**Wellbeing at Holy Family Community School**

Holy Family Community School believes that education provides opportunity for all and that aims to nurture the wellbeing of all so that they may grow in knowledge, integrity & compassion. Student and staff wellbeing is a strategic goal for HFCS.

**What is Wellbeing?**

Wellbeing is present when we

* realise our abilities,
* take care of our physical wellbeing,
* can cope with the normal stresses of life,
* and have a sense of purpose and belonging to a wider community.

Adapted from NCCA, 2017

**What does wellbeing look like at Holy Family Community School?**

Wellbeing is a programme at Junior Cycle. It accounts for 400 hours of learning over a range of subjects and learning experiences. These include:

* Pastoral Care Time
* SPHE
* CSPE
* PE etc.

Other learning experiences include theme weeks such as our Positive Mental Health weeks organized by the Amber Flag Committee, our First Year Wellbeing Retreat day, and a range of guest speakers from organisations such as the charity Aware.

Aside from the subjects and learning experiences there are four dimensions of Wellbeing present at HFCS.

* Culture,
* Curriculum,
* Relationships,
* Policy and Planning.

This whole-school approach to wellbeing is described in the image below.



**How is a student’s wellbeing identified?**

A student’s wellbeing is identified using indicators designed by the NCCA in their Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines in 2017.

These are identified in the image below.



Students learn about wellbeing using these indicators. Our goal is to provide students with the resources, knowledge, skills and tools of well-being, so that as they journey through their lives they have the strategies to cope with the struggles which life can bring.

**How are the indicators explored?**

The indicators are explored through descriptors. Descriptors are a series of questions which help our school in a number of ways including:

* to review current provision for learning in wellbeing.
* to plan teaching and learning within our Wellbeing programme.
* to plan conversations about how our Wellbeing programme might best support young people’s wellbeing with stakeholders including students, parents and teachers.
* to scaffold conversations with students about learning in the Wellbeing programme.
* to frame the student’s self-assessment about their learning in wellbeing.
* to report on learning in wellbeing.

For example, for the “Active” indicator the questions include:

* Am I a confident and skilled participant in physical activity?
* How physically active am I?

In the image below you can find each indicator of wellbeing and their descriptors.



**What about the wellbeing of students at Senior Cycle?**

Currently the NCCA has no mandatory wellbeing programme for Senior Cycle students. However, at Holy Family Community School we are dedicated to fostering student wellbeing throughout their time as a student at our school.

* All senior cycle students have a dedicated Pastoral Care class facilitated by their class tutor every week. This programme is rooted in the six indicators of wellbeing is but adapted to meet the needs of Senior Cycle students.
* All Senior Cycle students study either SPHE or a dedicated ten-week module in Relationships and Sexuality.

**What does wellbeing mean to our students?**

In 2019 some of our students were interviewed as part of a dissertation on male mid-adolescent wellbeing. Our students identified wellbeing as having a *“happy, healthy mindset”.* Our students identified “happy” as a positive outlook on life, not that they should feel happy all of the time.

Additionally, it was found that these young men had only ONE individual in their lives who they described as *“close enough to trust”.* Whilst they trusted many individuals, including their parents, siblings, mentors or coaches, they identified that there were levels of trust. In times of greatest need, they relied on ONE person, and this individual most commonly identified as another male of approximately the same age as they were.

It was also found that these young men also wanted solution-focused support: *“I want you to fix it!”.*

Pádraig Meredith, Waterford Institute of Technology, 2019

**How can I find out more about Wellbeing at Holy Community School?**

Our wellbeing coordinator is Pádraig Meredith. He can be contacted via email: [wellbeing@hfcs.ie](mailto:wellbeing@hfcs.ie)

**Additional Resources:**

NCCA Wellbeing portal:

<https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/wellbeing>

NCCA Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guideline:

<https://www.ncca.ie/media/2487/wellbeingguidelines_forjunior_cycle.pdf>