



Mount Sackville Secondary School

"Ours is not to reap the harvest, ours is just to sow the seed"
Blessed Anne-Marie Javouhey

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Wellbeing Policy

Wellbeing Policy - Scope

This document was prepared by the Wellbeing Committee on behalf of, and in consultation with the staff, students, parents and Board of Management of Mount Sackville Secondary School. The rationale behind this policy is based on the Junior Cycle Wellbeing guidelines - planning and developing a coherent Wellbeing programme that builds on the understandings, practices and curricula for wellbeing already existing in schools. The framework for Junior Cycle (2015) provides for a new area of learning at Junior Cycle called Wellbeing. Wellbeing will cross the three years of Junior Cycle and build on substantial work already taking place in schools in support of students' wellbeing. This area of learning will make the school's culture and ethos and commitment to wellbeing visible to students. It will include learning opportunities to enhance the physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing of students. It will enable students to build life skills and develop a strong sense of connectedness to their school and to their community.

Overview

Wellbeing is described as the state of being comfortable, healthy, resilient and happy. Our priority is the wellbeing of our students and staff. We seek to promote a caring and committed school community where everyone is valued as unique. Mount Sackville Secondary School is committed to promoting the emotional and social wellbeing of all, creating a respectful atmosphere between all individuals: management, teachers, staff members, students, parents, and visitors. We recognise the importance of students having positive role models.

Policy Aims

'The goal of wellbeing is human flourishing, and flourishing rests on the following: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment' (DES, 2015).

At Mount Sackville Secondary School, the wellbeing of our school community is paramount. Our environment of care and support is both formal and informal. With this policy we aim to:

- ensure that student wellbeing is central to teaching practices and student learning.





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- make visible our ongoing efforts to enhance student wellbeing by outlining the policies, procedures, culture, ethos and the activities which serve to assist the wellbeing of students at Mount Sackville Secondary School.
- outline our informal support which allows a holistic approach to enhancing our school community's wellbeing in accordance with our mission statement.
- protect and enhance student self-worth whilst offering students a chance to understand themselves better.
- encourage all staff to contribute to promoting a caring and inclusive environment within the school that is supportive of school wellbeing.
- ensure that respectful and caring relationships are fostered between staff and students, students and students, and staff and parents.
- offer a coordinated structure in supporting our young people through the creation of a multiplicity of opportunities both inside and outside the classroom, focused on the promotion of wellbeing.
- outline the ways in which the expertise of the staff and outside agencies are engaged to support and respond to the needs of students.

Wellbeing Indicators

Six indicators of wellbeing have been identified by the NCCA. 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 to feel connected and also to appreciate that actions and interactions taken by one person will impact on their wellbeing and that of others.

RESILIENT - Everyone goes through challenges in their life. By building resilience, students learn the skills to cope with life's challenges.





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RESPECTED - Feeling respected, listened to and valued are key aspects of wellbeing. Positive, respectful relationships are central to maintaining wellbeing.

AWARE - Self-awareness is important for wellbeing, being able to make sense of thoughts, feelings and behaviours and being aware of personal values and personal limitations.

Statements of Learning

"The learning at the core of Junior Cycle is described in twenty-four statements of learning. They are central to planning for the students' experience of, and the evaluation of the school's Junior Cycle programme" (Framework for Junior Cycle, 2015, page 12).

The purposes of the Statements of Learning are:

- to ensure a rich educational experience for students.
- that learning has both breadth and depth and is varied.
- to enable development of the key skills.
- to give access to a varied curriculum of knowledge.

The following Statements of Learning (SOL) are particularly applicable to wellbeing:

SOL 5: The student has an awareness of personal values and an understanding of the process of moral decision making.

SOL 7: The student values what it means to be an active citizen with rights and responsibilities in local and wider contexts.

SOL 10: The student has the awareness, knowledge, skills, values and motivation to live sustainably.

SOL 11: The student takes action to safeguard and promote her/his Wellbeing and that of others.

SOL 12: The student is a confident and competent participant in physical activity and is motivated to be physically active.

SOL 13: The student understands the importance of food and diet in making healthy lifestyle choices.



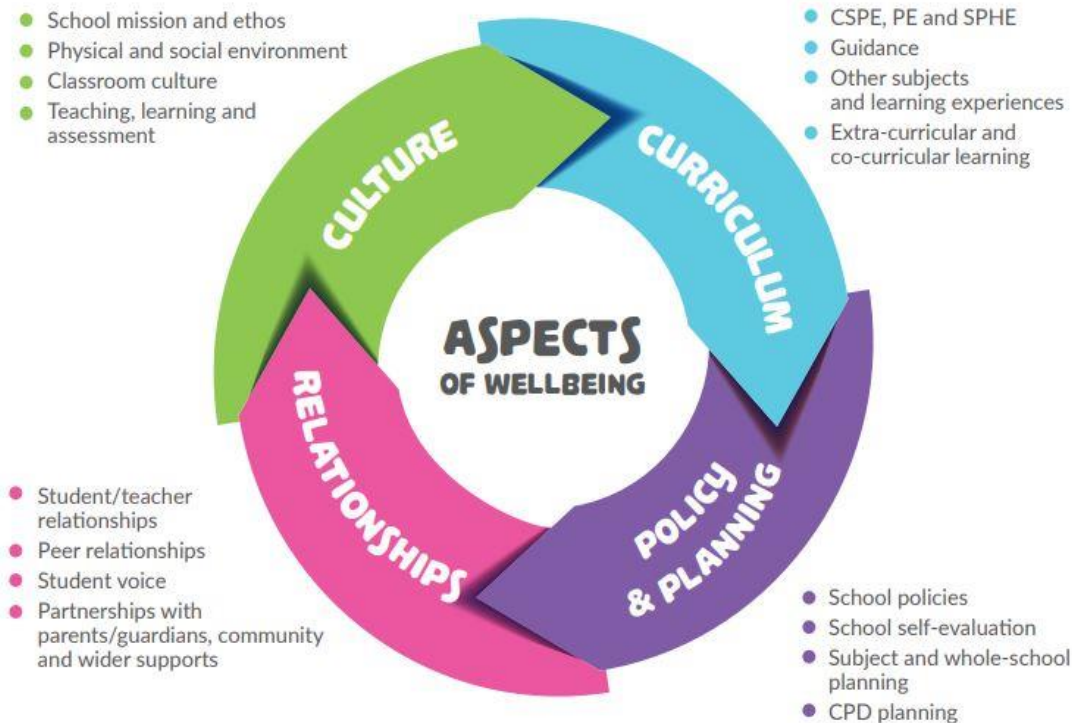


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Aspects of Wellbeing



Wellbeing and Culture

School Philosophy and Mission

In line with our Cluny heritage and tradition, we continuously strive to ensure that each student is offered every opportunity to excel and reach her full potential. We pride ourselves on offering a holistic education, characterised by the Gospel values of Faith, Hope and Love.

- We are committed to respecting the individuality of each student and helping her to reach her full potential.
- We encourage the pursuit of excellence, and a high standard of teaching and learning is offered.
- We provide opportunities for prayer and reflection. We work to create a caring school community based on respect, integrity, honesty and justice.





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- We prepare our students to take their place as self-confident, articulate young women who will meet the challenges of modern life with serenity and courage.

How our Catholic Ethos supports Wellbeing

- Our Catholic ethos permeates each aspect of school life. Our liturgical calendar offers opportunities for students and staff to pray, reflect and relate to others in a Christian way. School Masses, carol services and liturgies afford us the opportunity to come together as a community. These occasions help foster a sense of connection, support and togetherness.
- As a community of welcome, we promote inclusivity of all faiths and cultures.
- Students are taught how to meditate, reflect and pray on many opportunities throughout the school year. This supports their wellbeing and enhances their spiritual growth.
- Our Prayer Room is a designated quiet space which can be used by the school community for prayer and reflection and is located at the heart of our school.
- We maintain a strong link to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny. The Sisters frequently visit the school and speak with the students, helping them understand the guiding principles of the order and fostering in the students an understanding of the school's ethos and heritage.

Physical and Social Environment

- Our school is warm, welcoming and inclusive.
- Our school is located on the edge of the Phoenix Park, an amenity which is frequently used to enhance student and staff wellbeing. PE classes use the park for cross-country running. The whole school community participates in sponsored walks.
- There are designated spaces where students can congregate socially as well as quiet areas where students can take time out if necessary.
- Students and staff take pride in maintaining the physical environment.
- Celebrations such as Christmas and Graduation are evident in our physical school environment – Christmas trees, Christmas lighting, advent wreath, floral displays.
- Our landscaped grounds enhance our school environment. These spaces are maintained by our dedicated premises managers.

Classroom Culture: Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The staff of Mount Sackville work together to foster a collaborative, collegial culture amongst all members of the school community.





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- The school's Pastoral Care system is led by the Student Support Team and Guidance Department and is supported by the Deans of Year and Class Tutors. The Pastoral Care Team ensures that students feel safe, secure and respected in their classrooms, while remaining connected to the greater Cluny community.
- The Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Reporting (TLAR) committee inform the work of the subject departments. Each subject department is represented on the TLAR committee ensuring that the approach to TLAR is school-wide and cross-curricular.
- Students are encouraged to actively engage in their learning, and active learning strategies are promoted.
- Regular formative feedback is received by students and parents/guardians. This happens formally: winter and summer reports and informally: written feedback in copies, Teams messages, email and discussions between students and teachers.
- Teaching and learning is differentiated and teachers provide opportunities in class and through assessment that ensure all students reach their potential and experience success.
- A culture of collaboration between subject departments and the AEN Department is promoted. Each department has an AEN representative who liaises and meets with the AENCO regularly.
- Emphasis is placed on the integration of ICT into teaching and learning. Students from 1st to 3rd year have an iPad. The use of the iPad encourages students to become more organised.
- Assessment practices take the form of both formative and summative assessment.

Wellbeing and Relationships

Student/Teacher Relationships

Mount Sackville Secondary School recognises that our students can flourish and realise their true potential only when they feel safe, secure, respected and connected to the wider school community. The school community promotes the development of positive, nurturing and respectful relationships amongst all its members. We work to achieve this in the following way:

- ensuring that staff are fully trained in Children First (Tusla) and that they are aware of the school Child Protection and Safeguarding policy, along with the roles of the DLP and the DDLP.
- informing students and staff members of the pastoral structures and supports which are available in the school.





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- resolving discipline issues in a restorative way, while abiding by our school's Code of Behaviour.
- encouraging students to show respect, care and kindness to all members of the school community.
- SLT and staff value student feedback. Deans of Year hold weekly Assemblies with their respective year groups and the Principal and Deputy Principal attend these on occasion. This affords students an opportunity to discuss issues which may emerge and following discussion, changes can be implemented. Lines of communication between the SLT, staff, parents/guardians and students are clear, open and respectful.

Student Voice

- Students are encouraged to have their voices heard in the school decision-making processes. Elections to the Student Parliamentary Council (SPC) are held annually and each year group is represented. They meet regularly with the liaison teachers and are encouraged to become involved in the day-to-day running of the school alongside the SLT and the Board of Management.
- Representatives from the senior student body are appointed to the steering committee of the School Strategic Plan.
- Students have many forums through which their opinions are expressed: Assemblies, direct communication via email, MS Teams and Tutor Time.
- Student-led initiatives are encouraged. School Prefects, comprised of 6th year students, lead and organise whole-school events for example All Souls' Stroll, Céilís, Cluny/Sports Day, Halloween parties, Mile for the Missions, Tinsel Trek and quizzes.
- A 'Buddy System' between TY and 1st year students facilitates peer support in the transition from primary to secondary school. This initiative is an integral part of our 1st year Induction programme.
- 6th Year students are invited to attend their parent-teacher meeting, along with their parent/guardian. At the meeting, students and their parents are provided with an opportunity to discuss progress with individual subject teachers.

Partnership with parents/guardians, the community and wider supports

Mount Sackville recognises that parents/guardians are the primary educators of their children, and we value and respect all parents/guardians as members of our school community. We endeavour to make parents/guardians feel welcome, respected and listened to as we work in partnership, ensuring that their daughters reach their full potential.





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- Parents' Council: the Mount Sackville Parents' Council (PA) is an active group who represent the voice of parents/guardians in the school. The PA organises events which enhance wellbeing within the school community: help with catering for Open Day and other events, hot chocolate mornings and sponsorship of prizes for Christmas doors. The PA works in collaboration with the SLT to assist with policy development in the school.
- Regular communication ensures ongoing and frequent communication between school and home. This includes school reports, parent-teacher meetings, social media posts, school app (iClass), wellbeing newsletter, school website, information sessions on subject choice, one to-one meetings with staff members, phone calls and emails to and from staff members.
- Strong links between the school and the wider community are forged through the following pathways:
 - TY work placements
 - Visits by TY students to primary school to help with paired reading
 - The Lighthouse Leaders programme
 - Inter-school sports events
 - Inter-school debating and other competitions.

Wellbeing and Curriculum

At Mount Sackville, our Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme includes PE, CSPE, SPHE, Digital Literacy, Choir and Drama. All students have a 10-minute meeting with their Class Tutors four times a week, as well as a weekly year group Assembly with their Dean. Other aspects of the curriculum which enhance wellbeing include:

- Amber Flag
- Active Week
- Afterschool supervision
- Charity involvement and fundraising
- Christmas at Mount Sackville
- Class trips and school tours
- Cluny Day
- Creative Writing club
- Debating
- Evening Study
- Extracurricular Awards ceremony
- 1st year and TY Buddy system





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- 1st year Book club
- 1st year Halloween party
- Green Schools committee
- Induction programme for incoming first year students
- Jigsaw puzzles in the library
- LIFT programme
- Lighthouse Leaders programme
- Lunchtime Zumba dancing
- Nutrition workshops and cookery classes to benefit those students involved in sport
- Positive Action Week
- Prefect visits during Tutor Time
- Productions staged by the Drama Department
- Seachtain na Gaeilge: Sean Nós dancing
- Study Skills seminars
- The implementation of wellbeing practices in the classroom: mindfulness, reflection, gratitude, stress management techniques, resilience
- TY teacher mentorship
- TY modules in women's health, cookery, psychology, Dine at School
- TY musical

Sport at Mount Sackville

As a school community, we are proud of our sporting history and success. The school has the Coordinator of Extracurricular Activities. Our extracurricular sport provision underpins our commitment to supporting the wellbeing of students. As an inclusive school, each student is encouraged to participate in our extracurricular sports programme. Amongst the sports on offer are:

- Badminton
- Basketball
- Camogie
- Cricket
- Cross Country Running
- GAA Football
- Golf
- Hockey





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- Horse riding
- Soccer
- Swimming
- Tennis

Wellbeing: Policy and Planning

School policies related to wellbeing are formulated in conjunction with the stakeholders: teachers, parents/guardians, students and the Board of Management. The following policies underpin our school-wide approach to wellbeing:

- Admissions policy
- AEN policy
- Anti-Bullying policy
- Child Safeguarding statement and Risk Assessment
- Code of Student Behaviour
- Critical Incident Plan
- Data Protection policy
- Dignity in the Workplace policy
- Health and Safety policy
- iPad Responsible Use policy
- Risk Assessment policy
- RSE policy
- SNA policy
- Uniform policy
- Yondr mobile phone policy.

Other Supports to Staff and Student Wellbeing

- Student Support Team: This team consists of the Additional Educational Needs Coordinator, Chaplain, Guidance Department and other teachers. The team meet weekly and work with students who require extra support.
- AEN Department: The AEN teachers progress the learning of students who require extra support. This support is delivered through the NEPS continuum of support – individual support/ support for a few/ support for all. The AENCO coordinates the work of the AEN Department and liaises frequently with staff, subject departments, students and parents. AEN teachers and the AENCO are present at parent-teacher meetings and report on term reports, twice per year.





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- Tutor and Dean system: Students meet with their Tutor each morning in their base classrooms and with their Dean at a weekly Assembly. The Dean works with The Student Support Team and the AEN Department, as well as overseeing the wellbeing of their year group. Tutors are an important, daily point of contact for students, and they work closely with the Deans in supporting the students.
- Droichead: Workshops provide support, guidance and professional development for newly qualified teachers (NQTs).

Staff Wellbeing

Staff at Mount Sackville work in a collegial and collaborative manner.

- The Principal respects the professionalism and commitment of each member of staff and responds with compassion at all times.
- The Principal / Deputy Principal provides a staff briefing in the staff room every Monday morning.
- The SLT work to build capacity amongst the staff. Staff members are always encouraged and supported in engaging in CPD or in gaining further qualifications.
- To reduce the number of emails sent to staff members, the Deputy Principal compiles a weekly staff bulletin. All staff members are invited to make submissions to the bulletin and it is issued on Monday mornings.
- Staff are invited to foster a culture of collegiality and collaboration in subject departments. Time is allocated for subject planning, sharing of best practice, CPD and sharing of resources.
- The staff room is comfortable and well equipped and provides a designated space for break and lunch time. Tea, coffee, biscuits and filtered water are provided.
- Staff have a designated workroom where photocopying and other work may take place.
- The Staff Book club is held regularly in the library.
- Staff pilates takes place weekly.
- The Staff Social Committee organises gifts to celebrate occasions.
- Foosie Friday: Staff bake treats for their fellow colleagues on a rotational basis.





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Monitoring and Review

Implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Wellbeing Team and will be reviewed every three years by the team.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management.

Signed

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date: 11th June 2024

