

# **COLÁISTE NA TORIBHIRTE**

## **Wellbeing Policy and Programme 2022-2026**

### **Aims**

Colaiste na Toirbhirte seeks to promote healthy lifestyles and the wellbeing of our school community in a safe, supportive and non-threatening environment. Through its policies, procedures, activities and structures our school aims to create an environment in which:

- People feel valued
- Self-esteem is fostered
- There is respect, tolerance and fairness
- People in difficulty are supported
- There is open and honest communication
- Effort is recognised
- Difference and diversity are valued
- Conflict is handled constructively
- Social, moral and civic values are promoted
- Initiative and creativity are encouraged

These aims are implemented in the daily transactions between management, staff, students and the wider school community.

### **Mission Statement**

“Our School is a community seeking to develop the full potential of each student- intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and social.”

To achieve this, the School seeks:

1. To provide a broad and balanced curriculum suited to the needs of each individual and the demands of a changing world.
2. To recognise and affirm individual skills and abilities through curricular and extra-curricular activities.
3. To encourage positive interaction and good communication among students, staff, parents and the wide community.
4. To continue to develop and provide a framework of support and care which meets the needs of individual students and staff.

5. To continue to provide religious education and spiritual development, enabling the students to celebrate the Christian vision of life.
6. To maintain and foster our willingness for and openness to ongoing staff development.

### **Rationale**

In line with *The Framework for Junior Cycle 2015*, *The Guidelines for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle 2021*, *The Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023* and Circular Letter **0059/2021**, the school has devised a programme, which will provide Junior Cycle students, entering in September 2022, with 400 hours of wellbeing related learning, (See Wellbeing timetable pg., )

In the context of Junior Cycle reform, there is an increased focus on the need to ensure that the wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of school life. Accordingly, the NCCA (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment) have developed Wellbeing Guidelines. These guidelines govern what we, as a school, now set out to achieve.

*‘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 a wider community.’* (The Guidelines for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle 2021, page 5)

“While every teacher can support student wellbeing, it is further enhanced when important aspects of wellbeing are the subject of learning and teaching in specific curriculum areas and are allocated specific time.” (The Guidelines for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle 2021, page 13)

### **Wellbeing in Schools**

*The Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023* highlights the need for a whole school approach to wellbeing:

**A whole school approach** 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. Adopting this approach has been found internationally to produce a wide range of educational and social benefits for children and young people. A whole school approach supports the integration of systems within the school community and creates capacity to be reflective and responsive to the needs of the school and members of the school community.

A whole school approach focuses on **promoting wellbeing for all members of the school community** and includes **preventative approaches**. Embedded in the whole school approach and in line with the Department’s Continuum of Support (Table 1) is the recognition that members of the school community 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 members at the universal level.

### **Planning our Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme**

When planning our Junior Cycle programme, our starting point was 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).

Our programme for wellbeing is broad and balanced and aims to:

- provide choice
- have meaning and relevance
- be enjoyable and engaging
- provide opportunities to experience challenge and success
- equip students with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to develop as learners and build positive relationships.

### **Wellbeing Programme for 1<sup>st</sup> Year Students, commencing 2022-2023 (complying with the requirement for 400 Hours**

| <b><u>Subject</u></b> | <b><u>1<sup>st</sup> Year</u></b> | <b><u>2<sup>nd</sup> Year</u></b> | <b><u>3<sup>rd</sup> Year</u></b> | <b><u>Total</u></b> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| CSPE                  | 2 X 40 minutes                    |                                   |                                   |                     |
| SPHE                  | 2 X 40 minutes                    |                                   |                                   |                     |
| PE                    | 2 X 40 minutes                    | 2 X 40 minutes                    | 2 X 40 minutes                    |                     |
| Wellbeing class????   |                                   |                                   |                                   |                     |

### **JIGSAW, One Good School Programme**

A Wellbeing team consisting of the Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal Teacher, 2 parents and 2 students have received training and will implement a 'One Good School' (OGS) action plan 2022-2023, developed, following a consultation process with staff, students and parents.

RE teachers following training will deliver a 10 week module to 1<sup>st</sup> year students on Mental Health. In conjunction with OGS, parents will receive a webinar on Mental Health Awareness.

### **Student Voice and Wellbeing**

The Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines outline the importance of student voice in planning the Wellbeing Curriculum. "When students are involved in shaping the Wellbeing programme it is more likely to provide the kind of learning that young people need to deal with the world as they find it, rather than the world as

adults imagine it to be for them. By engaging in conversations with different groups of young people, the school can gain students' insights into the four key aspects of Wellbeing (Culture, Curriculum, Relationships, Policy) and identify how best to allocate time within the junior cycle Wellbeing programme", (pg.24). The importance of meaningful participation is outlined and the school has adopted Professor Laura Lundy's model, which incorporates a checklist based on 4 key elements.

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Space</b></p> <p><b>Provide a safe and inclusive space for young people to form and express their views</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the young people affected by this issue involved?</li> <li>• Are steps taken to ensure that the process is inclusive?</li> <li>• Do the young people feel safe to express themselves freely in the space?</li> <li>• Are the young people who are interested in the issue involved?</li> <li>• Are the young people involved from the start?</li> </ul>                       | <p><b>Voice</b></p> <p><b>Provide appropriate information and facilitate the young people to form and express their views</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the young people have the information they need to form a view?</li> <li>• Are the young people given a range of options on how to express themselves?</li> <li>• Do the young people know to whom their views will be communicated?</li> <li>• Does the process include opportunities for young people to identify issues that they want to discuss?</li> <li>• Do the young people know they have a choice about their participation?</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Influence</b></p> <p><b>Ensure that young people's views are taken seriously and acted upon, where appropriate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the young people clear about the scope of their influence, (opportunities and limitations)?</li> <li>• Will young people be given feedback explaining the reasons for decisions taken?</li> <li>• Will the young people be given an easily accessible summary of their views?</li> <li>• Do the young people know who the key decision-makers involved are?</li> </ul> | <p><b>Audience</b></p> <p><b>Ensure that young people's views are communicated to someone with the responsibility to listen</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the right decision-makers involved, i.e. those responsible for decision making on this issue?</li> <li>• Have these decision-makers committed to taking the young people's feedback seriously?</li> <li>• Is there a process in place to ensure that the young people's voices are given due weight and consideration?</li> <li>• Are there plans to have the young people involved in presenting their views</li> </ul>                        |

#### **Actions taken by our school to facilitate student voice**

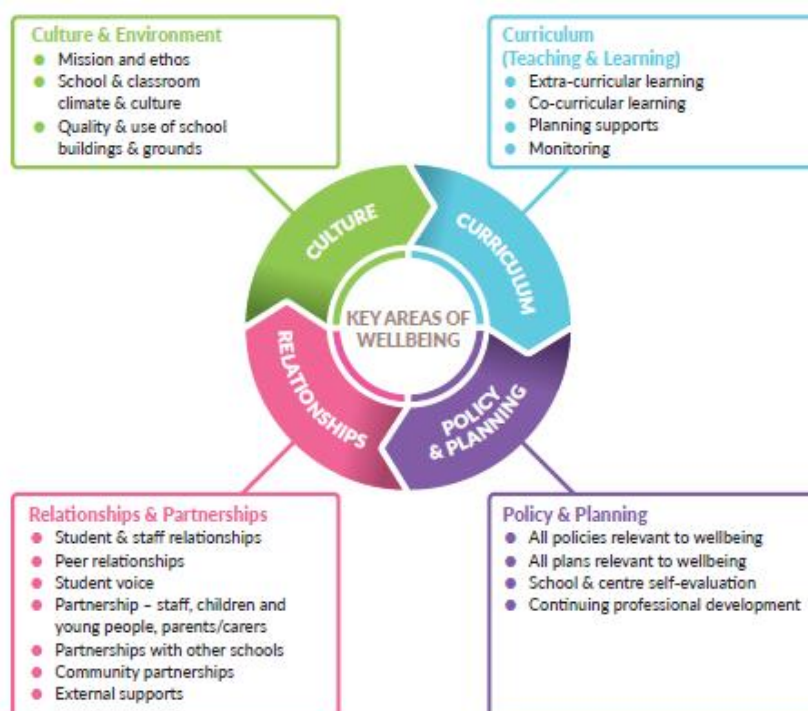
- The school has structures in place to facilitate the student voice. Listening and responding to feedback is central to the wellbeing of the student body. The school places an emphasis on hearing the student voice, through the following channels:

- Students' Council
  - Leadership Team
  - Assemblies
  - Transition Year Media team
  - School App
  - Tutorial classes
  - JIGSAW, 'One Good School' programme
- Students have been consulted through questionnaires in the area of their own Wellbeing and have also been involved in designing mental health workshops, facilitated by JIGSAW, One Good School Programme. The feedback from the questionnaires will be used to inform the next SSE cycle. It is hoped to adopt a new approach to feedback and reporting based on the student voice.
  - The 2022-2023 school year will see the introduction of a Student Focus group, which will be set up from 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students – to promote activities/initiatives of the Wellbeing Team. Students will also be formally introduced to the school community.

### Key Areas of Wellbeing Promotion

The Department advocates a **multicomponent approach** to wellbeing promotion to ensure that all of the key areas that contribute to wellbeing promotion in schools are given a focus. The four key areas for action are outlined in Figure 1.

**Figure 2: Whole School Approach: Four Key Areas of Wellbeing Promotion**



### **Supports for Wellbeing in our school**

**In our school, the following procedures are in place to support the wellbeing of our students:**

**Subject Teacher:** The subject teacher is responsible for maintaining a safe environment in which to work. The subject specific teacher is also responsible for monitoring the progress of each student in his/her care, providing assistance where needed.

**Class Tutor:** Each base class has a dedicated class tutor. The tutor is asked to take a particular interest in the welfare of the students in his/her class. Ongoing communication between tutor and year head is applicable for all students. The Class Tutor acts as a mentor to students and facilitates the organisation of the lunch time wellbeing activity for that class group.

**Year Head:** The school has assigned three teachers (AP1 & AP2 Postholders) to the role of Year Heads in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year. Year Heads monitor the students in their year group, ensuring that they are supported throughout their time in school. Weekly assemblies are held to inform students of school activities, acknowledge successes, promote 'student voice', and address any issues that may arise. Year Heads will also monitor attendance within the year group and liaise with home where necessary. Year Heads will work closely with Class Tutors to ensure the wellbeing of the students in their care.

**Guidance Counsellor:** The counsellor is available to meet students on an individual basis, should the need arise. All 1<sup>st</sup> year students receive a Guidance module as part of their Wellbeing programme. The counsellor delivers timetabled guidance classes to Senior Cycle students.

**Care Team:** The Care Team consists of the Principal and Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor and SEN CO-ordinator. They meet weekly to discuss individual cases of concern. In the event of a critical incident the Care Team will convene as soon as possible to consider the appropriate response, in line with established guidelines.

**Child Protection:** More information can be found on our website under Child Protection Policy.

**Learning Support Team:** This team coordinate the learning support timetable and liaise with parents of those children with additional needs. The coordinator works closer with feeder primary schools, to identify students who may need additional care.

**Meitheal:** Following an interview process 8/10 senior cycle students are appointed as Meitheal leaders. They receive training in Scala, Blackrock. They support encourage and help first year students throughout their initial year in our school. They play an active role in the induction of First Year students, helping them with the transition from primary to secondary school.

**Leadership Team:** The team consists of 7 Leaving Cert students, elected by their peers and ratified by staff. They have a pastoral role in the care of younger students. They also act as ambassadors for our school in interactions with the wider school community.

**Student Council:** This team consists of the Head Student and Deputy Head Student and Class Representatives from all class groups within the school. They are the 'student voice' of the student body. They are supported and mentored by an AP1 Post-holder.

**JIGSAW'S One Good School:** This is a comprehensive initiative which supports the mental health and wellbeing of young people, and those around them, by developing a shared responsibility for mental health across the whole school community. Our partnership with JIGSAW is based on the vision where every young person's mental health is valued and supported.

### **School community events**

In addition to the procedures outlined above, the school organises a number of events each year aimed at the wellbeing of our school community. These events are organised by various subject departments, teachers and students over the course of the year. The following summarises some of these initiatives:

- Open Night held in September/October for incoming 1<sup>st</sup> year students.
- Incoming 1<sup>st</sup> Year students are invited to the school musical held in November.
- Parents and the wider community are invited to attend the school musical.
- A general meeting of 1<sup>st</sup> year parents is held each year. This incorporates the ways in which Wellbeing is included in the curriculum at Junior Cycle
- An information meeting with 2<sup>nd</sup> year parents to outline Wellbeing requirements for Junior Cycle, incorporating reporting and assessment
- A nurse as an outside speaker addresses 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Year students.
- Study Skills seminar for parents is held before all Parent Teacher Meetings.
- Guest Speakers. The school organises visits from various guest speakers. These vary from year to year and can be on a range of different topics.
- Friendship Week. This week is organised to promote the importance of friendship and inclusiveness.
- 'Buddy System'. Organised by the 1<sup>st</sup> and TY Year Heads, TY students mentor 1<sup>st</sup> year students.
- Retreats for students.

In addition to the above, the school seeks to promote an environment, which is positive, affirming and true to our ethos. The school will endeavour to provide as many co and extra -curricular activities as possible, thereby giving our students the opportunity to enhance their wellbeing outside of the classroom. Students from all year groups are encouraged to become involved.

### **Indicators of Wellbeing (Framework for Practice)**

Six indicators –**Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected** and **Aware** have been identified as central to wellbeing. These indicators make what is important explicit for students, teachers, parents and the wider school community.



### **Our School**

In our school environment the following protective factors help to build resilience in our students:

- Developing positive teacher-student and teacher-parent relationships
- Supporting the development of positive relationships with peers
- Fostering expectations of high achievement and providing opportunities for success
- Using positive classroom management strategies
- Focusing on social and emotional learning and the development of problem-solving skills through SPHE
- Providing support for teachers, including professional development (JIGSAW Workshops)
- Encouraging our students to participate in extra-curricular activities
- Ensuring a sense of belonging and connectedness to school
- Having protocols and support systems in place that proactively support our students and their families should mental health difficulties arise

### **Wellbeing and School Self Evaluation (SSE)**

The school keeps its policies, curriculum and procedures under ongoing review. The school will use the SSE process to reflect on how we promote wellbeing in the school. The SSE process will allow us examine our strengths and weaknesses in this area and consider areas for improvement. This will involve the views of all stakeholders, i.e. management, staff, students and parents.

### **Teacher Wellbeing**

We believe and want to promote the wellbeing of our staff. We do this through our policies, procedures and practices. This will further ensure the wellbeing of our students. For example,

- The promotion of a safe, comfortable teaching environment
- Regular staff and departmental meetings
- CPD is provided, encouraged and supported by the Board of Management
- Provision of Mental Health Workshops - JIGSAW
- Staff have the opportunity to develop their leadership capacity through various initiatives, committees and groups

Review Date: 2025-2026.