



Wellbeing Policy

Introductory Statement

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

Relationship to the Ethos and Mission Statement of the school

Newpark Comprehensive School operates on the philosophy that each student is encouraged to fulfil their potential in all areas of school life and to develop their individual skills and abilities. All students will have a balanced, holistic, and comprehensive education which emphasizes academic, creative, practical, emotional, spiritual, sporting, and social development. The school is committed to creating an enjoyable environment in which the strengths of every person in the community are nurtured. Newpark advocates for and empowers students to be 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 and Senior 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. The purpose of this Wellbeing Policy is to identify the systems in place that promote, support, and review the provision of wellbeing in the school. It reflects both the updated NCCA Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines 2021 and the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice. These guidelines govern what we, as a school, 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 (Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines 2021)

The Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice states that 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 and what the Indicators of Success are. These are central to our whole school vision of wellbeing.

The four key aspects of wellbeing:

Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines 2021



The Indicators of Success:

Curriculum:

- Children and young people experience positive, high-quality teaching, learning and assessment, which provides opportunities for success for all.
- Children and young people access curricular activities to promote their physical, social, and emotional competence to enhance their overall wellbeing.

Policy and Planning:

- Schools and centres for education use a Self-Evaluation Wellbeing Promotion Process to develop, implement and review wellbeing promotion.
- Schools and centres for education incorporate wellbeing promotion into whole school policies and practices.

Relationships:

- Children and young people, their parents and other external partners are actively involved in wellbeing promotion within the school community.
- All adults in schools and centres for education have an increased awareness of the importance of wellbeing promotion, including listening to children and young people, and signposting them to internal or external pathways for support when needed.

Culture:

- Children, young people, and staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected, and supported.
- Systems are in place so that the voice of the child/young person, teacher and parent are heard and lead to improvements in school culture and ethos.

Wellbeing Indicators

Six indicators of wellbeing have been identified by the NCCA and they guide wellbeing practices in the school. 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 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.



Wellbeing structures and supports in Newpark

Newpark has always placed a strong emphasis on the wellbeing of the school community. A formal Wellbeing Programme will embed the support structures and activities already in place in the school. Through its policies and procedures and the

SSE process, the school seeks to provide a safe and caring environment for all. Each year the wellbeing co-ordinator does an Action Plan and a Wellbeing School Improvement Plan Summary for Wellbeing in consultation with other bodies in the school. A list of activities and events that support wellbeing in the school is done annually. Both are on Wellbeing OneNote.

Wellbeing in the Curriculum

Wellbeing is present in the junior cycle curriculum; PE, SPHE and CSPE. While all teachers in all subjects 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. Teachers from CSPE, SPHE and PE have a collaborative approach to the wellbeing curriculum and meet to develop a shared vision.

The students do a Digital Literacy course where they learn behaviour and skills necessary to be a good digital citizen and to safeguard their wellbeing online. By examining the school's IT Acceptable Use Policy 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. Junior cycle students do wellbeing classes, for example, yoga and mindfulness.

Senior cycle students also have wellbeing classes embedded in the curriculum. All senior years have PE classes. In Transition Year the students have two hours of Lifeskills a week, which includes Careers Ed, First Aid and RSE. In 5th and 6th year the students have an hour a week of Lifeskills which includes Careers Education, Study Skills, RSE and Mental Health.

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

All subject planning includes wellbeing, and teachers should embed wellbeing into their curriculum.

The school leadership team supports staff attending CPD.

Restorative practices

Newpark endeavours to take a restorative approach when it comes to managing behaviour and building relationships. This helps build positive relationships in the

school community. Teachers have been trained in restorative practices and restorative attitudes, values and processes inform our policies and procedures.

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 using the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines 2021 and the Wellbeing policy Statement and Framework for Practice as guidelines. Each year they do an Action Plan and a Wellbeing School Improvement Plan Summary for Wellbeing in consultation with other bodies in the school. A list of activities and events that support wellbeing in the school is done annually too.

Wellbeing Team

Newpark has an active Wellbeing Team that meets regularly. The role of the team is to implement the Wellbeing Policy and Statement & Framework for Practice and to organise a Wellbeing Week annually and other wellbeing events.

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 AEN 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 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 who 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 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.

AEN Department

The AEN 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

Newpark has a Child Protection Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment. This document is prominently displayed in the reception. The Principal is the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and the Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL P) 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 approved by the Board of Management.

Student Council & Culture 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 meets 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, school leadership, and the Board of Management. The school also has a Cultural Council and a Sports Council.

Prefect System

Each year 34 students 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 throughout the year. They are there to help them settle into the school, answer any questions, or concerns they may have and to generally be a friendly face around the school.

PME and NQT Induction

The Principal and Deputy Principals, supported by various Assistant Principals, are responsible for the induction of newly qualified teachers and PME students to ensure that they feel supported and connected and understand the ethos of the school. NQTs are mentored through the *Droichead* programme.

Extra-Curricular Sports and Activities Programme

Newpark has allocated two Assistant Principal 2 posts to ECA's. There is one for sport ECA's and another for the remaining ECA's. The co-ordinators oversee the implementation of the ECA programme in the school.

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, anti-racism, Christian Union, swimming, LGBTI, choir, Lego club and Green Schools. The ECA's contribute to all aspects of wellbeing. A list of ECA's is made available to the whole school community at the beginning of the academic year.

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Newpark's antibullying action plan follows Bí Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying Implementation Plan 2023-2027. All first year SPHE teachers deliver an antibullying programme to all first years after the October half term. A guest speaker comes in to talk to all first years. Bullying is revisited in second and third year SPHE. Resources from the FUSE programme are used. The SPHE co-ordinator surveys all second 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 are informed annually on the policy and procedures.

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.

Staff are informed throughout the year at staff meetings and via emails about Spectrum Life and the support services it provides to teachers.

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.

Parents/Guardians

Newpark has an active PTA which provides a forum to represent the views of parents to the Principal and the Board of Management. It engages with the Wellbeing Co-Ordinator, 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.

Sports Centre

Newpark has 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.

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. There is a sensory garden and a vegetable patch which the students tend to.

Outside Agencies

The school liaises with outside agencies to support wellbeing in the school. Dr Claire Hayes' programme, 'Understanding and Managing Anxiety', is one example and the school continues to work with both UNICEF and the Rape Crisis Centre.

Wellbeing Links with School Policies

All school policies should relate directly to Wellbeing and will be updated accordingly. All policies are available on the school website.

In addition to the above, the school organises several events and activities each year, aimed at the wellbeing of our school community. They are organised by various subject departments, ECA groups and teachers over the course of the year.

An annual list of events and activities that support wellbeing in the school can be seen on the Wellbeing OneNote. The annual Wellbeing Action Plan and Wellbeing School Improvement Summary Plan can also be found on the Wellbeing OneNote as can the annual ECA timetable.

This policy was reviewed in the 2025/2026 academic year. It will be reviewed as required going forward, in line with changing information, guidelines, legislation, school facilities and/or feedback from school stakeholders.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management, Newpark Comprehensive School at its meeting on 16 June 2026.