

Newpark Comprehensive School



WELLBEING POLICY

Introductory Statement

The Newpark School Wellbeing Policy is a structured document that describes the school Wellbeing programme. It is an integral part of the school's overall development plan.

Relationship to the Ethos of the school

Newpark Comprehensive School operates on the philosophy that each student “is encouraged to reach their own potential, to develop their skills and abilities to the maximum degree possible and hopefully become active participative citizens and lifelong learners after school”. Newpark aims to develop a broad and inclusive range of aptitudes in each student, to develop the self-worth, self-esteem and self-confidence of each student and to provide a supportive and caring environment.

The School Wellbeing Policy reflects this philosophy. The enhancement of self-esteem and life skills and the development of potential – academic, personal and emotional – leading to greater autonomy for all students are its central goals. The policy reflects the uniqueness of Newpark and its own context and circumstances.

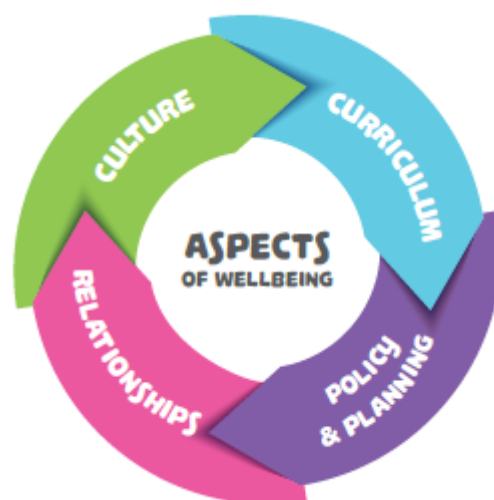
Rationale

In the context of Junior Cycle reform, there is an increased focus on the need to ensure that the wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of school life. Accordingly, the NCCA (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment) has developed Wellbeing Guidelines. These guidelines govern what we, as a school, now set out to achieve. 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 (The Guidelines for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle 2017).

The Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023 states that by 2023 the promotion of wellbeing will be at the core of the ethos of every school and that all schools will provide evidence-informed approaches and support, appropriate to need, to promote the wellbeing of all their students. The role of the school is now understood as a place which develops the “whole child”, one who should leave school with a balanced set of cognitive, social and emotional skills to face the challenges of the 21st century.

Wellbeing in Schools

The Wellbeing Guidelines identify four key aspects of wellbeing within the school setting: They are:



NCCA (2017). Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines

Curriculum:

This aspect refers to the subjects we provide and how we cater for wellbeing in the curriculum.

Policy and Planning:

This aspect refers to how we as a school endeavour to look after the wellbeing of the school community, for example, through policies, planning and school self-evaluation. We should make decisions with due regard to the wellbeing of our school community.

Relationships:

Good relationships amongst all members of the school community form the backbone of a positive working environment. Relationships between students, staff and parents/guardians should be characterised by openness, respect and listening.

Culture:

Culture refers to our ethos, mission statement, physical and social environment, classroom culture and teaching, learning and assessment. We strive to make sure our students and staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.

Wellbeing Indicators

Six indicators of wellbeing have been identified by the NCCA. They are:

- ***Active***
Being physically active is an important element in staying well.
- ***Responsible***
Each person must take responsibility for their own choices and make decisions, which promote their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others.
- ***Connected***
It is important to feel connected and also to appreciate that actions and interactions taken by one person will impact on their wellbeing and that of others.
- ***Resilient***
Everyone goes through challenges in their life. By building resilience, students learn the skills to cope with life's challenges.
- ***Respected***
Feeling respected, listened to and valued are key aspects of wellbeing. Positive, respectful relationships are central to maintaining wellbeing.
- ***Aware***
Self-awareness is important for wellbeing, being able to make sense of thoughts, feelings and behaviours and being aware of personal values and personal limitations.



NCCA (2017). Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines.

Newpark has always placed a strong emphasis on the wellbeing of the school community. The introduction of a formal Wellbeing Programme will embed the support structures and activities already in place in the school. Through its policies and procedures, the school seeks to provide a safe and caring environment for all.

Wellbeing in The School

Form Teacher

Each form group has a form teacher. The role of the form teacher is crucial to the successful implementation of the student support system. The work done by form teachers can help ensure that student welfare is looked after, and that good communication is kept up between home and school.

Year Leader

Each year group has an assigned Year Leader. The role of the Year Leaders is also crucial to the successful implementation of the student support system. They monitor the students in their year group, ensuring that they are supported throughout their time in the school. Year Leaders work closely with Management, the Student Support Team and Form Teachers to ensure the wellbeing of the students in their care. The Year Leader has a weekly meeting with the Principal and a Deputy Principal.

Student Support Team

The Student Support Team consists of the Guidance Counsellors, Chaplain, Nurses, Deputy Principals and representatives of the SEN department. The team meets weekly to discuss students who staff have concerns about, academically, emotionally or in terms of behaviour. The staff member refers the student to the team by filling out a lemon Student Support Team referral form. The student is assigned to a member of the Student Support Team. They work with the student and offer feedback to the team and to the staff member who referred the student (while keeping within the confines of confidentiality).

Guidance Counsellors

Newpark has two Guidance counsellors that assist students to develop self-management skills, which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives. Guidance encompasses the three separate but interlinked areas of Personal and Social Guidance, Educational Guidance and Career Guidance. The Guidance Counsellors in conjunction with staff and management are central to, and supportive of, the care system and policies which aim to deal with student support issues.

SEN Department

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

Nurses

The nurses in Newpark provide nursing care for students and staff and liaise with parents, teaching staff and management. They promote a healthy, caring environment and healthy lifestyles. They assist with HSE vaccination programmes and supply and fit first aid boxes for sports and outings.

Chaplain

The Chaplain meets every first year student for an informal “Chat with the Chaplain” to see how they are settling into the school. The Chaplain in conjunction with staff and management are central to, and supportive of, the care system and policies which aim to deal with student support issues. The Chaplain represents the school at times of serious illness and bereavement.

Child Protection

New child protection procedures came into effect from December 2017. As a result, the school has prepared a comprehensive Child Protection Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment. This document is prominently displayed in the reception. The Principal is the Designated Liaison person and the Deputy Designated Liaison person is one of the Deputy Principals. This information is displayed in the GPA. The Child Protection Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment is reviewed annually and is signed off by the Board of Management.

Student Council

The school encourage students to play a positive role in the effective running of the school. Newpark has a Junior and a Senior Student Council made up of 2 elected representatives from each form group. They meet regularly and a subcommittee meet with the Board of Management. The Student Council provides a focus for student opinion, to enable their voices to be heard and to be communicated to the staff, management and the BoM.

Prefect System

Each year 16 boys and 16 girls are elected to be prefects by their peers and staff. They are given leadership training workshops to help support them in their role. They help in the day to day running of the school, supporting staff and acting as role models to the younger students. They ensure that the student voice is heard by being the link between students and management, including the Board of Management. The prefects themselves elect a Head Boy and a Head Girl who lead the prefects and oversee their work.

Prefect and First Year Mentor System

Each prefect is responsible for a small group of First Year students. They meet the First Years at the beginning of the school year and show them around the school. They also have a fun activity morning in early September where they play games together in the sports hall. They meet with them every third Wednesday during long registration. They are there to help them settle in to the school, answer any questions or concerns they may have and to generally be a friendly face around the school.

Wellbeing in the Curriculum

Wellbeing is present in the junior cycle curriculum, PE, SPHE and CSPE. 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. For this reason, Newpark places a strong emphasis on the role that CSPE, PE, SPHE and guidance can play in supporting learning about wellbeing and learning for wellbeing. The school follows the NCCA digital media literacy short course. The students learn behaviour and skills necessary to be a good digital citizen and to safeguard their wellbeing online. By examining the school’s Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) students will learn what is correct and proper

behaviour when using the school's laptops, email system and when online. The school has developed its own RE short course with a view to supporting our inclusive school practice and developing cultural literacy.

Senior cycle students also have wellbeing classes embedded in the curriculum. All senior years have PE classes. In Transition Year the students have 2 hours of Lifeskills a week, which includes; careers, first aid and RSE. In 5th and 6th year the students have two classes a week of Lifeskills which includes careers education and mental health.

An annual junior cycle plan will be shared and made available to all teachers which references wellbeing. This will be done by the junior cycle co-ordinator.

In line with guidelines set down by the Department of Education and Skills, the school has reached our 400 hours of wellbeing related learning at junior cycle.

Wellbeing Co-Ordinator

Newpark has allocated one AP1 post to a wellbeing co-ordinator. The co-ordinator will oversee the implementation of the wellbeing programme in the school.

Junior Cycle Co-Ordinator

Newpark has allocated one AP1 post to a junior cycle co-ordinator. The co-ordinator oversees the formal wellbeing programme in the school and supports teachers in their implementation of the Junior Cycle Key Principle of Wellbeing as part of their daily practice.

API Post PME and NQT Induction

Newpark has allocated one AP1 post to induction of newly qualified teachers and PME students to ensure that they feel supported and connected and understand the ethos of the school. NQT are mentored through the Droichead programme.

Extra-Curricular Sports and Activities Programme

Newpark has an extensive range of extra-curricular sports and activities that take place both after and before school and during lunchtime. They include; drama, hockey, rugby, basketball, chess, Christian union, swimming, LGBTI, choir, lego club and green schools. The ECA's contribute to all aspects of wellbeing.

Anti-Bullying

Newpark has an antibullying policy which is reviewed regularly. All 1st year SPHE teachers deliver an antibullying programme to all first years after the October half term. Bullying is revisited in 2nd and 3rd year SPHE. The SPHE co-ordinator surveys all 2nd years annually to get an overall picture of how much bullying is occurring in the year group, the types of bullying occurring and where it is happening. The results inform decisions around, for example, supervision of the school building and grounds.

Staff Welfare Committee

The role of the Staff Welfare Committee is both social and personal. They organise social events during the year for staff and celebrate occasions such as births and marriages and remember staff when there is an illness or a bereavement.

Healthy Eating School

Newpark encourages healthy eating. The school has a healthy eating policy and works with the school's catering company to ensure that healthy lunches and snacks are provided to the students.

Green Schools Committee

The aim of Green Schools is to encourage students to live responsibly and increase their awareness of environmental issues through various means and to transfer this knowledge into positive environmental action in the school and in the wider community. The committee seeks to make cultural change based on education and encouragement. The school has a Single Use Plastic Free Policy, the first school in Ireland to have such a policy.

PTA

Newpark has an active PTA which provides a forum to represent the views of parents to the Principal and the Board of Management. It also engages with the Student Council, supports the aims and objectives of the school, encourages parent participation in school activities, organises fundraisers, social events and

parent evening talks on topical issues. All parents or legal guardians of students attending Newpark school are members of the association. The committee is elected and meets monthly.

Music and Sports Centres

Newpark has a music and a sports centre on campus which staff and students have access to. Both the students and the staff have access to the facilities in the sports centre during the school day and before and after school. The music department in the school runs a Links Programme with the music centre. This allows students to access instrumental lessons during the school day.

Physical Environment

The school has a meditation room for students and staff and the GPA provides a safe space for students to congregate during the school day. The grounds around the school are designed for use by the school community. They are landscaped, have benches, a garden and traffic free zones during break and lunch.

In addition to the above, the school organises a number of events and activities each year, aimed at the wellbeing of our school community. They are organised by various subject departments and teachers over the course of the year. A list of these events and activities is available from the wellbeing co-ordinator.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management, Newpark Comprehensive School at its meeting on 8th April 2019