



Kinnitty National School

Wellbeing Policy Statement

Introduction:

Kinnitty NS is currently developing a Wellbeing Promotion Process within the school, which is supported by the Department of Education and Skills (DoE) and the Health Service Executive (HSE). It is strongly supported by the “Health Promoting Schools” Model.

“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.” (WHO), 2001).

Kinnitty NS has a duty to provide the best quality and the most appropriate education in order to promote the wellbeing of our students. We also have a duty to protect students in our care at all times from any potentially harmful, inappropriate or misguided resources, interventions or programmes.

Kinnitty NS provides a two-tiered support to pupil well-being;

1. Whole School Approach
2. Individual Support through Student Support Team

Whole School Approach to Well-being

A multi-component, preventative, whole school approach to the promotion of well-being, with interventions at both universal and targeted levels, is the priority for Kinnitty NS. This 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 well-being.

By adopting a whole school approach Kinnitty NS aims 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.

This whole school approach supports the integration of systems within the school community. This creates capacity to be reflective and responsive to the needs of our school and the individuals who are part of the school community.

Central to this is the role of Kinnitty NS staff and the importance of building professional capacity to engage in a reflective process to implement and sustain well-being policy and strategies from within.

Kinnitty NS is in a unique position to promote well-being, and social and emotional learning, and ensures a whole school approach to well-being promotion and early intervention, especially when considering appropriate use of external supports and services.

Students flourish where there is a whole school approach to supporting their growth and where there is a shared belief in their potential for development, learning and well-being. Kinnitty National School wishes to provide an environment that nurtures and supports students.

Benefits of promoting pupil wellbeing in Kinnitty NS

By implementing a whole school approach to wellbeing the benefits include;

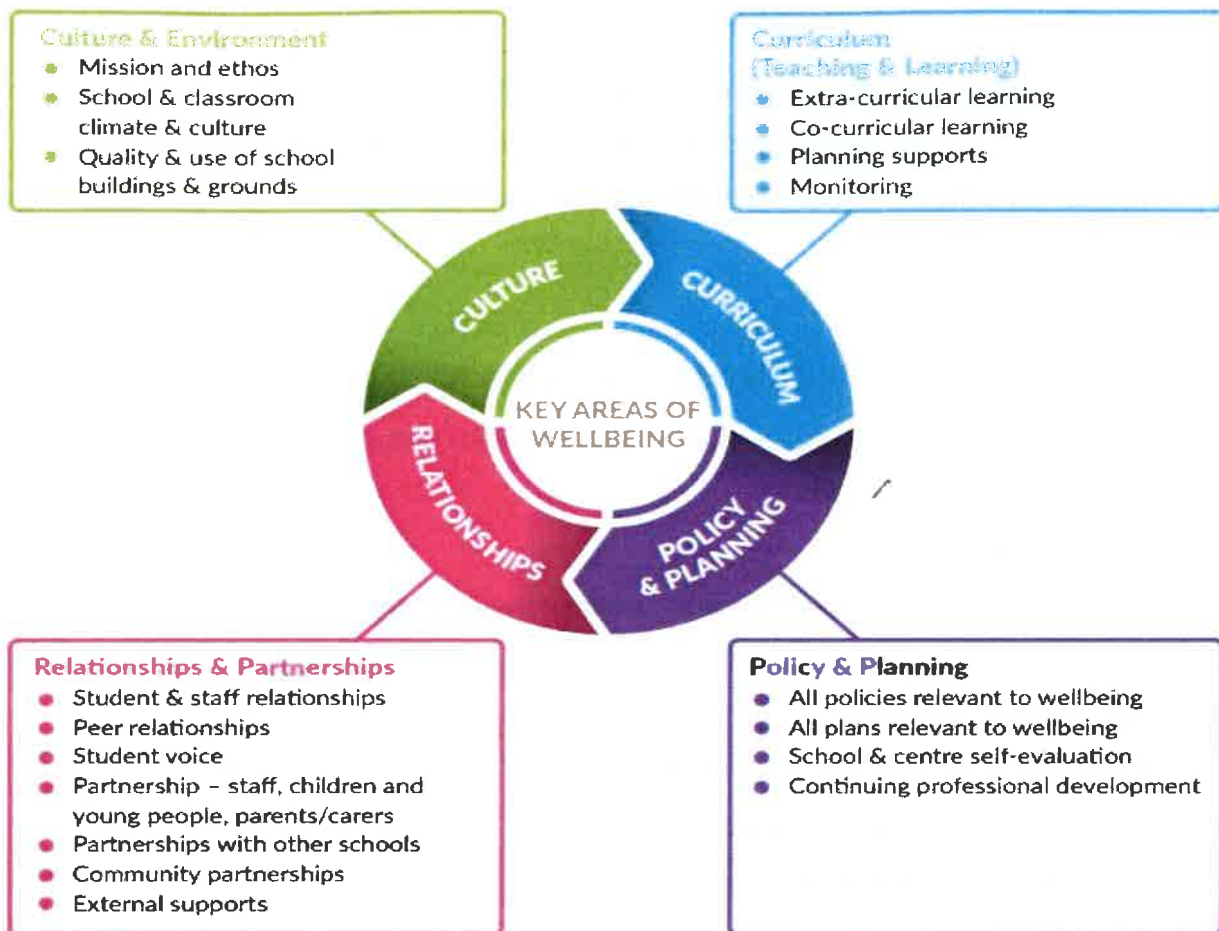
- Better learning results for pupils
- Promote staff health
- A co-ordinated approach to social, physical and environmental needs
- Increased pupil self-esteem
- Lowered incidence of bullying
- School environment is safer and more secure
- Better understanding of schools' health aims
- Improved relationships within the school
- Involvement of parents/guardians
- Use of outside agencies
- Pupils receive better quality education

The Department's Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework

The Department's Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice assists schools in ensuring that well-being 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 well-being promotion in the areas of:

- culture and environment

- curriculum (teaching and learning)
- policy and planning
- relationships and partnerships



Environment

Kinnitty NS aims to foster an environment that enhances competence and well-being; one that consciously fosters warm relationships, encourages participation, develops pupil and teacher autonomy and cultivates clarity about boundaries, rules and positive expectations.

Kinnitty NS 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 encourage and promote self-esteem and self-confidence by providing opportunities for all members of the school community to contribute to school life. The school community is encouraged to make healthy choices and to take responsibility for their own health.

Kinnitty NS continues to provide a climate in which good relationships, respect and consideration for others prosper, and where individuals are encouraged to make a vital contribution through their personal skills and qualities.

Curriculum and Learning

The teaching and learning in Kinnitty NS aims to be democratic, inclusive, engaging, differentiated, fostering expectations of high achievement and providing opportunity for success.

The SPHE curriculum in Kinnitty NS strongly supports the social and emotional well-being of our pupils, by placing an emphasis on children's social and emotional skills, attitudes, behaviour and therefore learning performance.

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 well-being needs of our pupils. ***(Please refer to SEN Policy for further information).***

Kinnitty NS adheres to statutory requirements and is accessible to all pupils. We provide challenges for pupils and staff through a wide range of physical, academic, social and community activities.

Policy and Planning

Kinnitty NS endeavors to regularly review our school policies for staff and pupils that are in accordance with the school aims, philosophy, vision and ethos.

Partnerships

Kinnitty NS 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 well-being, teaching and learning.

Role of teachers

It is essential that all staff continue to develop their competence and confidence in the promotion of wellbeing. The teacher is the best placed professional to work sensitively and consistently with students and she/he can have a powerful impact on influencing students' attitudes, values, and behaviour in all aspects of wellbeing education.

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 well-being promotion will be delivered by staff who are trained for this purpose having completed relevant CPD.

School Based Initiatives that Promote Well-being

Kinnitty NS implements a number of programmes and initiatives throughout daily school life that support the well-being of our pupils; this list is not exhaustive;

- Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (NCCA, 2009) which encompasses four themes, Well-being, Identity and Belonging, Communication, Exploring and Thinking in infants.
- Project based learning from 3rd class to 6th class
- Friends for Life Programme 4th class
- Wellbeing week, Friendship week, catholic School's Week, Active Week.
- SPHE Curriculum
- Continuum of Support Model
- Student Committees: Student Council, Green School Committee, Garden School Committee.
- Outdoor Learning
- Internet Safety talks

- Partnership with Offaly GAA, Offaly Athletics, Birr Rugby.
- Birr Outdoor Education – Cycle Right in 5th and 6th class
- External teachers for different strands of PE to promote active living e.g. basketball, pilates, cricket, tennis, skipping
- School subsidised swimming lessons – 6 week block for all pupils
- Healthy Eating- Food Dudes
- Active School Flag initiated, renewed 2016.
- Health Promoting Schools Initiative – initiated in October 2015
- Monthly whole school assemblies
- Themed Weeks (e.g. Maths Week, Science Week, Engineers Week, Book Week, Heritage Week etc)
- Promoting the Arts – whole-school musical, Recreate projects, purchase of school instruments (class set of ukuleles and percussion instruments),. Annual music workshops e.g. drumming,

Kinnitty NS well-being protective factors

In Kinnitty NS well-being 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 school through 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, self-management, relationship and responsible decision-making skills
- opportunities for the development of knowledge and skills providing a sense of mastery and self-efficacy.

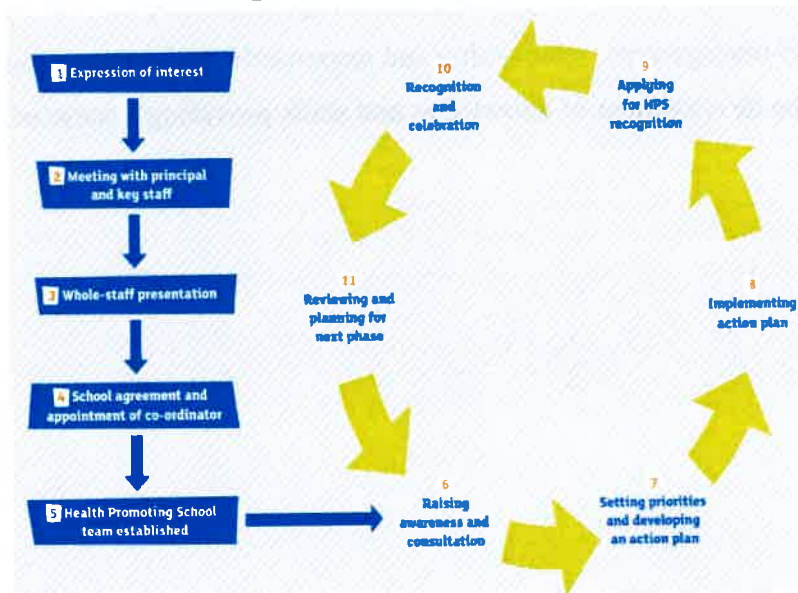
- fostering expectations, recognising contributions, effort and achievement and providing opportunities for success
- wellbeing of school personnel
- protocols and support systems that proactively support children and their families should difficulties arise.
- opportunities to develop the necessary skills to cope with using online technology in a safe and appropriate way.
- opportunities to develop skills to manage stress that may be linked to school work.

Well-being risk factors

In our school setting, well-being 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
- lack of opportunity to develop social and emotional learning, including problem solving and coping skills.

Stages in the Health Promoting Schools Process that supports wellbeing



Supporting Individual Pupils: The Student Support Team (SST)

The Student Support Team in Kinnitty NS looks after the overall general wellbeing of students. Because we have a small school our teachers and staff are a part of this team. While it is limited to and by school time we realise that many external issues impinge on the development of students. The purpose of a SST is to provide for students who have a greater need for a higher level of intervention from the school community. The SST is a visible representation of the school's understanding and valuing of each student as an individual.

The SST ensure effective implementation of a whole school approach which has well-being promotion as part of its responsibility. The Student Support Team (SST) consists of the schools' SET teachers, Principal, Deputy Principal and Assistant Principal 1 and other teachers and SNAs.

The SST meet 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/bodies.

Objectives and Rationale for SST:

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 undertake the following.

1. To liaise with external professionals about the welfare of the child
2. To liaise with the parents/ guardians of the child
3. To share information in a confidential setting
4. To coordinate a single transparent response to the care needs of a student.
5. To review and monitor the students with care needs.

SST meet to discuss and develop strength-based intervention plans.

School Support Team and Code of Behaviour:

The School Support Team and the Code of Behaviour work together to provide the structure and the care that is necessary for the student to benefit from school. Children receiving support are still expected to comply with the school's Code of Behavior.

Members of the Student Support Team:

The core Student Support Team is made up of staff and professionals that have direct involvement in the care issues of pupils and various other members depending on the students being discussed. Because we are a small school any of the teachers or SNAs may be involved in supporting the children.

Student referral to the Student Support Team:

All staff in the school community have a responsibility to be observant of the care needs of the student. Individual staff members need to trust their intuition regarding a student who needs support, outside of what can be provided in the classroom setting. It is in the interest of the student to have a clear referral system. The process of referral into the student support team will be outlined clearly to staff

below. The system below regarding referral should be maintained:

This system is as follows:

- The class teacher will refer a student directly to the Principal.
- The Principal will then liaise with the relevant members of the Student Support Team.

- During parent/guardian meetings following disciplinary actions, teachers often identify the Student Support Team as a resource to help address concerns.
- Parents and guardians who would like to request support may contact a staff member who will advocate for them

Following a referral to the student support team, the teacher will typically call home to arrange a meeting with the parents/ guardians to discuss concerns. The SST member enquires about the pupil's talents and interests, shares with the parent/ guardian that the Student Support Team may be able to help the student to be more successful at school.

Once a student is referred to the Support Team:

- Support plan is initiated for the child
- Intervention plans are developed and a specific staff member is assigned to coordinate the interventions for each student under the supervision of the Student Support Team.
- Health, mental health, and culturally appropriate community resources that may be needed are identified during the meeting.
- The team addresses attendance concerns along with the National Educational Welfare Board.
- The team addresses specific learning needs along with professionals such as National Educational Psychology Service (NEPs), HSE personnel (Primary Care Team, Assessment of Need Team, Early Intervention Team, School Age Team,)
- Cases are brought back to the School Support Team for review.

Documentation and communication of Support Plans:

- Support plans are drafted, shared with parents for consultation, and then finalised before a programme of support commences.
- Support plans are securely kept in child's file.
- Any confidential information or information which evokes the implementation of Child Safe Guarding Policy are dealt directly by the Designated Liaison Person – DLP, (or Deputy DLP in their absence), and communicated with parents/guardians.
- Because multiple students are discussed at Student Support Team meetings, students and caregivers do not attend Student Support Team meetings or have access to confidential information. Individual support plans drafted for specific children will be shared with parents.

Confidentiality

An essential element of the Student Support Team is maintaining clarity around the boundaries of confidentiality. It is essential for all members of the team, as well as all staff and pupils, to understand the concept of confidentiality in regard to child protection guidelines.

Communication

Clear communication is essential. A person who refers a pupil does not necessarily need to know the details of what has been discussed in relation to the student, but they need to be assured that the student is being cared for.

Essential Elements of the Student Support Team

- Child centred approach
- Non-judgmental
- Supported by staff, senior management and BOM
- Optimistic and hopeful
- Accountable through record keeping

School Support and School Support Plus

A list of children receiving support will be maintained by each class teacher. These lists are intended to inform the staff about students who are identified as requiring additional support.

It is essential to note that even if a student is on the list that normal code of behaviour applies at all times.

Meetings

The ethos of consistent and regular meetings is central to ensuring the success of the student support team. Children who need support will be discussed at each middle management meeting and with relevant staff members.

Evaluation

The Kinnitty NS team need to be reminded that they need to take care of themselves as well as the students. Reflection and evaluation are necessary.

Link with other policies in the school

The Student Support Team process will link in with the following policies already in existence in the school:

- **Code of Behaviour** links the discipline structure to the work of the care team
- **Anti-Bullying Policy** may link with the care team in supporting both the victim and the instigator.
- **Critical Incident Policy**. This is an important policy for the care team as it outlines procedures that a school uses when faced with a trauma such as death of a student.
- **Enrolment Policy**. It is important to name the care team as part of the school's commitment to caring for the student and to alert parents to the fact that those students can be referred for internal support.
- **Continuum of Support Policy**. This policy reflects the fact that students attending learning support or who have special needs may need the support of the care team.
- **SPHE Policy**. The social, personal and health education of students is an integral part of the curriculum and links in with the care team and guidance.
- **Staff Induction**. All new staff members are trained in how to raise a concern about a pupil's wellbeing.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 18/3/21 and we plan to review it every three years or when the need arises.

Chairperson: Leo Minnock Date: 18/march/2021

Principal: Brid Henry Date: 18/3/21

Programmes and/or External Facilitators

Use of programmes and/or external facilitators can play a role in supplementing, complementing and supporting a planned comprehensive approach to well-being promotion. Programmes and/or external facilitators accessed in Kinnitty NS;

- 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/carers
- 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.

Whole school approach: Indicators of Success

Key Areas	Indicators of Success
Culture & Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.

Appendix 1: Well-being framework

Key Area 1 – Culture and Environment

Statements of Effective Practice for All

- The wellbeing of the whole school community is central to the school's mission statement and management take responsibility to promote wellbeing.
- Parents/carers receive communication and information from schools in relation to initiatives which support the wellbeing of the child/young person.
- All teachers understand their shared role in supporting learning for and learning about wellbeing in their classroom/subject.
- The relationship between academic achievement and a child/young person's wellbeing is understood by all children and young people and staff.
- There is a positive approach to discipline where issues are resolved with care, respect and consistency.
- Children and young people and staff have a strong sense of belonging to the school.
- Systems are in place so that the voices of the child/young person, staff and parent/carer are heard.
- Child/young person's participation within the school community is valued by staff and children and young people are actively supported and encouraged to provide feedback for school improvement.
- The school building, grounds, classrooms and work spaces, are well maintained and appropriately furnished creating a welcoming, safe and warm environment.
- The school building is accessible for all children and young people and accommodation is modified to meet the needs of all.
- Indoor and outdoor space is provided to facilitate social interaction, physical activity and quiet time.
- The school environment is conducive to promoting healthy eating choices.
- The indoor space displays the work, talents and accomplishments of children and young people.

Statements of Effective Practice For Some & Few

The schools 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 inclusive of those from different cultural backgrounds and those with additional needs.

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 space
- space for distressed/anxious students
- 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

*This list is not exhaustive

Key Area 2 - Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

Statements of Effective Practice for All

All curricular and subject plans have explicit reference to teaching, learning and assessment approaches that promote collaboration, self-assessment and a sense of achievement.

All curricular plans outline how teaching/learning approaches and assessment of learning outcomes will be differentiated for children and young people, providing adequate challenge and opportunities for success.

Teachers use varied teaching and assessment methods and differentiate their expectations to promote full participation and achievement for all.

Teacher continuing professional development (CPD), sharing of learning and reflective practice is encouraged and facilitated through communities of practice.

Throughout primary schools, and in post primary school up to Junior Cycle, the SPHE curriculum is implemented on a mandatory basis.

There is a whole school and coordinated approach to the provision of CSPE, PE and SPHE as part of the Wellbeing Programme at Junior Cycle Level (post primary only).

Children's and young people's physical, social and emotional health education are effectively implemented and are a visible part of the Curriculum for SPHE, PE, RSE, CSPE (CSPE - post primary level only).

Appropriate use is made of programmes/resources to support SPHE, RSE, and CSPE.

Universal, evidence-based programmes are appropriately chosen to teach core social and emotional competence and coping skills.

The school links with community-based clubs and organisations to ensure that a broad, accessible and inclusive extra-curricular programme is provided.

Specific national or local initiatives are included in the school's wellbeing promotion initiatives.

Children and young people, and parents/carers are involved in planning the school's extra-curricular programme.

Children and young people are actively engaged in learning and enjoy coming to school.

Statements of Effective Practice For Some & Few

All curricular plans outline how teaching methods and assessment of learning outcomes will be differentiated for children and young people at risk or with additional and/or complex needs so they experience a sense of achievement.

Teachers attend CPD and deliver specialised and targeted programmes to individuals and/or small groups that are grounded in research and evidence and selected in line with best practice guidelines.

Individualised teaching approaches are linked to specific learning outcomes.

The school deploys resources based on individual learning, behavioural, social and emotional needs under the Teacher Resource Allocation Model.

The Special Education Team and/or Student Support Team support all class and subject teachers and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) to implement appropriate strategies for children and young people with additional and/or complex needs and those recommended in professional reports.

Delivery of one to one support teaching is supported by continuing professional development and reflective practice facilitated through communities of practice.

There are opportunities for CPD and ongoing practice support and guidance for SNAs.

Extra-curricular activities are planned to include those with additional and/or complex needs. Children and young people with additional and/or complex needs and their parents/carers are actively involved in planning and evaluating the school's extra-curricular programme.

Key Area 3 - Policy and Planning

Statements of Effective Practice for All

The wellbeing of the whole school community is at the heart of school policies and plans.

Consultation with staff, children and young people, and parents/carers is undertaken when developing and reviewing and updating school policies.

Policies are made available to staff, children and young people, parents/carers and relevant partners.

Schools have the following policies, plans and guidelines in place: e.g. Anti-bullying policy and procedures; COS policy; Child protection policy & procedures; Critical Incident Management Plan; Acceptable Use Policy for ICT etc.

All teaching and non-teaching staff are familiar with these policies and procedures.

Policies and plans set out how inclusive practice will be implemented.

The school has an established system for gathering information which is conducted in partnership with parents/ carers, children and young people and teachers in order to support the child/young person's needs.

The school has an established system for gathering information on children and young people at points of transition and uses the Education Passport (NCCA) for children and young people transitioning to post primary school.

Family and child/young person confidentiality is respected at all times and staff follow school guidelines for the appropriate sharing of confidential information.

Records about individual children and young people are stored securely.

The school has a system in place for gathering information on levels of school risk factors such as bullying; absenteeism; truancy; disruptive behaviour.

There is a comprehensive CPD plan to ensure all teachers have the necessary training to promote wellbeing on a whole class basis and through SPHE.

Staff are encouraged to share expertise and learning garnered from CPD by having opportunities to model and engage in collaborative working.

The school adheres to DES circular on the use of programmes and/or external speakers.

At post primary level, the whole school Guidance Plan sets out how Student Support Teams will operate.

The school identifies and participates in specific national or local initiatives for wellbeing promotion.

Statements of Effective Practice For Some & Few

The school's COS policy specifically lays out how the screening, gathering of information and planning of interventions for children and young people with additional and/or complex needs is undertaken.

School-based information is used in conjunction with reports from external professionals which, set guidelines and recommendations for individualised supports.

The school engages with collaborative problem-solving to support a child/young person's needs, identified through the NEPS Continuum of Support. A student support file is used to plan, record and review progress.

The COS policy identifies a range of evidence-based strategies and programmes for groups at 'further risk' of developing mental health difficulties.

The school's assessment policy outlines how additional school-based screening and intervention tools are used to assess social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The school's COS policy and plan sets guidelines for individualised supports to help those with complex needs understand and engage with school policies e.g. bullying, code of behaviour. The school has mechanisms in place for identifying vulnerable students in the event of a critical incident.

Key Area 4 - Relationships & Partnerships

Statements of Effective Practice for All

Relationships between teachers, children and young people and parents/carers are characterised by openness, respect and listening.

Relationships and partnerships are supported through a range of agreed formal and informal structures, for example, student councils, prefect systems, buddy systems, mentoring systems, assemblies and newsletters.

The views of all staff and children and young people are sought, listened to and respected.

The views of parents/carers are accessed through questionnaires, focus groups, parent councils and feedback from parent-teacher meetings.

Parent-teacher meetings are convened on a mandatory basis, to discuss children and young people's progress.

The board of management promotes the establishment of a parents' council in the school, and co-operates with the council as needed.

Staff receive recognition and support from management.

All staff members are aware of the Employee Assistance Service.

The school establishes links with feeder schools.

The school establishes strong working relationships with other schools and engages in sharing of best practice.

The school promotes professional networks for principals and subject teachers.

The school establishes good links with Department support services, community-based statutory and voluntary support services and other external agencies.

There are clear referral pathways and the roles and responsibilities of agencies are agreed and understood by all.

The school supports extra-curricular activities by linking with sports clubs, dance clubs and bands, scouts, work experience placements, charity organisations etc.

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 management in times of difficulty or during personal crisis and are given information and contact details for the Employee Assistance Service.

Mentoring systems are in place whereby more senior young people mentor younger children offering practical, social and/or emotional support.

Befriending and buddy systems are in place for children and young people who require support to interact with peers.

Efforts are made to build positive relationships with children and young people who are experiencing challenges, and with their parents. They may have a 'named staff member' allocated to them to act as the 'one good adult'.

Children and young people and their parents/carers are included in collaborative problem solving and decision-making with regard to individualised support and interventions.

Children and young people have access to one to one meetings with qualified members of staff to support their personal and social, educational and career development, and at moments of personal crisis.

The primary school links with the feeder post primary schools and holds sixth class transfer review meetings, for those children and young people with additional and/or complex needs.

Primary schools link with the local Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) to support the transition of children with additional and/or complex needs into the primary setting.

Centres of education link with other training centres and employees to ensure successful transfers from the centre.

The school attaches a high value to support networks for guidance counsellors and SEN teachers.

The school has established working relationships with DES support services and other agencies and services involved in supporting the mental health of children and younger people.