Our Lady of Mercy College Beaumont

Wellbeing Policy

Introduction

Our Lady of Mercy College is a Catholic, voluntary secondary school which caters for students of all religions and backgrounds in accordance with current equal status legislation.

Mission Statement

The core values of Our Lady of Mercy College are respect for all and the nurturing of individual potential, academically, spiritually, and culturally as a member of the school community and in the spirit of Mercy Ethos.

The Mercy Ethos

Mercy Education is committed to ongoing whole-school development in collaboration and partnership with the Board of Management, Staff, Pupils, Parents and the wider community. Our school was founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1967 and became part of CEIST in 2007. Our current student population is approx 380

CEIST (Catholic Education, an Irish Schools Trust) was established by five Catholic Religious Congregations – Daughters of Charity, Presentation Sisters, Sisters of the Christian Retreat, Sisters of Mercy, and Missionaries of the Sacred Heart – to provide a sustainable moral and legal trustee framework for post-primary Catholic education in Ireland. Rooted in the founding vision of its Congregations, CEIST emphasises the dignity and rights of individuals, empowers the vulnerable, and prepares young people to be agents of social transformation. The Trust is dedicated to fostering inclusive, hospitable, excellent, and compassionate learning environments inspired by Gospel values and the wisdom of its Founders. CEIST promotes collaborative school faith communities, supports staff in their essential roles, and addresses the evolving needs of youth. Engaging in ecumenical dialogue, CEIST values its Catholic identity while working with other Christian traditions and all people of goodwill to advocate for the poor, justice, and environmental stewardship, respecting diversity.

Our Lady of Mercy College Beaumont

➢ Promoting spiritual and human development.
➢ Achieving quality in teaching and learning.
➢ Showing respect for every person.
➢ Creating community.
➢ Being just and responsible

Inspired by the vision of Catherine McAuley, Our Lady of Mercy College provides the conditions and experiences which will promote the development of the full potential of each person including the spiritual, moral, physical, social, aesthetic, intellectual and vocational development.
We strive to ensure that every member of the school community is held in very high regard and their dignity, worth and individuality is respected. We aim to build a sense of community based on Christian values.

What do we mean by Wellbeing?

There are many definitions of wellbeing. The Wellbeing Framework Policy Statement and Framework for Post-Primary schools refers to the World Health Organisation (WHO), 2001:

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.

Policy Context:

This Wellbeing Policy is informed by:

● The Mission Statement of Our Lady of Mercy College,
● The CEIST Charter – Principles and Values,
● The Principle of Inclusion and Respect for Diversity,
● The Acceptable Use Policy (AUP),
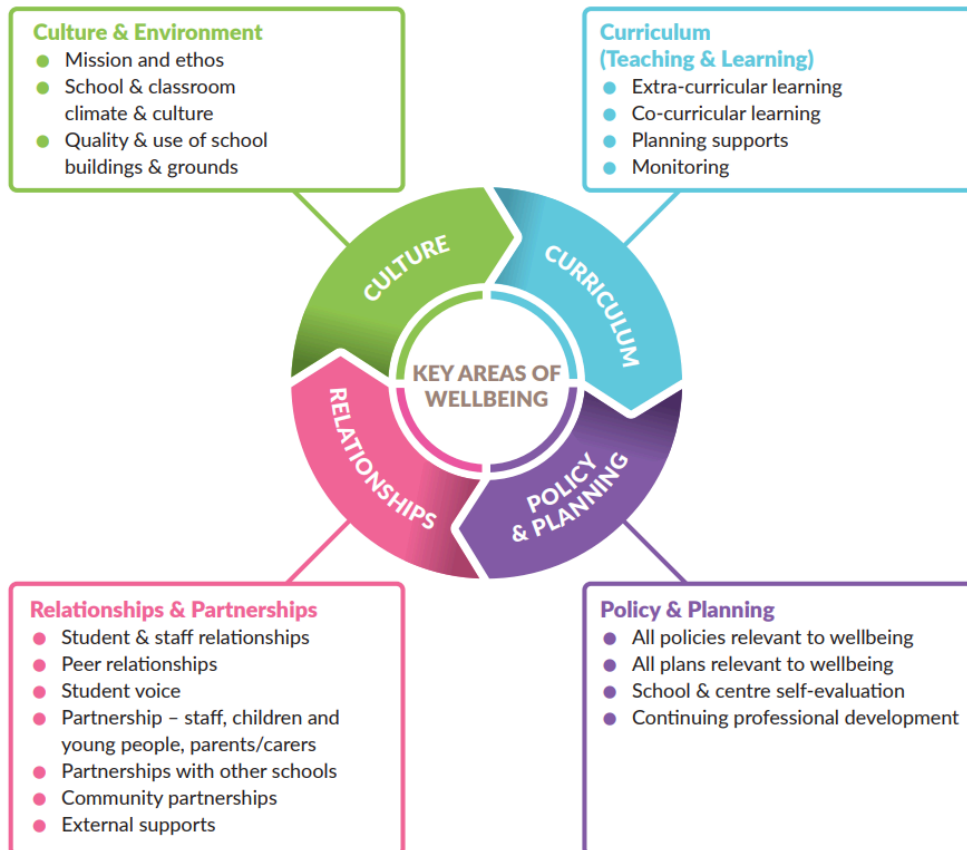● The Admission Policy,

- The Anti-Bullying Policy,
- The Data Protection Policy
- The Digital Learning Plan,
- The Substance Use Policy,
- The Attendance and Participation Policy,
- The Special Educational Needs Inclusion Policy,
- the Whole-School Guidance Plan,
- The Pastoral and Disciplinary System and Code of Behaviour,
- The General Data Protection Regulations (2018),
- The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act (2004)
- The Education Act (1998) and The Education Welfare Act (2000),
- Looking at Our Schools, 2022 (DES),
- The Wellbeing Guidelines (DES),
- Wellbeing – A Policy Framework (DES),
- Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice, 2018-2023 (DES),
- A Framework for Junior Cycle (2015),
- Circular Letter 0055/2019

This policy is also supported by subject department plans and policies in particular:

- Civic, Social and Political Education
- Guidance
- Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)
- Social, Personal and Health Education
- Physical Education
- Appendix I (as per Wellbeing Guidelines) See Appendix 1

Whole School Approach to Wellbeing-Four Aspects of Wellbeing

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

KEY AREAS OF WELLBEING

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

Junior Cycle Curriculum

The Framework for Junior Cycle is underpinned by eight principles that inform the development and implementation of junior cycle programmes in all schools. It is worth noting that wellbeing is both a principle of junior cycle education and also a curricular area. At Junior Cycle level the Wellbeing programme is committed to 400 hours as per DES guidelines and is delivered through the following subjects:

- Civic, Social and Political Education specification
- Digital Media Literacy Specification
- Social, Personal and Health Education specification (incl. RSE)
- Physical Education specification

- Tutor classes and Assemblies
- Careers
- Choir

Staying Well is one of the Key Skills in the Junior Cycle process and the following Statements of Learning (SoL) from the Junior Cycle are particularly relevant to an understanding of Wellbeing.

Relationships

Our Mission Statement attests to the importance of positive, respectful relationships which are at the heart of our school community and of wellbeing. Wellbeing is promoted through the fostering of respectful relationships throughout the school. This includes students, teachers, non-teaching staff, management, parents and visitors to the school.

We aim to achieve this in the following ways:

• Providing a safe, clean learning and working environment for the school community,

• Ensuring that student-teacher relationships are positive, caring and respectful and mutual boundaries are recognised.

• Ensuring that staff are fully aware that they may be the one adult that a student turns to for support and help during a difficult time,

• Informing students as to where to get support and how to access the care structures in the school,

• Resolving behaviour issues with care, respect and consistency,

• Ensuring that there is a shared vision and understanding of what student wellbeing means which emphasises strengths and capacities,

 • Encouraging students to show respect, care and concern for each other so that they feel safe and supported amongst their peers.

To equip students with the tools to develop and manage the tools necessary for healthy relationships

• Recognising that staff are entitled to feel supported and cared for amongst their colleagues,

• Providing forums for students so that they are consulted, insofar as is practicable, on matters that affect them (in keeping with the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child) so that their voices may be heard, and they are involved in making decisions about their life in school e.g. Student Council, opportunities for Student Voice in lessons, inviting Student, Parent and Staff Voice through School DEIS surveys,

• Making sure that students know that their feedback is valued and, where appropriate, acted upon,

 • Ensuring that parents feel welcome, respected, and listened to as partners in the education of their children and the support of an active Parents' Council,

• Sharing information with parents as to how they can support their child's wellbeing,

• Maintaining strong links with the local community.

Continuum of Support

In line with best practice, the Continuum of Support offers a flexible framework within which schools can address all educational needs, including wellbeing needs (DES & NEPS, 2007, 2010a, 2010b)
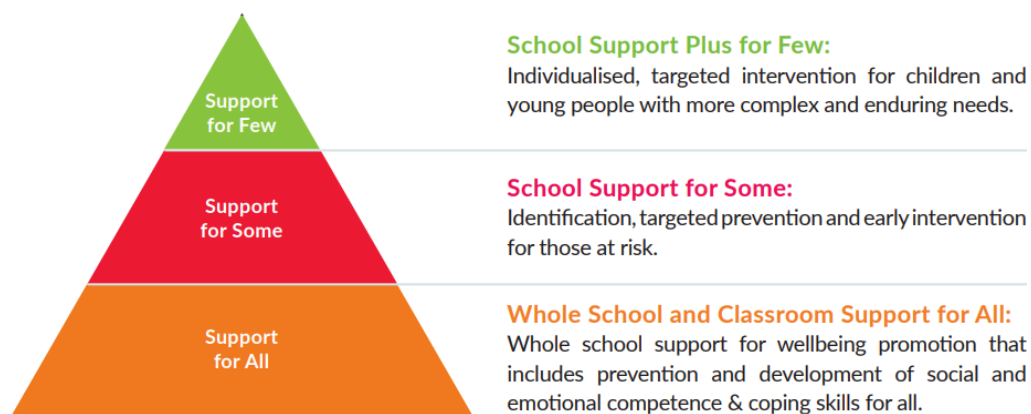
Student Voice and Participation

Recent curriculum developments, including the process of planning a junior cycle Wellbeing programme, provide rich opportunities for student voices to be heard on matters that affect their learning and their wellbeing.

The ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1992, Ireland committed to ensuring that the voices of children and young people are heard and that their opinions are given due weight in all matters that affect them.

Professor Laura Lundy has developed a model for meaningful participation by children and young people which include four features:

Space

Provide a safe and inclusive space for young people to form and express their views

- Are the young people affected by this issue involved?
- Are steps taken to ensure that the process is inclusive?
- Do the young people feel safe to express themselves freely in the space?
- Are the young people who are interested in the issue involved?
- Are the young people involved from the start?

Voice

Provide appropriate information and facilitate the young people to form and express their views

- Do the young people have the information they need to form a view?
- Are the young people given a range of options on how to express themselves?
- Do the young people know to whom their views will be communicated?
- Does the process include opportunities for young people to identify issues that they want to discuss?
- Do the young people know they have a choice about their participation?

Influence

Ensure that young people's views are taken seriously and acted upon, where appropriate

- Are the young people clear about the scope of their influence, (opportunities and limitations)?
- Will young people be given feedback explaining the reasons for decisions taken?
- Will the young people be given an easily accessible summary of their views?
- Do the young people know who the key decision-makers involved are?

Audience

Ensure that young people's views are communicated to someone with the responsibility to listen

- Are the right decision-makers involved, i.e. those responsible for decision making on this issue?
- Have these decision-makers committed to taking the young people's feedback seriously?
- Is there a process in place to ensure that the young people's voices are given due weight and consideration?
- Are there plans to have the young people involved in presenting their views

In our school, a key aspect of this is the development of the Student Council and hearing their voice in policy development and other issues that they wish to discuss. A member of staff works with the Student Council and prefects. The staff member gives feedback to staff regularly on the work of the Student Council.

Teacher Wellbeing

In any school, wellbeing starts with staff. Cósan, a framework for teachers recognises 'the importance of care of self so as to be able to care for others and in that context, teachers' well-being is vital if they are to effectively lead learning, and support and facilitate students in this endeavour'. Training for staff is provided where appropriate and included where possible in line with key priorities identified during an academic year.

Ratification, Implementation and Review

The Wellbeing Policy, as ratified by the Board of Management, will be implemented by the staff in a spirit of collegiality and collaboration, within the context and spirit of School DEIS plan and School Improvement.

The policy, practices and implementation of the policy will be kept under review and informed by relevant updated data elicited from students, staff and parents.

Improvements will be implemented, monitored and evaluated, as per the School DEIS Plan cycle.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management on 20th September 2024.

For and on behalf of the Board of Management

Our Lady of Mercy College Beaumont

Appendix 1:

APPENDIX 1:
TEMPLATE TO SUPPORT SCHOOLS IN PLANNING UNITS
OF LEARNING IN WELLBEING

Title of unit:		Duration	

Identified need:	

Aim of the unit:	

Learning outcomes:

Students will be able to...

Sample student learning experiences:

Links to Junior Cycle

Statement of learning:	Example of related learning in the unit

Key skills in focus

Key skill	Element	Example of possible student learning activity

Indicators of Wellbeing in focus

Wellbeing indicator	Descriptors

Assessment

Useful resources and weblinks

Our Lady of Mercy College Beaumont