

## Wellbeing Policy and Programme

Loreto Secondary School 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 the 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 stressed.

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

### Mission Statement

Truth, freedom, justice, sincerity and joy – as relevant today in Loreto, Wexford as for Mary Ward in 1609.

### Ethos and Aims

A number of key principles and values determine the ethos, characteristic spirit and practices in our school.

- We are Christian educators who aim to communicate to our students by word and by deed what it means to be a fully human person in the light of Christ.
- We aim to work in a spirit of close co-operation with each girl's home as we take a shared responsibility for her overall formation and development
- We place considerable emphasis on the importance of a happy working atmosphere in the school that is based on mutual respect amongst all who study and work here.
- We recognise that each girl in the school has strengths, weaknesses, needs and wants that are particular to her. Within the confines of a school system that deals with a student population of 810, we do all in our power to both recognise and cater for individuality and diversity. It is for this reason that we attach great importance to providing a broad curriculum, a wide range of extra-curricular activities and comprehensive support structures for all students.

### Philosophy

Loreto schools aim to create a 'dynamic community where every student is valued equally and has a real sense of belonging' (*Loreto Education: Continuing the Journey, 2017, p. 9*). The school is a welcoming school and commits to using its resources to ensure and promote the care and wellbeing of our students. The *Continuing the Journey* document outlines how the ideal of Loreto education today will be enshrined in:

- Courteous relationships within the school
- The wide and well-chosen curriculum provided
- Promotion of understanding of global issues
- The extra-curricular activities organised
- The systems, structures and policies
- Communications
- Interest and concern for the students
- Loyalty and gratitude (p.15)

The eight points above are central to how our school operates. They are also central to ensuring the wellbeing of the whole school community.

## Rationale

In line with *The Framework for Junior Cycle 2015*, *The Guidelines for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle 2017*, *The Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018 – 2023* and Circular Letter 0015/2017, the school has devised a programme, which will provide junior cycle students, entering in September 2019, with over 400 hours of wellbeing related learning.

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. Wellbeing is commonly seen ‘as a combination of sustained positive feelings and attitudes- happy, healthy and confident young people who feel safe, secure, cared for, included, involved, and engaged and so on’ (*The Guidelines for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle 2017*, p. 18). The World Health Organisation defines how 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’ (*The Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018 – 2023*, p.10).

## Context

This is a whole school policy which is informed by other school policies, including the following;

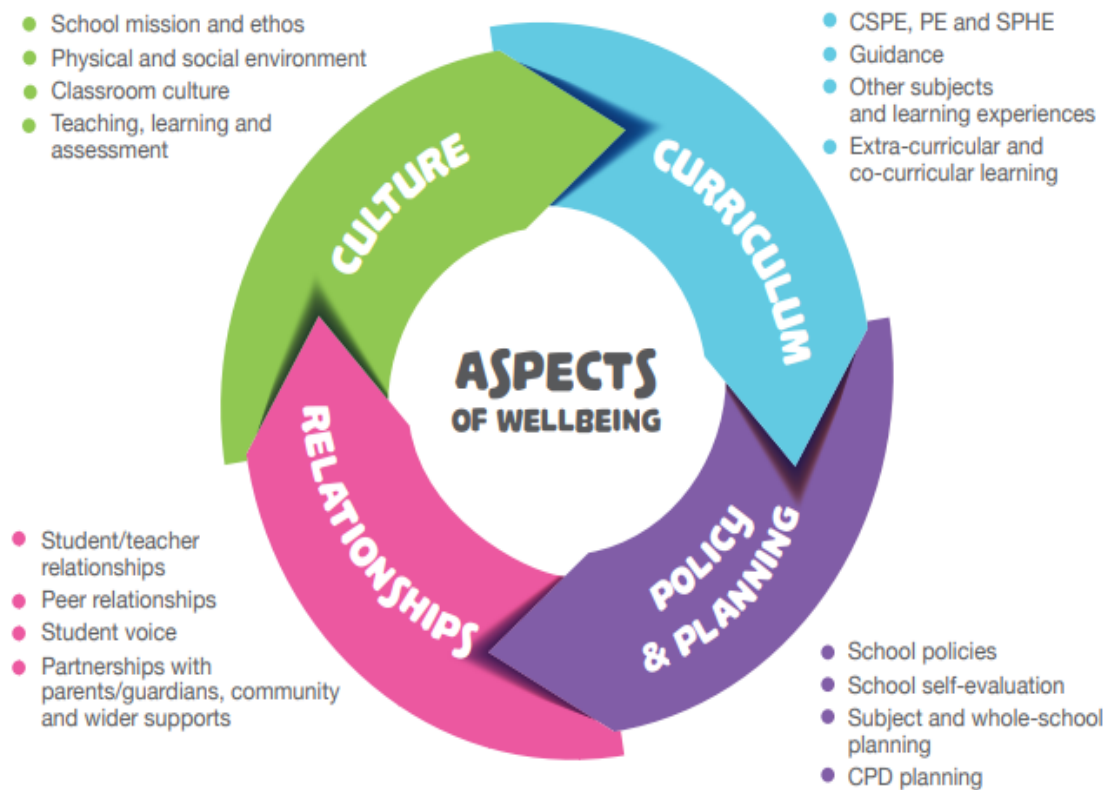
- Code of Behaviour
- SPHE Policy
- RSE Policy
- Homework Policy
- Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Anti- Bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Dignity in the Workplace Policy

## Wellbeing in Schools

The school recognises the important role it plays in promoting and ensuring the wellbeing of our students and staff. The *Wellbeing Guidelines* identify four key aspects of wellbeing within the school setting: They are:

- **Curriculum:** This aspect refers to the subjects we provide and how we cater for wellbeing in the curriculum.
- **Policy and Planning:** This aspect refers to how we as a school endeavour to look after the wellbeing of the school community. Simply put, through policies, planning and school self-evaluation, we should make decisions with due regard to the wellbeing of our students and staff.
- **Relationships:** Strong relationships amongst all members of the school community form the backbone of a positive working environment. As a school, we endeavour to make sure that all interactions between students and staff are positive and affirming.
- **Culture:** Culture refers to our ethos, mission statement and the prevailing atmosphere in our school. We strive to make sure our school is a happy place to study and work.

The following image, taken from the *Guidelines for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle 2021*, summarise the points above.



Six indicators of wellbeing have also been identified. They are:

- **Active:** Being physically active is an important element in staying well.
- **Responsible:** Each person must take responsibility for their own choices and make decisions which promote their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others.
- **Connected:** It is important, for our wellbeing, to be connected to other people and to interact with others in a positive way. We should also appreciate the implications of our actions for those around us and further afield.
- **Resilient:** Everyone goes through challenges in their life. By building resilience, we hope to give our students the skills to cope with difficult situations.
- **Respected:** Feeling respected, listened to and cared for are key aspects of feeling well. Positive, respectful relationships are also central to maintaining our wellbeing.
- **Aware:** To stay well, we need to be aware of our thoughts, our emotions and our limitations. We should also be aware of those around us, conscious of how our actions might impact on their wellbeing.



The school has always placed a strong emphasis on the wellbeing of the school community. The introduction of a formal wellbeing programme at junior cycle will now complement the support structures already in place to support wellbeing. Through its policies and procedures, the school seeks to provide a safe, caring environment for all.

The school recognises the importance of addressing all educational needs through the Continuum of Support:

- Support for All
- Support for Some
- Support for Few

In this 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 Teacher:** Each base class has a dedicated class teacher. This teacher is asked to take a particular interest in the welfare of the students' in his or her class. The Class Teacher will monitor attendance and sign the school journal of students in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year on a weekly basis.
- **Year Head:** The school has assigned three teachers 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 the school. Year Heads will also monitor attendance within the year group, contacting home where necessary. Year Heads will work closely with Class Teachers to ensure the wellbeing of the students in their care.
- **Guidance Counsellors:** Ms. Foley, Ms. Kelly and Mr. O' Sullivan deliver timetabled guidance classes to senior cycle students. In the first term of the year, they meet with every 1<sup>st</sup> year student. Furthermore, they are also available to meet students on an individual basis, should the need arise.
- **Deputy Principals:** To provide assistance to Junior Cycle Year Heads and fulfil the role of Year Head to senior cycle students. To get to know all students in the assigned year group and support them pastorally as they progress through the school.
- **Student Care Co-ordination Team (SCCT):** The SCCT meet weekly to discuss individual cases of concern, as well as general, school-wide initiatives. This group is made up of the Principal, Deputy Principals, Guidance Counsellors and the Learning Support team. In the event of a critical incident, the SCCT will convene as soon as possible to consider the appropriate response, in line with established guidelines.
- **Student Support Team (SST):** Where there is a confirmed case of bullying behaviour and the issue has not been resolved, the SST will meet to investigate the matter further and consider its response. The SST will support those involved and seek to ensure a satisfactory resolution.
- **Child Protection:** New child protection procedures came into effect from December 2017. These were further revised in September 2023. As a result, the school has prepared a comprehensive Student Safeguarding Statement. More detailed information on child protection can be found on our website, under the 'Child Protection' tab.
- **Special Education Teaching (SET) Team:** The SET team coordinate the SET timetable and liaise with parents of those children with additional needs. The SET team also work closely with feeder primary schools, to identify students who may need additional care upon entering Loreto, Wexford.
- **Meitheal/Cara:** Following an interview process, 18 senior cycle students are appointed as Meitheal leaders. They support, encourage and help first year students throughout their initial year in the school. The Cara system entails all Meitheal leaders carrying on a pastoral role in 6<sup>th</sup> year for 2<sup>nd</sup> year students.

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 and teachers over the course of the year. The following summarises some of these initiatives:

- Introductory meeting in January and induction camp in August for incoming first years.
- 1<sup>st</sup> year Retreat to The Parable Garden
- Study Skills seminars for students and parents
- Two general meetings of parents are held each year. This is an opportunity to update the parent body about school developments and discuss any issues of concern
- Internet Safety. The school will organise workshops for all students around the area of internet safety

- Guest speakers. The school organises visits from various guest speakers e.g. Community Garda. These vary from year to year and can be on a range of different topics. Guest speakers will be invited to the school in line with circular letter 0043/2018 'Best practice guidance for post primary schools in the use of programmes and/or facilitators in promoting wellbeing consistent with the Department of Education and Skills' Wellbeing policy statement and framework for practice'
- Themed weeks are run throughout the year e.g. Anti bullying Week, Multicultural Week and Safer Internet Week
- 6<sup>th</sup> year Wellbeing Day
- 6<sup>th</sup> year end of year events
- Lunchtime Clubs
- 1<sup>st</sup>- 3<sup>rd</sup> year school tours
- Prize-giving Ceremony
- Respect and Kindness Programme.

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 also encouraged to become involved in the numerous sporting teams representing the school.

### **Staff Wellbeing**

The wellbeing of school staff is also of extreme importance. As a school, we aim to support staff wellbeing through our policies, procedures and practices. For example,

- The promotion of a safe, comfortable teaching environment
- An open-door policy whereby staff can discuss issues of concern with the Principal and/or Deputy Principals in a confidential manner
- Regular staff and departmental meetings
- An Assistant Principal (AP2) with a focus on staff wellbeing
- The use of school sports facilities
- CPD is provided, encouraged and supported by the Board of Management
- Subject departments are resourced as well as possible. Requests for extra resources are considered and authorised, as appropriate
- Staff have the opportunity to develop their leadership capacity through various initiatives, committees and groups.
- Start of year staff bonding
- Support of Social Committee
- Droichead Programme
- Staff Mentoring
- Staff personal and professional needs supported

### **Student Voice**

The school has structures in place to facilitate the student voice. Listening and responding to feedback from students 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
- Prefects' Council
- Justice and Peace Group
- Class Teachers
- Year Heads
- Special Education Teaching (SET) Team

- Guidance Counsellors
- SCCT
- Close cooperation with home
- Amber Flag committee
- Green Schools committee
- School Planning Group
- Head Girls
- Regular classroom visits by the Principal/ Deputy Principal/ Year Head
- Regular assemblies
- Focus group meetings
- School Self Evaluation – surveys
- Meitheal and Cara Leaders
- Headstrong Group

### 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. Our School Plan has more detailed information in this regard.

In line with guidelines set down by the Department of Education and Skills, the school will provide wellbeing related learning at junior cycle level, as follows:

| Year Group           | Wellbeing Classes  | Total number of periods per week | Total time allocation |
|----------------------|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Year | SPHE (2)<br>PE (2)<br>I.T./Choir (1)<br>CSPE (1)<br>Induction Camp, phased start to school and class – based Retreat | 6 plus activities                | 160 hours             |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year | CSPE (2)<br>SPHE (2)<br>PE (2)<br>Choir/ I.T.(1)   | 7                                | 155 hours             |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year | CSPE (1)<br>SPHE (1)<br>PE (2)   | 4                                | 88 hours              |
| <b>Total:</b>        |  |                                  | 403 hours             |

### Wellbeing in Senior Cycle

At senior cycle, the school continues to promote the wellbeing of its students through its taught curriculum. In addition to the points mentioned above, the school also provides:

- A comprehensive Transition Year programme which includes wellbeing classes, guest speakers, work experience, first aid training and a timetabled wellbeing class.
- Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

- Information about subject choices and career paths
- Timetabled Guidance classes

### Junior Cycle Wellbeing Modules: Aims and Objectives

**Title of unit:** I.T/Choir (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Year students)

**Duration:** 33 weeks x 40 mins: 22 hours in both years.

**Aim of the unit:** To enable students use digital technology in a competent, safe and responsible way. Through the use of digital technologies, this module will explore strand 1 of CSPE, Rights and Responsibilities.

To encourage all students to sing and foster a love of music. To encourage students to perform in a group and on their own, where possible.

**Links:** This unit links with elements of SPHE and Technology. It also includes elements of the junior cycle short course in Digital Media Literacy.

| Statements of Learning   | Example of related learning in the unit  |
|--|--|
| SOL 7: The student values what it means to be an active citizen, with rights and responsibilities in local and wider contexts                            | Use of the internet to research topics and issues at a local and national level.<br>Prepare assignments using their Office 365 account.  |
| SOL 11: The student takes action to safeguard and promote his/her wellbeing and that of others   | Students can prepare projects/assignments and share their learning with their classmates.<br>Students will learn about digital wellbeing and take action to ensure the proper use of digital technologies. |
| SOL 19: Values the roles and contribution of science and technology to society, and their personal, social and global importance                         | Students will learn about digital technologies and consider the importance of technology in the modern world.  |
| SOL 24: Uses technology and digital media tools to learn, communicate, work and think collaboratively and creatively in a responsible and ethical manner | Students will use Office 365 and all its applications to carry out school work, collaborate with fellow students and teachers  |

**Key skills.** (The elements and the learning outcomes for the eight key skills in junior cycle are set out in detail in Key Skills for Junior Cycle. Select the four key skills that this unit is particularly significant in supporting.

| Key skill    | Element   | Student learning activity   |
|--------------|---|---|
| Staying Well | Being safe<br>Being responsible, safe and ethical in using digital technology | Classroom discussion on the importance of being secure and responsible online.<br>Students will be required to create strong passwords. |



|                     |  |   |
|---------------------|--|---|
|                     |  | Students will receive a number of dedicated lessons from <a href="http://www.webwise.ie">www.webwise.ie</a> and other sources in the area of online safety.<br>Students will recognise their rights and responsibilities when it comes to social media, sharing of images and the use of digital media. |
| Being Numerate      | Using digital technology to develop numeracy skills and understanding                        | Students will learn how to use applications, such as PowerPoint and Excel to develop numeracy skills. In this context, they should be able to create graphs/bar charts etc.   |
| Working with others | Working with others through digital technology   | Using Class Notebook and Office Teams, students will be able to interact with their classmates and submit work to their teachers.   |
| Communicating       | Using digital technology to communicate  | Students will be able to communicate via their Office 365 platform.   |
| Managing Myself     | Making considered decisions<br><br>Using digital technology to manage myself and my learning | Students will consider the dangers of digital technology. They will be asked to reflect on their online conduct and act in a respectful, sincere manner.<br>Students will use their Office 365 accounts to prepare presentations and projects. They will use the internet to conduct research.          |

The wellbeing indicators make explicit what is important learning in Wellbeing. (The Wellbeing Indicators are: Aware, Connected and Responsible)

### Suggested learning outcomes:

At the end of this unit, students will be able to...

- Demonstrate a basic capability is using Office 365, the internet and Class Notebook (**Aware, Connected**)
- Use all of the applications available on Office 365, especially Microsoft Word and PowerPoint. (**Aware, Connected**)
- Understand the importance of responsible, mature use of digital technologies (**Aware, Connected, Responsible**)
- Be aware of the dangers of the irresponsible use of digital technologies (**Aware, Connected, Responsible**)
- Take steps to ensure their safety and security online (**Aware, Connected, Responsible**)
- Use the internet to conduct research, sourcing information reliably (**Aware, Connected, Responsible**)
- Discuss what it means to be human and live in a community with rights and responsibilities (**Aware, Connected, Responsible**)
- Create a visual representation to communicate a situation where human dignity is not respected (**Aware, Connected**)
- Create a hierarchy of their needs, wants and rights (**Aware, Responsible**)
- Assemble a 'basic needs basket' representing the needs of a family living in Ireland (not just their economic needs) (**Connected, Aware, Responsible**)
- Access and interpret numerical data showing local and global distribution of basic resources and patterns of inequalities (**Aware, Connected**)

### Sample Learning Activities:

- Students will prepare documents/presentations using Microsoft Word and PowerPoint
- Students will learn how to carry out basic functions in all applications.
- Using resources prepared by Webwise, students will examine case studies around internet safety

- Students will have the opportunity to present their work in front of their peers.
- Students will use digital technology to carry out research and complete projects based on the CSPE short course specification.

**Assessment:** Students will show evidence of their learning when they:

- Are able to successfully navigate their Office 365 account
- Are able to recognise the dangers of the digital world
- Research, prepare and present work using their school accounts
- Carry out research on human rights and responsibilities, preparing reports summaries using digital technology
- Demonstrate, through formative assessment, an ability to competently use the digital technology at their disposal

**Useful resources, web links and community links:**

[www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie)

Make a Difference, 4<sup>th</sup> edition.