



School Wellbeing Policy

Definition of childrens' well-being is:

The presence of a culture, ethos and environment which promotes dynamic, optimal development and flourishing for all in the school community. It encompasses the domains of relationship, meaning, emotion, motivation, purpose, and achievement. It includes quality teaching and learning for the development of all elements related to healthy living whether cultural, academic, social, emotional, physical or technological with particular focus on resilience and coping.

The Purpose of this document is:

- Highlight the ways in which we promote the wellbeing of children, teachers and parents in our school
- to promote greater awareness emotional health issues
- build on the existing good practice already in place in our school
- progress mental health promotion using the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) Continuum of Support Framework which involves a graduated school response when mental health issues arise
- help our school develop a coherent whole school approach to mental health that focuses on children, their parents and teachers, which is integrated into core school structures and practices
- raise awareness of the school support systems and services available to our school in relation to mental health promotion
- assist our school in effectively addressing issues that arise

The wellbeing and care of children is multifaceted. It involves the physical, psychological, emotional, social, and spiritual development of the person. Many, if not all, of our school policies, curricular areas and afterschool activities contribute to the overall development and well-being of our children. We have divided this document into three areas; the wellbeing of our children, our staff and our parents.

Our Children

Physical.

The H.S.E., particularly through its Health Centre in O'Malley Park, Southill offers our school services for children, including testing for eyesight and hearing, inoculations in Junior Infants and 6th class, as well as dental services. St. Gabriel's Centre, Dooradoyle, provides services for children with physical disabilities of any nature. The school has a lift to cater for

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children with physical disabilities. The Schools Completion Programme organises daily breakfast, snacks and dinner for selected pupils, creating ‘*Mens sana in corpore sano*’ (“a healthy mind in a healthy body”) is a working aim and accordingly, physical activity plays a central role in our school. Play is an integral part of the ‘Aistear’ programme in all our early childhood classes. The school has an early childhood playground. We offer a wide variety of P.E. activities to all classes including 6 weeks of swimming classes for each class (1st – 6th) each year; gymnastics and indoor games, sports, such as hurling, Gaelic football, rounders, camogie and dance, including Irish traditional ‘Seán nos dancing’ and set dancing.

Physiotherapy students from the University of Limerick have developed a programme including for our younger classes. This programme will resume in the 2018 – 2019 school year when our Halla is available again.

The Limerick City Sports Partnership regularly supply coaches to our school in various sporting disciplines, while the School Completion Programme organises Summer Activities Camps for targeted pupils.

Psychological Needs:

A lack of self-esteem and confidence may often be the result of social factors or deprivation of praise. Our ethos of welcome, respect and involvement, as well as our life giving environment, helps to build self-esteem and confidence. Success in learning through differentiated curricula, praise and encouragement is a massive support to psychological health. School completion programme organise homework classes for 4 days each week. All staff completed the Whole School Incredible Years in the 2014/15 school year, while newly appointed staff are completing the programme during this school year (2017/2018). These classes are organised through the National Educational Psychological Service or NEPS. Our NEPS psychologist for the 2017/2018 Edel Higgins. The Incredible Years Programme has greatly influenced our approach to the management of our children in such areas as nurturing positive relationships to the school environment, the area of discipline and misbehaviour and friendship skills and partnering with parents.

This service also provides educational assessments on a small number of students, where such assessments are needed to identify blockages to learning or to inform parents/staff regarding transfers to other suitable schools, i.e. special classes, language units, its special schools or secondary schools.

Why is emotional health and well-being important?

Care of childrens’ emotional needs is important to allow them to fully access and engage with the primary school curriculum. There are many studies that prove that treating mental health is just as important as physical health. In a DEIS setting, helping children to deal with their emotional needs through school interventions is vital for learning and life. Children who are

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mentally healthy are better equipped to meet life's challenges they also learn better and get on better with others. Good emotional health helps children enjoy and benefit from their everyday experiences, have positive relationships with their families, friends and school staff and contribute to their community in ways that are appropriate to their age.

Our school initiatives to help promote emotional well- being in Our Lady Queen of Peace include:

- Designated Child Protection officers
- CAMHS
- NEPS
- School Completion Programme: homework and breakfast club/attendance
- Home School Liaison Officer
- Blue Box : creative therapies – sessions in art therapy two days per week.
- Paul Partnership: Incredible Years – Pre-School to First Class implement this programme.
- Rainbows: grievance counselling
- Barnardos
- St Gabriel's, Early Intervention Services
- Limerick Sports partnership
- School welfare officer
- Mary Immaculate College provide exposure to the arts through shared projects.
- Special Education teachers who deal with behavioural problems in small group settings
- Whole school meditation twice weekly
- Desty education: an online social and emotional well- being programme for which 2 teachers have received training programme. This has not yet been implemented.
- Friends for life – all teachers to receive training sponsored by DES
- Emotional Freedom Technique: a technique used to help the children to manage their own emotions, deal with anxiety and stress and increase the childrens' resilience skills. This will all help to promote the self-esteem of the children – one teacher trained in this programme.

Our Vision:

During this period 2016-2019 we hope to further expand and develop how we are catering for the emotional care and well- being of the children under our care in the following ways:

- Allowing greater access of our current services to more of our pupils to allow equality in learning.

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- Developing a quiet space to allow the children to go to relax. A ‘sensory room’ is planned as part of the 2018 building project.
- Assess the childrens’ emotional needs through the use of ‘My Thoughts About School Checklist’ (see attached)
- Establishing a lego group to encourage new friendships and promote positive self-esteem.
- Establish a Students Council who will initiate projects to promote kindness, in order to attain a kindness flag for our school.

Spiritual Wellbeing:

As a Catholic School, all classes follow the “Grow in Love” programme, as prescribed by our Patron. Children are prepared for the Sacrament of Eucharist in 2nd class and for the Sacrament of Confirmation in 6th class. Prayer Services are organised in the school to mark special feast days in the Church’s calendar. We meditate as a whole school weekly. We work closely with our Chaplain, Sr. Helen O’ Brien, Presentation Order; with the Parish Priest, Fr. Pat O’ Sullivan and other Srs. and priests in our catchment area, to give the children a sense of belonging to Church and Community.

Staff Wellbeing

Our School is committed to a positive work environment where work is done in an atmosphere of respect, collaboration, openness and equality. All employees have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. The Board of Management upholds the characteristic spirit (ethos of the school).

- Team Teaching was set up in Our Lady Queen of Peace school in September 2017 to assist with numeracy and literacy learning. Working on teams spreads responsibility, encourages creativity, can deepen friendships and builds community among teachers.
- Staff Support – The Principal, Deputy Principal are always available to talk to staff. Social committee is rotated termly so that each strand level gets a chance at planning our termly social events and marking special events of our staff members i.e. weddings, births etc... This adds greatly to a sense of solidarity among us.
- Professional + Staff Development: The Staff is provided with ongoing professional development through our Croke Park hour. School based professional development is part of regular in-school and out of school meetings. The PDST provides advice to managers on whole school staff support

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- The Employee Assistance Service/Inspire Workplace Services (formerly CareCall) provide teachers and their immediate family with access to confidential counselling and assists in coping with the effect of personal and work related issues. Counselling is provided on issues such as health, relationships, addictions, bereavement, stress, conflict, critical incident and trauma. The service is free and confidential and available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to teachers in school.
- Cornmarket provides financial advice and financial services including salary protection.
- The Psychological Society of Ireland's 40 tips for mental, well-being and prosperity may be useful in helping teachers to enhance and maintain their own mental health (www.pihq.ie).
- The Teaching Council holds the well-being of all teachers and learners in high regard (see website for more details).
- The following websites are also useful resources for teachers:
 - Voice for Teachers
 - Special Education Teachers Ireland Supporting Each Other

Parental Wellbeing

The school supports parents by both community to them about their child's academic progress and about the upcoming events happening in the school. Our school strives to promote communication between school and families at all times in some of the following ways

New pupils. Annual Information/Orientation Meeting for parents of 'new' Junior Infants – late May/early June

- Annual Curriculum Information, homework and General Procedures Meeting for parents of 'new' Junior Infants – September

Formal Parent/Teacher Meetings currently held in November

- To facilitate an exchange of information among staff members and parents

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- To let parents know how their children are progressing in school
- To let teachers know how children are getting along outside school
- To establish an ongoing relationship and communication with parents

- School Reports are posted to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of each pupil at the end of each school year
- Additional meetings as appropriate, between Parent(s) and Teacher(s) concerning pupils who may have special educational needs and/or to discuss pupil progress, behaviour, etc

Ongoing communication throughout the school year by means of

- home visits and meetings with our HSCL coordinator,
- family notes,
- calendar of events,
- website notifications,
- notes from class teachers/special education team teachers,
- homework journals,
- individual pupils progress reports,
- newsletters,
- information posted on notice boards and school brochures.

Homework Journals (1st – 6th classes) are used to relay messages which are signed between parents and teachers. Parents are requested to sign the diary each night to certify that homework has been completed

Parents council.

Through the Parents Association and BoM, parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of all school policies. The parents council can often be the voice of other parents in the school. The parent council support the community aspect of the school through fundraising, school pancake day, Halloween discos, christmas fair etc. They also support the teachers in community celebration days. It's a great way of bringing everyone together.

The care and wellbeing of all parent's is looked after so well by our HSCL. The underlying principal of the Home School Liaison Policy is 'Partnership with parents as part of a whole school for the ultimate wellbeing of the children. This policy lists so many ways parents wellbeing are looked after some of which are outlined below:

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- Build positive relationships and to establish bonds of trust with families, through regular home visits.
- To foster self help, independence and high self esteem.
- Work as an agent for change
- Provide support and reassurance
- Provide a well equipped parent's room
- Have a warm welcoming atmosphere in the school
- Strive to ensure that families enjoy a smooth and seamless transfer to Secondary school and from preschool to junior Infants. Through our School Transfer programmes.
- Equip parents with as much information as possible to help them to bring their children safely through to 6th class e.g. Parenting, school transfer, drug education, RSE, Effective communication skills, homework support etc
- Support parents to ensure good attendance.
- Support parents with homework.
- Encourage parents to have high expectations for their children and to impress on their child the importance of a good education.
- Support parents with any assessments, resources their child may need.
- Put families in contact with any family supports they may need at any time.
- Support families working with statutory agencies.
- Parental involvement and participation is particularly encouraged in certain areas of children's education, such as sacramental preparations, social personal and health education programmes, health promotion activities, sports events, green school projects, active flag, shared reading, Maths for fun, Kidstalk oral language programme, Dads & Lads, Mams & Gals, School Transfer programme, RSE programme, Drug Educare programme, Internet safety, Senior citizens party, 6th class graduation etc

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Ratification and Communication

This policy was reviewed and approved by the Parents Association Committee at a meeting on

Signed: _____

On behalf of the Parents Association

The policy was subsequently reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on

Signed:

Chairperson of the BOM

Date:

Its implementation was deemed effective from that date.

A copy of this policy was made available to all members of staff. Parents were made aware of the existence and availability of the policy by means of family note, and this policy is also included on the Our Lady Queen of Peace website.

Timetable for Review:

A Review of this Policy will be conducted as deemed appropriate, based on the success criteria outlined above.

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