happiness is not enough.'

Retrieved March 21 2016 from www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/newsletters/flourishnewsletters/newtheory

10 Growing great kids: helping young people to flourish in life.

Retrieved March 23 2016 from growinggreatschools.com.au/growing-great-kids-helping-young-people-flourish-in-life

1.2

THE POLICY CONTEXT

In discussions and consultations associated with the junior cycle developments, both teachers and students all stressed the importance of concerted attention being given to student wellbeing in the new junior cycle. Hence, *the Framework for Junior Cycle (2015)* states that

The junior cycle years are a critical time in young peoples' lives. Students are exposed to a range of influences, including peer pressure. They require support to make positive responsible decisions relating to their health and wellbeing and the wellbeing of others. Wellbeing in junior cycle is about young people feeling confident, happy, healthy and connected.¹¹

*The National Children's Strategy*¹² proposes a vision for an Ireland where

children are respected as young citizens with a valued contribution to make and a voice of their own; where all children are cherished and supported by family and the wider society; where they enjoy a fulfilling childhood and realise their potential.

*Healthy Ireland: A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing*¹³ sets out a similar vision for an Ireland where

...everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility.

The inclusion of wellbeing as an area of learning is also in keeping with the government's policy framework *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020*. This framework sets out a vision and outcomes which all government departments and agencies, statutory services and the voluntary and community sectors will work towards to enhance children's wellbeing. (See table 1 opposite for vision, outcomes and aims)

These guidelines contribute to this vision of schools as places 'where the rights of children and young people are respected, protected and fulfilled; where their voices are heard and where they are supported to realise their potential now and in the future'.¹⁴

The National Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development, 2014-2020, also provides a clear message regarding the link between Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and the promotion of wellbeing. Here, sustainable development is defined as

development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is characterised as 'a continuous, guided process of economic, environmental and social change aimed at promoting the wellbeing of citizens now and into the future.

11 Department of Education and Skills (DES). (2015). *Framework for junior cycle*. p.22.

12 Department of Education and Department of Health. (2000). *The National Children's Strategy: Our children, their lives*.

13 Department of Health (DOH). (2013). *Healthy Ireland: A framework for improved health and wellbeing. 2013-2025*. Retrieved March 23 2016 from www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/corporate/hieng.pdf

14 Department of Children and Youth Affairs. *Better outcomes, brighter futures: The national policy framework for children and young people 2014-2020*. p.1V.

Figure 1: Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: Vision and national outcomes

VISION

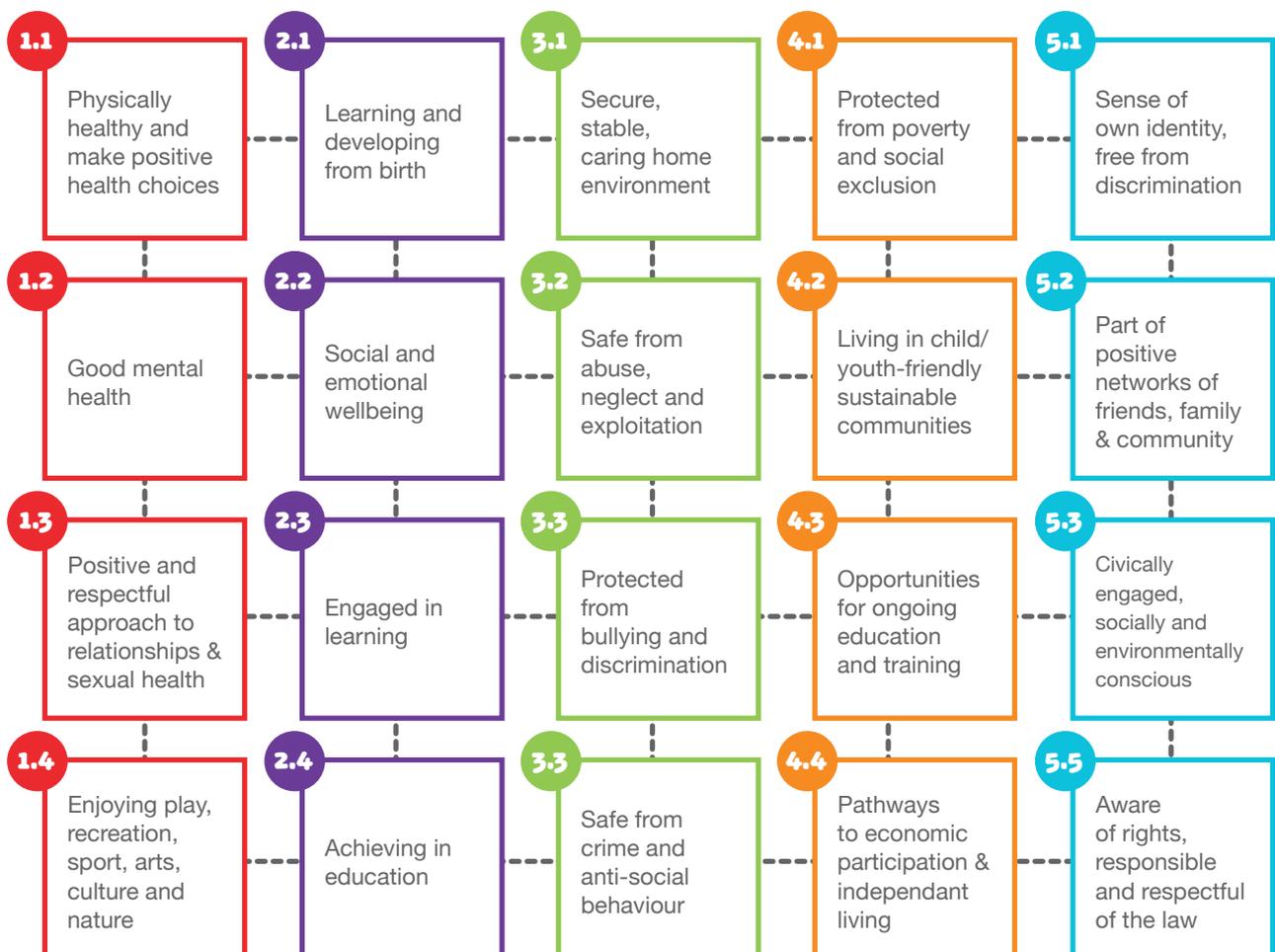
Our vision is to make Ireland the best small country in the world in which to grow up and raise a family, and where the rights of all children and young people are respected, protected and fulfilled; where their voices are heard and where they are supported to realise their maximum potential now and in the future.

NATIONAL OUTCOMES



Figure 2: Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: Aims

AIMS: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE OR HAVE...



Wellbeing has also been afforded increasing attention in education policy in recent times. The Department of Health and the Department of Education and Skills have supported a range of initiatives aimed at promoting health and wellbeing in schools, such as the *Framework for Developing a Health Promoting School*, *Well-Being in Post-Primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention (2013)*, *Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools (2016)*, and the Active School Flag, to name but a few. These and other initiatives have made a significant contribution to the growing awareness of how schools can promote wellbeing.

In a curriculum context, the theme of wellbeing is central to the *Aistear: Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* which describes wellbeing in terms of ‘children being confident, happy and healthy’¹⁵. Aspects of wellbeing are also present in a number of curriculum areas of the Primary Curriculum including Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and physical education (PE). SPHE¹⁶ provides particular opportunities to foster the personal development, health and wellbeing of the individual child, to help him/her to create and maintain supportive relationships and become an active and responsible citizen in society. Physical education¹⁷ fosters the balanced and harmonious development and general wellbeing of the child through a diverse range of experiences providing regular, challenging physical activity.

SCHOOLS NEED TO CONSIDER WELLBEING LESS AS A STATE OF BEING BUT MORE AS A PROCESS OF ‘WELL-BECOMING’. IT IS A LIFELONG JOURNEY.



15 *Aistear framework* www.ncca.biz/Aistear/pdfs/PrinciplesThemes_ENG/WellBeing_ENG.pdf

16 www.curriculumonline.ie/Primary/Curriculum-Areas/Social-Personal-and-Health-Education-Curriculum

17 www.curriculumonline.ie/Primary/Curriculum-Areas/Physical-Education

1.3

TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF STUDENT WELLBEING IN JUNIOR CYCLE

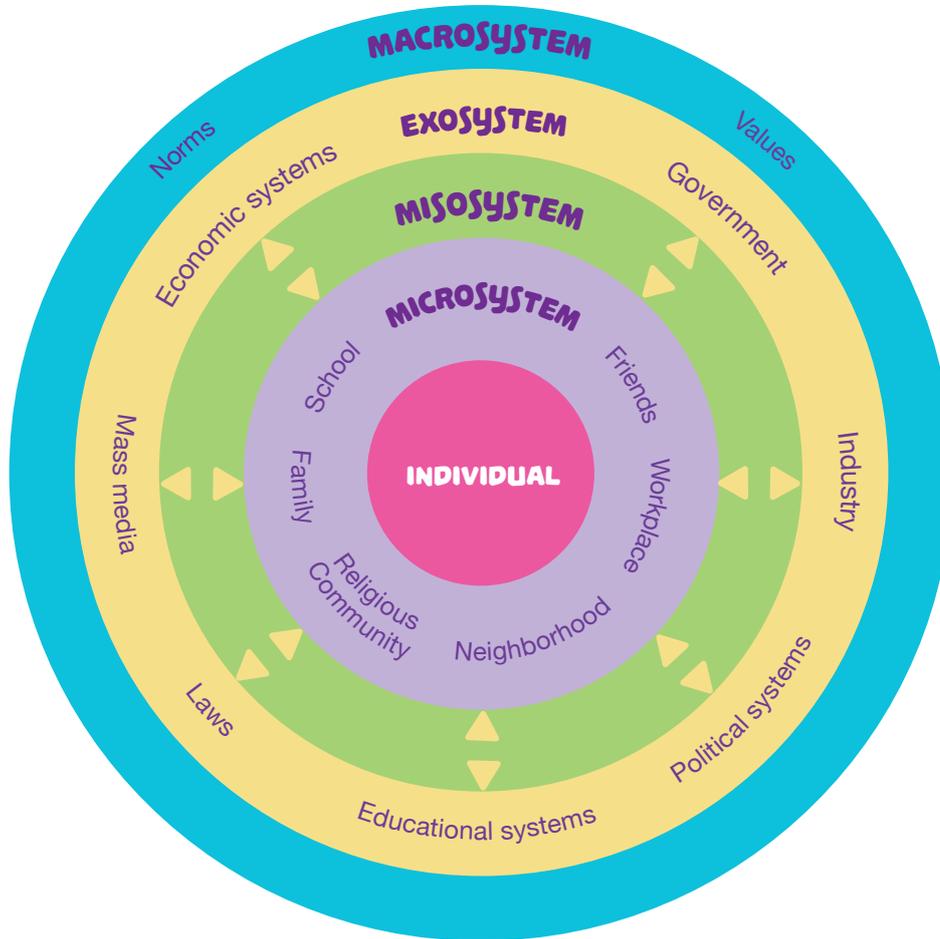
It is important that the whole school community builds and shares a common understanding of wellbeing, especially of what we mean when we talk about student wellbeing. Wellbeing can mean different things to different people. Hence, it is important to create a space for teachers to dialogue and share their own vision and understanding of wellbeing (see Appendices C, D, and H).

Arriving at a definition that communicates the multidimensional nature of student wellbeing is a challenge. Different disciplines offer diverse and sometimes competing perspectives on wellbeing. Much of the research and policy documentation defines student wellbeing in psychological terms and so wellbeing is commonly seen as a combination of sustained positive feelings and attitudes - happy, healthy and confident young people who feel safe, secure, cared for, included, involved and engaged, and so on. Such a view of wellbeing tends to narrowly identify wellbeing with the subjective mental state of the student. There are some problems with this approach. Firstly, it ignores the fact that wellbeing and ill-being exist together as part of the human condition and wellbeing doesn't necessarily mean the absence of negative moods, feelings or thoughts. Secondly, the individual is seen as being solely responsible for their wellbeing without reference to the wider context and social conditions necessary for individual wellbeing to flourish. Even with our best efforts, the wellbeing of individuals can be compromised by the wider social, economic and cultural landscape. Factors such as social class, ethnic identity and gender and sexual identity cannot be ignored when considering student wellbeing.

It is important, therefore, that the definition of wellbeing communicates the multidimensional nature of wellbeing and draws on the insights of psychology, philosophy and sociology¹⁸. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development is helpful as it provides a comprehensive systems-based approach to understanding wellbeing (See figure 3 on following page). It begins by acknowledging the importance of the individual and his/her immediate relationships and then moves outwards to show how a consideration of the wider community and social context is needed to accommodate a systems-based and holistic approach to wellbeing. This perspective recognises that sometimes the wellbeing of individuals is hindered by wider social, economic, or cultural factors and conversely, sometimes one's own behaviour, choices or goals may harm the collective wellbeing, at both a local and global level. In addition, it reminds us that our personal wellbeing and that of our local community is connected to the wider world and is built upon values of justice, equality, solidarity and respect for differences in an interconnected world. In a nutshell, this model demonstrates that to be human is to be relational and wellbeing is always realised in a community.

18 O'Brien, M. and O'Shea A. (2016). *A human development framework for orienting education and schools in the space of wellbeing*.

Figure 3: Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model of human development¹⁹



INDIVIDUAL
Age, sex, health, etc

MICROSYSTEM
Immediate environments
Direct interaction in activities, roles and relation with others and objects

MESOSYSTEM
Connections between systems and microsystems

EXOSYSTEM
Indirect environments
Systems that influence the individual indirectly through micro-systems

MACROSYSTEM
Social Ideologies and values of cultures and subcultures

TECHNO-SUBSYSTEM
Media influences
Computers
Internet
Portable devices
Social media
TV, Phone

19 Awartani M. and Looney J. *Learning and wellbeing: An agenda for change.* p.19. Retrieved from www.wise-qatar.org/sites/default/files/asset/document/wise-research-5-eisptu-11_17.pdf

Finally, schools need to consider wellbeing less as a state of being but more as a process of ‘well-becoming’. It is a lifelong journey. In this context, it is crucial to validate students’ current experience and to support young people in gaining the knowledge, skills and dispositions for their wellbeing now, and into their adult lives. It’s important to affirm that wellbeing will never be fully realised; setbacks are always possible and this is true for everyone. Low moods, feelings, thoughts and poor self-esteem should not be seen as obstacles to wellbeing but as aspects of the human condition. By acknowledging the experience of ill-being as part of the continuum of wellbeing, students learn to accept that everyone experiences vulnerability and a need for care at stages in their journey. Students can be encouraged to recognise that wellbeing does not necessarily mean the absence of stress or negative emotions in their lives.

The following definition²⁰ aims to take account of the multi-dimensional nature of wellbeing encompassing social, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, environmental and physical wellbeing:

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.

Part of the journey towards a shared understanding and vision for wellbeing is that everybody in the school community can see themselves as having a role and responsibility in supporting students’ wellbeing. This is in line with the *Healthy Ireland Framework*, which sets out a vision of

a healthy Ireland where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society, and is everyone’s responsibility.²¹

While every teacher can support student wellbeing, it is further enhanced when important aspects of wellbeing are the subject of learning and teaching in specific curriculum areas and are allocated specific time.

Examples of how schools might plan Wellbeing programmes are set out in Section 4 of these guidelines.

20 Adapted from the WHO definition. (2001). www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Resources-Guidance/Well-Being-in-Post-Primary-Schools-Guidelines-for-Mental-Health-Promotion-and-Suicide-Prevention-2013.pdf

21 Department of Health. *Healthy Ireland: A framework for improved health and wellbeing 2013 – 2025*. Retrieved from www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/corporate/hieng.pdf

2





**WELLBEING
AND THE
FRAMEWORK
FOR JUNIOR
CYCLE**

The junior cycle years are an important time in young peoples' lives as they learn to take greater responsibility for their lives and to cope with new experiences, influences and pressures.

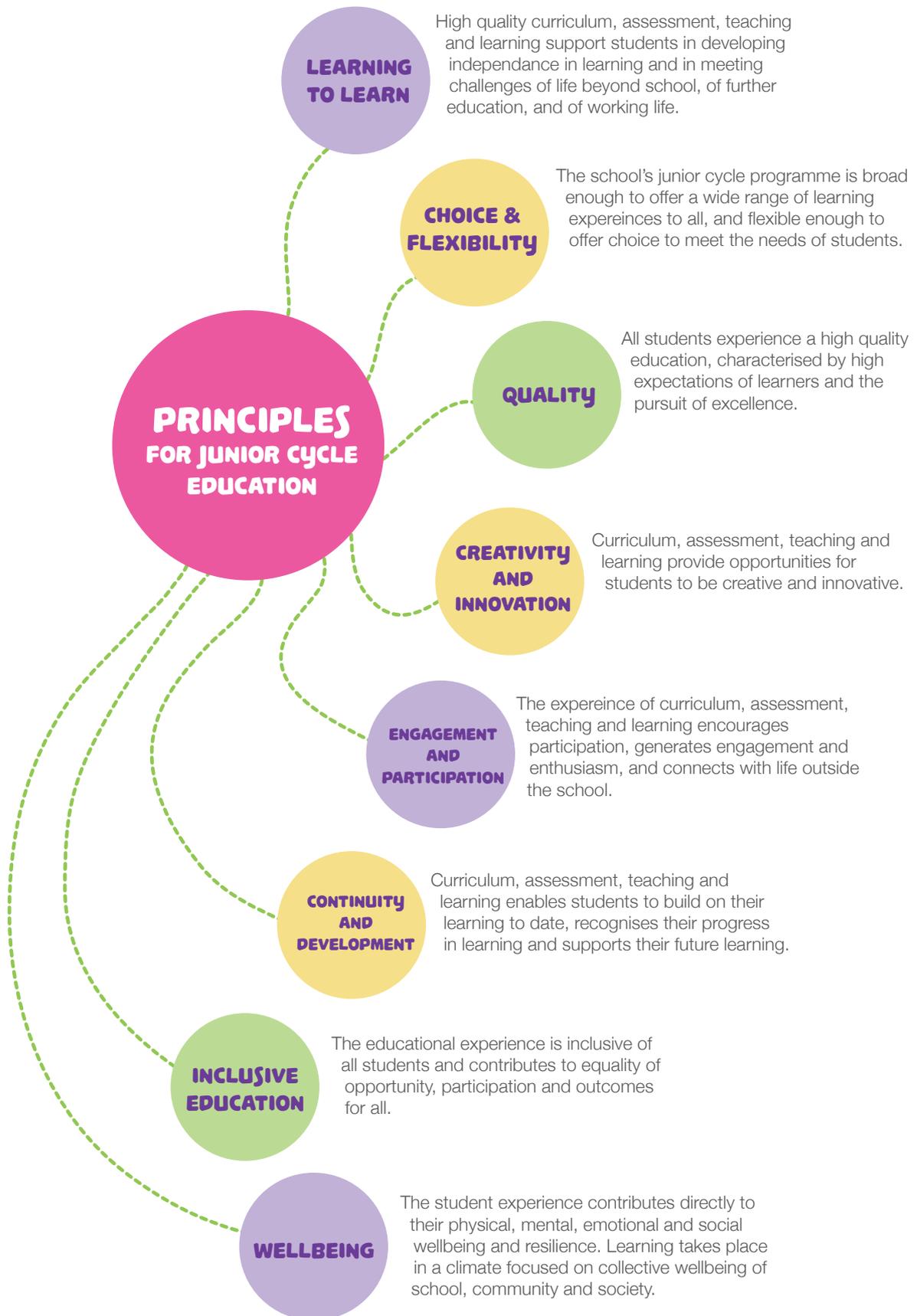
Student wellbeing is at the heart of the vision of a new junior cycle and *The Framework for Junior Cycle* provides an excellent basis for planning a junior cycle Wellbeing programme.

The Framework for Junior Cycle is underpinned by eight principles that inform the development and implementation of junior cycle programmes in all schools. All of these principles are important in supporting the student experience of wellbeing in junior cycle. It is worth noting that wellbeing is both a principle of junior cycle education and also a curricular area.



**STUDENT
WELLBEING IS AT
THE HEART OF THE
VISION OF A NEW
JUNIOR CYCLE.**

Figure 4: Principles for junior cycle education



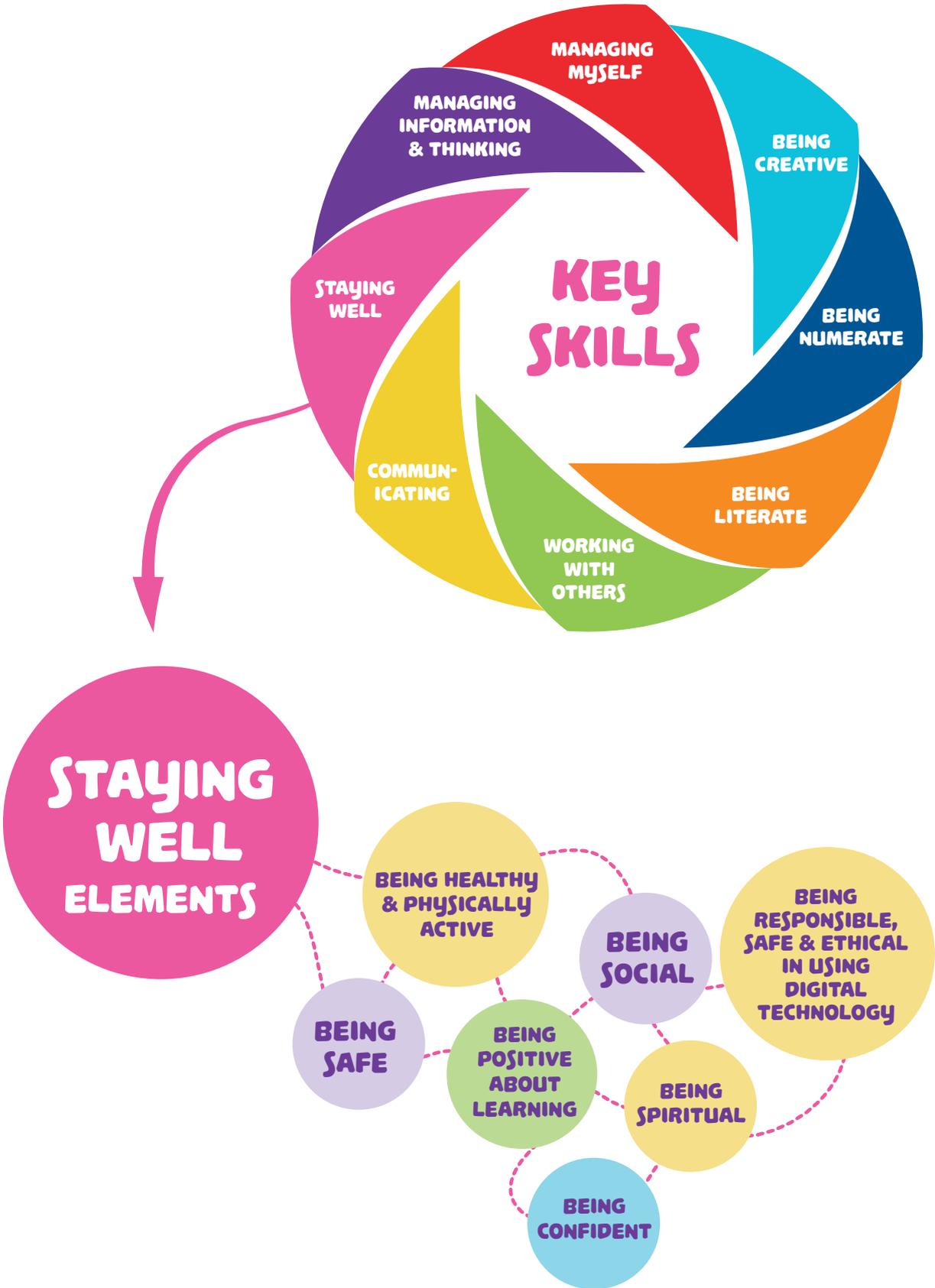
The 24 statements of learning (SOLs) included in the Framework, along with the eight principles, are central to planning for the students' experience of the school's junior cycle programme. A number of the statements of learning relate explicitly to wellbeing, including:

- 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).

The statements and the principles provide the basis for planning and evaluating all junior cycle school programmes. The promotion of key skills within teaching and learning also has an important part to play in supporting student wellbeing. When teachers plan skills-rich lessons, students are more actively engaged in their learning, feel more positive about learning and take more responsibility for their learning. While the key skill of Staying Well focuses specifically on wellbeing, many of the positive dispositions associated with student wellbeing are fostered through the conscious development of all the key skills in the classroom. (See opposite page)

Each school has the autonomy to design its junior cycle programme drawing on a combination of curriculum components (subjects, short courses, learning units and other learning experiences). An important criterion for the inclusion of the different components is that they provide engaging, challenging and enjoyable learning experiences for students, thereby supporting their experience of wellbeing.

Advice on, and examples of, how different curriculum components can be employed and combined in junior cycle Wellbeing programmes is set out in Section 4 of these guidelines.



3





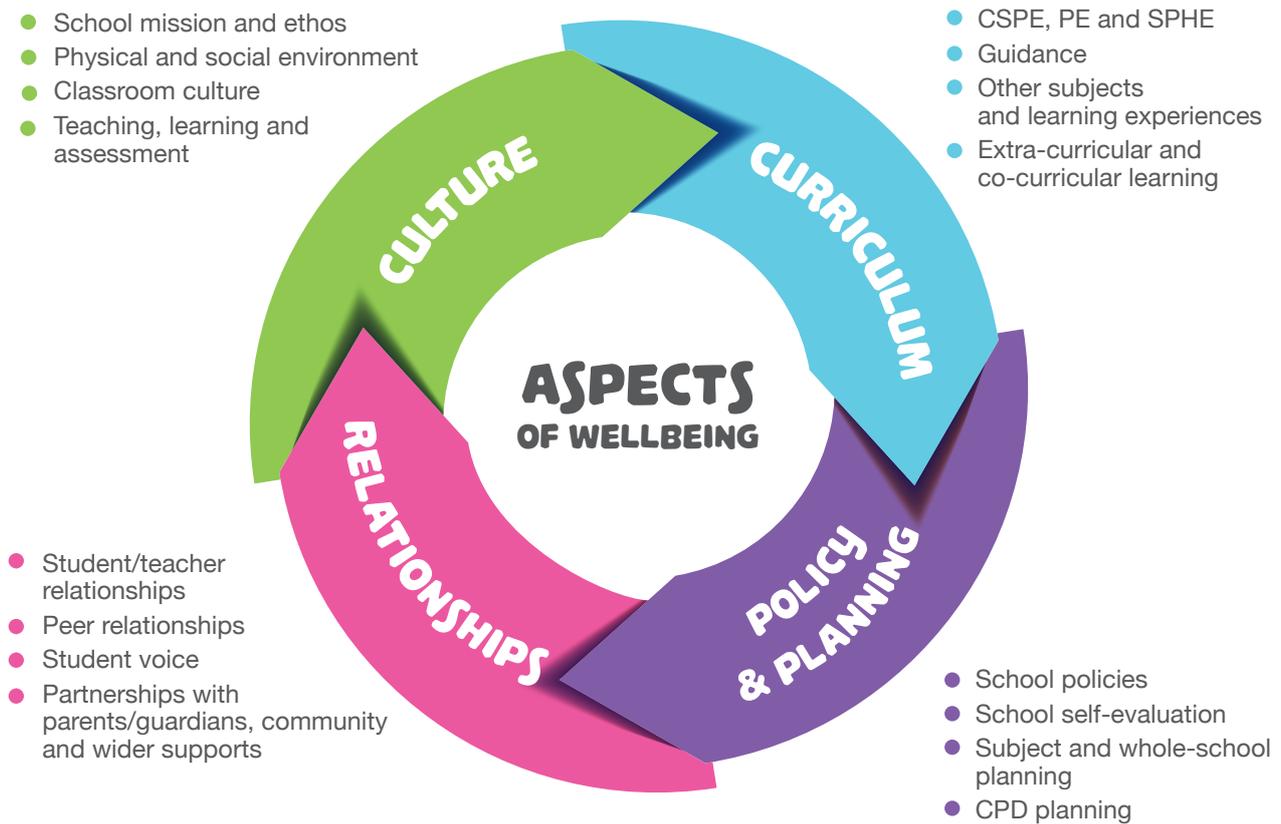
**WELLBEING A
WHOLE-SCHOOL
ENDEAVOUR**

3.1

FOUR ASPECTS OF WELLBEING IN SCHOOLS

Planning for wellbeing involves consideration of these aspects: culture, relationships, policy and planning and the curriculum. This section focuses on the first three of these and looks at ways in which a whole-school community can contribute to building the kind of culture, relationships and policies that support student wellbeing. These four aspects coincide well with the four areas of action recommended in the *Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention (2013)* and with *Schools for Health in Ireland: Framework for Developing a Health Promoting School*.

The question of wellbeing and the curriculum is the subject of detailed discussion in Section 4.



Wellbeing is a multi-faceted concept and efforts to promote student wellbeing require a whole-school approach. This means looking at structures, experiences, resources and other elements that the whole school community can provide to enhance young people's sense of wellbeing.

Much of the research in this area concludes that positive relationships²² between teachers and students, and students and their peers, along with a sense of connectedness, are the key influences on a student's sense of wellbeing while in school.

A sense of belonging to the school environment is an established protective factor for child and adolescent health, education, and social wellbeing.²³

Connectedness is realised and promoted through the quality of relationships experienced within the school environment and through the values and school culture experienced on a day-to-day basis. In this context, wellbeing can not only be taught through explicit curriculum components, but can be modelled by those working in the school as they show care, respect and consideration in their interactions with students.

The 'Health Promoting Schools' programme and research emphasise the significance of holistic educational experiences for students so that it is not sufficient to teach 'about' good relationships and respect; this needs to be modelled and experienced in the school community.²⁴

Research also indicates that it is possible to influence the development of social and emotional skills within formal schooling and this in turn can lead to better learning outcomes and higher academic achievement.

The importance of feeling connected to school, that you feel it matters that you are there, is increasingly seen as vital for both health and academic outcomes.²⁵

The good news is that some of the social and emotional skills are malleable, and teachers can play a pivotal role by improving learning environments to enhance these skills. ... raising levels of social and emotional skills—such as perseverance, self-esteem and sociability—can in turn have a particularly strong effect on improving health-related outcomes and subjective well-being, as well as reducing anti-social behaviours.²⁶

Everyone within each school, regardless of the level and frequency of contact they have with young people, shares the responsibility for creating a positive ethos and climate of respect and care—one in which everyone can make a positive contribution to the wellbeing of each individual within the school and to the wider community. The importance of small, everyday acts of kindness, interest, consideration and positivity cannot be underestimated. These dimensions of relationships and interactions communicate to students that they are recognised, cared for, valued and listened to and thereby contribute significantly to students' feeling of wellbeing.

All of us need 'one good adult' in our corner. This is someone in our lives who gets us, who listens to us and who believes in our potential.²⁷

22 'The quality of teacher-student relationships emerges as a key influence on child self-image'. Smyth, E. (2015). *Wellbeing and school experiences among 9- and 13-year-olds: Insights from the growing up in Ireland study*. ESRI/NCCA. p.v.

23 New South Wales Dept of Education and Communities. (2015). *Student wellbeing: Literature review*. Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation.

24 O' Brien, M. (2009). *Well-being and post-primary schooling*. NCCA. p.180.

25 Blum, 2005; Rowe, Stewart and Patterson, 2007.

26 OECD. (2015). *Skills for social progress*. p.13 and p.14.

27 Bates, T. (2016, April 2). We have the power to help those in a dark place. *The Irish Times*.

Wellbeing as a whole-school endeavour can support all students, albeit in different ways. When schools have a strong focus on taking care of the needs of all students, then those children who are vulnerable or experiencing particular difficulties also benefit. It is important that, as educators, we do not assume that we know what children need and design the curriculum to satisfy these assumed needs. Students should have opportunities to express their needs so that wellbeing programmes

are developed that respond to their real and expressed needs rather than adult perceptions of what they need.²⁸ The main focus of these guidelines is on building a whole-school approach to wellbeing and a curriculum for wellbeing that is the responsibility of all and supports wellbeing for all.



**WHEN SCHOOLS HAVE
A STRONG FOCUS ON
TAKING CARE OF THE
NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS,
THEN THOSE CHILDREN
WHO ARE VULNERABLE OR
EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES
ALSO BENEFIT.**

28 Noddings, N. (2005). Identifying and responding to needs in education. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, Volume 35(2).

3.2

TEACHER WELLBEING

Wellbeing in school starts with the staff. They are in the front line of the work and it is hard for them to be genuinely motivated to promote emotional and social wellbeing of others if they feel uncared for and burnt out themselves.²⁹

Many teachers are already committed to supporting the wellbeing of their students. This is evident in schools where pastoral carers, class tutors, guidance counsellors and year heads are working to ensure that young people receive the support and attention that they need to thrive and succeed in school. It is also evident where teachers have high expectations for students, where they plan to actively engage them in their learning, look for and act on feedback from students about what matters for their wellbeing and what helps them to learn, and where assessment approaches that support and encourage students to improve their learning are the norm.

Part of the task of putting wellbeing on the school map involves creating opportunities for teachers to consider their own sense of wellbeing. The Teaching Council recognises ‘the importance of care of self so as to be able to care for others and, in that context, teachers’ well-being is vital if they are to effectively lead learning, and support and facilitate students in this endeavour’.³⁰

Teacher wellbeing is shaped by individual, relational and contextual factors³¹. At an individual level, teacher wellbeing is concerned with a need for autonomy, having a sense of competence, a capacity for emotional intelligence, a positive attitude and a healthy work-life balance. At a relational level, the quality of staff student interactions and

positive professional working relationships have been identified as essential for teacher wellbeing. The importance of a whole-school inclusive culture with positive and affirming leadership is also important in this context. As with students, teachers’ sense of belonging and connectedness to their school is also fundamental to their wellbeing. Finally, there are contextual factors such as policy initiatives and school culture that impact on teacher wellbeing. Opportunities to discuss teacher wellbeing at all these levels is important.

Teachers will require professional development to ensure that they have a deep conceptual understanding of wellbeing and are confident in using the pedagogical approaches that are known to support and build students’ wellbeing. This is important because their personal understanding and values influence how they care for their own wellbeing and that of their students. In this context it is true that ‘we teach who we are’.³²

Ultimately, it is important for schools that teachers have a positive perception of the Wellbeing programme and understand how they can contribute to it and enable students to have a positive experience as they learn about wellbeing and for wellbeing across the whole curriculum.

29 Weare, K. (2015). *What works in promoting social and emotional well-being and responding to mental health problems in schools?: Advice for schools and framework document*. p.6.

30 Teaching Council. (2016). *Cosán: A framework for teachers’ learning*. p.18.

31 Teacher wellbeing in neoliberal contexts: A review of the literature. *In Australian Journal of Teacher Education Vol. 40(8) Article 6.*

32 Palmer, P.J. (1997). *The heart of the teacher*. p.15.

3.3

THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND WELLBEING

The physical environment of the school matters to students' experience of wellbeing.

Each school has a distinctive atmosphere which usually reflects the extent to which the school takes care of the social, emotional and physical needs of those who learn, work and visit.³³

The cleanliness and orderliness and general character of school buildings has been shown to influence student behaviour and engagement with their learning.³⁴ It is important that schools ensure that the physical environment is clean

and well-maintained with good ventilation and light. Where possible, schools should provide students with opportunities to be physically active during the school day, providing access to sports facilities where feasible. Facilities such as social/meeting spaces, a quiet room, pleasant outside areas, and an environment free from vending machines offering unhealthy food options should also be considered.



33 DES, HSE, DOH. (2013). *Well-being in post primary schools: Guidelines for mental health promotion and suicide prevention.*

34 Kutsyuruba, B., Klinger, D, Hussain, A. (2015). relationship among school climate, school safety, and student achievement and well-being: a review of the literature. *Review of Education Volume 3(2) 103 -135.*

3.4

EXPECTATIONS AND BELIEFS AND WELLBEING

Linda Allal³⁵ has suggested that learning involves the construction of one's identity as well as the acquisition of knowledge and skills. In this context, students' identities and beliefs about themselves are significantly impacted by the values, assumptions and beliefs about learning that both they and their teachers bring to the classroom.

Carol Dweck's research has demonstrated the powerful effect of a growth mindset and a fixed mindset view of intelligence.³⁶ A fixed mindset assumes that our intelligence and creative abilities are static givens which we cannot change to any significant degree, and success is the affirmation of inherent intelligence. A growth mindset is based on the belief that although people may differ in their initial talents and aptitudes, interests, or temperaments everyone can change and grow through effort and experience. Accordingly, everyone has the potential to grow in intelligence and in ability. A growth mindset thrives on challenge and sees mistakes and failure, not as evidence of lack of intelligence, but as a source of learning. On the other hand, when one adopts a fixed mindset, challenges are avoided, intelligence is seen as something you are born with and if students don't succeed it is due to a deficit on their part.

To ensure that all students continue to improve and engage with their learning, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- What is the dominant view in our school? How do we build growth mindsets rather than fixed mindsets with our students?
- Is a growth-based approach to intelligence adopted when talking about students and talking to students?
- Are students, as individuals, regularly reminded of their potential and strengths as learners and how they can improve?
- Are there high expectations for *all*?
- Are students encouraged to talk about their learning, e.g. what helps them to learn and to set goals for their learning?
- Are different areas of accomplishment nurtured and recognised?

35 Allal, L. (2010). In P. Peterson et al, *Intercultural encyclopedia of education*. Oxford. (Vol 13 p. 348-352).

36 Dweck, C. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. New York.

3.5

TEACHING AND LEARNING, AND WELLBEING

Teachers can play a particularly important role in raising children’s self-esteem, motivation and confidence by the way they organise teaching and learning.³⁷

How teaching happens matters! Given that students spend most of their day in class, the day-to-day experience of teaching and learning within the classroom probably provides the greatest opportunity to contribute to student wellbeing. Wellbeing is supported through learning and teaching that helps students feel confident, connected and actively engaged in their learning. It is further enhanced when students experience progress and mastery in the different subjects and courses they are studying.

Junior cycle key skills and the accompanying support materials and toolkits³⁸ provide an important basis for developing students’ skills in areas that are critically important for wellbeing: Managing myself, Staying well, Being creative, Managing information and thinking, Communicating and Working with others. Research with teachers has found that learning and teaching methodologies associated with developing key skills can help students feel more confident, connected and actively engaged in their learning. In particular, teachers who have adopted a key skills approach to teaching and learning reported the following results:

- the lessons became more learner-centred
- student motivation and engagement in learning improved
- more positive classroom relationships and pro-social behaviour were in evidence
- more effective learning took place³⁹

Teachers believed that these results derived from the increased use of co-operative learning strategies, the fostering of greater student autonomy, and engaging students in conversations about their learning. In particular, they pointed to the positive impact of collaborative learning, peer-explaining, and feedback as well as the value of giving students opportunities to reflect on their learning, set goals and review their progress. The embedding of key skills in teaching and learning also leads to a more democratic learning environment in which students have a voice⁴⁰. This too can contribute to student wellbeing.

Teaching and learning that is supportive of student wellbeing

- is democratic and takes account of the students’ views and experiences
- is inclusive, and consciously addresses the specific needs of minority student groups
- engages students through the use of a variety of approaches including active, cooperative and peer learning
- includes differentiated learning and assessment activities which take into account the diverse needs and interests of individual students
- fosters expectations of high achievement and provides opportunities for success for all
- encourages students to support each other and act as positive role models for others
- encourages and capitalises on the potential to experience learning and new challenges in the outdoor environment and wider community.

37 OECD. *Skills for Social Progress*. p.83.

38 juniorcycle.ie/Planning/Key-Skills.aspx

39 Reports on the developmental work undertaken by 20 schools in embedding key skills (2006-2009) can be retrieved from ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Post-Primary_Education/Senior_Cycle/Key_Skills/Information-and-Research.html

40 See Irish students talking about democratic learning through key skills in a video produced for UNESCO vimeo.com/42553073

Because it is the responsibility of every teacher to contribute to learning and development in this area, all staff are expected to be proactive in:

- promoting a climate in which children and young people feel safe and secure and which respects and develops children's rights and wellbeing
- establishing open, positive, supportive relationships across the school community, where young people feel that they're listened to, and where they feel secure in their ability to discuss sensitive aspects of their lives
- modelling behaviour which promotes wellbeing for all
- using learning and teaching methods which promote engaged and successful learning.

Looking at our School 2016: A Quality Framework for Post Primary Schools, (DES Inspectorate, 2016) provides a set of statements that schools can use to self-evaluate and improve teaching and learning through the lens of student wellbeing.

WELLBEING IS SUPPORTED THROUGH LEARNING AND TEACHING THAT HELPS STUDENTS FEEL CONFIDENT, CONNECTED AND ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN THEIR LEARNING.



3.6

STUDENT VOICE AND WELLBEING

The wellbeing of young people is enhanced by appropriate experiences of freedom, choice, participation and decision-making. Structures, relationships and democratic participation across the school as a whole can encourage students' sense of their own agency and allow them to find and develop their voices. Authentic listening by the school is central to these experiences; this happens when the views and suggestions of young people are sought and acknowledged, and there is a meaningful response to them⁴¹(Flynn, 2014). Students can experience 'authentic listening' in a variety of school contexts. It can happen at a whole-school level where, for example, policies are being developed, implemented or reviewed.

It can happen in individual classrooms where students and teachers engage in ongoing dialogue about learning, teaching and assessment. These conversations can have significant benefits for student wellbeing.

By engaging in authentic listening to students at both whole school and classroom level, the school is recognising students as experts in their own learning and hearing what it is like to be a student in the school. By empowering students to participate meaningfully in improving their experience in school and in class, it not only encourages student engagement in learning (Sebba & Robinson, 2010⁴²) but also improves teacher-student relationships (Tangen, 2009⁴³).

A recent student voice study conducted in the Republic of Ireland found that where students' opinions were heard and their views taken into account, it led to a significant improvement in the quality of their relationships with teachers and their sense of belonging and connection to school. (Flynn et al. 2012⁴⁴; 2013⁴⁵; 2014⁴⁶).

As a consequence, these positive student-teacher relationships and a stronger attachment to school generated an improvement in self-reported levels of confidence and wellbeing; a heightened sense of being 'cared for', as well as a general experience of comfort in their educational environment.

-
- 41 Flynn, P. (2014). Empowerment and transformation for young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties engaged with student voice research. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies* 49(2).
- 42 Sebba, J. and Robinson, C. (2010). *The evaluation of UNICEF UK's rights respecting schools award*. London: UNICEF.
- 43 Tangen, R. (2009). Conceptualising quality of school life from pupils' perspective: A four dimensional model. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 13(8) 829 -844.
- 44 Flynn, P., Shevlin, M., and Lodge, A. (2012). Pupil voice and participation: Empowering children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. In Cole, T., Daniels, H., & Visser, J. (Eds). *The Routledge international companion to emotional and behavioural difficulties*. Oxon: Routledge.
- 45 Flynn, P. (2013). The transformational potential in student voice research for young people identified with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. *Trinity Education Papers*, 2(2) 70-91.
- 46 Flynn, P. (2014). Empowerment and transformation for young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties engaged in student voice research. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies* 49(2) 162-175.

3.7

ASSESSMENT PRACTICES AND STUDENT WELLBEING

Students' experience of assessment impacts on their wellbeing.

While many young people are happy and enjoying school, some struggle with the volume of assessment. They could benefit from schools reviewing their assessment practices and involving students more directly in decision making.⁴⁷

Assessment change is an important feature of the junior cycle developments. This change reflects a substantial body of research showing that the greatest benefits for student learning occur when they receive quality feedback that helps them to understand how their learning can be improved. This helps students feel more engaged in the learning process, more in control of their learning and confident in their ability to improve.

Ongoing assessment should contribute to ensuring that students have a positive sense of themselves as learners and a strong sense of their own self-efficacy and capacity to improve.

In the consultation leading to the development of these guidelines, parents and students alike said that feedback in the form of comments is more helpful than marks and grades, particularly when the comments say what the student has done well and suggests how they might improve.

In addition to developing the practice of giving students supportive feedback, the use of a wider variety of assessment approaches such as projects, presentations, self and peer assessment is also an important consideration. Such varied assessment approaches allow students to demonstrate their learning in different ways, which in turn provides a broader picture of students' achievements. They can also facilitate greater student engagement in and ownership of the learning and assessment process. It is important to be sensitive to the particular demands of more varied assessment approaches and students should feel supported as they develop the skills necessary to complete them. It is also important to consider the volume of assessment activities that students are faced with. This can act as a considerable source of stress, especially when assessment is almost exclusively associated with testing, marking and grading.

Support for teachers in developing their ongoing assessment practices is available in the NCCA Assessment Toolkit.

47 New Zealand Education Review Office. (2015). Wellbeing for Young People's Success at Secondary School. Retrieved from ero.govt.nz/National-Reports/Wellbeing-for-Young-People-s-Success-at-Secondary-School-February-2015

3.8

SCHOOL POLICIES

Schools policies provide the compass by which the school navigates its way. A review of the range of policy areas quickly reveals that many of them relate directly to student wellbeing—the behaviour policy, homework policy, SPHE policy (including relationship and sexuality education), internet safety policy, anti-bullying policy, dignity in the workplace policy, child protection policy, and critical incident policy being those which have greatest relevance. The policy that school leaders tend to identify as being most important for student wellbeing is the behaviour policy.⁴⁸ Research has found that in schools where student wellbeing is optimised, supportive rather than punitive approaches to behaviour are adopted. There is a wide range of positive behaviour strategies that can be adopted in schools.

When school policies are reviewed through the lens of student wellbeing, it prompts questions such as:

- How are school policies developed? Are they developed by a couple of people or in partnership with the whole school community? Do students have a voice?
- How are school policies written? Is the language accessible? Is it punitive or positive in tone?
- How are they shared? Are they explained and made accessible to all? Are they linked to a shared set of values?
- How are they enacted? Are they put into practice with fairness and compassion?

Policy development in support of wellbeing should be a collaborative, inclusive and democratic process. Regular review of the impact and effectiveness of school policies through the lens of student wellbeing, is also important:

In a school setting, feeling connected to the school and valued within the school community will impact on a student's ability to learn and reach their potential, as well as impact on their health and well-being. The setting wherein meaningful participation is encouraged also benefits because policies and plans worked on collaboratively might be easier to implement and are much more likely to meet the needs of the whole school community.⁴⁹

**SCHOOLS
POLICIES PROVIDE
THE COMPASS BY
WHICH THE SCHOOL
NAVIGATES ITS WAY.**

48 As reported in a consultation meeting with school principals, October 19 2015.

49 HSE. Schools for Health in Ireland, Post Primary Coordinator's Guide, p.14. Retrieved from www.healthpromotion.ie/hp-files/docs/HPM00838.pdf

3.9

STUDENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Young people in junior cycle have a wide range of social, emotional, behavioural and learning needs. It is useful in the context of planning a whole-school approach to wellbeing to think of students as needing different levels and kinds of support to experience wellbeing, as outlined in *A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools: Guidelines for Teachers*⁵⁰ and *Well-being in Post-Primary School: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention*.⁵¹

In this sense, wellbeing as a whole-school endeavour takes into account the particular needs of students at these three levels.

1. School support for *all* is a focus which recognises that all students have wellbeing needs and even those who might appear to engage with school and their education with relative ease also need to be supported in achieving the outcomes of Wellbeing. It has also been the experience of National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS) that where school support for *all* is the focus, all students benefit including those students who may be experiencing particular difficulties.
2. At the second level, there are *some* students who may be identified as being at risk, or showing signs, of developing difficulties. These students will require additional support and should have timely and appropriate access to school support structures, such as, for example, the pastoral care system, the guidance counsellor or the student support team. School support may also include access to targeted programmes delivered within the school setting.
3. Finally, there are a few young people who have complex and enduring needs. These students may be receiving or require support from external agencies such as CAMHS. The school may request the involvement of the NEPS psychologist in a collaborative problem-solving process to guide tailored support, intervention and review in the school setting, for these students. This process should engage collaboratively with the external support services, as appropriate.

In every school, there are groups of students who require particular consideration to ensure that planning for Wellbeing is fully inclusive. For example, research shows that children with special needs, especially those with emotional-behavioural or learning difficulties, are significantly more negative about themselves than their peers.

Children with SEN see themselves as more anxious, less happy, less confident as learners, more critical of their physical appearance, less popular with their peers and more poorly behaved. These differences are sizable, ranging from one sixth to almost half of a standard deviation. Differences are particularly large in relation to academic self-image.⁵²

Opportunities for staff to consider how best they can care for the wellbeing of all students in their classes and in the school environment are vital. Increasingly, there are students who are experiencing mental ill-health who may also be accessing support beyond school; it is important that teachers feel confident that they can support these students when they are present in their class.

50 DES. (2010). *A continuum of support for post-primary schools: Guidelines for teachers*. National Educational Psychological Service. Retrieved from www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/neps_post_primary_continuum_teacher_guide.pdf

51 DES, HSE, DOH. (2013). *Well-being in post-primary schools: Guidelines for mental health promotion and suicide prevention*. pp 14-15.

52 Smyth, E. (2015). *Wellbeing and school experiences among 9- and 13-year-olds: Insights from the growing up in Ireland study*. ESRI/NCCA. p. v.

Opportunities for conversations between students and the pastoral care/student support team can help ensure that the school is supporting student wellbeing both at a whole-school level and through the Wellbeing programme and the curriculum it provides. It can also ensure greater ownership, commitment and shared responsibility for policy implementation⁵³.

Student support systems, such as buddy systems, peer-mentoring programmes, induction programmes, school chaplaincy, year head and tutor systems, breakfast or lunch clubs, homework clubs and school societies can also contribute greatly to student wellbeing. Guidance counsellors, pastoral care and student support teams⁵⁴, critical incident management teams, behavioural support teams, home/school liaison teachers and SPHE teachers play an important role in building support systems that take account of the needs of all students and their wellbeing.

Students can experience certain aspects of health and wellbeing through focused school-based programmes developed by statutory and voluntary agencies such as the Friends for Life programme, Active School Flag (ASF) initiative, Young Social Innovators (YSI) and other initiatives. These provide important opportunities for students to work together on projects designed to enhance their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others.

Links and partnerships with health professionals, educational psychologists, community and sporting organisations and others can provide important complementary expertise and support too. One example of a link that schools have found particularly useful is access to National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and the *Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools* when schools experience a critical incident.⁵⁵

53 DES, HSE, DOH. (2013). *Well-being in post-primary schools: Guidelines for mental health promotion and suicide prevention*. p. 25.

54 *Student Support Teams in Post-Primary Schools*, National Educational Psychological Service, DES (2014)

55 DES. *Responding to critical incidents: Guidelines for schools*. Retrieved March 21 2016 from www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/Responding%20to%20Critical%20Incidents.pdf

3.10

PARTNERSHIPS WITH PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

For most students, the home is the first place where children learn about and experience wellbeing. As students develop their understanding of wellbeing and their capacity to take greater responsibility for it, parents may need support in dealing with the issues and challenges that may arise for their child.

We know that proactive partnerships with parents and guardians are key to providing a meaningful Wellbeing programme in the school. Efforts to involve the larger parent body in different school-led initiatives has been challenging in many schools.

However, planning for Wellbeing may provide a context for greater involvement as it is evident from consulting with parents/guardians about these guidelines, that student wellbeing was rated by parents/guardians as being very important. Planning for Wellbeing should include opportunities to consult with parents/guardians regularly and in a meaningful way. Parents could be involved in planning for wellbeing in a variety of ways such as being asked to participate in an online survey about student wellbeing and/or being asked to comment on the findings from student consultations about wellbeing. They might also be asked to participate in focus groups about student wellbeing and to be part of a Wellbeing planning team.

An important aim of Wellbeing in junior cycle is to develop student agency about their wellbeing and their capacity to talk about it. It is important therefore that parents have the opportunity to become familiar with the Wellbeing programme and receive regular reports about their child's learning about wellbeing.

Where parents are engaged most successfully by schools the following features of culture and practice are evident:

- Good relationships—parents feel welcome and part of the school, staff are accessible, approachable and responsive and offer non-judgemental support.
- Communication—a range of methods are used to offer parents clear information about wellbeing and the progress their child is making. Parents are then better equipped to support their children's learning and wellbeing at home.
- Shared understanding and values—the schools involve parents in discussions to agree priorities for wellbeing and to evaluate progress.
- Skills recognised—the school recognises the experience and skills parents can offer to support improvement in wellbeing outcomes.

PLANNING FOR WELLBEING SHOULD INCLUDE OPPORTUNITIES TO CONSULT WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS REGULARLY AND IN A MEANINGFUL WAY.

3.11

PLANNING

At present, all schools engage in School Self-Evaluation (SSE) and some schools are involved in the 'Health Promoting Schools' initiative. These planning processes are mutually supportive and provide useful guidance for schools as to how they might approach planning for Wellbeing in junior cycle. Both recommend that planning should be a collaborative, reflective, inclusive process. The SSE process enables schools:

1. To take the initiative in improving the quality of education that they provide for their students.
2. To affirm and build on what is working well.
3. To identify areas in need of development and to decide on actions that should be taken to bring about improvements in those areas.
4. To report to the school community about the strengths in the work of the school and its priorities for improvement and development.

PLANNING AND REVIEW IS AN ONGOING PROCESS AS SCHOOLS ARE CONSTANTLY STRENGTHENING THEIR CAPACITY TO PROVIDE A MEANINGFUL WELLBEING PROGRAMME IN JUNIOR CYCLE.

The following questions are currently used by schools when engaging in School Self-Evaluation (SSE) activities. Schools can use these questions to reflect specifically on their work in the area of Wellbeing in junior cycle.⁵⁶ However, all SSE activities should include a focus on wellbeing:

- What are we currently doing?
- Why are we doing it?
- How well are we doing?
- What evidence do we have?
- How can we find out more?
- What are our strengths?
- What are our areas for improvement?
- How can we improve?

These questions can be framed using the definition and wellbeing indicators set out in these guidelines. The appendices provide some tools to help schools in the planning process. Individual schools are best placed to decide what the particular foci should be for their Wellbeing programme and how best they can deploy the resources available to them to plan the programme for their particular students.

4



A young boy with short brown hair, wearing a dark blue school uniform, is looking at a tablet computer. A hand from an adult, likely a teacher, is pointing at the screen. The background is a blurred classroom setting with white walls and a window. An orange dashed line highlights the tablet and the hand pointing at it. In the foreground, there is a blurred tablet showing a group of people.

**WELLBEING
AND THE
CURRICULUM**

A dedicated Wellbeing curriculum in junior cycle aims to ensure that all students engage in important learning about wellbeing through key curriculum areas.

For this reason, up to 400 hours will be available for learning in the area of Wellbeing in junior cycle beginning with a minimum of 300 hours of timetabled engagement from 2017 and moving to the full complement of time as the new junior cycle is fully implemented in schools.

Within a new junior cycle, schools now have more autonomy to plan a junior cycle programme around a selection of subjects, short courses and other learning experiences that meets their students' needs and interests. The new subject specifications for junior cycle require less time than previous syllabi – 240 hours for Gaeilge, English and Maths and 200 hours for all other subjects. One consequence of this will be an increase in the time available for learning in Wellbeing.

4.1

INDICATORS OF WELLBEING

As schools design their Wellbeing programme it is important that they have the flexibility to develop one that suits their students and their local context. It is equally important that all schools are working towards a shared vision and set of indicators which describe what is important for young people and their wellbeing. On this basis, six indicators – **Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected** and **Aware** have been identified as central to wellbeing. These indicators make what is important explicit for students, teachers, parents and the wider school community. Each indicator has a small number of descriptors.

When planning a junior cycle 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 indicators and their descriptors can be used in a number of ways:

- to review current provision for learning in wellbeing
- to plan teaching and learning within a school's Wellbeing programme
- to plan conversations about how the school's Wellbeing programme might best support young people's wellbeing and well-becoming with stakeholders including students, parents and teachers
- to scaffold conversations with students about learning in the Wellbeing programme
- to frame the student's self-assessment about their learning in Wellbeing
- to report on learning in Wellbeing.

Figure 6: Indicators of wellbeing



4.2

WELLBEING AND THE CURRICULUM

While all teachers in all subjects can support student learning about and for wellbeing, wellbeing is enhanced when it is embedded in the curriculum and visible to students within specific allocated time. Explicitly planning for wellbeing in the curriculum and assigning it space on the timetable communicates to students, parents and teachers that this area of learning is important – it makes the school’s concern with wellbeing visible and confirms for students in a very recognisable way that their wellbeing matters. For this reason, the guidelines place a strong emphasis on the role that Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), physical education (PE), Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and guidance can play in supporting learning about wellbeing and learning for wellbeing.

CSPE is an important part of a Wellbeing programme for a number of reasons. CSPE helps students understand how their wellbeing and the wellbeing of others is connected. Being well in oneself is important and is always related to being well with others and within society. It is important for students to understand that wellbeing is not singularly about one’s personal, emotional and physical health. Through the use of a human rights and development framework, CSPE can help students develop a more holistic and ecological understanding of wellbeing as they become aware of the relationship between individual wellness, wellness in relation to others and the wellbeing of the environment. Without CSPE, there is the risk that discussion of wellbeing can feed into individualism and miss the opportunity to make links between individual wellbeing and collective wellbeing, between the personal and the political, and ultimately between our wellbeing and that of the planet. CSPE also prompts students to consider the many social, political, cultural and economic factors that affect individual and collective wellbeing. Furthermore, the focus on active citizenship in CSPE provides opportunities for students to grow in confidence, resilience and a sense of agency as they participate in actions and connect with a wider community working to help build a more equal, just and sustainable future.

Finally, students are not only learning about democracy, human rights and responsibilities. They are exercising democracy, responsibility and decision-making in the ways they are learning and being assessed in the CSPE class.

Physical education provides all students with enjoyable and worthwhile learning opportunities where they develop their confidence and competence to participate and perform in a range of physical activities. Students in junior cycle are at an important stage of their lives where they are making their own decisions about if and how they will include physical activity as part of their lifestyle. Learning in physical education is designed to ensure that students appreciate the importance of participation in regular moderate physical activity not only for their physical wellbeing, but also for their psychological and social wellbeing. By providing a broad and balanced range of activities, physical education aims to build students’ motivation and commitment to participate in regular, enjoyable and health-enhancing physical activity.

Education for physical and mental health should not be seen as separate but rather as an opportunity to make connections between lifestyle choices such as regular exercise, healthy eating, stress management and relaxation and positive mental health.

SPHE provides opportunities for teaching and learning directly related to health and wellbeing. Through the use of experiential methodologies, including group work, SPHE aims to develop students’ positive sense of themselves and their physical, social, emotional and spiritual health and wellbeing. It also aims to build the student’s capacity to develop and maintain healthy relationships. Through studying aspects of SPHE, students have time to focus on developing personal and social skills including self-management, communication, coping and problem-solving.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is an integral part of junior cycle SPHE and the Wellbeing curriculum. Its aim is to help young people to

Acquire a knowledge and understanding of human relationships and sexuality through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework⁵⁷.

At this age, students are exposed to a lot of information about sex, sexuality and relationships from a variety of sources. RSE provides the context within which students can learn about the physical, social and emotional and moral issues related to relationships, sexual health, sexuality and gender identity including where to source reliable information. Schools are required to teach RSE as part of SPHE in each year of the junior cycle SPHE programme.⁵⁸



**CŞPE PROMPTS
STUDENTS TO CONSIDER
THE MANY SOCIAL,
POLITICAL, CULTURAL AND
ECONOMIC FACTORS THAT
AFFECT INDIVIDUAL AND
COLLECTIVE WELLBEING.**

57 www.sess.ie/sites/default/files/rse_policy_guidelines_0.pdf

58 Circulars M4/95, M20/96, M22/00, M11/03 and M27/2008, all of which are available at www.education.ie. These circulars require schools to develop a Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) policy and programme, and to implement them for all students from first year to sixth year.

4.3

GUIDANCE

Guidance in schools refers to:

A range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence, that assist students to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives. It encompasses the three separate, but interlinked, areas of personal and social development, educational guidance and career guidance.⁵⁹

Under the Education Act, Section 9C (1998)⁶⁰, schools are required to provide students with access to appropriate guidance to assist them with their educational and career choices. The *Framework for Junior Cycle* states that guidance provision may be included in the hours available for wellbeing ‘in recognition of the unique contribution that guidance can make to the promotion of students’ wellbeing’.⁶¹ The Circular Letter entitled *Arrangements for the Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle* states that the school’s junior cycle programme ‘must include guidance education’.⁶²

Schools are best placed to decide how they can include guidance in their junior cycle Wellbeing programme. Provision can be made in a variety of ways: through a dedicated short course, through shorter units and/or as part of related subjects. A range of learning experiences can be developed to encompass the three separate but interlinked areas of personal and social development, educational guidance and career guidance. These can be implemented in a collaborative way to best meet the needs of students. For example, other teachers working with the guidance counsellor could be responsible for transition-related learning in the first term of first year. It might not be possible for the guidance counsellor to work with all first-year classes over a number of weeks in the first term.

A continuum model of support might be applied to the school’s guidance programme in junior cycle. In applying the continuum, the guidance programme can meet the needs of students through whole-class teaching and learning, smaller groups and one-to-one sessions with individual students who require particular support. For the purposes of these guidelines however, the focus is on the role of the school guidance programme in supporting the wellbeing of all students in junior cycle.

FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

The ESRI study *Moving Up* (2004), on the experiences of first-year students embarking on post-primary education, highlights some of the challenges faced by young people:

Moving into second-level education evokes contradictory emotions among students; they are excited about going to a new school but nervous about what lies ahead of them. The primary and second-level sectors are distinctive in their organisation and structure, requiring students to adapt to a very different setting on making the transition. Students in first year have several teachers rather than one, and, in many cases, are moving to a larger school with a longer school day. Their relations with their teachers and peers are also different; having more teachers often means a more formal relationship with school staff and many students are required to build new friendship networks.⁶³

59 DES. (2005). *Guidelines for second level schools on the implications of section 9(c) of the Education Act 1998, relating to students’ access to appropriate guidance*. p.4.

60 www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1998/act/51/section/9/enacted/en/html

61 DES. (2015). *Framework for Junior Cycle*. p.22.

62 DES. (2016). Circular letter 0024/2016, p.5.

A guidance programme designed to focus on the particular personal and social needs of children making the transition into post-primary schooling could help ensure that students have the knowledge, understanding and skills to engage with their learning and to flourish in their new school. It could be helpful to be familiar with initiatives designed to support positive transition to secondary school that students might have engaged with in sixth class.

Where schools provide 'taster' subjects in first year, guidance could be provided regarding subject choices for junior cycle. In addition, first-year students could be helped to develop the coping skills needed for this new environment as well as the skills for learning.

Timetabling guidance as part of Wellbeing in first year could be very beneficial as it would provide an opportunity for students to get to know the guidance counsellor and to form a relationship that can be important in the context of students needing one-to-one support at a later stage. Where it is not feasible for the guidance counsellor to be timetabled with all classes, this learning could take place as part of SPHE. In addition to whole class support, particular support, individual and/or group, can be provided for the small number of students who have specific educational, social and/or emotional needs which, if left unaddressed, will stand between them and their learning. Learning in guidance can be supported by information nights for parents of first-year students.

SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS

While the *Framework for Junior Cycle* is designed to improve the quality of students' learning experiences across junior cycle, it is noteworthy that the ESRI research *Pathways Through Junior Cycle* (2006) found that a significant group of students in second year were drifting or disengaging from their learning. Because of this, students' access to guidance was seen as being particularly important in second year. Guidance-related learning in second year could help students stay connected to school by providing a space for structured conversations and reflection on their learning. Learning opportunities designed to develop self-management and personal organisation skills, including goal setting, study skills, coping skills and reflection skills could be included. Students could also be made aware of the relevance of their learning in different subjects to everyday life and the world of work. In addition, there could be a focus on building students' confidence in their ability to achieve, and on encouraging them to take greater responsibility for their learning.

THIRD-YEAR STUDENTS

The ESRI research into the experiences of students in the third year of junior cycle (2007) points to the importance of students receiving accurate and up-to-date information about educational and career pathways at this stage in their education. The transition into senior cycle can be challenging for many students as they are making important decisions about participating in a Transition Year programme, progressing to Leaving Certificate (Established or Leaving Certificate Applied), as well as decisions about subject choices for senior cycle and possible future careers.



OTHER AREAS OF LEARNING AND WELLBEING

While CSPE, PE, SPHE and guidance-related learning provide the main pillars for building a school's Wellbeing programme, other subjects and short courses can also make an important contribution. Schools offering Level 2 Priority Learning Units⁶⁴ (Communicating and literacy, Numeracy, Personal Care, Living in a community, Preparing for work) will be aware that these PLUs incorporate significant learning about and for wellbeing.

With careful planning and teacher collaboration, it could be possible to include elements of learning or activities taking place in art, music, home economics, science and religious education, to name but a few potential subjects. For example, in home economics, aspects of food and health studies could be included in a wellbeing programme. Similarly, a unit on sustainable living might be provided within home economics, science or geography and counted as part of the school's wellbeing programme. Once-off events, such as school retreats, could also be included.

When identifying elements of learning (beyond CSPE, PE, SPHE and guidance-related learning) that could be incorporated into a school's Wellbeing programme, it is important that the rationale for their inclusion is clear, that they are linked to the six wellbeing indicators and that the learning about wellbeing they address is clearly outlined (see Appendix I).

64 Level 2 Learning Programmes are targeted at a very specific group of students who have general learning disabilities in the higher functioning moderate and low functioning mild categories and all have Individual Education Plans (IEPs). The Learning Programmes are built around Priority Learning Units (PLUs) that develop the basic, social and pre-vocational skills of the students involved. See level2planning.ncca.ie

**WHILE CSPE, PE, SPHE
AND GUIDANCE-RELATED
LEARNING PROVIDE THE
MAIN PILLARS FOR BUILDING
A SCHOOL'S WELLBEING
PROGRAMME, OTHER SUBJECTS
AND SHORT COURSES CAN
ALSO MAKE AN IMPORTANT
CONTRIBUTION.**



4.5

PLANNING PRINCIPLES AND STEPS IN DEVELOPING WELLBEING PROGRAMMES

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

- **A collaborative approach to planning for Wellbeing:** The whole school community should be involved, including school management, teachers, students, parents and the wider school community. A once-off planning meeting is insufficient in supporting the planning, implementation and review of the school's Wellbeing programme.
- **A consultative approach to planning for Wellbeing:** Guided by an ethic of care, the school should undertake a consultation process with all the stakeholders to find out what is working well and what needs attention in relation to wellbeing in junior cycle. This may also involve acknowledging practices that contribute to students' experience of ill-being.
- **Flexibility to respond to students' needs and context:** The local context and the particular needs of the students in the school should be a central consideration in developing a meaningful, relevant and flexible programme. Engaging students in conversations about their wellbeing will help in the development and implementation of a Wellbeing programme that responds to their expressed needs rather than their assumed needs.
- **Mapping of local community resources:** It is essential that schools identify the range of services available locally and generate a map of relevant contacts and networks within the community that can contribute towards the promotion of their students' wellbeing. Many schools may have created these links through their engagement in the Health Promoting Schools (HPS) process and the Active School Flag (ASF) process as developing strong partnerships with parents/guardians and the wider community is a central part of these initiatives. The guidance counsellor may already have lists of relevant local services and referral agencies.
- **Adapting to change and to new and emerging circumstances:** Regular review and evaluation should take place once the programme has been developed.
- **Linking planning for Wellbeing with whole-school planning and other planning processes:** The evaluation tool (Appendix H) can be used or adapted for this purpose.

STEPS

There are a number of steps that a school needs to take in developing their Wellbeing programme:

Step 1: Invite members of the school community who are well placed and interested in supporting the planning and development of the Wellbeing programme in junior cycle to form a team. This team could comprise representatives from the student body, school management, SPHE, CSPE and PE teachers, the Guidance Counsellor, representatives from the student support team and from the SEN/Learning support team, and any other staff member with a particular interest in student wellbeing. Where possible, parents should also be included in this team.

Step 2: Organise consultations with students and parents to gather their views and suggestions about this area of learning (see Appendices E, F, G).

Step 3: Organise a workshop to engage the whole staff in reflecting on their understanding of wellbeing in order to build a common vision of wellbeing for their students (see Appendices C, D, H).

Step 4: Schools reflect on the following questions:

- What are we already doing that promotes students' wellbeing in junior cycle? How well are we doing this and how do we know? How can we find out more about our strengths and areas for improvement? What contribution do the different subjects and areas of learning make to our students' learning about and for Wellbeing?

The wellbeing indicators should be used in this exercise.

Step 5: The results of the staff, student and parental consultations should be collated and shared with the whole school community. This will help form the basis for action planning at the next stage.

Step 6: The next task is for the team to focus on creating an action plan for supporting student wellbeing, including how best to provide for the 300-400 hundred hours of dedicated time for Wellbeing as specified in the Framework for Junior Cycle. In their work, the team considers the particular needs of their students, the unique context of the school and the resources available.

Step 7: Once the programme is in place, regular evaluation should be undertaken by the planning group to ensure that the programme continues to be meaningful and dynamic and meets the needs of students. Regular evaluation also allows new staff, new students and their parents/guardians to contribute to the Wellbeing programme. Appendix H provides a tool to support schools with this task.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In order to ensure quality provision in CSPE, PE and SPHE the following should be considered:

- Regular collaborative planning between CSPE, PE, and SPHE teachers is needed to ensure that there is a shared vision, coherent approach and opportunities for collegial support across the three areas. Opportunities to use team teaching should also be fully explored.
- Every effort should be made to ensure that learning in CSPE, PE and SHPE is inclusive and is cognisant of the particular needs of different groups of students such as newcomers to Ireland, students with special educational needs, LGBT students, and students experiencing difficulties.
- Appendix A makes explicit the links between the Wellbeing indicators and the learning outcomes of the NCCA short courses in CSPE, SPHE and PE. Where schools choose not to include these short courses as part of their Wellbeing programme, planning in these subjects should be done using Appendix I.
- Active, experiential teaching and learning methods should be used to support maximum student engagement.
- Classes should be timetabled to allow for quality learning and teaching, i.e. double periods where appropriate, and always in physical education.
- Students should be consulted about their learning in and across these three areas to allow for more informed and effective planning.
- When planning for teaching and learning, opportunities for ongoing assessment should be identified so that there are opportunities for formative feedback in support of students' learning. Summative assessment should be used to provide evidence of students' overall learning at a point in time.
- Students' progress in CSPE, PE and SPHE should be reported on regularly alongside other subjects in junior cycle. Further guidelines on assessment and reporting are provided in the next section of these guidelines.

In physical education, the following should be considered:

- A broad and balanced programme should be planned to support student engagement and progress. Only qualified physical education teachers are in position to teach such a programme.
- Given the nature of learning in PE, the minimum amount of time required to provide a quality experience is two successive class periods. This allocation allows time for students to change into and out of their PE gear without encroaching on time spent in the PE class and/or other classes.

In CSPE and SPHE, the following should be considered:

- Teachers should be assigned to these subjects with their prior knowledge. When teachers are assigned who have an interest and commitment to this area, they are more likely to provide a broad and balanced experience of learning, particularly in SPHE where the difficult and more challenging areas could be avoided.
- Teachers assigned to SPHE and CSPE should have an understanding of and familiarity with the active, experiential methods associated with education in this area.
- In the majority of cases, teachers are completing initial teacher education without a qualification in CSPE or SPHE. In both of these areas, teachers should be facilitated in attending ongoing continuing professional development opportunities, thereby developing the school's professional capacity in these areas.
- It is important that learning experiences are designed around topics and issues of particular interest and relevance to students.

In SPHE, the following should be considered:

- SPHE teachers should be interested in and willing to teach SPHE. They should have the capacity to build a climate of trust and care in the SPHE classroom, including the ability to handle sensitive issues should they arise. They should be familiar with the school's SPHE policy, particularly with regard to some of the sensitive issues that may arise when teaching aspects of RSE.
- SPHE teachers should be willing and available to participate in SPHE-related professional development.
- The SPHE teacher is responsible for ensuring that the classroom is a safe environment for all students. In the event of students needing support beyond the SPHE class, the teacher should be familiar with the pastoral and counselling supports available within and beyond the school.
- When planning the SPHE curriculum, schools should, in the first instance, consider using the NCCA SPHE short course. Care should be taken to include areas that are intrinsic to SPHE and to students at this stage of their lives, such as Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). A broad and balanced SPHE course can be designed using the four strands of the NCCA SPHE short course: Strand 1: Who am I? Strand 2: Minding myself and others, Strand 3: Team Up, Strand 4: My mental health.

LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR A WELLBEING PROGRAMME

The sample Wellbeing programmes presented later in this section draw upon an analysis of the learning outcomes of the new short courses in CSPE, PE and SPHE and how they relate to each other and to the six indicators of wellbeing – Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected, Aware (See Appendix A). They also reflect the guidance-related learning outcomes for a Wellbeing programme set out earlier.

The analysis or tagging exercise (presented in Appendix A) is used to demonstrate the extent to which the learning outcomes for CSPE, PE and SPHE contribute directly to the indicators of wellbeing in junior cycle. Overall, there is a notable convergence and congruence between the learning outcomes across the three areas and the six indicators of wellbeing. This is unsurprising because, as part of the development process for the three courses, there was widespread consultation with education partners to ensure that they addressed important, relevant and meaningful learning for young people in CSPE, PE and SPHE. Care was also taken to ensure that unnecessary overlap between learning outcomes for the three courses was avoided.

The tagging exercise presented in Appendix A also throws light on different possibilities for Wellbeing programmes that combine learning outcomes across the short courses with learning outcomes from areas such as guidance to contribute to meeting the full range of student needs in the area of Wellbeing. For example, learning outcomes in PE Strand 1: Physical activity for health and wellbeing and SPHE Strand 1: Who am I? could be combined to focus on learning related to the importance of regular physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle. Learning outcomes from CSPE Strand 1: Rights and responsibilities and SPHE Strand 2: Minding myself and others could be combined to address learning about rights and needs, the importance of respectful and inclusive behaviour, and ways of addressing bullying behaviour.

4.6

CURRICULUM FOR A WELLBEING PROGRAMME

Once a school has considered the particular needs of their students in junior cycle, the unique context of the school and the resources available, there are a wide range of curriculum options available for consideration. These include:

- existing courses, e.g. junior cycle physical education⁶⁵, SPHE junior cycle curriculum⁶⁶, CSPE syllabus⁶⁷
- NCCA-developed short courses in CSPE, PE and SPHE
- school-developed short courses in these areas
- shorter units based on learning outcomes selected from NCCA short courses in CSPE, PE and SPHE
- shorter units based on wellbeing-related learning outcomes from other short courses (see table 1 opposite for examples)
- guidance-related learning
- pastoral care/tutor time
- school-provided courses/units that address an aspect of wellbeing that is important for their students
- elements of other subjects that are clearly linked to important learning for wellbeing
- school initiatives, e.g. school retreats, sports days, awareness days, etc. which involve all students
- relevant courses and units developed by outside agencies and organisations.

The existing courses in CSPE, PE, and SPHE are familiar to teachers and may represent a good starting point for planning learning in each of these areas. The NCCA-developed short courses also merit consideration. These are fully up-to-date and are the result of widespread consultation with education partners to ensure that the courses address important, relevant and meaningful learning for young people in CSPE, PE, and SPHE. Care was taken to avoid unnecessary overlap between learning outcomes for the three courses. They also include assessment advice both for ongoing assessment and summative assessment. These short courses therefore provide excellent building blocks, individually or collectively, for a school's Wellbeing programme.

Learning in other short courses can also contribute to a school's Wellbeing programme. The following table shows two examples of relevant learning outcomes that could be included in a Wellbeing programme, from the NCCA philosophy and digital media literacy short courses.

65 jcpe.ie/index.php?option=com_mtree&task=listcats&cat_id=43&Itemid=

66 www.sphe.ie/downloads/RESOURCES/SPHE%20JUNIOR%20CYCLE%20SYLLABUS.pdf

67 www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Curriculum-and-Syllabus/Junior-Cycle-/Syllabuses-Guidelines/jc_civics_sy.pdf

Table 1: Sample learning outcomes that could be included in a Wellbeing programme

Short course	<i>Students should be able to</i>
Digital Media Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss their personal safety concerns when using digital technologies, communication tools and the internet • create a charter of online rights and responsibilities for the class • describe appropriate responses to potentially harmful situations • give examples of how digital media texts can support citizenship and inform decision-making
Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify questions that are common (shared by everybody), central (help us understand ourselves and our world) and contestable (the subject of argument and competing understandings) • name what are my big questions and how can I grapple with these questions? • agree as a class some 'big questions' which they would like to explore as part of this course • listen carefully, critically and respectfully to other points of view • express emotion in appropriate ways • help others to feel included in the group • contribute to creating a critical, creative, collaborative and caring community of enquiry

It is envisaged that guidance-related learning will be included as one of the building blocks in a school's Wellbeing programme. This will help to ensure that students gain the knowledge, skills and dispositions which are the focus of the three interlinked aspects of guidance education – personal and social development, educational guidance and career guidance.

Sample learning outcomes for guidance-related learning

Students should be able to

- recognise their own ways of learning and their learning habits, interests, strengths and weaknesses
- identify the factors that cause blocks or barriers to learning and ways to overcome them
- set learning goals and evaluate their progress towards achieving those goals
- develop study skills and study plans
- recognise and value opportunities for learning within and beyond the school
- make considered decisions on choice of subjects, including how the subjects might relate to further study and the world of work

Where a school has established strong practice in an area of wellbeing, they may decide to develop their own short courses using the NCCA guidelines for short courses⁶⁸. This can be a very worthwhile process which allows the school to focus specifically on its particular needs and interests. However, developing a 100-hour short course is demanding and time-consuming and, in the first instance, the option of using existing off-the-shelf courses may prove the best one to take.

Where a school chooses to include a unit-based approach based on a small number of learning outcomes, these could be selected from the NCCA short courses where applicable. In planning all units, care should be taken to include learning outcomes which address the important learning in Wellbeing. The planning template at Appendix I provides guidance on how to plan units in Wellbeing.

A school can also combine learning outcomes from two or more short courses that it chooses to include in its Wellbeing programme. This approach could work particularly well where a thematic approach is being adopted in developing the programme. This approach should use the planning template in Appendix I to generate a unit or short course that will appeal to the students and support their learning in wellbeing.

For a student working on a personalised Level 2 Learning Programme (L2LP), most of their learning will take place with their peers in PE, SPHE, CSPE and guidance-related learning, but some may take place in small group settings or one-to-one, for instance when they are working on elements of the Priority Learning Units (PLUs).

Visiting speakers and once-off events can be used very effectively to complement learning in the schools' Wellbeing programme. However, it is important to note that national and international research has consistently shown that it is the classroom teacher who is best placed to work sensitively and consistently with students⁶⁹. Once-off isolated events can often be ineffective. With careful planning it is possible to ensure that students experience the maximum benefit from experiences provided by outside speakers and events, particularly when their learning is linked to learning before and after the event. Information and guidelines on the best use of visiting speakers is available in Circular 0023/2010⁷⁰ and in Section 7 of the SPHE handbook.⁷¹

Optional wellbeing-related initiatives which engage a small number of students, rather than a whole class group, can be effective for those involved. However, these learning experiences should not be counted as part of the Wellbeing programme.

Eight sample Wellbeing programmes are presented in the following pages. These are designed to illustrate different ways in which schools could configure a programme. There are many other possibilities within and beyond each programme, so these examples should be seen as illustrative.

68 juniorcycle.ie/Planning/Short-Course-Development

69 DES, HSE, DOH. (2013). *Wellbeing in post-primary schools: Guidelines for mental health and suicide prevention*. p.22.

70 www.sphe.ie/downloads/Circulars/DES%20CIRCULAR-0023%20APRIL%202010.pdf

71 www.sphe.ie/downloads/RESOURCES/SPHE%20SCHOOL%20HANDBOOK.pdf

ALLOCATING TIME

Learning in CSPE, PE and SPHE is viewed as fundamental to learning about and for Wellbeing. Introducing a Wellbeing programme should not result in students experiencing less time in PE, SPHE or CSPE than under current provision. For this reason, there is a minimum threshold of time which should be provided in each area. This minimum is set out as follows:

- PE: 135 hours spread across first, second and third year (i.e. the most common current allocation provided by schools—two class periods per week).
- SPHE: 70 hours spread across first, second and third year (the same time allocation as required by the current junior cycle framework for SPHE, including RSE).
- CSPE: 70 hours spread across first, second and third year (the same time allocation as required currently).

In setting out these minima, schools have the flexibility to allocate more time to these areas in line with their priorities and students' needs. After these minimum requirements have been met, further time up to the full complement of 400 hours can be available for schools to allocate to other aspects of wellbeing. For example, these hours can create space for the inclusion of learning outcomes not directly related to PE, SPHE and CSPE, such as guidance. In addition, they offer potential for schools to timetable some of the already existing, excellent programmes that relate to wellbeing. The following programmes all reflect allocations of time within the range 300-400 hours. It is accepted that a certain degree of flexibility in relation to how the hours for Wellbeing are applied may be necessary in the initial years of the new Junior Cycle.



**ENGAGING STUDENTS
IN CONVERSATIONS ABOUT
THEIR WELLBEING WILL HELP
IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A
WELLBEING PROGRAMME THAT
MEETS THEIR EXPRESSED
NEEDS RATHER THAN THEIR
ASSUMED NEEDS.**

4.7

SAMPLE PROGRAMMES

PROGRAMME 1

In this Wellbeing programme, the school has allocated the minimum requirement of 300 hours for their Wellbeing programme as a starting point.

This programme is configured as follows:

- Double periods for PE in each of the three years in junior cycle. Schools can include the NCCA PE short course or develop their own short course for second and third year.
- One period for SPHE, focusing on selected learning outcomes from **each** strand of the NCCA SPHE short course. Alternatively, teachers can continue to plan for learning using the SPHE syllabus.
- One period for CSPE, focusing on learning outcomes from **each** strand of the NCCA CSPE short course.
- The remaining 25 hours are used to support guidance-related learning in first year. In a single period, once a week, students gain the knowledge and skills to manage themselves as more independent learners and to make a positive transition from primary education.

The table below outlines the main features of the programme.

	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Hours
PE	Double class period	Double class period	Double class period	135
	Focus on a broad range of skills and experiences	School developed/ NCCA PE short course		
SPHE	One class period	One class period	One class period	70
CSPE	One class period per week	One class period per week	One class period per week	70
Guidance-related learning	One period per week			25

Approx
300
hours

PROGRAMME 2

In this Wellbeing programme, the school decides to include a particular focus on supporting students to make healthy lifestyle choices about regular physical activity, relaxation, mindfulness and healthy eating. PE and SPHE are offered as stand-alone courses. The PE, SPHE and Home Economics teachers collaborate on providing learning experiences in support of healthy lifestyle choices. The programme is configured as follows:

- Double periods for PE in each of the three years of junior cycle.
- One period for CSPE in each year of junior cycle focusing on selected learning outcomes from **each** strand of the CSPE short course. Alternatively, teachers can continue to plan for learning using the CSPE syllabus.
- One class period for SPHE in each year of junior cycle focusing on selected learning outcomes from **each** strand of the NCCA SPHE short course and guidance-related learning.
- One class period of combined PE/SPHE-related learning in first and second year each year focusing on learning outcomes designed to encourage students to include regular physical activity, relaxation and mindfulness as part of a healthy lifestyle. These learning outcomes are selected from the NCCA short courses in PE and SPHE, where considerable congruence and compatibility has been identified across the learning outcomes in question. In third year, the home economics teacher teaches the single period per week with a particular focus on learning about nutrition and healthy eating.

The table below outlines the main features of the programme.

	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Hours
PE	Double class period	Double class period	Double class period	135
	Focus on a broad range of skills and physical activity experiences	NCCA PE short course		
Combined PE/SPHE/ Home Economics	One class period per week	One class period per week	One class period per week	70
	Combined PE / SPHE		Wellbeing-related learning in home economics	
SPHE	One class period per week	One class period per week	One class period per week	70
	SPHE including guidance-related learning			
CSPE	One class period per week	One class period per week	One class period per week	70

Approx
345
hours

PROGRAMME 3

In this Wellbeing programme, the school is moving from the minimum to gradually incorporate additional units from a diverse range of sources in support of a broad Wellbeing programme.

The programme is configured as follows:

- Double periods for PE in each of the three years of junior cycle. Teachers use the junior cycle physical education framework to plan the course.
- One class period for SPHE focusing on selected learning outcomes from each strand of the NCCA SPHE short course. Alternatively, teachers can continue to plan for learning using the SPHE framework.
- One period for CSPE focusing on selected learning outcomes from each strand of the CSPE short course.
- One class period per week in each of the three years of junior cycle for shorter units of learning.

The table below outlines the main features of the programme.

PROGRAMME 3

		First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Hours
PE		Double class period	Double class period	Double class period	135
		Focus on a broad range of skills and physical activity experiences	School-developed / NCCA PE short course		
SPHE		One class period per week	One class period per week	One class period per week	70
CSPE		One class period per week each year	One class period per week each year	One class period per week each year	70
Units	Term 1	Single period x 10 weeks	Single period x 10 weeks	Single period x 10 weeks	70
		Guidance-related learning supporting transition into post-primary education	Mentoring for learning	Managing my learning through eportfolio	
	Term 2	Single period x 10 weeks	Single period x 10 weeks	Single period x 10 weeks	
		Friends for Life ⁷³	Social Innovation Action Programme (Junior) ⁷⁵	Managing myself – coping and relaxation skills	
	Term 3	Single period x 10 weeks	Single period x 10 weeks	Single period x 10 weeks	
		Digital Citizenship ⁷⁴	Staying safe online ⁷⁶	Creativity and wellbeing (linked to music and/or art)	

Approx
345
hours

73 *Friends for Life* is a positive mental health programme taught by teachers who are trained by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

74 There are a number of short modules that can be used or adapted such as *Think B4 you click*, *The web we want: Young and online. Activities for young people by young people*, *Up2U Anti-bullying kit for junior cycle SPHE* and *Lockers* (all available to download online).

75 www.youngsocialinnovators.ie/programmes-initiatives/social-innovation-action-programme-junior

76 Modules such as *Lockers* (a teaching resource for junior cycle on the sharing of explicit images) could be useful (www.webwise.ie).

PROGRAMME 4

In this Wellbeing programme, the school develops a programme that strongly reflects the school’s ethos of social justice, inclusion and equality. In this context, learning in CSPE is seen as particularly important for students’ learning about, and experience of, wellbeing. Students are offered learning experiences designed to develop students’ sense of agency and citizenship. Across the three years, students study CSPE for two periods per week. This allows time for full engagement with the NCCA short course in CSPE and linkage with elements of religious education (RE). In addition, CSPE and RE teachers could cooperate in developing social justice or development education initiatives aimed at helping students make links between faith and action. Ideally these should be offered as a double period to support the active learning approaches and links with the community which are central to this kind of learning.

Students study SPHE as a double class period in first year. A unit on transition, designed to support their successful transfer into post-primary education, is also included.

This programme is configured as follows:

- Double periods for PE in each of the three years of junior cycle.
- CSPE is timetabled for two class periods each year of junior cycle.
- SPHE is timetabled as a double class period in first year and a single one in second and third year.

The table below outlines the main features of the programme.

	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Hours
PE	Double class period	Double class period	Double class period	135
	Focus on a broad range of skills and physical activity experiences	NCCA PE short course		
SPHE	Two class periods per week	One class period per week	One class period per week	90
	Focus on guidance-related learning and selected learning outcomes from strands 1 and 2 of the NCCA SPHE short course	Based on learning outcomes selected from strands 2/3/4 of the NCCA SPHE short course		
CSPE	Two class periods per week	Two class periods per week	Two class periods per week	135
	Incorporating the NCCA short course in CSPE plus other related learning linked to social justice and/or development education			



PROGRAMME 5

In this Wellbeing programme, the school decides to include the three NCCA wellbeing-related short courses in PE, SPHE and CSPE. The priority of the Wellbeing programme in first year is to support a positive transition from primary education in all areas.

The programme is configured as follows:

- There are double periods for PE in each of the three years of junior cycle. In second and third year, learning in PE is based on the NCCA PE short course.
- In first year, in addition to a double PE class, students have two classes per week which can be organised in 10 week rotating units to include CSPE, SPHE and guidance-related learning. The CSPE and SPHE short courses can be introduced during this time as well as other SPHE and citizenship-related learning. Guidance-related learning is mainly focused on supporting first-year students in making a positive transition from primary education. Where it is not possible to organise a rotating timetable, the students could be timetabled for one period of CSPE and one period of SPHE, and the guidance counsellor could arrange to work with students on occasion, for example, one class per month.
- In second and third year, learning in SPHE and CSPE is based on the NCCA short courses.

The graphic below outlines the main features of the programme.

	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Hours
PE	Double class period	Double class period	Double class period	135
	Focus on a broad range of skills and physical activity experiences	NCCA PE short course		
SPHE		Two periods per week	Two periods per week	100
		NCCA SPHE short course		
CSPE		Two periods per week	Two periods per week	100
		NCCA CSPE short course		
Units	Two periods per week			45
	Shared between CPSE, SPHE and guidance			

Approx
380
hours

PROGRAMME 6

In this Wellbeing programme, the school has decided to use a thematic approach to learning in Wellbeing in first year. The chosen theme is one focused on making the optimum transition from primary education and is called ‘Head Start’. All learning in the Wellbeing programme in first year is designed to support the students’ positive transition to post-primary education.

The programme is configured as follows:

- A double period of physical education in first, second and third year.
- The school includes six units in first year which contribute to learning related to ‘Head Start’. The units are timetabled for two class periods per week. Each unit lasts for ten weeks so that students participate in six units during first year.
- Two periods of SPHE in second year and three periods in third year to facilitate the NCCA short course.
- Three periods of CSPE in second year and two periods in third year to facilitate the NCCA short course.

	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Hours
PE	Double class period	Double class period	Double class period	135
	Focus on a broad range of skills and physical activity experiences	NCCA physical education short course		
SPHE		Two class periods	Three class periods	100
		NCCA SPHE short course		
CSPE		Three class periods	Two class periods	100
		NCCA CSPE short course		
Units	Two class periods Transition from primary (linked to Guidance) Staying safe online Friends for Life Getting involved in my school and local community Healthy eating–Healthy living (linked to Home Ec) Developing positive coping skills			45
Special events and activities related to wellbeing				20



PROGRAMME 7

In this Wellbeing programme, CSPE, SPHE and PE are given equal parity in supporting student learning in Wellbeing and are allocated similar time over the three years of junior cycle. Learning is addressed in CSPE, PE and SPHE classes and it is also addressed in a variety of units such as those suggested below.

The programme is configured as follows:

- Double periods for PE in each of the three years of junior cycle.
- Two periods for SPHE in first year (to incorporate guidance-related learning) and a single period in second and third year.
- One period for CSPE in each year.
- The school also offers a range of units related to CSPE, SPHE and guidance-related learning in one period per week in 10 week blocks in each year of junior cycle. Where possible, the school facilitates team teaching for these units.
- Key events within the school calendar which involve all students are also incorporated in this Wellbeing programme such as sports day, a school retreat, and learning related to International Human Rights Day, Earth Day or other awareness events.

PROGRAMME 7

	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Hours
PE	Double class period	Double class period	Double class period	135
	Focus on a broad range of skills and physical activity experiences	NCCA physical education short course		
SPHE	Two class periods	One class period	one class period	90
	Based on learning outcomes selected from strands 1/2 of NCCA SPHE short course and guidance-related learning to support a positive transition from primary education	Focus on selected learning outcomes from each strand of the NCCA SPHE short course		
CSPE	One class period	One class period	One class period	70
	Focus on selected learning outcomes from each strand of the NCCA CSPE short course			
Units Relating to CSPE, SPHE, PE and guidance	10 week units	10 week units	10 week units	70
	One period per week	One period per week	One period per week	
	Healthy eating–Healthy living (linked to Home Economics)	Active School Flag Guidance-related learning	Mindfulness and self-care skills	
	Moving up (transition from primary) Young Environmentalist award or similar	Digital literacy skills (linked to learning outcomes identified on page 57)	The meaning of life and other big questions (Linked to RE or philosophy) Social entrepreneurship	
Whole-school activities and/or class tutor/pastoral care over the three years				35



PROGRAMME 8

This Wellbeing programme is designed to facilitate schools who have moved from 40-minute class periods to one hour classes. This programme also shows how a Wellbeing programme might make explicit links to wellbeing related learning in RE. This example is configured as follows:

- Two one-hour periods for PE in each of the three years of junior cycle.
- One-hour period for SPHE in each of the three years. In this programme, one class every six weeks is dedicated to guidance-related learning, including mentoring for learning.
- Learning in CSPE and RE is provided through three rotating units of ten weeks' duration in each of the three years of junior cycle. Each year, two of these units address learning that is directly related to CSPE. One 10 week unit each year is linked to learning in RE. The students also organise and participate in annual special events to mark International Human Rights Day.
- The school also offers other wellbeing-related units considered to be of relevance and interest to the students. These take place each week in ten week blocks, in each year of junior cycle.

	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Hours
PE	Two periods of one-hour duration	Two periods of one-hour duration	Two periods of one-hour duration	200
	Focus on a broad range of skills and physical activity experiences	NCCA PE short course		
SPHE	One hour per week	One hour per week	One hour per week	100
	NCCA SPHE short course (including guidance-related learning)			
Units (Linked to citizenship education)	Three units x 10 weeks of one-hour duration	Three units x 10 weeks of one-hour duration	Three units x 10 weeks of one-hour duration	100
	Human rights and equality	Taking leadership in my school and community	Celebrating diversity	
	Digital citizenship	Voice your concern	Exploring human rights through the creative arts	
	Stewards of creation (linked to RE)	People living on the margins (linked to RE)	Inspiring people of faith (linked to RE)	

Approx
400
hours

5





**ASSESSMENT
AND
REPORTING**

5.1

ASSESSMENT

The *Framework for Junior Cycle* states that all assessment in junior cycle should have as its primary purpose the support of student learning.⁷⁷ To achieve this, the framework emphasises the need to broaden the approach to assessment, recognising that ‘no single assessment event can provide evidence of the full range of student achievement’.⁷⁸ This is especially true in relation to learning in Wellbeing where assessment has to take account of the wide range of learning experienced by students. It is also acknowledged that

Given the sometimes sensitive nature of this area of learning, schools will be given significant flexibility when assessing and reporting on learning in Wellbeing.

Assessment in Wellbeing is not about teachers assessing where the student is situated on the continuum of wellbeing or the student’s subjective state of wellbeing. It would be counterproductive for a teacher to make a judgement about a student’s wellbeing *per se*, given that student wellbeing depends on a variety of factors and life circumstances which can change quickly and can be context-specific. The focus of assessment in Wellbeing is on gathering evidence of what the student has learned *about* wellbeing, i.e. the knowledge, skills and dispositions students have gained. While not everything needs to be assessed, it is important that students are encouraged to reflect regularly on their learning throughout the Wellbeing programme.

ONGOING ASSESSMENT

It is expected that most of the assessment activities in the area of Wellbeing will be classroom based and formative in nature.⁸⁰

All the curriculum components of a Wellbeing curriculum provide opportunities for ongoing assessment and formative feedback. As teachers plan for learning in Wellbeing,

a variety of ongoing assessment activities can be included. For example, students can be asked to complete assignments, project work, presentations, performances, engage in self/peer assessment, reflect on their learning and set goals for the next steps in learning. Teachers can also use effective questioning to allow students to make their learning visible and to plan for improvement. All of these activities are most effectively carried out when supported by success criteria stating what a good piece of work looks like in the contexts involved. The NCCA Assessment Toolkit, *Focus on Learning*⁸¹ includes lots of ideas for ongoing assessment which can be adapted for use in the different areas of the Wellbeing curriculum.

The six wellbeing indicators provide an overview of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that students are moving towards achieving in support of their wellbeing. The six indicators – Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected and Aware can be used to support ongoing reflection by students about their learning in Wellbeing. For example, at the end of a class, a unit, or a school term, students can use the indicators to reflect on

- their important learning about wellbeing
- the indicators that they feel they are making most progress on
- the indicators that they would like to make progress on and how this might be done.

Ultimately, learning in Wellbeing aims to encourage young people to take responsibility for their wellbeing and the wellbeing of others. It is therefore appropriate that ongoing assessment provides students with opportunities to take greater ownership and make choices about how assessment in Wellbeing happens. It is also important that assessment practices in Wellbeing help students become familiar with the language of wellbeing and to develop their capacity to talk about their learning in Wellbeing (see Appendices E and F).

77 p. 35.

78 p. 34.

79 p. 23.

80 p. 42.

81 NCCA Assessment Toolkit: *Focus on Learning*. Retrieved March 21 2016 from juniorcycle.ie/Assessment/Focus-on-Learning

5.2

REPORTING ON WELLBEING IN FIRST AND SECOND YEAR

Learning in Wellbeing will be assessed by the students' teachers and reported on to students and parents/guardians during junior cycle and in the JCPA.⁸²

Reporting on students' learning in Wellbeing happens in two different ways: reporting in first and second year, and reporting as part of the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) at the end of third year.

End-of-term reporting is the process by which information about what students have learnt in Wellbeing is communicated to help students and teachers make informed decisions about future learning in Wellbeing.

The following principles for reporting at junior cycle are relevant to wellbeing as well as to other subjects and short courses. Reporting should

- encourage genuine engagement with parents and engage with hard-to-reach parents
- provide opportunities for students through feedback to reflect on their learning and contribute to the reporting process
- value the professional judgements of teachers
- use the language of learning
- be manageable and not take time away from learning and teaching
- clearly communicate students' learning
- provide information on a broad range of achievement
- be sensitive to the self-esteem and general wellbeing of students and take an inclusive approach.

Reporting on students' learning in Wellbeing aims to provide parents with a picture of what students are learning about wellbeing and the skills they are developing to support their wellbeing. In many schools, reporting will focus on assessments that students have completed as part of their learning in short courses or units in the Wellbeing programme.

Some schools might choose to include a comment on students' learning in Wellbeing in the school report. This could be done in consultation with the students themselves.

Rich reporting on student progress is most likely to occur when it has been developed within the context of regular dialogue and feedback in class and where students are provided with frequent opportunities to reflect on their own learning. Given the importance of students learning to take responsibility for their own wellbeing, it is hoped that in time, as schools develop their Wellbeing programme, students would have an opportunity to contribute to the school report.

**ALL
REPORTING
SHOULD HAVE AS ITS
PURPOSE INFORMED
DISCUSSIONS, EITHER
ORALLY OR WRITTEN,
BETWEEN TEACHERS,
PARENTS AND STUDENTS
ABOUT HOW TO
IMPROVE.**

Formal reporting on Wellbeing is designed to complement other informal reporting opportunities including parent-teacher meetings, teacher-student dialogue and other home-school written communications. All reporting should have as its purpose informed discussions, either orally or written, between teachers, parents and students about how to improve learning. Schools have flexibility to decide how best they can plan for reporting in first and second year to ensure that it will support student learning in Wellbeing.

82 *Framework for Junior Cycle*. p. 42.

Table 2 below shows some examples of how students could contribute to reporting as schools build their practice of reporting in Wellbeing

CURRICULUM COMPONENT	ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY	WELLBEING INDICATORS
<p>CSPE short course</p>	<p>Poster presentation on global consumption</p> <p>Student comment: ‘This was an important project for me because I realise that we only have one planet and how we live in this part of the world affects others. I’m now much more careful about wasting electricity, water and food.’</p>	 RESPONSIBLE  CONNECTED  AWARE
<p>PE short course</p>	<p>Video of dance performance</p> <p>Student comment: ‘This is the first time that I ever performed as part of a group in front of an audience. It was a real challenge but I felt proud when we did it and I’d hope to do it again so that I could build up my confidence even more.’</p>	 ACTIVE  AWARE  RESILIENT
<p>Healthy eating unit</p>	<p>Photos of class Cookfest of healthy lunches</p> <p>Student comment: ‘I don’t do home ec, so this was really interesting, because now I have loads of ideas for lunches and because the whole class are involved, I am more likely to make an effort to make healthy eating choices.’</p>	 AWARE  CONNECTED  RESPONSIBLE

5.3

REPORTING ON WELLBEING IN THE JUNIOR CYCLE PROFILE OF ACHIEVEMENT (JCPA)

When it comes to reporting at the end of junior cycle, schools will be using templates provided for the JCPA. Depending on the contents of the Wellbeing programme in the school, the contents of the JCPA related to Wellbeing may differ from school to school. Where schools have included short courses in their Wellbeing programme, students' achievements in these short courses will be recorded on the JCPA in the section called 'Short courses'. In this instance, students will have completed the Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA) associated with the short course (CSPE/PE/SPHE) or other wellbeing-related short courses. Where schools include NCCA short courses in their Wellbeing programme, the assessment guidelines for these short courses provide detailed advice on assessment and other practical issues. Where schools develop their own short courses or adopt those developed by outside agencies, they can use the assessment approaches included in the NCCA short courses to inform the design of the CBA.

Schools could also report on students' learning in Wellbeing in the section of the JCPA called 'Other areas of learning'. In this section, schools will be reporting on areas of learning beyond the subjects and short courses reported on in the JCPA. Here, schools could list one or two learning experiences that students have had in the area of Wellbeing. In time, this might include a student comment on their learning in Wellbeing.



As with reporting on Wellbeing in first and second year, schools will thus have some flexibility as to what they include and how they report on Wellbeing in the relevant sections of the JCPA. Further advice will be provided on reporting as schools develop their practice in this area.

6





APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: NCCA SHORT COURSES AND WELLBEING PROGRAMMES AT JUNIOR CYCLE

This tagging exercise is designed to highlight the extent to which the learning outcomes in the short courses for PE, SPHE and CSPE contribute to the indicators for Wellbeing in junior cycle. In very many cases, it is clear that the different learning outcomes contribute to one or more of the outcomes for Wellbeing.

STRAND 1: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

<i>Students learn about...</i>	<i>Learning outcomes Students should be able to...</i>	ACTIVE	RESPONSIBLE	CONNECTED	RESILIENT	RESPECTED	AWARE
How to monitor and improve their physical fitness Physical activity for all	1.1 set SMART improvement goals informed by their health-related and/or performance-related fitness and advised by norms for their age and sex						
	1.2 apply principles of training within a personalised physical activity programme (minimum duration of six-weeks) designed to improve their health-related and/or performance-related fitness, documenting their progress						
	1.3 evaluate their engagement and progress in the programme, providing evidence of progress made and identifying ways they can further develop						
	1.4 use a range of measurement techniques to monitor and analyse physical activity levels across a sustained period of time						
	1.5 identify a range of strategies to support ongoing participation in health-related physical activity						
	1.6 lead physical activities that young people find enjoyable and can undertake to achieve the minimum physical recommendations for health						

STRAND 2: GAMES

Students learn about **two** of the games categories.

Students learn about...

Learning outcomes
Students should be able to...

ACTIVE
RESPONSIBLE
CONNECTED
RESILIENT
RESPECTED
AWARE

							
Invasion games	2.1 use a wide range of movement skills and strategies effectively to enhance their performance						
Striking and fielding games	2.2 take responsibility for improving their own performance based on personal strengths and developmental needs						
Divided court games	2.3 modify activities to promote inclusion and enjoyment in a safe manner						
	2.4 demonstrate activities to enhance their health-related and/or performance-related fitness for the particular game, including warm-up and cool down						
	2.5 respond, individually and as part of a team to different games' scenarios						

STRAND 3: INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM CHALLENGES

Students learn about **two** of the physical activity areas.

Students learn about...

Learning outcomes
Students should be able to...

ACTIVE
RESPONSIBLE
CONNECTED
RESILIENT
RESPECTED
AWARE

							
Orienteering and team challenges	3.1 use orienteering strategies and map-reading skills to complete a variety of orienteering events safely and confidently showing respect for the environment						
Aquatics/ Athletics	3.2 contribute to team challenges that require co-operation and problem-solving skills to achieve a common goal						
	3.3 reflect on their personal contribution and their team's effectiveness in completing a group challenge						
	3.4 perform competently and confidently in a range of swimming strokes						
	3.5 respond appropriately to a range of water safety scenarios						
	3.6 take responsibility for improving their own performance, based on personal strengths and developmental needs						

STRAND 4: DANCE AND GYMNASTICS

Students learn about **either** gymnastics or dance in this strand.

Students learn about...

Learning outcomes
Students should be able to...

ACTIVE
RESPONSIBLE
CONNECTED
RESILIENT
RESPECTED
AWARE

							
Creating a sequence of movement	4.1 create a dance on their own or with others, incorporating a selected dance style and a variety of choreographic techniques and suitable props and music or						
Reflecting on performance	4.2 create a sequence of movement or routine based on a gymnastic theme (on their own or with others), incorporating a variety of compositional techniques and gymnastics skills						
Performing	4.3 refine their performance based on a critique of a video of their performance and/or feedback from others						
	4.4 perform the dance/gymnastics sequence of movement for an audience incorporating appropriate music and/or props						
	4.5 reflect on their experience of creating and participating in a performance						

SPHE SHORT COURSE

STRAND 1: WHO AM I?

<i>Students learn about...</i>	Learning outcomes <i>Students should be able to...</i>	ACTIVE	RESPONSIBLE	CONNECTED	RESILIENT	RESPECTED	AWARE
How I see myself and others	1.1 appreciate the importance of building their own self-esteem and that of others						
	1.2 welcome individual difference based on an appreciation of their own uniqueness						
Being an adolescent	1.3 participate in informed discussions about the impact of physical, emotional, psychological and social development in adolescence						
	1.4 recognise how sexuality and gender identity is part of what it means to be human and has biological, psychological, cultural, social and spiritual dimensions						
Self-management	1.5 identify short, medium and long-term personal goals and ways in which they might be achieved						
	1.6 apply decision-making skills in a variety of situations						
	1.7 source appropriate and reliable information about health and wellbeing						
My rights and the rights of others	1.8 explain how stereotyping can contribute to a person's understanding and experience of rights and wellbeing						
	1.9 appreciate the importance of respectful and inclusive behaviour in promoting a safe environment free from bias and discrimination						

STRAND 2: MINDING MYSELF AND OTHERS

		ACTIVE	RESPONSIBLE	CONNECTED	RESILIENT	RESPECTED	AWARE
<i>Students learn about...</i>	Learning outcomes <i>Students should be able to...</i>						
Being healthy	2.1 evaluate how diet, physical activity, sleep/rest and hygiene contribute to self-confidence, self-esteem and wellbeing						
	2.2 critique the impact of the media, advertising and other influences on one's decisions about health and wellbeing						
	2.3 describe what promotes a sense of belonging in school, at home and in the wider community and their own role in creating an inclusive environment						
	2.4 distinguish between appropriate care-giving and receiving						
Substance use	2.5 demonstrate the personal and social skills to address pressure to smoke, to drink alcohol and/or use other substances						
	2.6 reflect on the personal, social and legal consequences of their own or others' drug use						
	2.7 critique information and supports available for young people in relation to substance use						
Respectful communication	2.8 use the skills of active listening and responding appropriately in a variety of contexts						
	2.9 use good communication skills to respond to criticism and conflict						
Anti-bullying	2.10 describe appropriate responses to incidents of bullying						
	2.11 appraise the roles of participants and bystanders in incidents of bullying						
	2.12 review the school's anti-bullying policy and internet safety guidelines explaining the implications for students' behaviour and personal safety						

STRAND 3: TEAM UP

		ACTIVE	RESPONSIBLE	CONNECTED	RESILIENT	RESPECTED	AWARE
<i>Students learn about...</i>	Learning outcomes <i>Students should be able to...</i>						
Having a friend and being a friend	3.1 establish what young people value in different relationships and how this changes over time						
	3.2 evaluate attitudes, skills and values that help to make, maintain and end friendships respectfully						
	3.3 recognise their capacity to extend and receive friendship						
The relationship spectrum	3.4 explain the different influences on relationships and levels of intimacy						
	3.5 analyse relationship difficulties experienced by young people						
Sexuality, gender identity and sexual health	3.6 describe fertility, conception, pre-natal development and birth, and the particular health considerations for each						
	3.7 explain what it means to take care of their sexual health						
	3.8 demonstrate assertive communication skills in support of responsible, informed decision-making about relationships and sexual health that are age and developmentally appropriate						
	3.9 reflect on the personal and social dimensions of sexual orientation and gender identity						
Media influence on relationships and sexuality	3.10 critically analyse the use of sexual imagery and gender stereotyping in various forms of media						
	3.11 critique the influence of media on their understanding of sexuality and sexual health						

STRAND 4: MY MENTAL HEALTH

<i>Students learn about...</i>	Learning outcomes <i>Students should be able to...</i>	ACTIVE	RESPONSIBLE	CONNECTED	RESILIENT	RESPECTED	AWARE
Positive mental health	4.1 explain what it means to have positive mental health						
	4.2 appreciate the importance of talking things over including recognising the links between thoughts, feelings and behaviour						
	4.3 practise some relaxation techniques						
Mental health and mental ill-health	4.4 participate in an informed discussion about mental health issues experienced by young people and/or their friends and family						
	4.5 appreciate what it means to live with mental ill-health						
	4.6 critique mental health services available to young people locally						
	4.7 explain the significance of substance use for one's mental health						
Dealing with tough times	4.8 practise a range of strategies for building resilience						
	4.9 use coping skills for managing life's challenges						
Loss and bereavement	4.10 explain the wide range of life events where they might experience loss and bereavement						
	4.11 outline the personal, social, emotional and physical responses to loss and bereavement						
	4.12 compare how loss and bereavement are portrayed in a variety of contexts and cultures						
	4.13 describe how they might care for themselves and be supportive of others in times of loss or bereavement						

CSPE SHORT COURSE

STRAND 1: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

<i>Students learn about...</i>	<i>Learning outcomes Students should be able to...</i>	ACTIVE*	RESPONSIBLE	CONNECTED	RESILIENT	RESPECTED	AWARE
Human dignity—the basis for human rights	1.1 discuss what it means to be human and to live in a community with rights and responsibilities						
	1.2 create a visual representation to communicate a situation where human dignity is not respected						
	1.3 create a hierarchy of their needs, wants and rights						
	1.4 assemble a ‘basic needs basket’ representing the needs of a family living in Ireland (not just their economic needs).						
	1.5 access and interpret numerical data showing local and global distribution of basic resources and patterns of inequalities						
Human rights instruments	1.6 share stories of individuals or groups who inspire them because of their work for human rights						
	1.7 create a timeline tracing the origin of the concept of human rights, showing five or more key dates, events, people and documents						
	1.8 communicate their understanding of how the UNDHR, UNCRC and ECHR ⁸³ apply to their lives, in terms of both their rights and their responsibilities						
	1.9 identify examples of social, cultural, language, economic, civic, religious, environmental and political rights						
	1.10 outline different perspectives in situations where there is an apparent conflict of rights or an abuse of rights						
	1.11 show an appreciation of their responsibility to promote and defend their individual human rights and those of others						
	1.12 reflect on what has been learned in this strand						

* Students’ citizenship action projects may involve physical activity within or beyond the school.
 83 United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR), United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

STRAND 2: GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

<i>Students learn about...</i>	Learning outcomes <i>Students should be able to...</i>	ACTIVE	RESPONSIBLE	CONNECTED	RESILIENT	RESPECTED	AWARE
Sustainability	2.1 communicate how they are connected to and dependent upon eco-systems, people and places, near and far						
	2.2 create a visual representation to communicate a situation where human dignity is not respected						
	2.3 create a visual representation of data depicting their ecological footprint						
	2.4 discuss three or more sustainable living strategies they can employ in their lives						
Local and global development	2.5 examine case studies or personal testimonies of people experiencing poverty or inequality from different contexts and countries and how they are working to overcome this						
	2.6 express an informed opinion about the root causes of poverty, both locally and globally						
	2.7 discuss, with evidence, positive and negative effects of development in their local area						
Effecting global change	2.8 identify one person and one institution with power and influence in the world today, explaining their role						
	2.9 analyse one global issue or challenge, under the following headings:causes, consequences, impact on people’s lives and possible solutions						
	2.10 evaluate how they can contribute in responding to one challenge currently facing the world						
	2.11 examine a campaign for change in the area of sustainability and assess reasons why it has been successful or not						
	2.12 reflect on what has been learned in this strand						

STRAND 3: EXPLORING DEMOCRACY

ACTIVE*
RESPONSIBLE
CONNECTED
RESILIENT
RESPECTED
AWARE

Students learn about...

Learning outcomes
 Students should be able to...

The meaning of democracy	3.1	create a visual representation of the day-to-day contexts and institutions to which they belong, highlighting where they have power and influence				
	3.2	describe decision-making processes and the roles of different groups in their class/school				
	3.3	compare two or more systems of government, taking particular note of the ways in which the state interacts with its citizens, and citizens can shape their state				
	3.4	use the correct terminology to describe Irish and European democratic institutions, structures, political parties and roles				
	3.5	discuss strengths and weaknesses of the democratic process				
The law and the citizen	3.6	identify laws that directly relate to their lives				
	3.7	explain how laws are made, enforced and evolve over time				
	3.8	explain the role and relevance of local, national and international courts				
	3.9	list the nine grounds under which discrimination is illegal in Irish law, with examples				
	3.10	investigate how individuals or groups have used the law to bring about change in society				
The role of the media in a democracy	3.11	debate the pros and cons of media freedom				
	3.12	examine case studies of the use of digital or other media in one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a social justice movement • a political election or referendum • a criminal investigation • an environmental movement 				
	3.13	reflect on what has been learned in this strand				

APPENDIX B: HOW THE WELLBEING INDICATORS LINK TO THE STATEMENTS OF LEARNING AND THE STAYING WELL KEY SKILL

CURRICULUM LINKS	LINKS TO STATEMENTS OF LEARNING	LINKS TO KEY SKILL – STAYING WELL
PE/SPHE	 ACTIVE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is a confident and competent participant in physical activity and is motivated to be physically active (12) takes action to safeguard and promote her/his wellbeing and that of others (8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> participates in regular physical activity and recognises its benefits develops positive relationships finds enjoyment and fun in learning
SPHE/PE	 RESPONSIBLE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understands the importance of food and diet in making healthy lifestyle choices (13) takes action to safeguard and promote her/his wellbeing and that of others (8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> makes informed choices in relation to food, personal care and lifestyle identifies the likely consequences of risky and unhealthy behaviours recognises when personal safety is threatened & respond appropriately
CSPE SPHE PE	 CONNECTED <ul style="list-style-type: none"> values what it means to be an active citizen, with rights and responsibilities in local and wider contexts (7) takes action to safeguard and promote her/his wellbeing and that of others (8) has an awareness of personal values and an understanding of the process of moral decision-making (5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> participates in actions that make a positive contribution to my school, community and wider world recognises my rights and responsibilities as a local and global citizen respects life, in all its diversity, and know that life has meaning and purpose feels positive about myself
PE, CSPE, and SPHE	 RESILIENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> brings an idea from conception to realisation (23) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a range of coping strategies to deal with problems and stress learns from their mistakes and moves on sticks with things and work them through until they succeed recognises and celebrates their achievements
PE, CSPE and SPHE	 RESPECTED <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has an awareness of personal values and an understanding of the process of moral decision-making (5) takes action to safeguard and promote her/his wellbeing and that of others (8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> makes decisions based on the common good contributes to decision-making within the class and group communicates their opinions and beliefs with confidence stands apart from the crowd when needed develops positive relationships
PE, CSPE, and SPHE	 AWARE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has an awareness of personal values and an understanding of the process of moral decision-making (5) takes action to safeguard and promote her/his wellbeing and that of others (8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates care and respect for themselves and other people feels positive about themselves practises relaxation and mindfulness techniques

APPENDIX C: GETTING STARTED—SUGGESTED OUTLINE FOR A STAFF WORKSHOP

TOPIC	TIME NEEDED	USEFUL RESOURCES
<p>1 Agree the aim and learning outcomes for the workshop</p> <p>e.g. Aim: to begin the process of planning a Wellbeing programme for our junior cycle students. e.g. Learning outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to come to a shared understanding of what we mean by ‘wellbeing’ • to identify what we are already doing well to promote student wellbeing • to identify what we can do better and how. 	10 mins	
<p>2 What is important for students’ wellbeing?</p> <p>Brainstorm: What does the word ‘wellbeing’ mean for us? Record responses on a flip chart. Note as many aspects as possible at this point.</p> <p>Notice if there is a dominance of words that associate wellbeing with subjective feelings (happiness, confidence, etc.) and consider if there are other factors, as well as psychological/emotional factors, that impact on wellbeing, e.g. relational or contextual factors?</p> <p>Individual reflection:</p> <p>Invite each teacher (privately) to identify which factors they consider to be most important for student wellbeing and share these with a colleague. Might these factors also be important for teacher wellbeing?</p> <p>Invite staff to add any additional words to the ‘brainstorm’ following this exercise.</p> <p>Draw attention to the range of responses and highlight the fact that wellbeing is multifaceted, is a dynamic process with ups and downs, and that we are all on a continuum between ill-being and wellbeing.</p> <p>Conclude this session by asking participants to form small groups and identify the places/situations/learning experiences where students experience wellbeing in your school.</p>	25 mins	<p>Introduction to the Wellbeing guidelines, and especially the section entitled ‘Why does wellbeing matter?’, p 20-21.</p> <p>Definition of wellbeing in the guidelines, p. 9.</p>

TOPIC	TIME NEEDED	USEFUL RESOURCES
<p>3 Wellbeing – a central consideration</p> <p>To what extent is wellbeing a central consideration in this school – for students, for teachers? What is the evidence? What do we know about different students’ experience of wellbeing in our school? How do we know?</p> <p>Wellbeing indicators</p> <p>Working in small groups, read through the six wellbeing indicators and consider: Which wellbeing indicators are we doing well in supporting? How do we know? Which indicators need our attention? If you were to award a medal to a good practice and identify an area that needs further consideration (a mission) what would they be? Which indicator(s) would we want to prioritise for attention? How might this be done?</p>	25 mins	<p>School mission statement, school structures, policies and practices.</p> <p>Wellbeing indicators, p.45</p>
<p>4 Conclusion and next steps</p> <p>Invite each group to share one important insight from their discussions including a suggestion for next steps in planning a JC Wellbeing programme</p> <p>Possible next steps might include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consulting with students and their parents/guardians about the outcomes from the meeting • identifying CPD needs for staff in support of their engagement with the wellbeing programme • mapping out current curriculum provision and extra-curricular support for wellbeing, identifying supports and resources within the local community, etc. 	10 mins	

APPENDIX D: USING THE WELLBEING INDICATORS TO REVIEW SCHOOL PRACTICE

The following questions may be helpful in supporting groups such as the whole staff, subject departments, teachers of a year group, the wider school community, including administrative and ancillary staff, to reflect on current practices and how they, individually and/or collectively, contribute or could contribute to supporting students' progress in relation to each of the indicators.

In my role and in my relationships with students, how do I support their learning journey towards		Yes	To some extent	Not yet
 ACTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being a confident and skilled participant in physical activity • being physically active 			
 RESPONSIBLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being able to take action to protect and promote their wellbeing and that of others • making healthy eating choices • knowing when and where their safety is at risk and enabling them to make the right choices 			
 CONNECTED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feeling connected to their school, their friends, community and the wider world • understanding how their actions and interactions impact on their own wellbeing and that of others, in local and global contexts 			
 RESILIENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feeling confident in themselves and having the coping skills to deal with life's challenges • knowing where they can go for help • believing that with effort they can achieve 			
 RESPECTED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • showing care and respect for others • having positive relationships with friends, peers and teachers • feeling listened to and valued 			
 AWARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being aware of their thoughts, feelings and behaviours and being able to make sense of them • being aware of their personal values and able to think through their decisions • being aware of themselves as learners and knowing how they can improve 			

Reflecting on this exercise consider:

Which wellbeing indicators do you feel you are most supporting?	
Which wellbeing indicators need your attention?	
What one/two changes will you make to support students' progress in relation to the indicators?	
What surprised you doing this exercise?	

APPENDIX E: USING WELLBEING INDICATORS TO SUPPORT STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT

The following questions may be helpful in supporting students to reflect on their wellbeing using the six indicators. It might also be useful for checking in with the students that they understand what is meant in the different indicators.

In using this, or other self-assessment tools, it is important to stress to students that wellbeing is a process and a lifelong journey and may never be fully realised. The purpose of this tool is to allow students to reflect on their wellbeing, to identify areas of wellbeing that they can improve and to provide information and insights for the staff about how they can better support learning for and learning about wellbeing.

Students can use the comment box to comment on their answer, to set a goal and/or to suggest how the Wellbeing programme in junior cycle could support their progress in relation to this indicator.

This self-assessment tool can also provide an opportunity to open up a conversation about wellbeing with a teacher, a peer or parent/guardian.

	Day to day	Yes	To some extent	Not yet
 ACTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am a confident and skilled participant in physical activity • I am physically active on a regular basis 			
Comment:				
 RESPONSIBLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I take action to protect and promote my wellbeing and that of others • I can make healthy eating choices • I know when my safety is at risk and I make the right choices to protect myself 			
Comment:				
 CONNECTED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel connected to my school, my friends, community and the wider world • I understand how my actions and interactions impact on my own wellbeing and that of others, in local and global contexts 			
Comment:				

	Day to day	Yes	To some extent	Not yet
 RESILIENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel confident in myself and have the coping skills to deal with life’s challenges • I know where I can go for help • I believe that with effort I can achieve 			

Comment:

 RESPECTED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel listened to and valued • I have positive relationships with my friends, my peers and my teachers • I show care and respect for others 			
--	--	--	--	--

Comment:

 AWARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am aware of my thoughts, feelings and behaviours and I can make sense of them • I am aware of my personal values and can think through my decisions • I am aware of how I learn best and know how I can improve 			
--	---	--	--	--

Comment:

Reflecting on this exercise consider:

Three things I am doing well to support my wellbeing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3
Three things I plan to do that will help to support my wellbeing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3

APPENDIX F: STUDENT FOCUS GROUP ON DEVELOPING A WELLBEING PROGRAMME

This workshop can be used with a whole class group, a focus group from the same class/the same year group/across year groups. It would require a double period and it is important that the students involved represent a range of experiences in the school. It may be the case that some students may need time to build their confidence to participate fully in such groups. That said, it is important to include the quieter, less vocal students and students with special educational needs in order to understand the full range of experiences of wellbeing in the school. The feedback from this group can be used for a number of purposes such as informing planning for Wellbeing or to inform the design of a questionnaire for all students.

1. INTRODUCTION

Explain to the students that the purpose of the session is to hear their ideas and suggestions for the new area of learning, Wellbeing, in junior cycle. Tell them where and how their feedback will be used. Agree with them how you will report back to the group. It is important that students appreciate the democratic nature of this engagement.

2. BRAINSTORM: WHAT IS WELLBEING? (FULL GROUP ACTIVITY)

When you hear the word 'wellbeing' what words, phrases come into your mind?

Record feedback on a flip chart. Draw attention to the different aspects of wellbeing that are included. Identify where there are gaps and ask if they think these are important and would like to add them to the feedback.

3. BRAINSTORM: WHAT REALLY MATTERS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S WELLBEING?

Feedback can be recorded on a flip chart, a graffiti wall, post-its.

4. GROUP WORK

In groups of three/four, ask students to rank in order their choice of the six most important things that matter for young people's wellbeing.

Then ask them to repeat this exercise in the context of school. This feedback should be collected for feedback purposes to the wellbeing planning team.

5. THINK, PAIR, SHARE ACTIVITY

Individually, consider the following two questions:

What can school do to support students and their wellbeing? Their learning about wellbeing?

Pair up and identify the three most important ideas.

Pair up with another pair, share what both groups have identified and agree the two most important suggestions.

6. FEEDBACK

Take feedback from the group and record the different ideas on flip chart. Take care not to repeat ideas.

Invite students to rank in order the ideas where '1' is the most important idea. This can be done by giving each group two votes. Each group decides how they will cast their two votes, giving their first vote to the most important thing that schools can do to support young people's wellbeing in junior cycle. (The first and second vote can be recorded using two different colour stickers).

When the areas have been prioritised, ask each group for suggestions about how one of areas prioritised should be progressed. Each group receives a different priority to focus on.

7. PRIORITISING WHAT IS IMPORTANT FOR STUDENT LEARNING ABOUT WELLBEING

In the same group of four, complete the following sentence on an A4 sheet:

To support their wellbeing, young people in junior cycle need to learn...

Invite suggestions about which subject areas might best support this kind of learning.

Place these sheets on the floor and invite students to view what others have suggested. Invite feedback.

8. TO FINISH

The one big idea from today that I would like to be considered is...

This workshop could be used to promote a conversation between staff and students. For example, both teachers and students could complete the different exercises and come together to share responses.

Having participated in this workshop, students, working in pairs/threes, could facilitate this workshop with different class groups in order to gather more student voices to inform planning for Wellbeing.

APPENDIX G: PARENT FOCUS GROUP ON DEVELOPING A WELLBEING PROGRAMME

The purpose of this focus group is to facilitate the active participation of parents/guardians in planning the Wellbeing programme in junior cycle. This focus group should, if possible, include parent representatives from across the school cohort.

1. INTRODUCTION (FULL GROUP ACTIVITY)

Explain to parents that Wellbeing is a new area of learning in junior cycle and the guidelines can be accessed online. Explain that the purpose of the session is to hear their ideas and suggestions for this new area of learning and that their feedback will be used to inform the planning process.

2. BRAINSTORM: WHAT IS WELLBEING?

When you hear the word 'wellbeing' what words, phrases come into your mind?

Record feedback on a flip chart. Draw attention to the different aspects of wellbeing that are included. Identify where there are gaps and ask if they think these are important and would like to add them to the feedback.

3. BRAINSTORM: WHAT REALLY MATTERS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S WELLBEING?

Feedback can be recorded on a flip chart, a graffiti wall, post-its.

4. THINK, PAIR, SHARE ACTIVITY

Individually, consider the following:

What can this school do to support students and their learning about wellbeing?

Pair up and identify the three most important ideas.

Pair up with another pair, share what both groups have identified and agree the two most important suggestions.

5. FEEDBACK

Take feedback from each group and record the different ideas on a flip chart. Take care not to repeat ideas.

Invite parents to rank in order the ideas, for themselves, where '1' is the most important idea. Everyone has two votes. They cast their two votes, giving their first one to the most important. (First and second preferences can be recorded using two different colour stickers.)

6. WELLBEING INDICATORS

The wellbeing indicators describe the skills and dispositions that a programme in Wellbeing is designed to develop in young people in junior cycle.

Individually, rank in order the indicators where '1' is the most important in your opinion.

In threes, discuss your rankings with the other two parents. Agree which indicators you really welcome and which indicator(s) will require the most support and how this might happen in the school.

7. LEARNING IN WELLBEING

In small groups, consider the following question:

When you think about your child or young people in junior cycle: what do they need to learn about and be able to do in support of their wellbeing? How can this school plan for this kind of learning?
Each group identifies the three most important ideas and records them on the flipchart.

Invite each group to share one of their big ideas and these should be recorded.

What can the school do to support you in supporting your child's wellbeing?

8. TO FINISH: INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Ask each parent to record what one big idea from today they would like to be considered, in particular, in the school's planning for Wellbeing in junior cycle.

The one big idea from today that I would like to be considered is...

APPENDIX H: WELLBEING IN JUNIOR CYCLE: SELF-EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND STAFF⁸⁴

This checklist can be used to reflect on and evaluate what the school is doing well and what needs to be improved in the four key aspects of wellbeing in junior cycle: culture, relationships, curriculum and policy/planning. Schools should use all available evidence from a range of people including students, teachers, parents/guardians to review the extent to which it meets the features set out in the questionnaire.

KEY ASPECT: CULTURE

How are we doing? Apply rating 1 – 3 taking into account the criteria in the second column. (1. Needs attention, 2. Acceptable, 3. Excellent)

FOCUS	SOME CRITERIA TO LOOK FOR:	NEEDS		
		ATTENTION	ACCEPTABLE	EXCELLENT
School mission and ethos	The wellbeing of the whole school community is at the heart of the school’s mission statement.			
	The wellbeing of the whole school community is at the heart of the school’s mission statement.			
	Everybody in the school community is valued and has opportunities to flourish.			
	All staff contribute to promoting a caring and inclusive environment within the school that is supportive of student wellbeing.			
	There is a shared vision and understanding of what student wellbeing means which emphasises strengths and capacities rather than simply focusing on problems and weaknesses.			
	Respectful and caring relationships are fostered between staff and students, students and students, and staff and parents.			
	There are structures in place designed to support the wellbeing of students, e.g. a Student Support Team.			

⁸⁴ This checklist has been adapted from DES, HSE, DOH. (2013). *Well-being in post-primary schools: Guidelines for mental health promotion and suicide prevention.* p. 62-65.

FOCUS	SOME CRITERIA TO LOOK FOR:	NEEDS		
		ATTENTION	ACCEPTABLE	EXCELLENT
Physical and social environment	The physical environment conveys a message of warmth, welcome and inclusion.			
	The school is a safe place for all students.			
	There are spaces for students to congregate socially and to have quiet time.			
	The school building is accessible for all students.			
	Students and staff take pride and care in maintaining the physical environment.			
	The school environment is conducive to promoting physical activity and healthy eating choices.			
Classroom culture	Teachers have high expectations for all students.			
	There are open, positive, supportive relationships between teachers and students in class and outside.			
	A culture of collaboration and cooperation is promoted through day-to-day teaching, learning and assessment practices.			
	Students feel safe, secure and respected in their classrooms.			
Teaching, learning and assessment	Students are actively engaged in their learning and enjoy being at school.			
	Students receive regular formative feedback about their learning and how they can improve.			
	Students have regular opportunities to talk about their learning and what helps them to learn.			
	Teachers use active methodologies to develop the key skills in their subjects.			
	Teaching and learning is differentiated and provides an appropriate challenge to enable all students to engage and experience success.			

Which of the aspects of **Culture** outlined above should be prioritised in planning for Wellbeing in junior cycle?

What are we going to do?

Who is going to do it?

Review date:

KEY ASPECT: RELATIONSHIPS

How are we doing? Apply rating 1 – 3 taking into account the criteria in the second column.
 (1. Needs attention, 2. Acceptable, 3. Excellent)

FOCUS	SOME CRITERIA TO LOOK FOR:	NEEDS ATTENTION	ACCEPTABLE	EXCELLENT
Student teacher relationships	Student teacher relationships are friendly, caring and respectful.			
	The whole school staff feel confident, as individuals, about their potential role as the ‘one good adult’ that students may turn to for support and help.			
	Students know where to get support and how to access the ‘care’ structures in the school.			
	There is a positive discipline policy where discipline issues are resolved with care, respect and consistency.			
	There is a shared vision and understanding of what student wellbeing means which emphasises strengths and capacities rather than simply focusing on problems and weaknesses.			
Peer relationships	Students show respect, care and concern for each other.			
	Students feel safe and supported amongst their peers.			
	Teachers feels supported and cared for amongst their colleagues.			
Student voice	There are different structures in place where students can have their voices heard, e.g. in class, tutor meetings, student -voice focus groups, prefect meetings, Student Council.			
	Students know that their feedback is valued because it is acted on.			
	All students have an opportunity to have their voice heard and are involved in making decisions about their life in school.			
Partnership with parents/guardians, community and wider supports	Parents/guardians feel welcome, respected and listened to as partners in the education of their children.			
	Parents/guardians have opportunities to learn about the school’s Wellbeing programme in junior cycle and how they can support their child’s wellbeing.			
	Parents/guardians are actively encouraged to get involved in the planning and evaluation of the Wellbeing programme.			
	The school has developed positive, proactive links with groups and clubs in the community involved in supporting young people’s wellbeing.			

FOCUS	SOME CRITERIA TO LOOK FOR:	NEEDS ATTENTION	ACCEPTABLE	EXCELLENT
-------	----------------------------	--------------------	------------	-----------

Which aspects of **Relationships** outlined above should be prioritised in planning for Wellbeing in junior cycle?

What are we going to do?

Who is going to do it?	Review date:
------------------------	--------------

KEY ASPECT: CURRICULUM

How are we doing? Apply rating 1 – 3 taking into account the criteria in the second column.
 (1. Needs attention, 2. Acceptable, 3. Excellent)

FOCUS	SOME CRITERIA TO LOOK FOR:	NEEDS ATTENTION	ACCEPTABLE	EXCELLENT
CSPE, PE, SPHE	There is a coherent and coordinated approach to the provision of CSPE, PE, SPHE as part of the Wellbeing programme in junior cycle.			
	There are regular opportunities where teachers can work collaboratively in planning for CSPE, PE and SPHE.			
	Students’ and parents’ voices inform planning in CSPE, PE and SPHE.			
	Teachers are supported and encouraged to participate in continuing professional development in CSPE, PE and SPHE.			
	Teachers are consulted before being assigned to teach SPHE and/or CSPE.			
Guidance	Guidance-related learning is an important aspect of the Wellbeing curriculum in junior cycle.			
	The guidance counsellor works collaboratively with the wellbeing team in planning the Wellbeing programme in junior cycle.			
	The guidance counsellor has opportunities to get to know and to support students in junior cycle.			
	The guidance counsellor co-ordinates the appropriate sharing of relevant information about students with their teachers in support of their wellbeing.			
Other subjects and learning experiences	Each teacher understands their role in supporting learning for and learning about wellbeing in their subject.			
	Teachers, other than CSPE, SPHE and PE teachers, are encouraged to consider how they can contribute to learning about wellbeing and for wellbeing.			
Extra-curricular and co-curricular learning	The school’s extracurricular programme is designed to be broad, accessible and inclusive.			
	Students and parents are actively involved in planning and evaluating the school’s extra-curricular programme.			

Which aspects of **Curriculum** should be prioritised in planning for wellbeing in junior cycle?

What are we going to do?

Who is going to do it?

Review date:

KEY ASPECT: POLICY AND PLANNING

How are we doing? Apply rating 1 – 3 taking into account the criteria in the second column.
 (1. Needs attention, 2. Acceptable, 3. Excellent)

FOCUS	SOME CRITERIA TO LOOK FOR:	NEEDS ATTENTION	ACCEPTABLE	EXCELLENT
School policies	School policies are developed and reviewed in partnership with students, parents and staff.			
	Wellbeing-related policies including policies in relation to behaviour, internet safety, extra-curricular activities, SPHE (including RSE) and anti-bullying are in place and are regularly reviewed.			
	Policy documents are accessible and are shared with students and parents/guardians.			
	Policies are enacted with fairness and compassion.			
School self-evaluation (SSE)	In school planning, time is made available for planning in Wellbeing.			
	Explicit links are made between planning for Wellbeing and SSE.			
Subject and whole-school planning	Planning documents for Wellbeing are collated and saved in support of WSE in Wellbeing.			
	Wellbeing in junior cycle is an important feature of whole school and subject planning.			
Continuing professional development (CPD)	Teachers are encouraged and supported to participate in CPD in support of student wellbeing.			
	Teachers are encouraged and facilitated to share their learning in CPD with colleagues.			
	In school CPD includes opportunities for teachers to share their work in junior cycle Wellbeing with colleagues.			

Which aspects of **Policy and planning** should be prioritised in planning for Wellbeing in junior cycle?

What are we going to do?

Who is going to do it?

Review date:

The wellbeing indicators make explicit what is important learning in Wellbeing. Circle which of the indicators and the descriptors learning in this unit supports. (See page 45)

Learning outcomes

At the end of this unit, students will be able to...

Sample learning activities

Assessment

Students will show evidence of their learning when they...

Useful resources, web links and community links

PHOTO CREDIT

The NCCA would like to thank the students from St Joseph's Secondary School, Rush and St Mark's Community School, Tallaght who kindly consented to having their photographs taken. The NCCA was granted parental/guardian permission for the participation of their children in this process.



