

School Overview

Mission Statement

Villiers School provides a broad and balanced education within a caring community. Our aim is to develop life and learning skills in order to face the challenges ahead with awareness and integrity.

Ethos

Villiers School is a private endowed Co-educational, Boarding and Day School. The School maintains religious values in line with Protestant traditions as set out in the scheme dated 21st December 1889 under the Educational Endowments (Ireland) Act 1885. The philosophy of the school is such that it recognises, supports and endeavours to accommodate the right of every student to learn in an educationally conducive environment, regardless of innate ability, family/social circumstances or religious affiliation. Villiers endeavours to educate students within the Church of Ireland/Presbyterian traditions; however, we also welcome members of other faiths. Villiers aims to ensure that the educational, emotional, spiritual, psychological and moral welfare of each individual student is provided for, while encouraging at all times the co-operation and assistance of parents/guardian of the students. Such aspirations are reflected in the structures and order of the School and are safeguarded by the Board of Governors. This ethos creates a very caring and highly academic environment.

School Profile

Villiers School was founded in 1821 for the provision of education to children in the Church of Ireland and Presbyterian faiths. Its management consists of a Board of Governors and a Board of Management. The school comprises of day students, day boarders, weekly boarders and a small number of fortnightly boarders. The school caters for over 560 students, of whom approximately 150 are boarding students. There is an open admissions policy which has resulted in a student body of which approximately 20% has special educational needs.

Villiers School has recently become a provider of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme for senior level students.

Wellbeing

Rationale

The Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) provides for a new area of learning at Junior Cycle called 'Wellbeing'. Wellbeing crosses the three years of Junior Cycle and builds on the substantial structures we already have in place in Villiers School to support students' wellbeing. This area of learning makes our culture, ethos, and commitment to wellbeing more visible to students. It includes learning opportunities to enhance the physical, mental, emotional, and social wellbeing of students. It enables students to build life skills and develop a strong sense of connectedness to Villiers School and our wider community in line with our mission statement.

Goals of the Policy

- To provide for the wellbeing of all students in the school within the context of the school mission statement and ethos
- To outline the policies, procedures, culture, ethos, and activities that serve to assist the wellbeing of the students of Villiers School
- To recognise the interplay between a positive experience of school life, student achievement, and long-term wellbeing
- To offer a co-ordinated structure in supporting our young people through the creation of a multiplicity of opportunities both within and without the classroom focused on the promotion of wellbeing
- To recognise and support the particular needs of our boarding students in the promotion of their wellbeing throughout their years at Villiers School
- To outline the ways in which the expertise of staff and outside agencies are engaged to support and respond to needs
- To provide an umbrella policy that outlines a structure to link a series of other policies that relate to wellbeing.

The goals of this policy are informed by the national outcomes of wellbeing as outlined in the NCCA's *Wellbeing Guidelines for Junior Cycle*.



This policy also aims to form a basis for a unified approach to a number of other school policies.



- Code of Behaviour
- SPHE Policy
- RSE Policy
- Appropriate Use of Technology Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- GDPR
- Child Protection Policy
- Extra-curricular Activities Policy

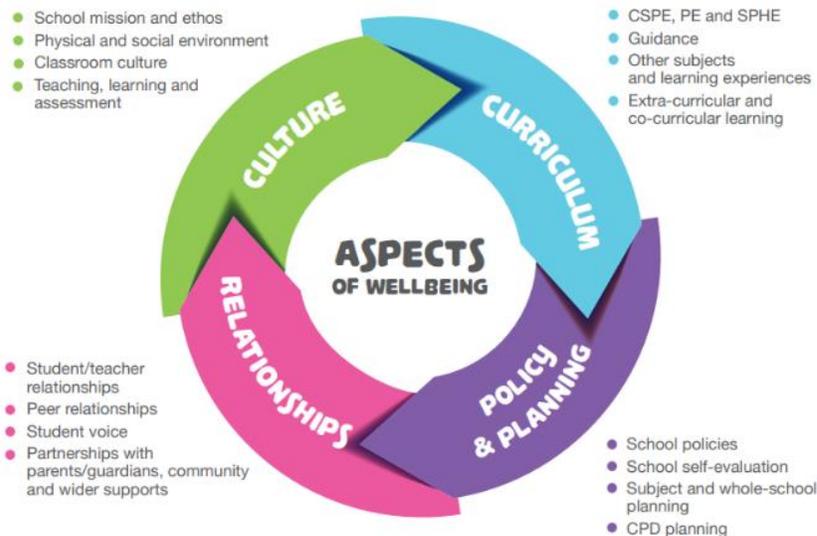
These plans are central to the provision of support structures for students and as such form the foundation for the school's implementation of its wellbeing policy.

Aspects of Wellbeing

Wellbeing is a multifaceted concept and as such, efforts to promote student wellbeing require a whole-school approach. Planning for wellbeing involves consideration of four particular aspects that guide student wellbeing:

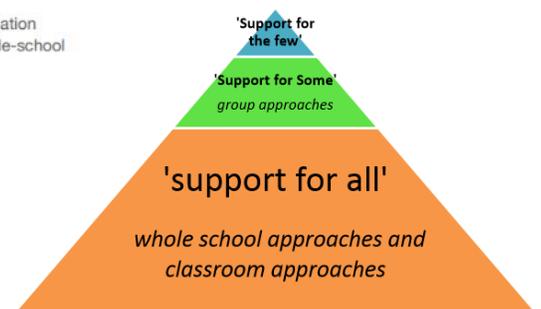
1. Culture
2. Curriculum
3. Relationships
4. Policy and Planning

A whole-school approach is taken in the development of each of these areas, with subject co-



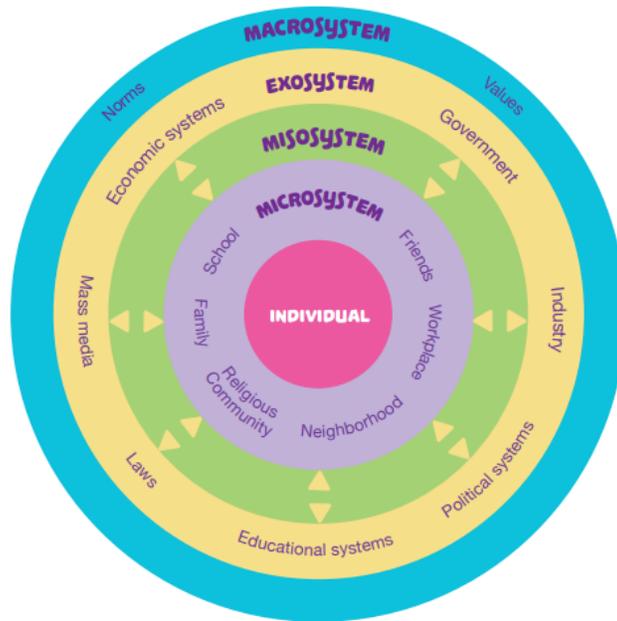
ordinators being responsible for the integration of the values of wellbeing as outlined in this statement into their curricula.

As each of these aspects are linked, so too does the entire school community contribute to supporting student wellbeing.



These aspects are also incorporated into the structure of the continuum of support offered to students. This continuum is based on the NEPS document 'Wellbeing in Post-Primary Schools'. As suggested in this document, the school offers a unified approach to support for students based on the needs of 'all' → 'some' → 'the few'.

We believe that this approach provides students with greater structure in the development of their wellbeing, and also increases our efficacy in planning and policy-making. This approach is based on the concept: "When schools have a strong focus on taking care of the needs of all students, then those children who are vulnerable or experiencing difficulties also benefit."



INDIVIDUAL
Age, sex, health, etc

MICROSYSTEM
Immediate environments
Direct interaction in activities, roles and relation with others and objects

MEZOSYSTEM
Connections between systems and microsystems

EXOSYSTEM
Indirect environments
Systems that influence the individual indirectly through micro-systems

MACROSYSTEM
Social Ideologies and values of cultures and subcultures

TECHNO-SUBSYSTEM
Media influences
Computers
Internet
Portable devices
Social media
TV, Phone

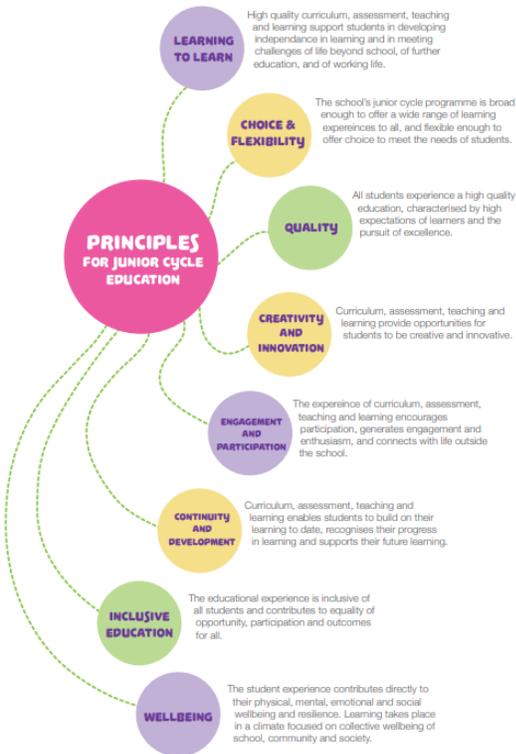
Villiers School acknowledges that wellbeing has a multidimensional nature and we recognise that a holistic approach to wellbeing accounts for the student's wider community and social context. We recognise that sometimes the wellbeing of individuals is hindered by wider social, economic or cultural factors and that conversely, sometimes an individual's behaviour, choices, or goals may harm the collective wellbeing of the school community.

We remind our staff and students that our personal wellbeing and that of our local community is connected to the wider world and is built upon values of justice, equality,

solidarity and respect for differences in an interconnected world, as demonstrated by this model.

Wellbeing and the Framework for Junior Cycle

Villiers School acknowledges that the Junior Cycle years are an important time in young peoples' lives as they learn to take greater responsibility and to cope with new experiences, influences, and pressures. The *Framework for Junior Cycle* is underpinned by eight principles that inform the development and implementation of Junior Cycle programmes in all schools. All of these principles are important in supporting the student experience of wellbeing in Junior Cycle. It is worth noting that wellbeing is both a principle of Junior Cycle education and also a curricular area. The principle of wellbeing is outlined as: "The student experience contributes directly to their physical, mental, emotional, and social wellbeing and resilience. Learning takes place in a climate focused on collective wellbeing of school, community and society."



Statements of Learning

• The 24 statements of learning (SOLs) included in the Framework, along with the eight principles, are central to planning for students' experiences of Junior Cycle at Villiers School. A number of these statements relate directly to wellbeing, including:

- The student has an awareness of personal values and an understanding of the process of moral decision-making (SOL 5)
- The student values what it means to be an active citizen, with rights and responsibilities in local and wider contexts (SOL 7)
- The student has the awareness, knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to live sustainably (SOL 10)
- The student takes action to safeguard and promote her/his wellbeing and that of others (SOL 11)

- The student is a confident and competent participant in physical activity and is motivated to be physically active (SOL 12)
- The student understands the importance of food and diet in making healthy lifestyle choices (SOL 13)

Junior Cycle Key Skills

The key skill of Staying Well focuses specifically on wellbeing; nevertheless, many of the positive dispositions associated with student wellbeing are fostered through the conscious development of all the key skills in the classroom. The elements of Staying Well are as follows:

- Being healthy and physically active
- Being safe
- Being social

- Being positive about learning
- Being confident
- Being spiritual
- Being responsible, safe and ethical in using digital technology

These elements are incorporated in various school curricula as well as through wider policies within the school, such as the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy and the Code of Behaviour.



Staff Wellbeing

Villiers School acknowledges that wellbeing in schools starts with the staff: it is difficult if not impossible to be genuinely motivated to promote the emotional and social wellbeing of others if staff feel uncared for and burnt out themselves.

In Villiers School, the Student Support team, Year Heads, Form Tutors, and Guidance Counsellor work to ensure that young people receive the support and attention they need to thrive and succeed in school and in life. We urge teachers to have high expectations for students; to plan to actively engage students in their learning; to look out for and act on feedback from students about what matters to their wellbeing and what helps them to learn. Villiers School promotes assessment approaches that support and encourage students to improve their learning.

In order to support staff wellbeing, management encourages teachers to consider their own sense of wellbeing as recognised by the Teaching Council. We promote positive working relationships and place emphasis on a whole-school inclusive culture. Social events for staff are organised throughout the year, including an annual staff barbeque that takes place before the beginning of the academic year. To promote staff relationships as well as the relationships between staff and students, a Christmas dinner is held each year for staff and boarding students. We further encourage and provide opportunities for continuous professional development, teambuilding activities and staff social events.

Wellbeing and the Curriculum

A dedicated wellbeing curriculum in Junior Cycle aims to ensure that all students engage in important learning about wellbeing through key curriculum areas. We have considered the particular needs of our students in Junior Cycle, the unique context of our school, and the resources available and have identified a range of curriculum options available so as to ensure that at least 300 hours of timetabled engagement is provided in line with JCT recommendations.

These include:

- SPHE (existing course)
- CSPE (existing course)
- PE (existing course)
- Guidance counselling
- Tutor time
- Pastoral care
- Other subjects and learning experiences
- Extra-curricular and co-curricular learning
- School initiatives

In planning for wellbeing inclusion in the curriculum, we have based our programme on the inclusion of each of the six indicators of wellbeing. These indicators make explicit what is important for teachers, parents, and the wider school community.

Subject teachers are also encouraged to explicitly address wellbeing in their schemes of work and lesson plans.



Provision at Junior Cycle

	FORM 1	FORM 2	FORM 3
PE	Double class	Double class	Double class
SPHE	Single class	Single class	Single class
CSPE	Single class	Two classes	Two classes
TUTOR TIME	Ten minutes each morning	Ten minutes each morning	Ten minutes each morning
ICT	Single class	-	-

Form 1 ICT is now under the umbrella of Junior Cycle Wellbeing. This decision will assist in making the school’s culture, ethos, and commitment to wellbeing visible to all new students. Equally it will include learning opportunities to enhance the physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing of these learners. Moreover, as part of the school’s wellbeing programme this unit strives to enable students to build life skills and develop a strong sense of connectedness to their school and to their community.

Students in Junior Cycle also engage in numerous teambuilding activities, Wellbeing days, cultural activities.

Wellbeing Outside the Curriculum

As outlined above under 'Aspects of Wellbeing', Villiers School acknowledges that wellbeing is informed by a student's wider context as well as their experience within lessons. Furthermore, as a boarding school, Villiers recognises that their duty of care to boarding students in particular requires a unique approach to planning for wellbeing in order to better cater for the needs of students who spend a majority of their teen years in the school context.

Transition to Post-Primary

Villiers School recognises the intimidation and trepidation that many students feel moving to post-primary school. As such, we work to ensure a smooth transition for all students and have put systems in place to ensure their wellbeing at all stages of this change.

Students in sixth class are invited to do a 'shadow day' where they spend an afternoon with a Form 1 class group, with one Form 1 student in particular nominated to be their guide. This afternoon is intended to give incoming students a sense of what their Form 1 experience will be like and to help prepare them for the increased responsibilities facing secondary school students.

Incoming Form 1 students are invited to do a scholarship exam in May. Lunch is provided for the students, giving them a chance to meet with other students who will be in their year from September.

Form 1 students return to school in August a day before the rest of the students. This is for an Open Afternoon to which parents are also invited. Students meet with their Form Tutors, their prefects, their classmates, and also get a tour of the school. They are assigned their lockers and given a chance to settle in to the school before the other, older students arrive. This initiation process is extended the following day as students have an extended Form Tutor Time during which their tutor goes through the Code of Behaviour and other school policies and procedures.

In order to familiarise themselves with the needs of incoming students, the Year Head and relevant Form Tutors review the NCCA Educational Passport and summer reports for each pupil.

As part of our continuum of support, Villiers offer students with SEN and those who are particularly anxious about starting a new school the opportunity to visit the school during the summer to familiarise themselves with the layout and atmosphere of the school at their own pace during a quieter time.

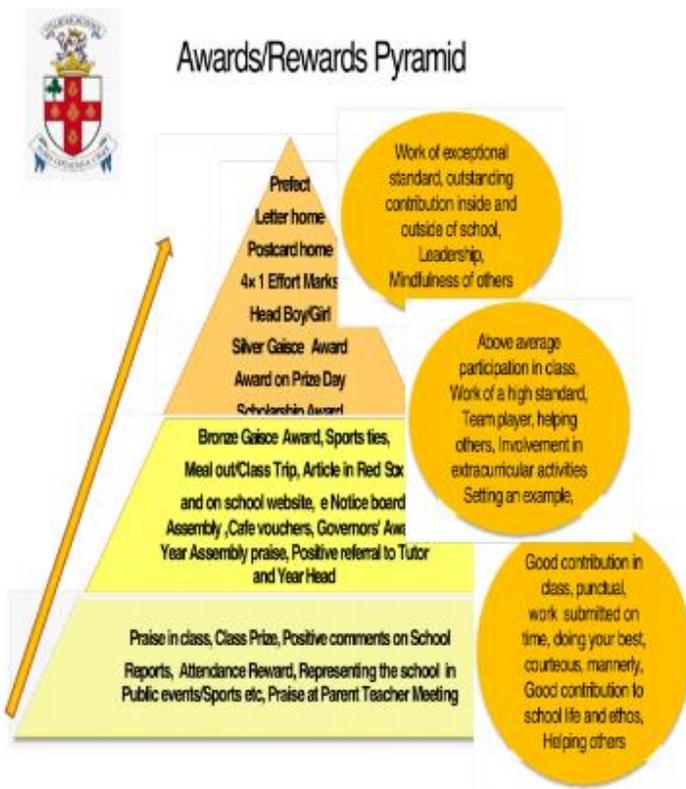
Regarding choice subjects, Form 1 students sample the various subjects over the course of the first four-five weeks of term. This is designed to help students get a taste of subjects with which they might not be familiar from primary school before they need to make a choice regarding their Junior Cycle subjects.

There are particular provisions made in the first week of term to ease the transition for Form 1 pupils. The Chaplain and Form 1 Year Head are assigned boarding duties to help students settle; also, afterschool sporting events are scheduled specifically for Form 1 students. These activities largely consist of ice-breakers and other games designed to help students settle together and make friends.

Later in the year, prefects organise an optional Secret Santa for Form 1 students, with participation from other Junior Cycle years as well. This event is aimed at encouraging Form 1 students to get to know each other and to acclimate them to the ethos and culture of the school.

As part of encouraging Form 1 students to engage in the school community, they are taken as a year group to the Form 4 drama each year. This event also aims to develop their cultural awareness.

Recognition of Student Achievement



Villiers School recognises that “assessment has to take account of the wide range of learning experience by students” (NCCA). To that end, a broad spectrum of student achievement is acknowledged by the school in a number of ways.

As part of our Code of Behaviour, teachers are encouraged to reward positive behaviour demonstrated by students. We have a pyramid system of rewards that is employed to reward and encourage student behaviour.

Our prefect system is also intended to recognise and reward students of meritorious conduct. Prefects are nominated on the basis of their approachability and amicability; academic achievement is not considered in their selection.

Academic achievement is celebrated at our annual Prize Day. Prizes are allocated on the basis of results from summer examinations, both in-house and State. The Schutz Cup is also awarded on this day to a student nominated by teachers as friendly, helpful, and with a positive attitude. This cup has no relation to academic achievement but rather celebrates student character.

Students who have a sporting achievement are rewarded with special ties during Assembly and their achievement is announced by the Headmistress.

Designated Days

As part of the allocation of hours to student wellbeing development, Villiers School organises a series of 'designated days' each year to address different aspects of wellbeing. These range from Mental Health Awareness to activity promotion (such as Cycle Right). There are a number of these days held throughout the year, often with involvement in their organisation from student committees.

These days are intended to offer students a chance to focus on a particular aspect of wellbeing that is being highlighted. Guest speakers are often invited in order to give students the opportunity to learn about particular issues and events from experts in these fields.

The school has also previously been involved in the Cycle against Suicide programme and we are now an Ambassador School.

Provision at Extra-Curricular Level

Villiers School promotes participation in sports as well as in a variety of clubs and societies in order to create a holistic educational experience. The provision of these extra-curricular activities is linked to the whole-school approach to wellbeing outlined in this policy.

Teachers and coaches of extra-curricular activities are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the school's wellbeing statement as well as with the guidelines for wellbeing as outlined by the NCCA. A sample of the wellbeing indicators we have identified as in-line with our extra-curricular activities are as follows:

ACTIVITY	INDICATORS OF WELLBEING
SPORTS	Active, Responsible, Connected
DEBATING / MUN	Connected, Resilient, Respected, Aware
FILM & DIGITAL LITERACY	Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected

These extra-curricular clubs also form part of our continuum of support. Form Tutors are strongly encouraged by the school to refer students, especially Form 1 students, who appear to be struggling socially to a school club. The two most often chosen for this are the lunch time club, led by the school Chaplain, and the chef club, led by the Form 1 Year Head.

Two school nurses provide medical care to all students, and a school guidance counsellor and school chaplain are available for students who are dealing with emotional upsets.

Teambuilding activities are organised for students in Forms 2 and 4. These activities are intended to address all of the indicators of wellbeing. Form 2 students are allocated a day of teambuilding activities, usually scheduled in Derg Isle. Form 4 students complete a week in Achill Outdoor Activities Centre. Their time in Achill can also be used as part of their achievements for the Gaisce award.

Provision for Boarding Students

The School has dedicated boarding staff who cater for the needs of boarding students outside of school hours. Boarding Staff promote the emotional, mental, and social wellbeing of boarding students, as well as acting in loco parentis after official school hours have ended.

Healthy eating is promoted through the catering staff, who provide a range of healthy options at meal times for students.

In the first week of term, the Chaplain and Form 1 Year Head are specifically scheduled for boarding duties to help new students, in particular Form 1 students, adjust to boarding life.

Review

This policy will be reviewed biannually and presented to the Board of Management at the beginning of each academic year for ratification.