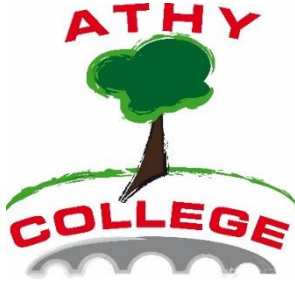


**Athy College ,
Athy, Co. Kildare.**
*Coláiste Áth-Í,
Áth-Í, Cho. Chill Dara.*

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Athy College Kildare

Wellbeing Policy

Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Approval Date: _____

Signed: _____

Principal

Approval Date: _____



**BORD OIDEACHAIS AGUS OILIÚNA
CHILL DARA AGUS CHILL MHANTÁIN
KILDARE AND WICKLOW
EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD**

MISSION STATEMENT

In a caring school we are dedicated to fostering educational excellence empowering all students to reach their full potential – academic and social, physical and spiritual. Through partnership and cooperation, we openly respect and nurture the dignity and uniqueness of each individual’.

ETHOS

Athy College is a caring school. The staff are dedicated to fostering educational excellence and earnestly endeavour to empower all students to reach their full potential – academic and social, physical and spiritual. Through partnership and cooperation, the staff of Athy College respect and nurture the dignity and uniqueness of everyone.

Athy College defines education as the on-going development of all students so that they may realise their true and best selves. The college motto is “Fas agus Foghlaim” (Lifelong Learning).

From the outset students are taught they are partners in their own education. The school aims to prepare students for public examinations, in an age when academic qualifications are indispensable for admission to further education and entry into employment. The school recognises that its students are of varying cultural and social backgrounds and have a wide variety of aspirations and abilities.

The school embraces the vital role that parents, and guardians play in the overall education for their children. The school also recognises the importance of the community in which the student lives. For this reason, every effort is made to ensure that the student is aware of his/her role in the community and is encouraged to be positively involved in the wider community.

RATIONALE

In Athy College students are encouraged to:

“Do your best. Show respect. Take pride in your work, your school and yourself.”

Students’ wellbeing is present when students realise their abilities, take care of their physical wellbeing, can cope with the normal stresses of life and have a sense of purpose and belonging to wider community (NCCA 2017)

SCOPE

This document sets out the policy of Athy College in relation to student and staff wellbeing.

A holistic approach to teaching and learning is endorsed. Education of the whole person is central to our mission statement. This philosophy focuses on the idea that children have many talents and academics is but one part of that. We strive to develop our students socially, emotionally, physically, creatively, spiritually and intellectually. We aim to do so in a safe and caring environment.

Emphasis is placed on every student reaching their full potential. Athy College promotes an atmosphere of trust and friendliness. We encourage our students to develop responsibility, reward initiative, allow for personal growth and champion leadership qualities so that they can become functional citizens. Wellbeing and its curriculum are a key component of achieving this goal.

Introduction

Wellbeing education occurs throughout life and in a variety of settings. Promoting the wellbeing of our children and young people is a shared community responsibility and is everybody's business. While many factors which influence wellbeing are in the home, the school, situated within the community can be a powerful context for healthy development in enhancing protective factors and minimising risks.

Schools play a key role in developing and enhancing young people's wellbeing as they spend a large proportion of their time in school during their formative years. Many schools have already developed innovative approaches to wellbeing promotion supported by strong leadership and quality teaching and learning. Schools are also well placed to further support young people by optimising opportunities to learn about wellbeing.

Athy College as well as being a place of academic learning, provides opportunities for students to develop friendships and social networks, to respectfully encounter diversity and to access support structures.

What is Wellbeing?

"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" DES, 2018

WELLBEING POLICY STATEMENT AND FRAMEWORK FOR PRACTICE

The Department's Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice assists schools in ensuring that wellbeing 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 wellbeing promotion.

The Wellbeing Framework for Practice outlines:

1. Key areas of wellbeing in education
2. Indicators of success in each of these areas
3. Statements of effective practice to guide schools
4. Suite of online wellbeing resources

Looking at Our School: A Quality Framework for Primary Schools

Looking at Our School articulates the Department's holistic view of learning in schools. The framework sees wellbeing as both an enabler of learning and an outcome of learning. It emphasises the need for children and young people to develop a broad range of skills, competencies and values that enable active citizenship, lifelong learning and personal wellbeing. The framework asserts that in providing good quality learning experiences, teachers need to also consider children and young people's wellbeing and that effective school leadership and management involves creating and maintaining a positive, secure and healthy culture where the holistic development of all children and young people is enabled.

Looking at Our School also provides a coherent approach to improving outcomes and experiences for all children and young people. It is used to assist schools in embedding self-evaluation processes and reflective practices and it provides a structure for implementing new initiatives. The domains and standards of Looking at Our School can therefore support schools in promoting and enhancing the wellbeing of all members of the school community.

PHILOSOPHY AND CONTEXT TO THE WELL BEING POLICY

The philosophy of 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.

This policy intends to formalise, document and structure how we collaboratively plan and implement Wellbeing going forward to achieve the aims set out in both Junior Wellbeing Guidelines 2017-2020 and Wellbeing Policy and Framework for Practice 2018- 2023. The junior cycle Wellbeing programme will begin with 300 hours of timetabled engagement in 2017 and build up to 400 hours by 2020 as the new junior cycle is implemented fully in schools.



WELLBEING PROMOTION

The four key areas of wellbeing from the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice will be used to inform reflective, collaborative processes at a whole school level, to improve specific areas of school life that impact on wellbeing. The statements of effective practice detailed in the Framework will be used in the school self-evaluation process by 2023 to analyse practices and inform the school improvement plan.



There is substantial evidence that Wellbeing Programmes in schools, when implemented effectively, can produce long-term benefits for young people. Athy College recognises the importance of developing the whole person; emotionally, mentally, spiritually and physically. A supportive school environment where high expectations and aspirations are the norm for all young people can of itself contribute significantly to lifelong health and wellbeing. At Athy College we provide a range of supports and interventions that address the emotional, mental, spiritual and physical needs of our students.

These include:

- The co-ordinated implementation of our whole-school guidance plan.
- Building positive interpersonal relationships.
- Ensuring that our students are aware of the range of supports within the school as well as those offered by external agencies.
- Providing opportunities to develop their physical well-being through physical education and extracurricular activities.
- The effective and consistent implementation of SPHE as part of a whole-school approach to the promotion of wellbeing in our students.
- Addressing the spiritual needs of students through religion class.
- Implementation of the whole school approach to SEN

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO WELLBEING

Athy College is developing and implementing policies and procedures to support student wellbeing. We are ensuring student wellbeing is central to teaching practices and student learning. We are raising awareness in the school community of issues related to student wellbeing. Our Wellbeing programme aims to foster happy, confident, responsible and resilient students who feel connected to Athy College. All subject planning will include Wellbeing and teachers should embed wellbeing into their curriculum and ensure it is visible to students. Wellbeing provision is delivered through:

- CSPE, SPHE & PE
- Guidance related learning
- Time-tabled wellbeing classes
- Tutorial Programme
- Whole school resilience and wellbeing activities/initiatives
- Extra-curricular and co-curricular learning

All students at Junior Cycle engage with learning in CSPE, SPHE and PE. These subjects support the general wellbeing of our students. CSPE allows students to make connections between personal wellness, the wellness of others and the wellbeing of the environment. PE highlights the link between physical activity and mental health. SPHE seeks to encourage students to have a positive self-image and to develop their emotional wellbeing; it includes learning in relation to RSE.

PROMOTING WELLBEING SKILLS IN OUR STUDENTS

Wellbeing is present when students realise their abilities, take care of their physical wellbeing, can cope with the normal stresses of life, and have a sense of place and belonging to a wider community.

Wellbeing indicators are thus as follows – Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected & Aware



The main skills Athy College tries to promote in its students are:

- Showing care and respect for others.
- Having positive relationships with friends, peers, and staff members.
- Feeling listened to and valued.
- Being aware of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, and being able to make sense of them.
- Being aware of their personal values and being able to think through their decisions.
- Being aware of themselves as learners and knowing how they can improve.
- Believing that, with effort, they can achieve their potential.
- Being a confident and willing participant in physical activity.
- Being able to act to protect and promote their wellbeing and that of others.
- Making healthy eating choices.
- Knowing when and where their safety is at risk and enabling them to make the right choices.
- Feeling connected to their school, friends, community and the wider world.
- Understanding how their actions and interactions impact on their own wellbeing and that of others.
- Feeling confident in themselves and having the coping skills to deal with life's challenges
- Being aware of how all these skills contribute to positive mental health and resilience.
- Knowing where they can go for help – Tutor/Yearhead/ Staff

WELLBEING IN ATHY COLLEGE

- Annual Events: Our annual Endeavour Awards, Sports Awards, TY night and 6th year Graduation
- Parents Association: Fundraises, organises events, has a wellbeing subcommittee, assists policy development to sustain and enhance wellbeing in the school community.
- A wide variety of extra-curricular activities
- Year Assemblies
- Tutor Time: 40 minutes per week contact time with tutor/Year-Head
- School Internal Supports: School Counselling Service/Guidance Counsellor/Student Support Team/Tutor/Year-Head
- Whole School Breakfasts
- Health and Wellbeing week: creates awareness around mental health, promotes health and wellbeing, as well as adding to the positive atmosphere of the school. Ultimately it seeks to highlight what keeps us well, content and whole.
- Whole School Wellbeing activities at Midterm and Christmas e.g Blueway walk, Christmas Dance, Christmas Door
- Transitions programme for first years- New Beginnings
- Music plays an important role in the college with musical instruments, the music room and the option to join the school choir/band club available to all students. Our annual Wintersong service also gives students the opportunity to display their talent on an annual basis.
- Subject related weeks help to build positive relationships, improve self-esteem, and develop transferable skills e.g Seachtain na Gaeilge, Maths week, Science week. They contribute to the wellbeing of the students by giving them the opportunity to learn in many ways. By interacting with their classmates and teachers, and by taking part in activities inside and outside the classroom, each student is challenged to problem solve outside of their comfort zone. These weeks promote positive supportive relationships within the school and wider community.
- Mentoring Programmes such as academic mentoring of Leaving Cert/LCA class students.

- Our Student Council gives students a voice within our school. It is a forum which reinforces that their feedback is valued. They are involved in decision making about life in their school.
- After School Study is provided for those who wish to avail of it. Students can complete homework and study in a quiet designated room ensuring they can focus and maximise learning.
- Teaching and learning are differentiated and provides an appropriate challenge to ensure all students engage and experience success. We are mindful of the mixed ability settings in most classes and staff utilise a variety of teaching approaches and methodologies to maintain student engagement and maximise learning and achievement. Emphasis has also been placed on the integration of IT into teaching and learning in the school. Team teaching for SEN support is also in place.
- School Counselling and Guidance are available to students who may need it. Counselling is provided through school completion and/or guidance teacher depending on individual needs.
- Endeavour Awards, Student of the Month and Merit card System

STAFF WELLBEING

Staff at Athy College work in a supported environment. At Board of Management meetings, the Principal's report keeps the board informed of the work of staff. This is formally affirmed at staff gatherings. School management works collaboratively with the whole staff. Management respects the professional commitment of each staff member.

Management is understanding of the complex pressures which may come to bear on all members of staff from time to time and responds with compassion. Staff members are encouraged and supported to take on new roles, gain further qualifications or attend relevant CPD courses.

Athy College promotes a culture of collaborative collegiality. This is achieved through regular subject department meetings, whole staff meetings, staff planning committees and developing a culture where staff share their expertise by making presentations at staff meetings. The whole school email system ensures all staff are aware of important events and opportunities.

SCHOOL POLICIES THAT SUPPORT WELLBEING

School Policies provide the compass by which the school navigates its way. We have several policies that support and supplement the roll out of Wellbeing.

They are

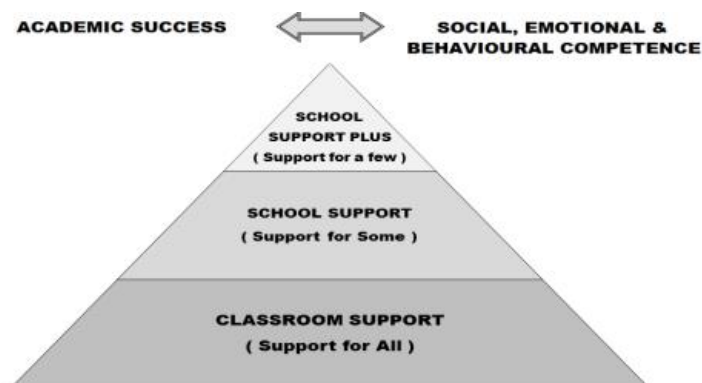
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti- Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- RSE Policy & SPHE Policy
- Guidance Policy
- SEN Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Critical Incident Policy

SCHOOL SELF EVALUATION (SSE) LINK TO WELLBEING

By 2023 every school is required to use the SSE process to initiate a Wellbeing Promotion Review and Development Cycle. Athy College will begin this process of SSE in 2023.

We will use the continuum of support, set out by the National Educational Psychological Service, and use the Action Plan of the Four Key areas of Wellbeing Promotion –

1. Culture and Environment
2. Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)
3. Policy & Planning
4. Relationships & Partnerships



SUPPORT FOR ALL

At this level we adopt a whole school approach. We have a series of policies and procedures that promote wellbeing for all members of the school community. Processes on this level aim at

1. the establishment of a safe environment that is conducive to wellbeing and which supports the prevention of factors that negatively impact on wellbeing,
2. promotion of an understanding of and commitment to wellbeing
3. early identification and intervention in the cases of challenge.

These steps are reflected in various school policies such as Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy etc. additionally supported by our commitment to quality teaching and learning, broad provision of programmes and a comprehensive curriculum.

SUPPORT FOR SOME

There is a more focused approach adopted with a number of identifiable groups of young people who are at risk of developing unhealthy patterns of behaviour. These structures seek to provide a more targeted support structure to promote and scaffold wellbeing for these identified groups. Our Student support team, Pastoral care team, Guidance Counsellor ,SEN team and management team also contribute to supporting students in this area

SUPPORT FOR A FEW

This support focuses on putting in place interventions for young people with more complex and enduring needs. Work with this group of students is structured under the development of an ISP (Individual Student Profile/Plan). The details of the development of these plans are outlined in the SEN policy of the school.

APPENDIX 1 - Junior Cycle Timetable breakdown 2022-2023

	FIRST YEAR	SECOND YEAR	THIRD YEAR	TOTAL
SPHE	1 X 40min	1 X 40min	1 X 40min	66.8
CSPE	1 X 40min	1 X 40min	1 X 40min	66.8
WELLBEING CLASS	1 X 40min	1 X 40min	1 X 40min	66.8
TUTORIAL	1 X 40min	1 X 40min	1 X 40min	66.8
PE	2 X 40min	2 X 40min	2 X 40min	133.6
WELLBEING ACTIVITIES * Wellbeing Day (28/10/2022)	4 hours	4 hours	4 hours	12
TOTAL				412