



**Assumption Secondary School**  
**Wellbeing Policy**  
**&**  
**Appendix A**

# Wellbeing Policy



## Our Mission Statement

*We endeavour to educate young women in an inclusive, caring, Christian atmosphere of respect for self, others and the environment.*

*We value freedom, equality and security and strive to promote the growth of positive thinking, self-worth and justice*

**Student's 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 wider community.  
(NCCA 2017)**

### Why does Wellbeing matter?

Wellbeing is defined as a state of being comfortable, healthy, resilient and happy. Wellbeing matters because all students have a right to feel cared for in school. Students who have higher levels of wellbeing tend to have better cognitive outcomes in school. Wellbeing and learning are inextricably linked. (NCCA 2017)

Schools provide an important setting for the support and promotion of students learning about wellbeing and for 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. How they learn is as important as what they learn. (NCCA 2017)

There is a great link between a young person's mental health and them having 'one good adult' whom they can turn to. Teachers are listed as being an example of those 'one good adult's' for some young people, further highlighting the important link between education settings and wellbeing.

### An overview of Wellbeing.

Wellbeing has always been part of a school's curriculum. Now however, as part of the Junior Cycle Programme, Wellbeing will form a substantial component. Across the 3-year cycle, students will engage with the provision of 400 hours of 'wellbeing'. This involves the provision of learning opportunities to enhance the physical, social, emotional and mental wellbeing of our students and to enable them to build the necessary life skills to cope with day today stresses in a healthy manner.

It will encourage students to develop a strong sense of connectedness to their school and their community. The indicators for wellbeing as outlined in the new framework for Junior Cycle (see figure 3.1) underpin C.P.PS's curricular provision for well-being.



Figure 3.1 Indicators of Well-Being (JCT.ie)

### **Wellbeing a Whole School Approach**

Schools have a central role to play in supporting and promoting students learning about wellbeing and for wellbeing, in the classroom and all school activities. Wellbeing can be taught explicitly through curriculum, but it can also be modelled by those working in the school as they show care, respect and consideration in their interactions with students.

A whole school approach to wellbeing is encouraged in Assumption Secondary School. With this in mind, all teachers are aware of the importance of wellbeing and support its place in the school's ethos. They are encouraged to plan for wellbeing within their subject areas and assist whole school initiatives for wellbeing. They should embed wellbeing into their curriculum and make it visible to students.

It is our aim in Assumption Secondary School to create an atmosphere of mutual respect between all individuals involved within our school including management, students, teachers, auxiliary staff, parents and visitors.

### **Policies informed by Wellbeing**

With wellbeing working best on a whole school approach, it must be noted that it informs a number of other school policies which include:

- Wellbeing Policy
- Code of behaviour
- Homework policy
- Child safeguarding statement
- Anti-bullying policy
- Admissions policy
- SEN policy

- Acceptable usage policy
- Mobile phone and Digital Device policy
- Critical incident policy

Student wellbeing is central to all of the above through protection of their rights to feel safe, cared for, valued, respected and happy in their school.

### LAOS and Wellbeing

LAOS recognises a holistic view of learning, that the curriculum should be broad, challenging and responsive to learners needs. Student wellbeing is intrinsic to this holistic view of learning – it is needed to enable learning but is also an outcome of learning.

Schools are recognised as playing a crucial role in promoting and nurturing wellbeing through their practices in key the key areas of school environment, curriculum, policies and partnerships.

In Assumption Secondary School we strive to follow best practice in all aspects of our work and this policy and our work on wellbeing has been developed with such documents in mind.

### SSE and Wellbeing:

The process of developing our wellbeing programme follows the six step procedure outlines in the School Self Evaluation guidelines (see figure 7.1). It is a collaborative, reflective and inclusive process. In Assumption Secondary School, the data gathering process is through the DEIS planning in school.



(Figure 7.1)

**1. Focus** –the wellbeing team aims to lead the school in the delivery of a programme whereby students want to come to school; feel safe, connected, cared for and

challenged. That they are equipped with life skills to cope with everyday life challenges in a healthy way

**2. Information** – relevant documents are consulted with for the writing of wellbeing programmes. Best practice from other schools is also considered. The student council, parents working group and teachers are all consulted in relation to delivery of the programme.

**3. Decisions** – after consulting the above a plan and programme is developed on a yearly basis.

**4. Share** – the wellbeing plan is shared with all stake holders in the school community. The programme is evaluated yearly and changes for improvement suggested.

**5. Improved Action** – In lieu of evaluations, the wellbeing programme and policy is updated to include changes.

**6. Monitor** – changes made are monitored and their impact evaluated.

**7. Junior Cycle Framework and Monitoring:**

The framework for Junior Cycle is underpinned by 24 statements of learning (SOL's). Eight key skills are outlined within the framework (see figure 8.1), one of which is 'staying well' suggesting the weight of importance wellbeing holds within the new framework



(Figure 8.1 Junior Cycle Key Skills)

### Wellbeing and the Curriculum

The curricular provision for wellbeing highlights the strong priority Assumption Secondary School has placed on catering for such in our school. It will make the school's commitment to wellbeing visible to students. It will enable students to build life skills and develop a strong sense of connectedness to their school and their community.

Wellbeing provision is delivered through:

- CSPE, SPHE & PE
- Guidance related learning

- Time-tabled wellbeing classes
- Whole school resilience and wellbeing activities
- Extra-curricular and co-curricular learning

All students at Junior Cycle engage with learning in CSPE, SPHE and PE. These subjects support the general wellbeing of our students.

CSPE allows students to make connections between personal wellness, the wellness of others and the wellbeing of the environment.

PE highlights the link between physical activity and mental health.

SPHE seeks to encourage students to have a positive self-image and to develop their emotional wellbeing; it includes learning in relation to RSE.

Junior Cycle framework stipulates that a minimum of 400 hours of wellbeing learning should be delivered. See figure 9.1 for curricular delivery for 2022/23.

Subject	1 <sup>st</sup> Year	Hours	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	Hours	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	Hours	Weeks	Total
PE	2 classes	80mins	2 classes	80mins	2 classes	80mins	33.4x 3	133.60
SPHE Short Course	1 Class	40mins	1 Class	40mins	1 Class	40mins	33.4x3	66.8
CSPE Short Course	1 Class	40mins	1 Class	40mins	1 Class	40mins	33.4x3	66.8
Guidance	1 Class	40mins	1 Class	40mins	1 Class	40mins	33.4x3	66.8
Music/Choir/Art	1 Class	40mins	1 Class	40mins	1 Class	40mins	33.4x3	66.8
Whole School Events	Sports Day Wellbeing Day, Walk.	10 hours						10
<b>Hours</b>		<b>14 Hours</b>		<b>4 Hours</b>		<b>4 Hours</b>		<b>410.8 Hours</b>

Figure 9.1 Wellbeing Provision 2022/2023 (see appendix A for subsequent years).

### Assessment and Reporting of Wellbeing

As per JCT wellbeing guidelines, there is flexibility in the assessing and reporting of the learning students gain from our wellbeing programme. Evidence of learning is gathered and relates to the knowledge and skills developed through the programme. As part of assessment, student reflection is used. It is ongoing and usually takes place within the classroom setting. Whole school activities and their value and learning to student wellbeing are accounted for.

The curriculum components of wellbeing are assessed in a variety of ways as decided upon by individual class teachers - formats such as assignments, project work, presentations, performances, peer assessment are but some.

Where possible the six indicators of wellbeing (active, responsible, connected, resilient, respected & aware) are identified and linked to learning and said assessment of it. There is scope for wellbeing to be reported on within student's school report. This will form basis for conversation with school management as wellbeing becomes further embedded into the curriculum. Presently it is commented on through subjects of SPHE, CSPE and PE in an indirect way. The JCPA accommodates an area for documenting Other

Areas of Learning (OAL's). Learning in wellbeing could be accounted for here where relevant.

### **The Wellbeing Team**

The Principal, Deputy Principal, Post holder (If applicable), teachers delivering the Wellbeing Programme and volunteers.

### **Aim of the Wellbeing Team**

The wellbeing team aims to lead the school in the delivery of a programme whereby students want to come to school; feel safe, connected, cared for and challenged. We hope when our students leave us they: feel proud and respected and show respect to others, have the ability to be responsible for their actions, are aware of who they are as people, are connected and capable of developing and maintaining healthy relationships, are resilient to normal stresses of everyday life and become active citizens.

### **Achieving our Vision of Wellbeing**

Wellbeing is at the heart of all that we do in Assumption Secondary School. We hope that our focus on wellbeing is visible to our students. It is our wish that the wellbeing programme we design and deliver is engaging and responds to their needs.

To allow for this:

- Students have the opportunity to express their needs either informally to teachers or formally through work with the student council.
- The Parents Association is consulted with regard to what they foresee the needs of our students being. They are asked to identify gaps or areas for improvement and appropriate actions are taken.
- The programme delivered evolves with changing times. Topics of concern to teenagers in real time are incorporated into our programme of themes and modules.

### **Staff Wellbeing**

Teacher wellbeing is vital if they are to effectively lead learning and support and facilitate students in this endeavour (NCCA 2017).

In Assumption Secondary School we work in a supported environment. There is collaborative work and professional commitment. There is encouragement and support to take on new roles and responsibilities in the school, gain further qualifications and attend relevant CPD courses. Assumption Secondary School has a small staff but enjoys a fantastic sense of team spirit. Social gatherings help enhance personal relationships between staff members.

### **Supporting and Promoting a Culture for Wellbeing**

Assumption Secondary School promotes a warm, welcoming, encouraging and positive school culture. This is evident in areas such as:

- The school building conveys a message of warmth, welcome and inclusion. Students and staff take pride and care in maintaining the physical environment.

It is a safe place for all. A copy of the child safeguarding statement is on display at the entrance to the building. The DLP and DDLP are identified.

- Staff are provided with First aid training to ensure the safety of all and appropriate actions occur where necessary. The school is equipped with a first aid bags and boxes which are checked and restocked regularly. There are located in the main office, Science Labs, the Gym and Home economics Kitchens. The school has two mobile AED's.
- School notice boards celebrate student and staff achievements outside the classroom and in the community.
- Display of student art around the school building also promotes a positive atmosphere and enriches the wellbeing of all.
- The wellbeing notice board displays key messages relating to student wellbeing such as the Junior Cycle indicators of wellbeing. Support services are highlighted and it is used as a focus for the themes spaced across the school calendar.
- School lunches / dinners are provided through the DEIS programme ensuring the physical wellbeing of student
- Student mentor programme allows senior students demonstrate their leadership qualities. They feature in whole school events and are given roles to support the needs of junior students. These programmes enrich the wellbeing of both the mentors and the mentees and demonstrates the caring element within our school.
- Transitioning programme for first years.
- School Counselling and Guidance are available to students. Students can self-refer or can be referred by class teachers.
- After school study is provided. Students can complete homework and study in a quiet designated room ensuring they can focus and maximise learning. Subject to student interest and available resources.
- Lunchtime clubs are run to allow students to socialise and also build relationships with students and teachers.
- Teaching and learning is differentiated and provides an appropriate challenge to ensure all students engage and experience success. Students are encouraged to actively engage in their learning so they enjoy being in school. They receive regular formative feedback on their learning and how they can improve. They have regular opportunities to discuss their learning with their teachers.
- Assumption Secondary School strives to focus and reward good behaviour, with rewards in place for positive comments etc.
- Bullying is not accepted. Students and parents are fully informed of the Anti Bullying policy. Behaviour issues are resolved with care, respect and consistency. Student voice is heard throughout the process. Assumption Secondary School operates a Restorative Practice approach to dealing with conflict amongst students. We encourage students to show respect, care and concern for each other so that they feel supported by their peers.
- Our Student Council gives students a voice within our school. It is a forum which reinforces that their feedback is valued. They are involved in decision making about life in their school.
- Maintaining strong links with home is important to student wellbeing. We ensure parents feel welcome, respected, listened to and reinforce them in knowing that they are important stake holders



in the school community. Information regarding student's academics and wellbeing is shared with them on an ongoing basis and the lines of communication are always open. We have a very active parents association who represent parent's voice. Their opinions are sought in relation decisions which will impact on student life.

- Our school enjoys strong links with the local community.
- Assumption Secondary School has good communications and working relationships with outside agencies regarding student wellbeing such as NEPS, CAHMS, TUSLA and the DES.

#### Guidance and Wellbeing:

- Whole school Guidance Plan has been formulated.

#### Students Supports and Wellbeing:

Some students will have additional needs. Once identified and concerns arise, information is gathered and a plan is put into place. Assumption Secondary School follows the approach outlined in NEPS continuum of support (see figure 17.1) which suggests a support network with an 'all, some & few' structure.

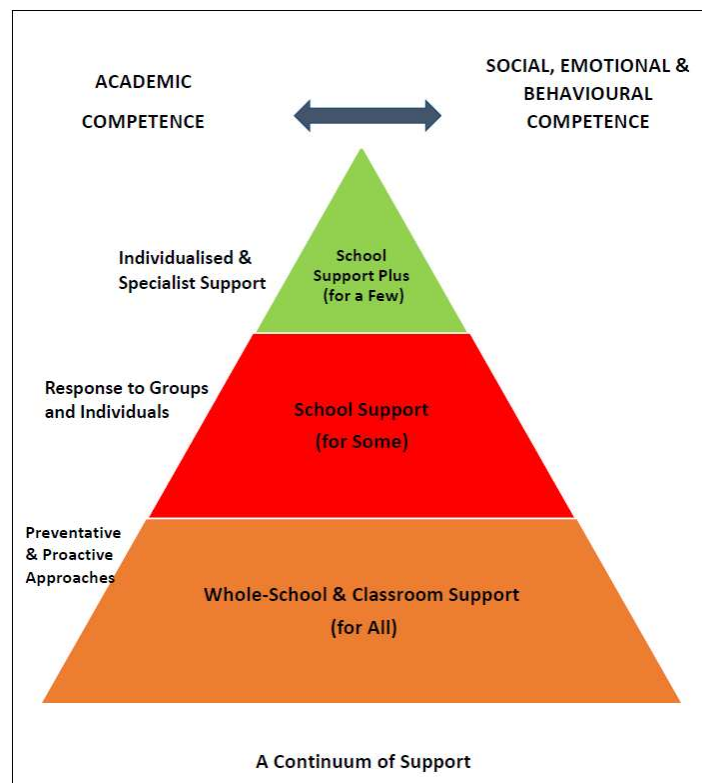


Figure 17.1 NEPS Continuum of Support

**Support for All** – involves a whole school approach. It includes policies and procedures that promote the wellbeing of all members of our school. The aim is to create a safe environment that is conducive to wellbeing and works to prevent factors that negatively impact on wellbeing. Our commitment to wellbeing is visible to students and staff alike.

All students have wellbeing needs even those who might appear to engage with school with relative ease. Early detection and intervention of challenges is our goal.

**Support for Some** – this is a more focussed approach with a number of identifiable students who are at risk of or are showing signs of developing unhealthy patterns of behaviour or difficulties. Structures are in place to provide additional targeted support to promote and scaffold wellbeing for those identified. Supports such as the pastoral care system, guidance counsellor and check and connect programmes are key components here.

**Support for Few** – this involves interventions for students with more complex and enduring needs. Work with these students is structured under the development of Individual Student Plans (ISP's) and Individual Behaviour Plans (IBP's). These students may also be receiving or require additional support from external agencies such as CAHMS or NEPS. Students with SEN tend to be more negative about themselves (NCCA 2017) and so a wellbeing programme which is fully inclusive is imperative.

#### **Additional School Supports and Wellbeing:**

As well as the provisions outlined within this policy, the following are also available to our students to support their emotional, social, mental, spiritual, and physical wellbeing:

- School Completion support team
- Year head structures
- Extra-curricular activities
- Guidance Support Teacher
- Supportive school management
- Positive comment reward system
- Student leadership teams i.e. Buddy Programme, Prefects, Head Girl/Deputy Head Girl, Student Council

#### **Developing the Policy:**

- This policy is informed by the framework for Junior Cycle alongside the ethos of the school. SSE principles have been used and will continue to be used for future planning.

#### **How do we reflect and evaluate the plan?**

- Periodic review

**This policy was approved by the Board of Management of Assumption Secondary School on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022.**

**For updated Appendix A and B please contact the school.**