ST. BRIGID'S NATIONAL SCHOOL KILLYGARRY

WELLBEING POLICY

Rationale

The promotion of wellbeing is central to the Department's mission to enable children and young people to achieve their full potential and contribute to Ireland's social, cultural and economic development. Schools play a vital role in the promotion of wellbeing through a range of activities and approaches to support the academic, physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual development of all children and young people. Our education system is key to equipping children and young people with the knowledge, skills and competencies to deal with challenges that impact on their wellbeing (Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice, 2018).

In the school environment, social and emotional skills do not exist in isolation but interact with cognitive skills development. The role of the school is now understood as a place which develops the 'whole child', who should leave school with a balanced set of cognitive, social and emotional skills to face the challenges of the 21st century (OECD 2014). Schools play a key role in developing and enhancing young people's wellbeing as they spend a large proportion of their time in school during their formative years. Children and young people learn more effectively and have better academic outcomes if they are happy in their work, believe in themselves and feel acknowledged and supported in their schools. National and international research highlights that the wellbeing of our children and young people is critical to their success in education and in life (Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice, 2018).

St. Brigid's N.S., Killygarry has already developed innovative approaches to wellbeing promotion supported by strong leadership and quality teaching and learning. We aim to further support children by optimising opportunities to learn about wellbeing. As well as being a place of academic learning, our school provides opportunities to develop friendships and social networks, to respectfully encounter diversity and access support structures.

This policy displays existing and developing work in wellbeing promotion in St. Brigid's N.S. Its implementation is an ongoing, reflective and self-evaluative process that aims to focus on supporting children in having a sense of purpose and fulfilment, and the skills necessary to deal with life's challenges. It also aims to be responsive to the changing needs of the school and the children in our care.

Introduction

St. Brigid's N.S. is currently working through the SSE process for Wellbeing Promotion within the school, which is supported by the Department of Education and Skills and the Health Service Executive. St. Brigid's N.S. is a Health Promoting School and we have a Health

Promotion Committee in the school. It is also strongly supported by the Health Promoting Schools model. St. Brigid's N.S. has selected Wellbeing as a topic for School Self-Evaluation for the 2023-2026 academic years and onwards into the future.

This policy sets out the vision and ambition of St. Brigid's N.S. to ensure that the experience of our children from the early years throughout their primary education will be one that enhances, promotes, values and nurtures their wellbeing. Key to this ambition is building on the good practice already in place and the capacity of our school to assess, understand, evaluate and promote the key factors that will lead to optimal promotion of student wellbeing in our school setting.

We adopt a preventative, multi-component, continuum of support approach to the promotion of wellbeing with the provision of both whole school and targeted interventions that promote school-based protective factors and reduce school-based risk factors. We are committed to the ongoing review and development of the four key areas and indicators of successful wellbeing promotion - school culture and environment, teaching and learning, policy and planning, and relationships and partnerships. This involves all members of the school community engaging in a collaborative process of change to improve specific areas of school life that impact on wellbeing.

Our wellbeing policy is:
- **Child-centred**: The wellbeing needs and the best interests of our children are a central focus of this policy. This requires us to respect and value the voice of children and young people and foster their belonging and connectedness to our school community.
- **Fair and inclusive**: All children receive fair and inclusive opportunities to develop their wellbeing in ways that are responsive and suitable to their particular needs and contexts. Practices are tailored and relevant, building on the existing strengths of children, school staff, families and school communities.
- **Evidence-informed:** This policy promotes the use of evidence-informed practice, which brings together local experience and expertise with the best available evidence from research.
- **Outcomes focused:** This policy promotes continuous improvement practices and the use of data relating to outcomes to guide practice in our school in relation to the promotion of wellbeing for all children.
- **Partnership/Collaboration:** The wellbeing of our children is a shared responsibility. Working in partnership with parents, guardians, school staff and external agencies is key to ensuring this policy is implemented.

Documents which have informed our Wellbeing Policy planning:
- [Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (DES, 2018)](#)
- [Schools for Health in Ireland: Framework for Developing a Health Promoting School (HSE, 2013)](#)

- [Looking at Our School: A Quality Framework for Primary Schools (DES, Inspectorate, 2022)](#)
- [Well-Being in Primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH & HSE, 2015)](#)
- [Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (NCCA, 2009)](#)

Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice

The Department's *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice* assists schools in ensuring that wellbeing promotion is embedded within the school's existing practice. The school's review and development process using the *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice* provides guidance and practical resources to assist in the further enhancement of whole school approaches to wellbeing promotion.

The Wellbeing Framework for Practice outlines:
1. Key areas of wellbeing in education
2. Indicators of success in each of these areas
3. Statements of effective practice to guide schools
4. Suite of online wellbeing resources

Schools for Health in Ireland: Framework for Developing a Health Promoting School

The Health Promoting Schools process provides a comprehensive approach for school self-evaluation in:
- Environment (physical & social)
- Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
- School Policy and Planning
- Partnerships (family and community links)

A health promoting schools approach is a way of thinking and working that is adopted by all in the school to make it the best possible place to learn, work and play (Queensland, 2005).

Looking at Our School: A Quality Framework for Primary Schools

Looking at Our School articulates the Department's holistic view of learning in schools. The framework sees wellbeing as both an enabler of learning and an outcome of learning. It emphasises the need for children and young people to develop a broad range of skills, competencies and values that enable active citizenship, lifelong learning and personal wellbeing. The framework asserts that in providing good quality learning experiences, teachers need to also consider children and young people's wellbeing and that effective school leadership and management involves creating and maintaining a positive, secure and healthy culture where the holistic development of all children and young people is enabled. *Looking*

at Our School also provides a coherent approach to improving outcomes and experiences for all children and young people. It is used to assist schools in embedding self-evaluation processes and reflective practices, and it provides a structure for implementing new initiatives. The domains and standards of *Looking at Our School* can therefore support schools in promoting and enhancing the wellbeing of all members of the school community.

What is Wellbeing?

"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." (World Health Organisation, 2001)

Wellbeing is multidimensional:
1. Physical
2. Social
3. Mental
4. Emotional
5. Spiritual

The Mental Health Foundation (2002) suggests that children who are mentally healthy possess the ability to:
- develop psychologically, emotionally, socially, intellectually, spiritually
- initiate, develop and sustain mutually satisfying interpersonal relationships
- use and enjoy solitude
- become aware of others and empathise with them
- play and learn
- develop a sense of right and wrong
- resolve (face) problems and setbacks satisfactorily and learn from them (Alexander, 2002)

The science of wellbeing is studied as Positive Psychology. Positive psychology is underpinned by Professor Martin Seligman's PERMA Theory of Wellbeing (2011). PERMA Theory outlines 5 core elements of wellbeing.

Table 1: PERMA Theory of Wellbeing

PERMA model of well-being
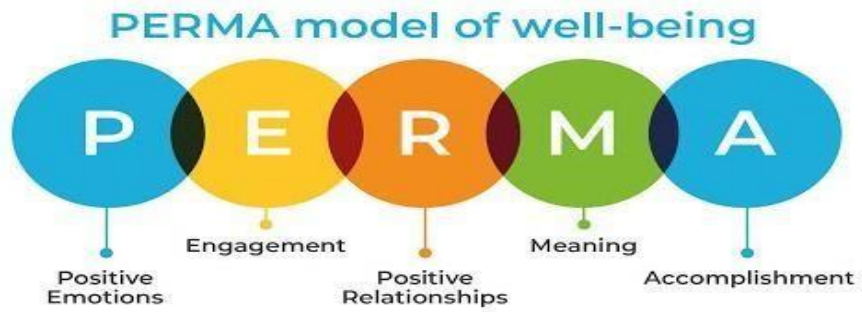
St. Brigid's N.S. we focus on building these 5 elements of wellbeing by:

- Increasing and prioritising positive emotions
- Teaching emotional regulation skills
- Encouraging children to utilise their skills
- Providing challenging activities to facilitate growth
- Identifying and using character strengths
- Promoting and supporting inclusion
- Communicating high expectations
- Fostering positive relationships
- Providing support
- Teaching life skills
- Facilitating connection to the school community
- Improving self-efficacy
- Celebrating success

Wellbeing Protective and Risk Factors

Risk and protective factors relating to wellbeing promotion that are specific to our school setting have been identified. Protective factors have been found to promote positive outcomes for children and young people, even when they have been exposed to risk factors (Cooper, Jacobs, 2011). In St. Brigid's N.S., we implement a preventative wellbeing promotion process that has a focus on strengthening school-based protective factors and minimising school based risk factors.

In St. Brigid's N.S. Wellbeing Protective Factors include:
- positive relationships with peers and teachers - including positive teacher classroom management strategies and a sharing of positive behaviour management practices with parents
- a sense of belonging, security and connectedness to our school through the creation of a positive school climate and participation in school and community activities
- opportunities for social and emotional learning including the development of attention and planning, self-awareness, emotional regulation, relationships, responsible decision making and problem-solving skills
- opportunities for the development of knowledge and skills providing a sense of mastery and self-efficacy

- fostering expectations, recognising contributions, effort and achievement and providing opportunities for success
- protocols and support systems that proactively support children and their families should difficulties arise
- opportunities to develop the necessary skills to cope with using online technology in a safe and appropriate way
- wellbeing of school personnel and professional development for teachers and staff

In our school setting, Wellbeing Risk Factors include:
- disengagement, absenteeism, isolation and alienation
- violence/aggression, bullying and relationship difficulties
- low achievement/learning difficulties/special educational needs including social, emotional and behavioural needs
- cultural differences
- school transitions
- poor connection between family and school
- inconsistent discipline
- lack of opportunity to develop social and emotional learning, including problem solving and coping skills

The Role of the Teacher

The role of the teacher has been found to be paramount to children's wellbeing and reaches beyond teaching and learning. The relationship that teachers develop with the child has a key influence on wellbeing development. Access to 'one good adult' who can guide and support a young person at a vulnerable time is an identified protective factor. The presence of one supportive adult is critically important to the child's wellbeing, sense of connectedness, self-confidence and ability to cope with difficulties. Teachers are sometimes that 'one good adult' acting as a protective force in a child's life.

The classroom teacher is the best placed professional to work sensitively and consistently with students and he/she can have a powerful impact on influencing students' attitudes, values, and behaviour in all aspects of wellbeing education.
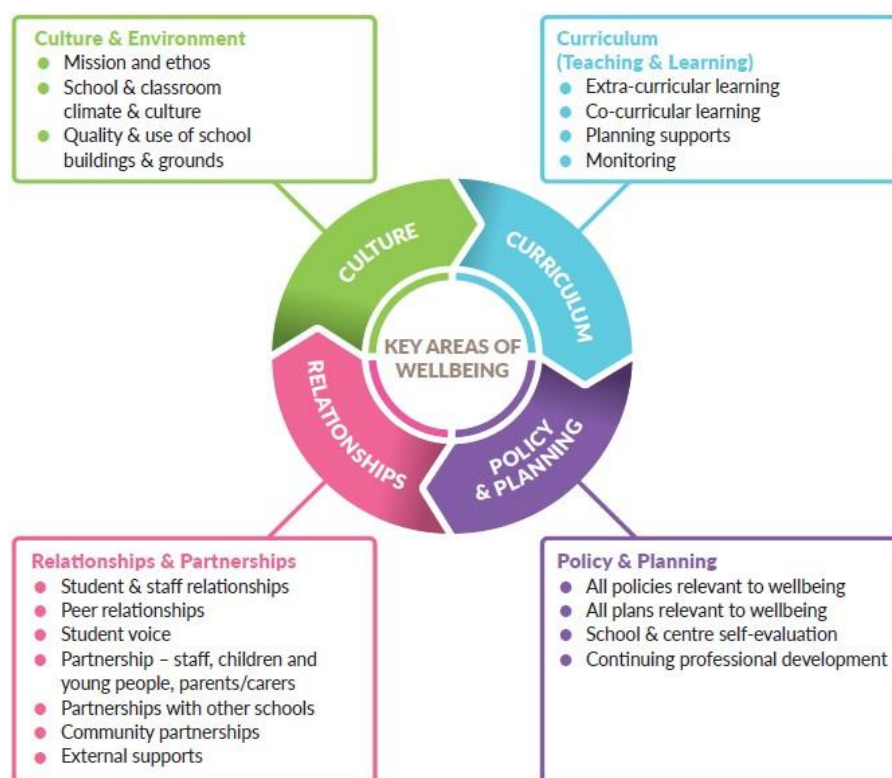
It is essential that all staff continue to develop their competence and confidence in the promotion of wellbeing. This can be achieved through accessing continuing professional development (CPD) which includes the sharing of expertise and learning, and having opportunities to model and engage in collaborative working. The curricular elements of wellbeing promotion are delivered by staff who are trained for this purpose having completed the relevant CPD training e.g. Zippy's Friends, Fun Friends and Friends for Life.

Multi-component Approach to Wellbeing Promotion

The Department advocates a multi-component approach to wellbeing promotion to ensure that all the key areas that contribute to wellbeing promotion in schools are given a focus.

The Department considers the following four areas as key areas for action in wellbeing promotion:
• Culture and Environment
• Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)
• Policy and Planning
• Relationships and Partnerships

Culture & Environment
● Mission and ethos
● School & classroom climate & culture
● Quality & use of school buildings & grounds

Curriculum (Teaching & Learning)
● Extra-curricular learning
● Co-curricular learning
● Planning supports
● Monitoring

CULTURE
CURRICULUM
KEY AREAS OF WELLBEING
RELATIONSHIPS
POLICY & PLANNING

Relationships & Partnerships
● Student & staff relationships
● Peer relationships
● Student voice
● Partnership – staff, children and young people, parents/carers
● Partnerships with other schools
● Community partnerships
● External supports

Policy & Planning
● All policies relevant to wellbeing
● All plans relevant to wellbeing
● School & centre self-evaluation
● Continuing professional development

1. School Culture and Environment

St. Brigid's N.S. aims to cultivate an environment that enhances wellbeing for all who learn, work and visit. Our school environment is one that consciously fosters warm relationships, encourages participation, develops pupil and teacher autonomy and provides clarity of boundaries, rules and positive expectations.

St. Brigid's N.S. provides a safe, secure and stimulating environment that encourages and supports pupils, staff and members of the whole school community, both in and out of school. We provide a climate in which positive relationships, respect and consideration for others prosper, and where individuals are encouraged to make a vital contribution through their personal skills and qualities.

Our school leaders actively promote wellbeing in St. Brigid's N.S. Our In-School Management team strive to create a culture and climate which is accepting and supportive for staff, parents and students. Through nurturing quality relationships within the school we facilitate the wellbeing of staff members and students as well as fostering a shared responsibility for promoting positive wellbeing.

In St. Brigid's N.S. we have amended our Mission Statement to include the areas of Respect, Responsibility and Resilience and we are actively working on helping the children to build these skills.

2. Curriculum

Wellbeing promotion is central to all areas of teaching and learning in St. Brigid's N.S.. The teaching and learning is democratic, inclusive, engaging and differentiated. We deliver an integrated curriculum that recognises the richness and uniqueness of the individual and the importance of the quality of teaching and learning experiences.

Wellbeing promotion is addressed across the curriculum through:
- Aistear
- SPHE – Stay Safe, Fun Friends, Zippy's Friends, Friends for Life, etc.
- Physical Education
- Religious Education
- Science

Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (NCCA, 2009) encompasses four themes - Wellbeing, Identity and Belonging, Communication, Exploring and Thinking.

Social, Personal and Health Education is central to pupil development in its broadest sense and is an essential part of school curriculum. The SPHE curriculum in St. Brigid's N.S. strongly supports the social and emotional wellbeing of our pupils, by placing an emphasis on children's social and emotional skills, attitudes, behaviour and therefore learning performance. SPHE encompasses the development of emotional literacy which is the ability to understand emotions, listen to others and empathise. This includes provision of safe, secure and comfortable environments that enable children to share their concerns.

Key characteristics of the SPHE programme delivered in our school:
- a lifelong process
- a shared responsibility between family, school, health professionals and the community
- based on the needs of the child
- spiral in nature
- effective and consistent in delivery
- developed in a combination of contexts
- engages children in activity-based learning (NCCA 1999).

3. Policy and Planning

St. Brigid's N.S. regularly reviews our school policies for staff and pupils that are in accordance with the school aims, philosophy, vision and ethos. All aspects of the school planning and self-evaluation process in our school incorporate a health and wellbeing dimension.

Wellbeing promotion is addressed in school policies and plans including but not limited to:

- Aistear
- Physical Education
- Religious Education
- SPHE
- Science
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding
- Critical Incidents
- Health and Safety
- Anti-bullying/Bí Cinealta Programme
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Special Educational Needs
- Transition to other schools

4. Relationships and Partnerships

St. Brigid's N.S.continues to develop strong partnerships with parents/guardians and the wider community, which is a central part of the wellbeing process. We efficiently engage with appropriate agencies and specialist services to advise, support and contribute to health and wellbeing, teaching and learning.

The following stakeholders collaborate regularly:

- Parents/Guardians
- Board of Management
- Patron
- Parents Association
- Student Committees
- Local schools
- Voluntary/sports/arts groups
- State agencies
- Community groups
- Support services

Two-tiered Approach to Wellbeing Promotion

In St. Brigid's N.S. we adopt a preventative, two-tiered approach to wellbeing promotion, with interventions at both universal whole school and individual targeted levels.

1. Whole School Approach

Our whole school approach involves all members of the school community engaging in a collaborative process of change to improve specific areas of school life which impact on wellbeing. By adopting a whole school approach, we aim to produce a wide range of educational and social benefits for our pupils, including improved behaviour, increased

inclusion, improved learning, greater social cohesion, increased social capital and improvements to mental health and wellbeing.

In St. Brigid's N.S., we embrace *School Support for All* as a whole school approach that focuses on promoting wellbeing for all members of the school community. *School Support for All* is a process of prevention, effective mainstream teaching, early identification and intervention for children who are showing mild or transient signs of difficulty. Students flourish where there is a whole school approach to supporting their growth and wellbeing.

Our Whole School Approach involves:

- raising awareness of wellbeing promotion
- regular review and development of policies relating to wellbeing such as critical incidents, bullying, child protection etc
- professional development for school staff in wellbeing promotion
- implementing the SPHE curriculum which includes a focus on whole school approaches to wellbeing and health promotion
- implementing universal evidence-based programmes and interventions
- establishing school structures for supporting staff and students including the school support team
- establishing mechanisms such as student committees to ensure that the voices of children are heard
- planning, collaborating and appropriate sharing of information between schools when children are making the transition into primary school or moving into post-primary school
- liaising with appropriate external agencies and services e.g. NEPS psychologists, NCSE etc.

(a) Benefits of a Whole School Approach

Adopting a whole school approach has been found internationally to produce a wide range of educational and social benefits for individual children including:

- Better learning results for pupils
- Increased pupil self-esteem
- Improved behaviour
- Lowered incidence of bullying
- Increased inclusion
- School environment is safer and more secure
- Improved relationships within the school
- More involvement of parents/guardians
- Better use of outside agencies
- More proactive in promotion of staff wellbeing

(b) Whole School Initiatives that Promote Wellbeing

St. Brigid's N.S. implements several programmes and initiatives that support the wellbeing of our pupils, including but not limited to:

- **Play** - Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework, play used throughout all subject areas and an aim to provide more playful learning experiences in the upper end of the school.
- **SPHE** - RSE, Stay Safe, Friendship Week, Wellbeing Week, Fun Friends (Junior Infants and Senior Infants), Zippy's Friends (1st and 2nd Class), Friends for Life (5th and 6th class)
- **SEN** - Continuum of Support Model with emphasis place on Early Intervention, highly trained SET team, CPD carried out regularly in topics such as dyslexia, WIAT III, etc.
- **Pupil Voice** – Student involvement in Green School Committee, Active School Committee and Health Promoting Committee. Pupil involvement in SSE and SIP by completion of surveys and listening to what they have to say.
- **Wellbeing publicised** - Wellbeing Signs around the school yard, buddy bench in the yard
- **Project based learning** – across all classes
- **Outdoor learning** – orienteering, maths eyes, sensory garden, etc.
- **Partnership** with the local clubs and groups e.g. Killygarry GAA, Cavan Sports Partnership, etc.
- **Physical Education** – CPD provided for teaching staff, PE timetabled for every week, the Daily Mile, External PE coaches e.g. GAA, Cavan Sports Partnership Coaches, Basketball Coach, events such as the Sponsored Walk and the School Marathon, Swimming Lessons, competitions such as Cumann na mBunscol, Swimming Gala, etc.
- **Active School Flag**
- **Health Promoting Schools Initiative -** Healthy Eating Policy throughout the school, Food Dudes, Hot School Meals
- **Promoting the Arts** – Christmas Concerts, purchase of school musical instruments, entry into art competitions, school quizzes, involvement in Creative School and BLAST
- **After School Clubs** – tin whistle, quiz club, ukulele, GAA (camogie and Gaelic Football), soccer, choir, etc.
- **Breakfast and After-School Service** - provided by Laochra Academy
- **School facilities** – sensory room, playroom, STEAM room, astro turf pitch, playground with swings, slides, roundabouts, climbing frames and seesaws, library, general purpose room, aistear resources, class libraries, soundfield systems in all classrooms.
- **Braincalm** - by trained SNAs
- **Staff Wellbeing** - Staff Meals at staff training days, Christmas lunch, social club events, nice warm staffroom, staff noticeboard, staff whatsapp group, regular staff meetings, school events noticeboard.
- **Festive Events** – Christmas concerts, carol services, craft fairs, Seachtain na Gaeilge concerts, school masses/prayer services, celebration of the sacraments, etc. The Principal makes bags of hot chocolate and marshmallows for each child in the school for the Late Late Toy Show.
- **Parent Teacher meetings** – cup of tea/biscuits for parent, Principal free to chat to parents about issues or concerns, pastries for staff at break/lunch on these days

- **School Website** – demonstrating pupil achievement, informing parents of school events
- **School Newsletter** – showing events taking place in the school
- **Physical School Environment** – school kept clean and tidy, good lighting, warm, displays updated, rooms painted, etc.
- Parental Involvement – Parents association affiliated to the National Parents Council, Principal attends the AGM and presents a powerpoint at it, PA and BoM work closely together for the betterment of the school.
- **New Parents** - New Parent Information meeting held annually and an Infant Induction Day where the PA provide refreshments for the parents and treat bags for the children.
- **Communication** – Notes and messages via Aladdin, text message or letter, school website, newsletters. Open door policy in the school where parents want to meet the teacher or Principal.
- **Resources** – huge array of resources for literacy including levelled books in English and Gaeilge and Accelerated reading, science resources, SPHE resources, maths resources (central resources and classroom resources), music resources (music stands, class set of ukuleles, guitars, tin whistles, electric piano, keyboards, percussion instruments, etc.), visual arts resources and lots of physical education resources.
- **CPD** – staff are encouraged to carry out CPD and particularly around pupil wellbeing.
- **Bí Cinealta –** Implementation of the Bí Cinealta Programme in September 2024 to replace the Anti-Bullying Policy. Staff training to be provided in this area. Restorative Practices to be used throughout the school.
- **School Policies –** School policies to mention pupil wellbeing
- **Sustainability –** The school is a Green School and is committed to ensuring that recycling and composting is done on a daily basis, water and electricity is conserved, biodiversity is encouraged outdoors, pupils can walk to school where it is safe to do so, school is insulated, and new solar panels are to be installed in 2025.

(c) Programmes and External Facilitators

The use of programmes and external facilitators can play a role in supplementing, complementing and supporting a planned comprehensive approach to wellbeing promotion.

Programmes and external facilitators accessed in
- are part of a whole school approach and address an identified need
- are delivered to class groups with the involvement of school staff and the appropriate involvement of parents/guardians
- enhance protective factors which predispose students to positive outcomes in the face of adversity such as: facilitating supportive adult-pupil relationships, strengthening life skills, helping students believe in their capacity to overcome hardship and building a sense of mastery over life circumstances
- adopt a planned implementation process, for example, incorporate needs analysis, use evidence informed programmes and track and evaluate outcomes for students
- are implemented and used in our school in a sustained way over a number of years in order to bring about lasting effects and benefits

2. Individual and Targeted Support

In line with best practice, the Continuum of Support model delivered within our school offers a flexible framework within which we can address all educational needs, including the wellbeing needs of our pupils.

Table 3: Continuum of Support

Support for Few	**School Support Plus for Few:** Individualised, targeted intervention for children and young people with more complex and enduring needs.
Support for Some	**School Support for Some:** Identification, targeted prevention and early intervention for those at risk.
Support for All	**Whole School and Classroom Support for All:** Whole school support for wellbeing promotion that includes prevention and development of social and emotional competence & coping skills for all.

The Continuum of Support recognises that individual children and young people can have different needs at different times. Those at greater risk and with greater needs may require more specific and targeted support, in addition to the support provided to all children and young people in their class-based groups.

Children and young people with additional needs and vulnerable groups are particularly at risk in the area of wellbeing (NCSE, 2014). The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) supports schools to promote the wellbeing and mental health of all children and young people. While supporting all, NEPS prioritises support for those at risk of educational disadvantage and those with special educational needs.

(a) The Student Support Team

The Student Support Team (SST) consists of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principals and the SET Team

The purpose of the SST is to provide for students who have a greater need for a higher level of intervention from the school community. The SST meet regularly and discuss the needs of pupils in the school as a whole, under the continuum of support model. Children may be identified through this process who would benefit from further support in school, at home and/or from external agencies.

Objectives and Rationale for the Student Support Team

Students who experience difficulties in life will find it difficult to have cognitive space for learning. Therefore, the rationale of the SST is to strive to care in a genuine way to improve the lives of students and thereby ensure access to the curriculum and learning.

The SST undertakes the following:

- To liaise with external professionals about the welfare of the child

- To liaise with the parents/ guardians of the child
- To share information in a confidential setting
- To coordinate a targeted response to the needs of a student
- To review and monitor the students with care needs

Referral to the School Support Team
All staff in the school community have a responsibility to be observant of the needs of the students.

The process of referral to the school support team is as follows:
- The class teacher will refer a student directly to the Special Education Co-ordinator
- The Special Education Co-ordinator will forward information to the Principal
- A parent may also raise concerns regarding their child to the class teacher, Principal or Deputy Principal

Once a student is referred to the Student Support Team:
- The teacher may call home to arrange a meeting with the parents/guardians to discuss concerns
- A classroom support or school support plan may be initiated for the child
- When developing a Student Support Plan, we consider the 'whole child' keeping in mind Maslow's hierarchy of Needs (see Table 4 below). Basic Needs, My Thoughts about School and School Environment checklists are completed
- Intervention plans and individual targets are developed
- Specific needs may be discussed with external agencies or professionals such as National Educational Psychology Service (NEPs), HSE personnel (Primary Care Team, Assessment of Need Team, Early Intervention Team, School Age Team), National Educational Welfare Board, National Council for Special Education (NCSE)
- Student support plans are reviewed and updated throughout the school year

Table 4: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943)
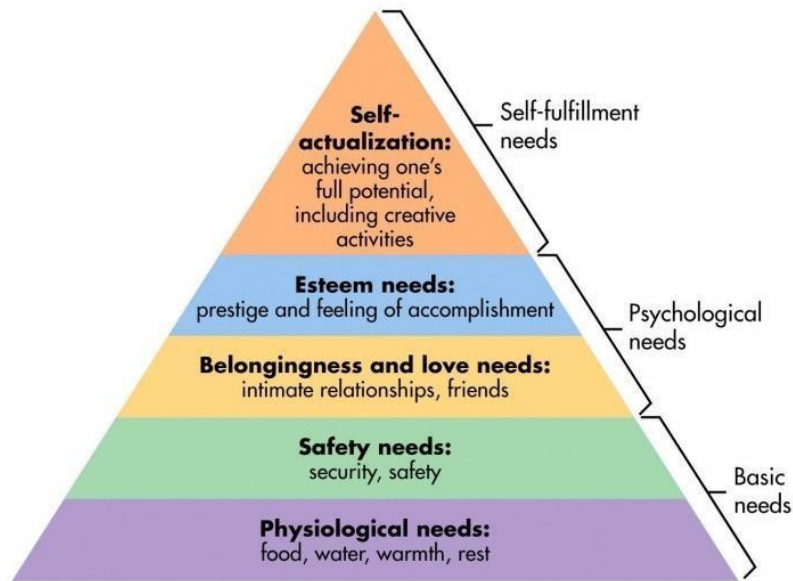
Documentation and Communication of School Support Plans
- Support plans are drafted, shared with parents for consultation, and then finalised before a programme of support commences
- Support plans are uploaded to the child's Aladdin documents
- Any confidential information or information which evokes the implementation of the Child Safe Guarding Policy are dealt directly by the Designated Liaison Person – DLP, (or Deputy DLP in their absence), and communicated with parents/guardians.

(b) External Agencies and Specialist Support Services

Some children and young people will require additional support from specialist support services external to the school. In the event of a child presenting with mental health concerns, which are above and beyond the capacity and ability of the school to provide adequate support, the school may decide upon either of the following courses of action:

- Follow existing policies which enables staff to access and refer directly to an external service. In St. Brigid's N.S. we have established essential relationships with local agencies and have names and contact details readily available for onward referrals.
- When deemed necessary, the school team, with the consent and collaboration of parents/ guardians, may recommend a referral to the local General Practitioner (GP) or other appropriate professionals who can advise on referral pathways. For children with mental health difficulties, the referral will likely be made to the local HSE Psychology Service/Primary Care Team or the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

Indicators of Success

In St. Brigid's N.S. we use the *Wellbeing Indicators of Success* to identify our strengths and targets for improvement, and to actively monitor our progress and outcomes in relation to wellbeing promotion over time. We achieve this by accessing the opinions and views of all stakeholders throughout the process.

The *Wellbeing Indicators of Success,* outlined in Table 5, are the broad outcomes to which the Department aspires and wants schools and centres for education to accomplish.

Table 5: Wellbeing Promotion Indicators of Success

Key Areas	Indicators of Success
Culture & Environment	• 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.
Curriculum (Teaching & Learning)	• 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 & 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 & Partnerships	• 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.

These Indicators of Success in the four key areas of wellbeing are further expanded upon as *Statements of Effective Practice* (See Appendix A) which provide a set of standards for wellbeing practices across the Continuum of Support at the whole school preventative level (Support for All) and also at the targeted and more individualised levels (Support for Some and Few). These Statements of Effective Practice form the basis of the school's self-reflective Wellbeing Promotion Process. They enable us to identify strengths and areas to target and therefore plan the next stage in the improvement journey.

Suggested Measures of Success:
- Student attendance
- Successful school completion
- Successful transition of pupils

- Data gathered in school e.g. surveys, interviews, checklists
- Data gathered through consultation with children, parents, teachers and other staff members
- Information from inspectorate reports

School Self-Evaluation Wellbeing Promotion Process

To implement this policy our school is required to use the six-step School Self-Evaluation (SSE) process with the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice, to initiate a Wellbeing Promotion review and development cycle. We will consider our existing provision for wellbeing under each of the four key areas (culture and environment, curriculum, policy and planning, and relationships and partnerships), and devise and implement a plan for improvement in one key area, as appropriate for our school. In devising and implementing the improvement plan, we will refer to the Statements of Effective Practice in key areas relevant to the specific focus we have chosen.

We have gathered information by consulting with and collecting information from key stakeholders, including staff, pupils and parents/guardians, relating to current practice in the key areas of wellbeing promotion. This information was essential to highlight positive aspects and strengths in our practice and identify areas for development – the analysis and judgement stage. This analysis will inform actions for wellbeing in a selected area. A list of actions have been drawn up and we have incorporated these actions into our School Improvement Plan (SIP). Steps have been put in place to implement the agreed actions. At the monitoring stage, actions will be reviewed on an ongoing basis which will assist us in evaluating impact and tracking our progress in this process of continuous improvement.

Table 6: Using the SSE process with the Wellbeing Framework for Practice

The *Wellbeing in Education Framework for Practice* is closely aligned to the standards set out in *Looking at Our School.* In order to assist schools in their use of the SSE process to engage with wellbeing, Table 7 shows how the language in the *Wellbeing in Education Framework for Practice* maps to the language of *Looking at Our School.*

Table 7: Linking Looking at our Schools and the Wellbeing Framework for Practice

Supporting the Implementation of the Wellbeing Promotion Process

The Department have made available a suite of Wellbeing Resources to provide practical tools and information to support the Wellbeing Promotion Process.

These Wellbeing Resources include:

- Evaluation Tools: Parent/Carer, Child/Young Person and Staff Questionnaires
- Focus Group Guidelines to facilitate access to the voice of key stakeholders
- Revised Circular for schools to provide strengthened guidance on the use of programmes/external facilitators in school wellbeing promotion.

Continuous Professional Development

In St. Brigid's N.S., the school management team prioritise professional development for school staff in wellbeing promotion for staff and students. Whole-staff professional development for our school includes a focus on the following:

- identifying and building upon existing good practice in the whole-school implementation of SPHE
- providing a shared understanding of the wellbeing of children
- developing an understanding of child development
- exploring the factors that impact both positively and negatively on wellbeing
- providing opportunities for reflection on the school environment, classroom and whole school practice to establish and maintain healthy patterns of relationships
- raising awareness of the importance of consistency between home and school environments in the implementation of strategies and programmes which promote wellbeing

- considering the implementation of supportive practices in addressing and resolving conflict and other issues arising between children
- raising awareness of the links between risk taking behaviours, bullying and the development of mental health problems
- exploring strategies to develop children's skills, attitudes and behaviours in dealing with peer pressure, bullying situations or situations involving risk
- equipping teachers to develop their own and children's resilience, self-control and coping skills in a variety of social situations.

Staff Wellbeing

Support for the wellbeing of staff is also an essential element in wellbeing promotion, and crucial to sustaining teacher/staff engagement, enthusiasm and the ability to model resilience. It builds staff capacity to cope with challenges and adapt to change and creates conditions to support and motivate staff to be effective.

St. Brigid's N.S. provides a safe and supportive environment for staff members. All staff members are supported in maintaining their personal health and wellbeing. Our staff benefit from reflecting on our own wellbeing and general attitudes to mental health. All staff are made aware of supports for teacher wellbeing and that individual teachers requiring additional support at a particular time may access the Employee Assistance Service (EAS). Spectrum Life was awarded the EAS contract in July 2020. The service provided is known as 'Wellbeing Together: Folláine le Chéile'.

The EAS provides advice to employees on a range of issues including wellbeing, legal, financial, bereavement, conflict and mediation. It also provides advice and support to school leaders and delivers interventions to help them deal with health and wellbeing issues in the workplace.

Where appropriate, short-term counselling is available to employees and their family members. A family member includes a spouse, civil partner or dependent, where the family member can be described as a person over the age of 18 and residing at the family home. In addition, online cognitive behavioural therapy is also provided to employees.

A bespoke wellbeing portal and app is available offering a host of online services with access to live chats, videos, podcasts and blogs on topics around mental health, family life, exercise and nutrition. The platform is available via Web, iOS App or Android App.

As part of the EAS, a Mental Health Promotion Manager is also available to develop and deliver evidence based mental health and wellbeing initiatives. Spectrum Life also provides a series of webinars and presentations to promote wellbeing in schools.

Employee Assistance Service: Free-phone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 or text 'Hi' to 0873690010 - available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

This Policy was ratified by the BOM on the 6th of February 2025

Signed: Kevin Reilly   **Date: 06/02/2025**

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Key Area 1 - Culture and Environment

The indicators of success in the four key areas of Wellbeing are further expanded upon as statements of effective practice below.

For Key Area 1 Culture & Environment the indicators of success are:

- 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 Statements of Effective Practice for All

- The wellbeing of the whole school community is central to the school's ethos/mission statement and school leaders and management actively promote wellbeing.
- The school communicates with parents about the supports that are in place regarding the promotion of the wellbeing of children and young people.
- It is recognised by school leaders and management and all members of staff that the entire school community has a role to play in supporting learning for and learning about wellbeing.
- The relationship between academic achievement and a child/young person's wellbeing is understood by all children and young people and staff in the school.
- There is a positive approach to discipline where issues are resolved with care, respect and consistency.
- The school recognises that wellbeing is as important for the staff as for the children and young people. Appropriate supports are available for staff wellbeing.
- Opportunities for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) are provided to teachers to ensure that they have the relevant knowledge and understanding to promote wellbeing and to create a positive classroom environment.
- Opportunities are provided for children and young people, staff and parents to have an active voice in decisions relating to school improvement.
- The school building, grounds, classrooms, bathrooms and work spaces are well maintained and appropriately furnished, creating a welcoming, safe and warm environment.
- The indoor space displays the work, talents and accomplishments of children and young people.
- The school building is accessible for all children and young people and accommodation is modified to meet the needs of all.
- School leaders and management understand the link between physical activity and wellbeing and facilitate physical activity and movement breaks within the school environment.
- Indoor and outdoor space is provided to facilitate social interaction and physical activity and quiet time.
- The school environment is conducive to promoting healthy eating choices. Drinking water is freely available and rewards other than food are used to motivate children and young people.

Wellbeing Statements of Effective Practice For Some & Few

- The school demonstrates commitment to identifying, including and providing targeted supports for children and young people experiencing barriers and challenges to wellbeing and learning.
- Staff, children and young people are welcoming and inclusive of those from different cultural backgrounds, those with additional needs and all sexual orientations.
- Schools are proactive in meeting the professional development needs of teachers, who attend relevant CPD and can identify signs and triggers in vulnerable children and young people, and recognise the need for early intervention.
- The physical environment is modified to meet the needs of children and young people with additional and/or complex needs. The following are available if applicable:
  - Sensory room/sensory gardens
  - 'Safe' room/space for distressed/anxious children and young people
  - Room(s) for meeting with parents, visiting professionals
  - Room(s) for individuals and small groups requiring targeted intervention and support
  - Lifting equipment
  - Specialist technology
  - Buddy bench
  - Nurture Room
  *This list is not exhaustive

Key Area 2 - Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

The indicators of success in the four key areas of Wellbeing are further expanded upon as statements of effective practice below.

For Key Area 2 Curriculum (Teaching and Learning) the indicators of success are:

- 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.

Wellbeing Statements of Effective Practice for All

- Teachers' preparation for teaching and learning explicitly references teaching, learning and assessment approaches that promote collaborative learning, peer and self-assessment and a sense of achievement.
- Teachers design and prepare teaching/learning approaches and assessment of learning outcomes which are differentiated for children and young people, providing adequate access, challenge and opportunities for success.
- Teachers use various teaching and assessment methods that promote a sense of achievement and differentiate their expectations to promote full participation and achievement for all children and young people.
- Teachers are encouraged and facilitated to attend relevant CPD to meet the needs of the school population and are encouraged to incorporate and model learnings in their practice and engage in collaborative working.
- Teachers use opportunities to promote wellbeing across the curriculum.
- Throughout primary, and in post primary up to Junior Cycle, the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum is implemented on a mandatory basis. An SPHE Programme that has been planned in consultation with children and young people and parents is taught to every class up to Junior Cycle, in accordance with the required time allocations.
- There is an integrated curriculum planning approach to the provision of Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), Physical Education (PE) and SPHE as part of the 400 hour curricular wellbeing programme at Junior Cycle (post primary only).
- Universal, evidence-based programmes are chosen and guided by Circulars 0042/2018 (primary) and 0045/2018 (post primary) to teach core social and emotional competence and to help children and young people develop coping skills to manage challenges.
- Where an extra-curricular programme is provided, the school links with community-based clubs and organizations to ensure that it is broad, accessible and inclusive.
- Schools are guided by Circulars 0042/2018 and 0045/2018 on the use of programmes/facilitators when guest speakers are invited to contribute to wellbeing promotion in the school.
- Where an extra-curricular programme is provided, children and young people and parents are invited to actively participate in planning the programme.
- A broad range of children and young people's success is rewarded and celebrated to demonstrate the value the school places on all types of achievement.
- Children and young people's enjoyment in learning is evident and is linked to a sense of making progress and of achievement. Children and young people are motivated to learn, and see themselves as learners, demonstrating this in their positive approach to classwork and homework.
- Wellbeing promotion within the school develops children and young peoples' awareness of mental health difficulties and information is shared about when to seek help and who to go to when distressed.

Wellbeing Statements of Effective Practice For Some & Few

- Teachers design and prepare for differentiated teaching methods and assessment of learning outcomes for children and young people at risk or with additional and/or complex needs so that they experience a sense of achievement.
- Teachers attend CPD and deliver specialised and targeted programmes, selected in line with best practice and grounded in research and evidence, to individuals and/or small groups.
- The school deploys resources based on individual learning, behavioural, social and emotional needs under the Special Education Teaching Allocation model.
- A dedicated team (for example, Student Support Team and/or Pastoral Care Team) supports all teachers and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) to implement appropriate strategies for children and young people with additional and/or complex needs, including those recommended in professional reports.
- There are opportunities for training and on-going practice support and guidance for SNAs to further build their capacity to support children and young people with additional needs.
- Where extra-curricular activities are planned, children and young people with additional and/or complex needs and their parents are actively involved in planning and evaluating the programme.

Key Area 3 - Policy and Planning

The indicators of success in the four key areas of Wellbeing are further expanded upon as statements of effective practice below.

For Key Area 3 Policy and Planning the indicators of success are:

- 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.

Wellbeing Statements of Effective Practice for All

- The wellbeing of the whole school community underpins all school policy and plans.
- The voice of children and young people, parents and staff informs the development, review and updating of school policies.
- Schools have appropriate wellbeing policies in place (for example, Anti Bullying Policy, Child Protection Policy, Critical Incident Policy) and are made available to staff, children and young people, parents and relevant school community partners.
- Policies and plans set out how inclusive practice will be implemented in a way that fosters school connectedness, acceptance and celebration of diversity.
- The school uses the Education Passport (NCCA) for children and young people transitioning to post primary school.
- The school gathers information on risk factors such as bullying; absenteeism; truancy and disruptive behavior to inform wellbeing programme planning.
- There is a comprehensive CPD plan to ensure all teachers have the necessary training to incorporate wellbeing promotion in their teaching practice to meet the particular needs of the school population.
- School leaders and management recognise the importance of staff wellbeing and the particular challenges that can occur in a school environment and have systems in place to support all members of staff.

Wellbeing Statements of Effective Practice For Some & Few

- The school has regard to the Department's policies and circulars that outline how to support children and young people with additional and/or complex needs.
- School-based information is used, in conjunction with reports from external professionals, to set guidelines and recommendations for individualised supports for children and young people with additional needs.
- The school engages in a collaborative problem-solving process to support a child/young person's needs, identified through the school's continuum of support.
- A student support file is used to plan, record and review progress.
- At times of transition, information is gathered and transfer review meetings are held for those children and young people with additional and/or complex needs.
- The school has regard to the Department's policies and circulars that outline how to identify a range of evidence-based strategies and programmes for groups at 'further risk' of developing mental health difficulties.
- The schools assessment policy outlines how additional school based screening and intervention tools are used to assess social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- The school ensures that children and young people with complex needs will be supported to understand and follow school policies such as bullying and the school code of behavior.
- The school has mechanisms in place for identifying and supporting vulnerable children and young people in the event of a critical incident.
- Appropriate structures are in place so that early intervention is promoted for children and young people who are 'at risk' e.g. those who do not attend school regularly or those at higher risk of developing mental health difficulties.
- The school has a procedure for gathering, storing and sharing confidential information which is guided by data protection regulations and which is conducted in partnership with parents, children and young people and teachers to inform programme planning.

Key Area 4 - Relationships & Partnerships

The indicators of success in the four key areas of Wellbeing are further expanded upon as statements of effective practice below.

For Key Area 4 Relationships & Partnerships the indicators of success are:

- 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.

Wellbeing Statements of Effective Practice for All

- School staff model openness, respect and listening in their interactions with each other, children and young people and parents.
- Relationships and partnerships are supported through a range of agreed formal and informal structures, such as, student councils, prefect systems, buddy systems, mentoring systems, assemblies, newsletters, student journals and through teaching and learning.
- The board of school leaders and management promotes the establishment of a parents' council in the school, and collaborates with the council as appropriate.
- School leaders and management acknowledge the importance of staff wellbeing and promote this in a variety of ways including recognition of the value of staff contribution and their work.
- School leaders and management ensure that appropriate support mechanisms are put in place for staff wellbeing and details of the Employee Assistance Service and other relevant supports are made available to staff.
- The school establishes links with feeder schools and fosters strong working relationships to engage in sharing of best practice.
- The school promotes professional networks for principals and teachers.
- The school establishes good links with Department support services, community-based statutory and voluntary support services and other external agencies.

Statements of Effective Practice For Some & Few

- Mentoring systems are in place whereby more senior teachers offer practical and social support to Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and/or new staff members.
- Staff receive individualised support from school leaders and management in times of difficulty or during personal crisis and are given information and contact details for the Employee Assistance Service.
- Systems are in place whereby more senior young people are supported in mentoring younger children.
- Befriending and buddy systems are in place for children and young people who require support to interact with peers.
- Relationship building for children and young people who are experiencing difficulties can be achieved through a variety of initiatives including having a 'named staff member' allocated to the child/young person to act as the 'one good adult'.
- Children and young people and their parents are invited to engage in collaborative problem solving and decision-making with regard to their individual needs and the interventions to support them.
- Children and young people have access to one to one or small group support as appropriate with qualified members of staff to support their personal and social, educational and career development, and at moments of personal crisis.
- At times of transition schools link with other education settings, including early childhood care and education settings, crèches, other primary/post-primary schools, Youthreach, Community Education Centres to ensure successful transfers.
- The school promotes teachers' engagement in networks for teacher collaboration.
- The school establishes good links with Department support services, community-based statutory and voluntary support services and other external agencies (for example, the HSE) to support the needs of students with additional and/or complex needs.