



KILKENNY CITY

VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

WELLBEING POLICY



kcetb

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
Chill Chainnigh agus Cheatharlach
Kilkenny and Carlow
Education and Training Board¹



Contents

1. KCVS Mission Statement
2. Introduction
3. Scope
4. Definition
5. Rationale
6. Policy Context
7. School Self Evaluation Process and the Whole-School Approach to Wellbeing
8. Planning a Wellbeing Programme
9. KCVS Junior Cycle Wellbeing
10. KCVS Senior Cycle Wellbeing
11. Wellbeing in our Teaching and Learning
12. Wellbeing and the Student Support Team
13. Planning for Wellbeing during Challenging Times
14. Wellbeing of Staff
15. Wellbeing and Outside Agencies
16. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

Kilkenny City vocational School

Wellbeing Policy

1. KCVS Mission Statement

- To provide all our learners with the best possible education in a caring, disciplined and affirming environment.
- To develop the personal, academic and spiritual potential of each learner.
- To foster a sense of self-esteem, honesty and respect amongst all the members of our school community.
- To create ongoing opportunities for staff and parents, which will enable them to understand their role as educators.
- To provide a welcoming environment, where they are partners in the education of their children.

2. Introduction

Kilkenny City Vocational School is a co-educational, post-primary school which operates under the auspices of Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board (KCETB). The school participates in the DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) initiative, the School Completion Programme (SCP) and avails of the services of NEPS, the National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).

This Wellbeing policy was developed in accordance with:

- The school mission statement
- Guidelines as set out Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (2018–2023), Wellbeing in Education
- Circular 0055/2024
- Circular 0028/2023
- Circular 0056/2022
- DEIS Strategy to 2036
- DEIS 2017
- Anti-Bullying Policies: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour (2024), Cineáltas Action Plan (2023–2027), Whole Education Approach to Preventing Bullying (2022).
- Student Support Teams in Post-Primary Schools
- Looking at Our School 2022 (LAOS Framework)
- Participation Framework – The National Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making
- Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines (2021)

- Framework for Junior Cycle (2015)
- Child Protection Procedures 2025
- Child Protection Procedures 2017
- Updated Junior Cycle SPHE Specification (2023).
- Junior Cycle CSPE Specification.
- Junior Cycle Physical Education Specification (2022/2023)
- Senior Cycle SPHE Specification (2024).
- Senior Cycle Physical Education (SCPE) Framework.
- Guidance from Wellbeing, SPHE, CSPE, PE Department
- Consultation with the Student Support Team
- All members of the Kilkenny City Vocational School community

3. Scope

This policy is designed to inform and focus the whole school community on the implementation and benefits of a whole school wellbeing programme at Junior and Senior Cycle. The policy reflects the relationship of Wellbeing (Guidance Related Learning), SPHE, CSPE and PE and the whole school promotion of Wellbeing in KCVS.

This policy applies to all aspects of teaching and learning about Wellbeing and Wellbeing school life. It also applies to all school staff, students, parents /guardians, visiting speakers, invited guests, volunteers and members of the Board of Management.

4. Definition

‘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 the wider community’ (Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines, 2021, P.5).

5. Rationale

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 lives (Awartani, M., and Looney, J. (2015) Learning and Wellbeing)

In KCVS we are aware of the significant protective role that schools play in supporting young people’s wellbeing. A Framework for the Junior Cycle

School years are a critical time in young peoples’ lives. Students are exposed to a range of influences and require support to make positive responsible decisions relating to their health and wellbeing and the wellbeing others. Wellbeing underpins junior and senior cycle education in KCVS. Wellbeing is the foundation of whole school life in our school community.

We are aware that student wellbeing and successful learning are inextricably connected. Irish 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)' (Smyth, 2015). There is overwhelming evidence that students learn more effectively including their academic subjects if they are happy in their work, believe in themselves, their teachers and feel school is supporting them.

Aspects of wellbeing are present in several curriculum areas of the Post Primary Curriculum including Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) and Physical Education.

Students require support to make positive responsible decisions relating to their health and wellbeing and the wellbeing of others. Wellbeing is about young people feeling confident, happy healthy and connected.

6. Policy Context

The Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) provides a new era 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 student's wellbeing. This area of learning will make the school 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.

Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice.

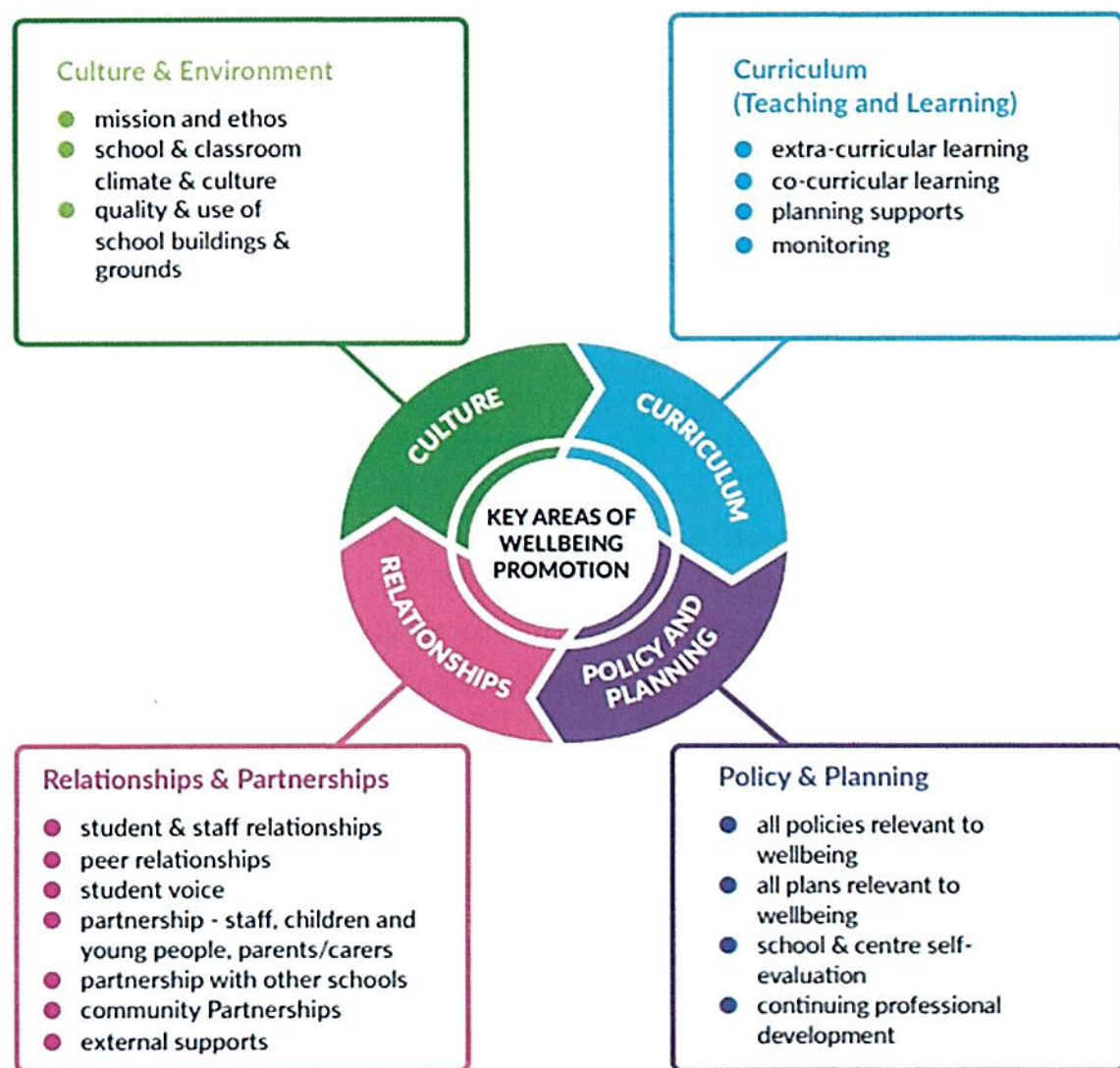
The Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (2018-2025) supports a holistic approach to wellbeing promotion and advises our school community on how best we can promote whole school wellbeing.

The policy statement and framework for practice provides an overarching structure encompassing existing, ongoing and developing work in the area of Wellbeing Promotion in schools. The working definition of wellbeing defined by the WHO (2001) and adapted by the Department of Education is as follows:

'Wellbeing is present when a person realises their potential, is resilient in dealing with the normal stresses of their life, takes care of their physical wellbeing and has a sense of purpose, connection and belonging to a wider community. It is a fluid way of being and needs nurturing throughout life'.

Best practice indicates that schools adopt a whole school, multicomponent, preventative approach to wellbeing promotion that includes both universal and targeted interventions.

In KCVS we engage in a collaborative integrated approach through provision mapping to identify areas of school life that impact on wellbeing. A multi component approach ensures that key areas that contribute to wellbeing promotion in schools are given a focus which is embedded in the continuum of support.



DEIS and Wellbeing

"Fostering the personal development, health and well-being of learners and the wider school community helps to ensure that our children and young people develop resilience, have respect for diversity, learn to create and maintain supportive relationships and become active and responsible citizens in society." (DEIS, 2017)

A whole school, multicomponent, preventative approach to wellbeing can be achieved through the use of the DEIS process, taking wellbeing promotion as its focus. The work of the student support team is central to this and this year we have reviewed our student support team structures as part of the wellbeing promotion process in school using the provision map.

The Wellbeing Programme is student centred in its approach. The Promotion and enhancement of self-esteem and life skills and the development of potential – academic, personal, social and emotional – leading to a greater personal autonomy for all students are its central goals. All staff members and subject departments have a vital role to play in developing student wellbeing and therefore have a role to play in the delivery of the Wellbeing Programme.

The school is also committed to the care and happiness of the entire school community within the scope of its influence. To this end a sense of welfare and care is underscored across the entire School community and at all levels of interaction – amongst all staff, students, parents and management. The school is acutely aware that a happy school is an environment where teaching and learning can flourish.

It is envisaged that this Junior Cycle wellbeing programme will foster discussion, achieve whole school cooperation and inform a consistent approach to Wellbeing.

Overall, our Wellbeing programme aims to foster happy, confident, responsible and resilient students who feel connected to Kilkenny City Vocational School. We have embraced a whole school approach and aligned the design of our Wellbeing programme with the schools DEIS plan.

Wellbeing is integrated in all our programmes on a whole school level. All of our programme's SEN, DEIS, Guidance, Student Support Team, Behaviour Team are wellbeing proofed and are built around a robust wellbeing continuum.

Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying Implementation Plan 2023–2027

The Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying Implementation Plan 2023–2027 is Ireland's national strategy to prevent and address bullying in schools. Developed through extensive consultation with students, parents, educators, and stakeholders, it builds on the 2013 Action Plan and aligns with the Wellbeing Policy Statement and UNESCO's Whole Education Approach. The plan outlines 61 actions to be implemented over five years, with an Implementation and Evaluation Group overseeing progress. In its first year, 56 actions were initiated, with five completed. Annual reports will track progress and incorporate feedback from the education community. The plan prioritizes student wellbeing and aims to foster safe, inclusive school environments.

Bí Cineálta Procedures for Post-Primary Schools

The Bí Cineálta Procedures, effective from September 2025, replace the 2013 anti-bullying procedures. Rooted in a child-rights and kindness-based approach, they guide schools in preventing and addressing bullying, including cyberbullying, gender identity bullying, racism, and sexual harassment. Developed collaboratively with education partners, the procedures emphasize whole-school engagement and provide resources and training for staff. Schools are encouraged to hold a half-day closure for staff engagement and policy development. Appendices offer templates and guidance for policy creation, student-friendly materials, and reporting mechanisms. These procedures support a proactive, inclusive culture where all school staff share responsibility for tackling bullying.

The KCVS Bí Cineálta Anti Bullying policy uses our provision map to build on the work already being done to address and prevent bullying behaviour in our school to ensure that all students who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything that we do. KCVS created a student friendly Bí Cineálta Policy to promote kindness, safety and happiness in our school community.

KCVS

Bí Cineálta: Anti-Bullying Policy

Bí Cineálta!

We want everyone at our school to feel safe and happy.

If you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied, you need to tell a teacher or another adult that you trust. They will know what to do to help.

Get help!

Tell someone!

If a student tells a staff member that they think they are being bullied, we will:

- talk with the student
- ask the student what they want to happen
- work out a plan together
- talk to their parents
- talk to the other student(s) involved
- talk with the other student's parents

Bullying behaviour is when someone keeps being mean or hurtful to others on purpose over and over again.

When it happens a lot.
Not just once.

Please tell someone if you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied.

Our school has a Bí Cineálta policy to try to stop bullying behaviour. We look at this policy every year to see what is working well or what could work better. We will ask you what you think.



7. School Self Evaluation Process and the Whole-School Approach to Wellbeing

Following the SSE 6 step process the KCVS Wellbeing Improvement Plan identified the Key Area of Focus as **Relationships**.

Indicators of Success

Key Area 4 - Children and young people, their parents and other external partners are actively involved in wellbeing promotion within the school community.

Statements of Effective Practice

Key Area 4

For All

Relationships and partnerships are supported through a range of agreed formal and informal structures, such as student councils, perfect systems, buddy systems, mentoring systems, assemblies, newsletters, student journals and through teaching and learning.

For Few

Systems are in place whereby more senior young people are supported in mentoring younger children.

Targets
Increase the parental use of VS Ware
Increase positive communications to parents about students from staff
Induction - Buddy Club - Lunchtime club / run by 4th Year mentors
1st Year induction enhanced

Wellbeing is part of our DEIS Plan 2024/27.

Our Key Area of focus is **Relationships**. The targets which are part of our Wellbeing Improvement Plan are:

- Enhance the First Year Induction – Fourth Year student leaders to mentor new students.
- Fourth Years will run a lunch time club for First Years to help them make connections and friendships in our school.
- Parents will increase their access and engagement with VS Ware.
- Teachers will increase positive communications to parents through VS Ware.

The following points are an overview of our Wellbeing Improvement Plan:

- Wellbeing in the Subject Space integrated into Subject Department planning. (CPD provided as requested.)
- Specialised study skills support will be provided for all students with particular focus on Senior Cycle students.
- Wellbeing initiatives (as prioritised by staff/students/parents) to include Wellbeing Wednesday, Termly Wellbeing Days and Wellbeing Weeks.
 - Anti-bullying Week – FUSE: Anti-bullying and Online Safety Programme.
 - Mental Health Awareness – Walk in My Shoes/Amber Flag
 - Safer Internet Week.
 - Inclusion Week.
 - Get Active Week.
- Social media and Teams continued to be used as a communication tool.
- Structured online Wellness webinars for staff – Spectrum Life.
- Staff will continue to be that “one good adult” to support priority students through the Check and Connect programme.
- Introduction of tutor time to KCVS.

The above priorities will inform:

- Whole School Promotion of Wellbeing
- DEIS Planning
- Whole School Guidance
- Subject Department Planning
- Junior Cycle Wellbeing Subject Planning
- Student Support Team
- Behaviour Team
- First Year Induction Process
- Whole School Policies, Planning and Procedures
- Digital Strategy Plan
- Student Support Team

All KCVS Wellbeing Resources can be accessed in the Wellbeing Promotion channel of 'KCVS' Staff on the Microsoft Teams Platform.



8. Planning a Wellbeing Programme

The Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines (2017, P. 44) state that when planning a 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).

The Six Indicators of Wellbeing

Using the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines our school has identified six indicators which describe what is important for young people and their wellbeing. Being –

- ✓ **Active**
- ✓ **Responsible**
- ✓ **Connected**
- ✓ **Resilient**
- ✓ **Respected**
- ✓ **Aware**

These indicators make what is important explicit for students, teachers, parents and the wider school community.



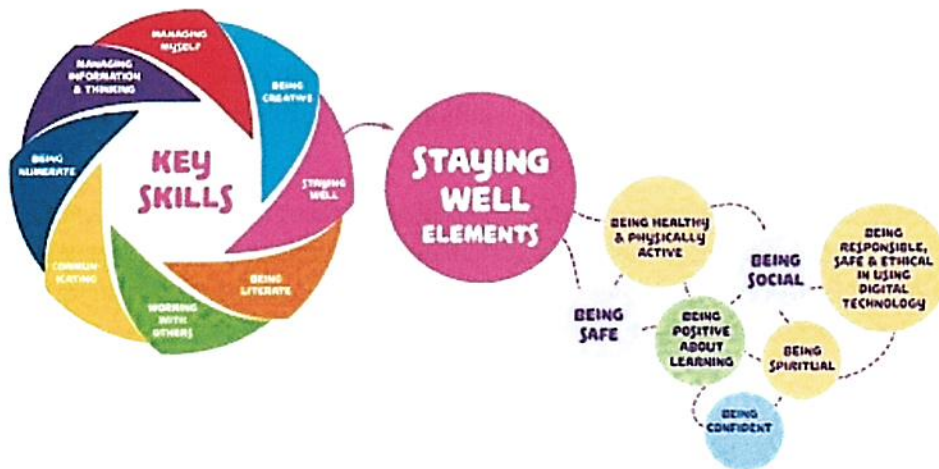
Statements of Learning

'The learning at the core of Junior Cycle is described in 24 statements of learning – They are central to planning for the students experience of and the evaluation of the schools junior cycle programme' (Framework for Junior Cycle, 2015).

The following Statements of Learning (SOL) are particularly applicable to Wellbeing:

- The student has an awareness of personal values and an understanding of the process of moral decision making (SOL5)
- The student values what it means to be an active citizen with rights and responsibilities in local and wider contexts (SOL7)
- The student has the awareness, knowledge, skills, values and motivation to live sustainably (SOL 10)
- The student takes action to safeguard and promote his/her wellbeing and that of others (SOL11)
- The student is a confident and competent participant in physical activity and is motivated to be physically active (SOL12)
- The student understands the importance of food and diet in making healthy lifestyle choices (SOL13)

Staying well is one of the Eight Key Skills for the Junior Cycle.



Elements of the Key Skill Staying Well are:

- Being healthy and physically active
- Being Social
- Being Safe
- Being Spiritual
- Being Confident
- Being positive about Learning
- Being responsible, safe and ethical in using digital technology

Elements of other Key Skills also relate to Wellbeing

- Developing good relationships and dealing with conflict
- Respecting difference
- Contributing to making the world a better place
- Knowing Myself
- Making considered decisions
- Setting and achieving personal goals

Key skills help learners develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to face the many challenges in today's world. They also support students in learning how to learn and take responsibility for their own learning.

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 vision for Junior Cycle places students at the centre of all endeavours – *‘Junior Cycle places students at the centre of the educational experience, enabling them to actively participate in their communities and in society and to be resourceful and confident learners in all aspects and stages of their lives’* (Framework for Junior Cycle, 2015, p.6)

In KCVS when designing the Wellbeing Programme at Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle all partners in the school community have been consulted. The depth and expanse of the Wellbeing Programme is demonstrated more clearly within the context of other specific Whole School Policies and such as

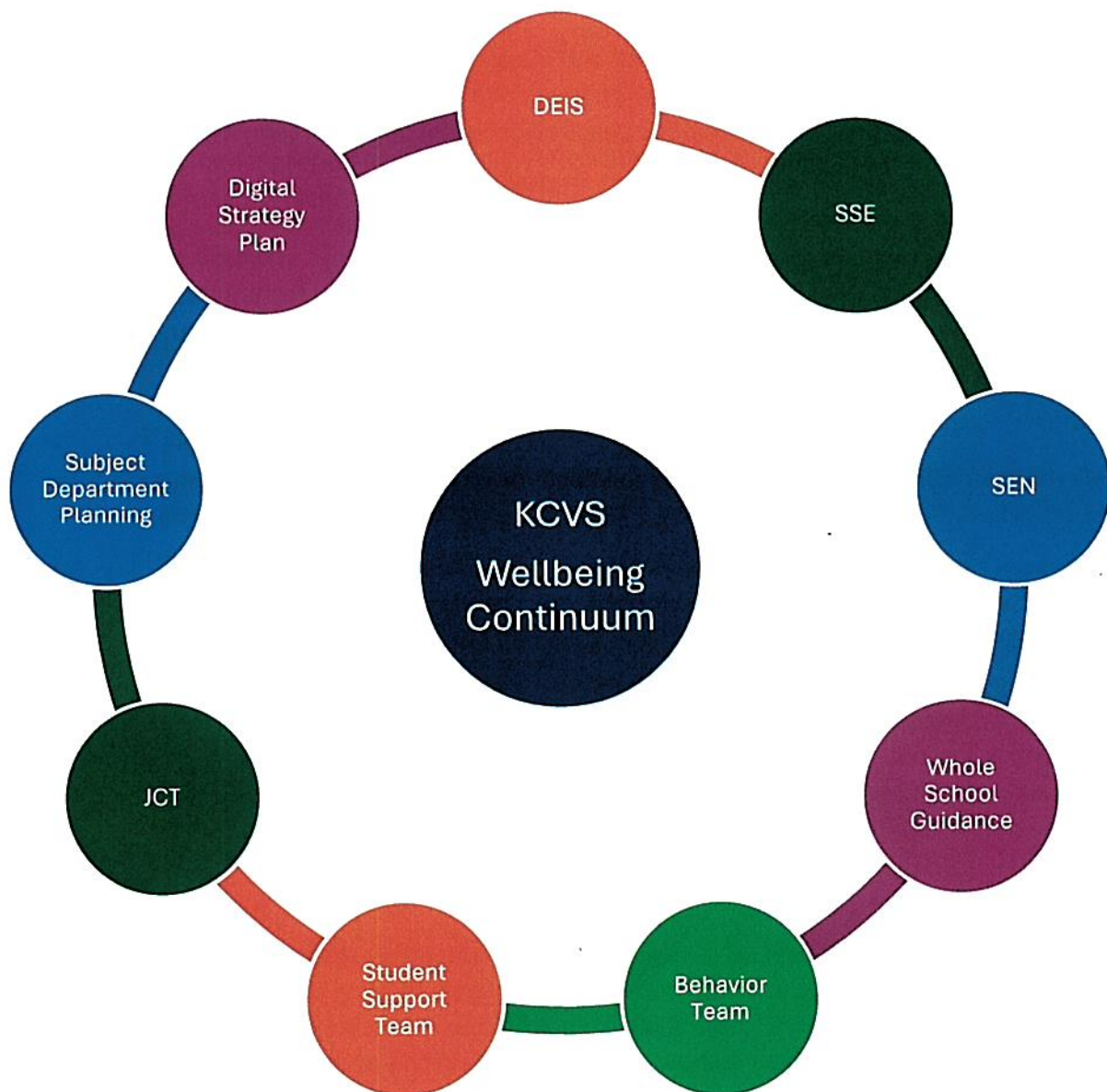
- Whole School Guidance Plan
- Behaviour Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Homework Policy
- SPHE Policy
- RSE Policy
- Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection
- Critical Incident Policy
- Student Support Team Policy

The Process of consultation and curriculum planning has evolved through related and interlinked processes including (but not limited to):

- Subject Planning
- Junior Cycle Planning
- Senior Cycle Planning
- TY Planning
- LCA Planning
- DEIS Planning
- SEN Planning and Provision
- Whole Staff consultations
- School Student Support Team Meetings
- Guidance Planning and review
- Year Head Meetings
- Management Meetings

Staff, Students and Parental voices have informed the Wellbeing Programme through a number of approaches including (but not limited to):

- Student Council
- Surveys as part of the DEIS process
- Student Wellbeing Workshops
- Parental Surveys
- Parental and Student presentations on information nights.
- HSCL engagement with parents
- Community Links including links with agencies responsible for International Students.
- SCP Links
- TY Programme Evaluations
- Guidance Evaluations



9. KCVS Junior Cycle Wellbeing

400 hours of Wellbeing subjects are embedded across the Junior Cycle timetable. These subjects are CSPE, SPHE, PE and Wellbeing,

CSPE – Civic, Social & Political Education

CSPE is a 100-hour Junior Cycle short course built around three strands: Rights and Responsibilities, Global Citizenship, and Exploring Democracy (Curriculum Online, 2026). It emphasises active citizenship through real-world action projects and active learning methodologies.

Students explore human rights, law, government, sustainability, and interdependence. The course develops agency, critical thinking, empathy, and democratic participation.

SPHE – Social, Personal & Health Education

SPHE supports physical, emotional, social, and mental wellbeing. The updated 2023 specification provides 100 hours over three years and includes four strands: Understanding Myself and Others; Making Healthy Choices; Relationships and Sexuality; Emotional Wellbeing.

Teaching focuses on reflection, empathy, critical thinking, and wellbeing skills. SPHE prepares students for modern challenges including stress, identity formation, and online influences.

RSE – Relationships and Sexuality Education is part of the SPHE specification, covers identity, healthy relationships, consent, boundaries, and communication. RSE helps students evaluate cultural, peer and online influences while forming a secure sense of identity.

PE – Physical Education – the short course develops physical literacy and lifelong participation, focusing on physical, cognitive, psychological, and social dimensions.

Students engage in games, athletics, dance, outdoor adventure, and fitness activities. The course builds teamwork, reflection, competence, confidence, and an appreciation for physical wellbeing.

Wellbeing, which includes Guidance Related Learning, is made of up three areas: personal and social development, educational guidance and career guidance.

It supports students' transition, develops resilience, self-awareness, and responsibility. Wellbeing equips students to handle challenges, set goals and make decisions about the path to senior cycle.

Level 1 and 2

Much of the content of the PLUs is in alignment with the core aspects of Wellbeing. Where students undertaking PLUs have difficulty accessing some or all of the curricular provision for Wellbeing available to the general school population, the school may choose to adjust the learning programme offered to individual students in this area to meet the needs of the student while still ensuring that the student has access to appropriate provision and support.

Diversity and Accessibility

Students in Junior Cycle come from a wide range of backgrounds and have a wide range of individual interests and needs. Wellbeing subjects will be developed in as universal as is feasible, providing meaningful and valuable learning opportunities for students from all cultural and social backgrounds and from a wide variety of individual circumstances. This includes ensuring that the learning opportunities are as accessible as possible to students with special educational needs and that statements about the skills to be developed are articulated in a way that reflects this.

- **KCVS Junior Curriculum – Total number of hours on the timetable is 434 Wellbeing**

Year Group	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Total Hours
CSPE – Short Course	1	1	1	100
SPHE – Short Course	1	1	1	100
PE – Short Course	2	1	1	134
Wellbeing – Includes Guidance related learning.	1	1	1	100
Total Hours				434 – Wellbeing Total

Assessment and Reporting

Wellbeing subjects CSPE, SPHE and PE are assessed in class in a formative manner and reported on in school reports.

CSPE, SPHE and PE each complete two Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) which are reported on in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

Wellbeing (Guidance Related Learning) is assessed in class in a formative manner and reported on in school reports.

Wellbeing is also reported through student voice supported by staff in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

Where appropriate Level 1 and Level 2 students will complete assessment through Priority Learning Units in relation to wellbeing subjects. Formative assessment feedback will be reported on in school reports. The JCPA will document the achievement of the student in PLUs.

10. KCVS Senior Cycle Wellbeing

SPHE - SPHE classes 4th-6th Years, including LCA, are each year, 1 hour per week.

SPHE supports students as they develop identity, resilience, critical thinking and responsible decision-making during adolescence. Transition Year SPHE continues to complement this by promoting personal development, digital responsibility and social awareness.

Senior Cycle SPHE has a **Relationships and Sexuality strand**, which is based on the RSE Review (2018-2019), ensuring students learn about consent, healthy and unhealthy relationships, communication, personal boundaries, gender equality and sexual health.

A minimum of six RSE lessons a year is provided to 4th- 6th Year SPHE classes including LCA.

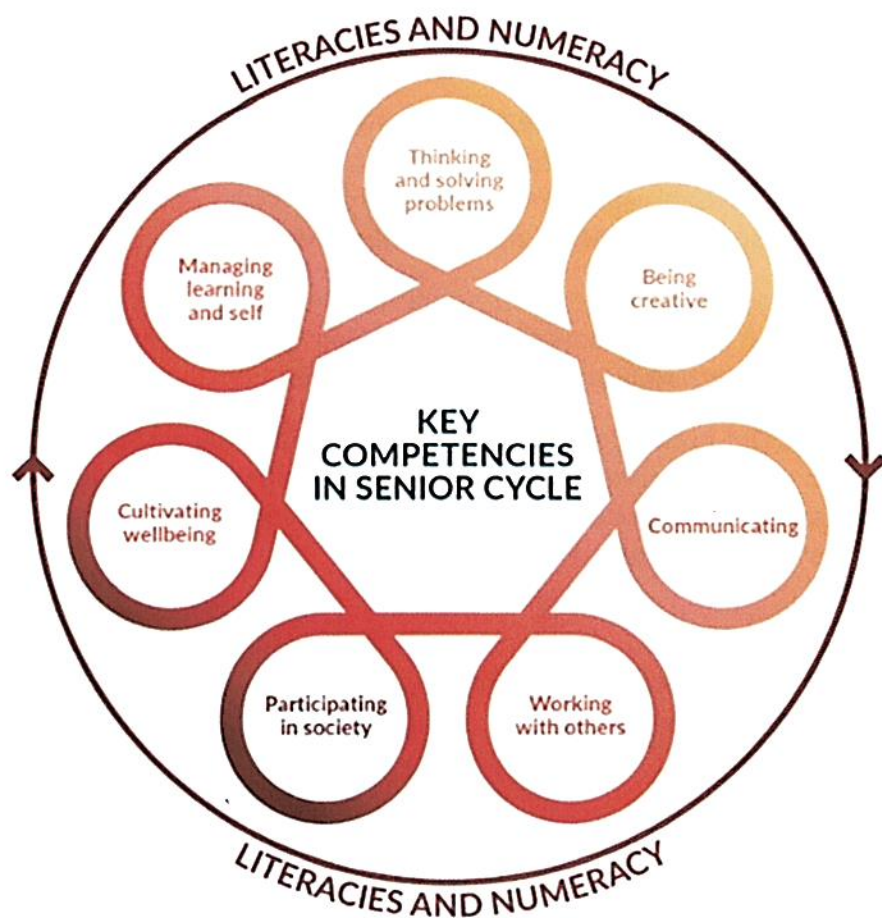
In the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme, SPHE continues to be embedded through Social, Personal and Health Education modules, supported by updated national documentation and key assignment guidelines. LCA SPHE emphasises practical life skills, emotional wellbeing, community engagement and preparation for adulthood. Through the alignment of LCE, LCA and LCVP under the new national curriculum, all Senior Cycle students now have access to the same enhanced and modernised SPHE and RSE content.

PE - Leaving Certificate Physical Education (4th-6th Year), develops the student's capacity to become an informed, skilled, self-directed and reflective performer in physical education and physical activity in senior cycle and in their future life.

Career Guidance - Career Guidance (4th-6th Year), involves a range of learning experiences provided 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.

SPHE, PE and Career Guidance in 4th-6th year are assessed in a formative manner and reported on in school reports.

In LCA a key assignment is completed for SPHE and reported on in the usual manner.



Senior cycle competencies support the growth and development of students. One key competency is Cultivation Wellbeing. This competency helps students understand how to protect and nurture their own wellbeing and support the wellbeing of others. They come to understand how social, economic and cultural factors can positively and negatively impact on the overall quality of life and wellbeing of individuals, groups and societies. Students' overall wellbeing – their social, emotional, environmental, intellectual, spiritual, and physical wellbeing – and their academic success mutually support each other, and healthy, caring relationships are also key to both literacy and numeracy.

11. Wellbeing in our Teaching and Learning

Use of a variety of learning and teaching methodologies and strategies: Mindful of the mixed ability settings in the majority of classes staff utilise a variety of teaching approaches and methodologies to maintain student engagement and maximise learning and achievement. In recent years staff has attended in service or undertaken projects in - Assessment for Learning (AFL) methodology, team teaching, differentiation, sharing success criteria and the organising group work and active learning methodologies. Emphasis has also been placed in recent years on the integration of ICT into teaching and learning in the school. These skills are of benefit in creating an engaged learning and teaching environment. Team teaching for SEN support is also a significant strategy in the provision of SEN Support in the school.

Subject Department Planning subject teachers are aware that wellbeing is a whole school endeavour and plan for wellbeing moments in their curriculum. This is facilitated through in house CPD and departmental planning.

Assessment Practices and Student Wellbeing. Ongoing formative assessment contributes to students having a positive sense of themselves and knowledge on how to improve. In terms of reporting on progress, school reports now place more emphasis on comments as opposed to grades thus allowing students to make choices around how they can improve.

Mixed ability class grouping: This serves to promote a sense of democracy and a sense of community in all classes. Where practical and in keeping with best practice staff view this structure as central to the promotion of student self-esteem.

Positive relationships: Our promotion of positive relationships is based on the recognition of the dignity of each individual and the importance of respectful relationships between teachers, students and parents. Building an emphasis on positivity and on rewarding positive behaviour enhances our school community.

KCVS - Wellbeing in the Subject Space

Promoting the wellbeing of our children and young people is a shared community responsibility and is everybody's business.

Wellbeing Improvement Plan

- Our Key Area of focus is Relationships. The targets which are part of our Wellbeing Improvement Plan are:
- Enhance the First Year Induction - Fourth Year student leaders to mentor new students.
- Fourth Years will run a lunch time, Games Club, for First Years to help them make connections and friendships in our school.
- Parents will increase their access and engagement with VS Ware.
- Teachers will increase positive communications to parents through VS Ware.

Figure 1: Whole School Approach: Four Key Areas of Wellbeing Promotion



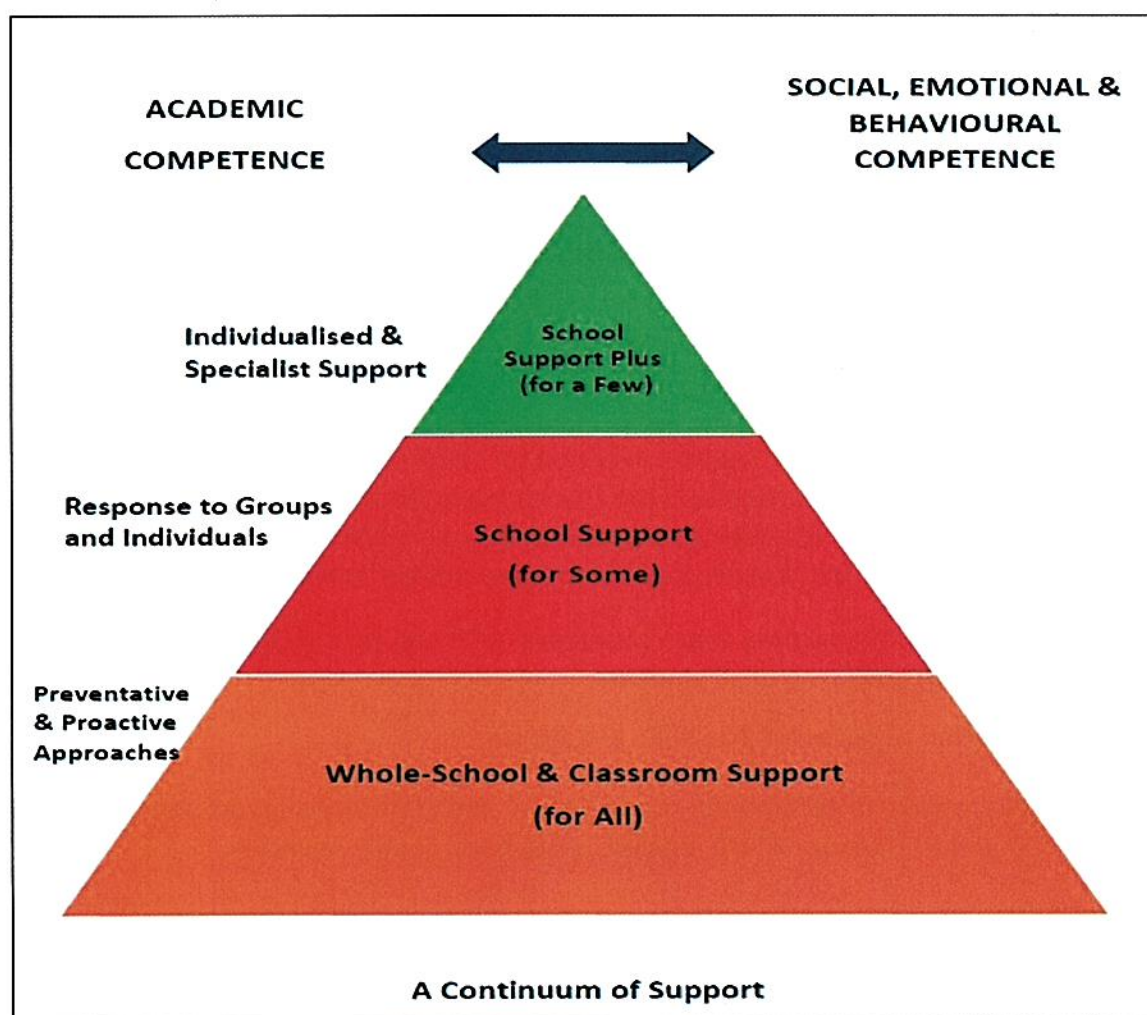
Where in my subject space are there opportunities to focus on Positive Relationships? Pay particular attention to the Transition of First Years and Positive Communication.

12. Wellbeing and the Student Support Team

The Kilkenny City Vocational School (KCVS) Student Support Team (SST) is the coordinating team for all KCVS Student Support Services and the promotion of whole school wellbeing. The KCVS Student Support Team organises, and coordinates supports for students in a structured and collaborative manner. (The Student Support Teams in Post Primary Schools: A Guide to Establishing a Team or Reviewing an Existing Team – 2021).

The SST uses a multicomponent and preventative whole school approach in line with the DES continuum of support that includes both universal and targeted interventions for the educational, social, emotional, behavioural and learning needs of all, some and few

students to ensure their ongoing wellbeing. The Continuum of Support enables provision mapping of wellbeing supports and services and the identification of any gaps.



Support for All

At this level we adopt a whole school approach. We have a series of policies and procedures that promote wellbeing for all members of the school community. Processes on this level aim at (i) the establishment of a safe environment that is conducive to wellbeing and which supports the prevention of factors that negatively impact on wellbeing, (2) promotion of an understanding of and commitment to wellbeing (3) early identification and intervention in the cases of challenge. These steps are reflected in various school policies such as Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy etc. Additionally, supported by our commitment to quality teaching and learning, broad provision of programmes and a comprehensive curriculum, study skills, homework and assessment policies.

Support For Some

There is a more focused approach adopted with several identifiable groups of young people who are at risk of developing unhealthy patterns of behaviour. These structures seek to provide a more targeted support structure to promote and scaffold wellbeing for these

identified groups. A proactive Student Support Team and engaging interventions, SEN teamwork, Guidance counselling and Year head -tracking-report and reward systems

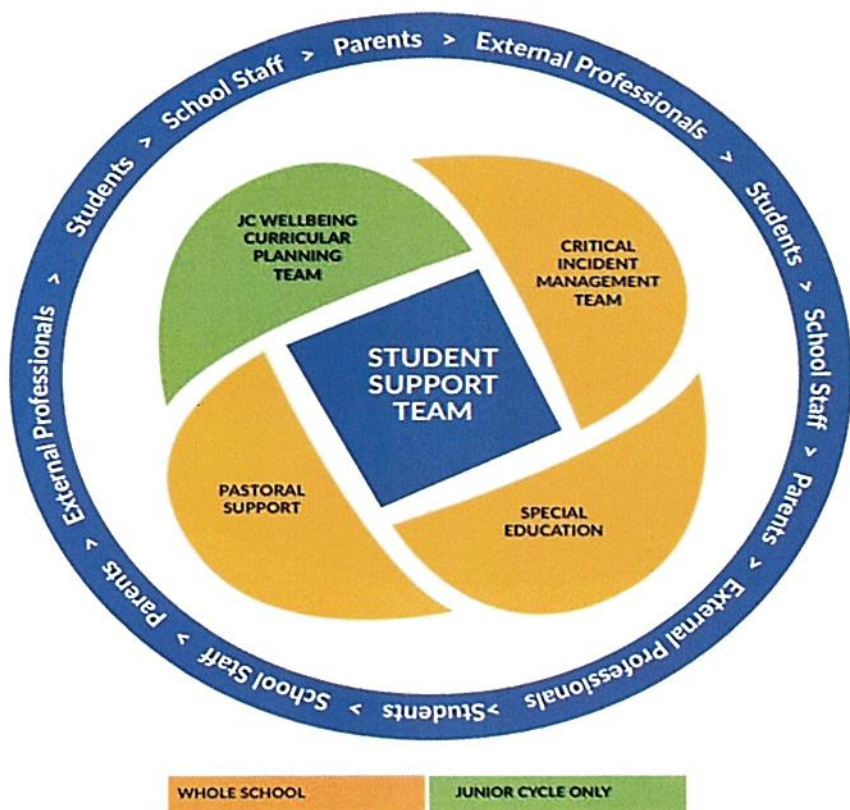
Support for a Few

This support focuses on putting in place interventions for young people with more complex and enduring needs. Work with this group of students is structured under the development of a Care Plan and/or IBP (Individual Behaviour Plan). In some cases, students under the care of the student support team will also have a student support file.

The remit of the team includes:

- The coordination of the support available for students in the school. These supports are facilitated by Year Heads, Class Tutors, our Guidance Counsellor, our Wellbeing Coordinator, our Attendance Coordinator, our AENCO, our HSCLO, our DEIS coordinator, our BFL teacher, our SCP worker and our Senior Management Team.
- To act as an overarching team concerned with the progressing of actions for the welfare and wellbeing of all students.
- Coordination of support from NEPS and AENO.
- Facilitate links to community organisations and statutory support services such as EWO and JLO, Ossory Youth, CAMHS, TUSLA and Family Agencies.
- Enable all students with support needs to continue to access a full education by putting the requisite Student Support Plans in place. Examples of these include Check and Connect, Lean In / Lean Out, Wellbeing programmes, one to one counselling, attendance initiatives, home visits, AEN supports, BFL supports.
- Assist staff to manage those students effectively by managing referrals and clearly communicating progress reports and updates.
- To ensure the Lean in/Lean Out process is understood and available to all staff.
- To ensure that all new staff are briefed about policies and procedures relating to student support and wellbeing.
- To ensure that Student Support Team Policy is reviewed and updated on an annual basis and is accessible to all staff and management.
- To support the implementation of the Bí Cinéalta Policy.
- Overall, the KCVS SST is designed to foster inclusive, student-centred environments where KCVS supports are proactive, coordinated, and responsive to evolving needs.

Our Student Support Team is central to all aspects of school life at Kilkenny City Vocational School.



13. Planning for Wellbeing during Challenging Times

Critical incidents or extraordinary events can result in schools having to plan in challenging and uncertain circumstances. A critical incident may be defined as any event that seriously affects members of the school community.

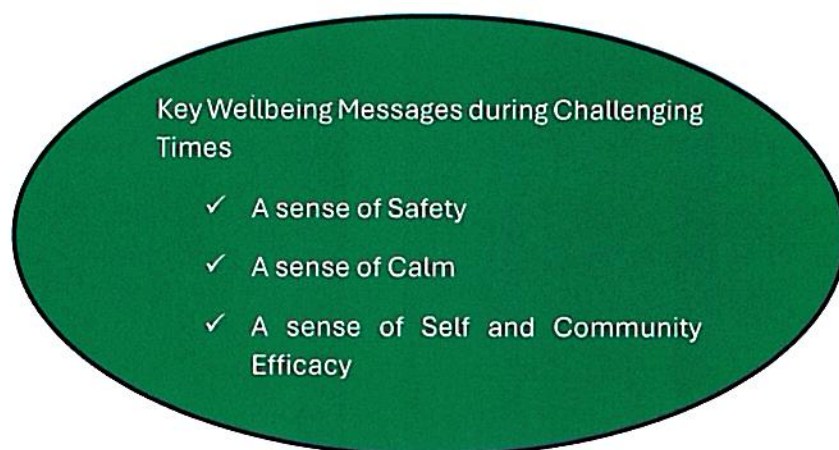
The KCVS Critical Incident Plan provides guidance for those whose task it is to manage such incidents.

Such events provide opportunities to take stock of and affirm the many ways in which school life can support wellbeing in times of crisis.

In KCVS we can support student and teacher wellbeing by focusing on creating:

- a calm atmosphere where the message is 'we are all here to support each other'
- positive, supportive relationships
- learning environments that promote collaboration and a sense of connection with peers and teachers
- opportunities for students to consider the strengths and skills they have shown as learners during times of challenge and to build on these

- familiar and predictable school routines and rituals (as far as possible) to enhance everyone's sense of security and connection
- a sense of hope and efficacy grounded in a belief in everyone's ability to cope, coupled with assurances that others are there to help too
- opportunities to regularly check-in with students about their experiences of school and learning



14. Wellbeing of Staff

At KCVS, staff wellbeing is a key priority. We actively promote the Employee Assistance Service (EAS) to all staff as a confidential support resource.

Throughout the year, we implement a range of wellbeing initiatives designed to foster a positive, supportive working environment. These include:

- Wellbeing Wednesdays, offering activities that support staff health and wellbeing.
- Step challenges and other physical-activity events that encourage movement and healthy habits.
- Regular coffee mornings to promote connection and informal peer support.
- An active Social Committee, which organises social events that strengthen staff relationships and enhance morale.

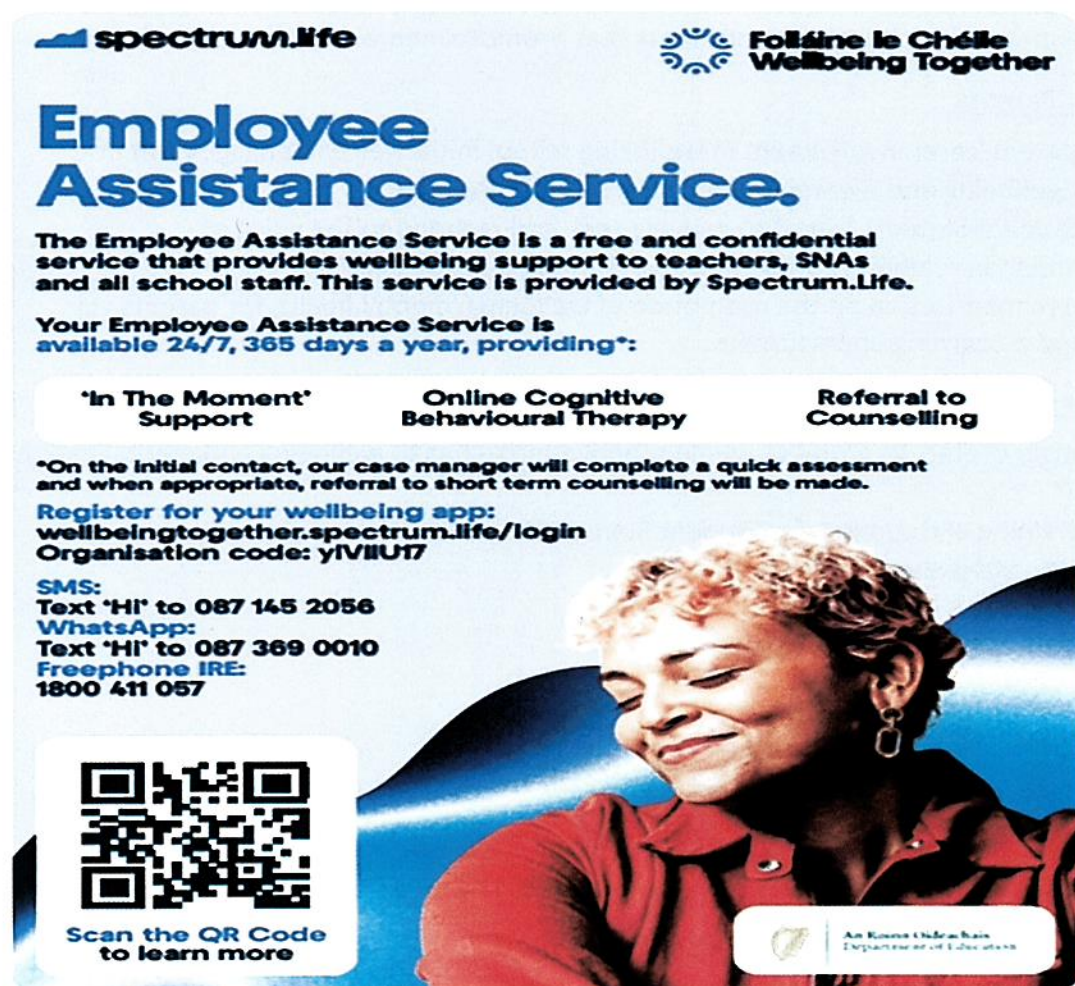
These initiatives reflect our commitment to creating a workplace where all staff feel valued, supported, and connected.

The EAS can help with a wide variety of problems. The EAS team of counsellors and experts are highly experienced in personal or work-related issues, and can support anyone suffering with issues including:

- Depression, anxiety, stress
- Grief and bereavement
- Addictions
- Relationships and marital problems
- Work stress and work-life balance issues
- Workplace conflict and communication
- Life transition such as career progression or retirement.

A bespoke wellbeing platform and app are available offering a host of online services with access to a Digital Gym, monthly Wellbeing Series, videos, podcasts and blogs on topics around mental health, family life, exercise and nutrition.

As part of the EAS, a Mental Health Promotion Manager helps to support and deliver evidence-based mental health and wellbeing initiatives including a series of webinars and seminars that are available throughout the year.



spectrum.life **Fóiláine le Chéile Wellbeing Together**

Employee Assistance Service.

The Employee Assistance Service is a free and confidential service that provides wellbeing support to teachers, SNAs and all school staff. This service is provided by Spectrum.Life.

Your Employee Assistance Service is available 24/7, 365 days a year, providing*:

- ‘In The Moment’ Support
- Online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
- Referral to Counselling

*On the initial contact, our case manager will complete a quick assessment and when appropriate, referral to short term counselling will be made.

Register for your wellbeing app:
wellbeingtogether.spectrum.life/login
Organisation code: yIVIU7

SMS:
Text ‘HI’ to 087 145 2056
WhatsApp:
Text ‘HI’ to 087 369 0010
Freephone IRE:
1800 411 057

Scan the QR Code to learn more

An tAonán Oideachais
Department of Education

15. Outside Agencies

NEPS – The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) is the psychological service of the Department of Education and provides educational psychological support to primary, post-primary and special schools in Ireland. NEPS supports students in partnership with home, school and the young person. They also support and provide guidance for the Student Support Team. NEPS also provides support for our school if we have critical incidents.

Neart: National Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme

Neart – the Irish word for strength – is a national programme supporting mental health and wellbeing in post-primary schools. Developed by Jigsaw in collaboration with the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and the Department of Education, Neart complements existing school supports such as whole school wellbeing and Student Support Team training.

Support for Students

- Enhance the capacity of Student Support Teams to actively seek and respond to the voice of young people in relation to wellbeing and mental health in schools.
- Provide learning opportunities for students that promote mental health and wellbeing.

Support for Parents

- Enhance parent/carer involvement in wellbeing school initiatives and engagement in promoting wellbeing and mental health in the school community.
- Enhance Student Support Teams to actively seek and respond to the voice of parent/guardian in relation to wellbeing and mental health in schools.
- Provide psychoeducation on the promotion of wellbeing/mental health for parents via webinars and e-Learning opportunities.

Support for School Staff

- Build capacity of staff to promote whole school approaches to wellbeing and mental health awareness.
- Enhance training and support for Student Support Teams to raise awareness of positive mental health and wellbeing.



The following listed outside agencies also liaise, in regards with school management, the Wellbeing Co-ordinator, the Student Support Team and staff at KCVS. This list is not exhaustive.

- NCSE
- Túsla
- Social workers
- EWO
- Ossory Youth
- Medical experts
- Camhs
- Teac Tom



16. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

The KCVS Wellbeing Policy will be reviewed annually or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this statement refers.

Gairm Scoil na Cathrach
Sráid Nua
Cill Chainnigh

Priomhoide: Cait Nic Somhairle
Leas-Phriomhoide: Deirdre Ní Coisteagáin

Kilkenny City Vocational School
New Street
Kilkenny

Principal: Cathy Mc Sorley
Deputy Principal: Deirdre Costigan



Tel: 056 7722468
Email: info@kcvs.ie
Web: www.kcvs.ie

Ratification: KCVS Wellbeing Policy

This Policy was ratified by B.O.M Kilkenny City Vocational School on 13th April 2026.

Signed: Cathy Mc Sorley

Date: 13/4/26

BOM - 13.04.2026

KCVS Wellbeing Policy

Signed: Principal

Cathy Mc Sorley

Chairperson BOM

Cathy Mc Sorley



