

# Kilcolgan Educate Together

## Our Self-Evaluation Report and Improvement Plan 2024

### Wellbeing

#### 1. Introduction

This document records the outcomes of our last improvement plan, the findings of this self-evaluation, and our current improvement plan, including targets and the actions we will implement to meet the targets. This improvement plan was created to focus on wellbeing in our school.

##### 1.1 Outcomes of our last improvement plan 2017-2019

- To create a whole school behaviour plan that provides clarity to all teachers, students and parents around acceptable behaviours, whole school acknowledgment and celebration of positive behaviours and progression of sanction. The Board approved the new Code of Behaviour at a meeting on 08.06.18
- Restorative practice was reviewed and amended
- Video created to explain the Code of Behaviour was uploaded to school website and shown to all parents at the September meeting 2018. All teachers explained the changes in their classrooms.
- Anna and Fionnuala visited Merlin Woods Primary 28.04.17 to view the Mind Up programme in operation
- Information session for staff and Board members 06.06.17
- Board approved Mind Up programme 03.07.17
- Training occurred between 19.09.17 and 02.10.18
- Programme implementation formally began October 2017 across all classes.

##### 1.2 The focus of this evaluation

We undertook self-evaluation of Wellbeing as the department asked us to engage with Wellbeing as part of SSE before 2025. As Wellbeing was already an area of focus we decided to begin review and engagement with this process now. This review and improvement plan was conducted by Jikke and Anna in consultation with all staff. It took into account feedback collected from children, parent and staff surveys and discussions at staff meetings.

#### 2. Findings

1. The whole school **code of behaviour plan is now embedded** within our school ethos. Children are familiar with the behaviour rewards and consequences. Children are taught our five positive behaviour characteristics (Empathy, Respect, Integrity, Academic Excellence and Responsibility) both explicitly and implicitly throughout the year and this has become part of our Learn Together yearly plan with shared resources on our server.
2. **Restorative practice** is now only for intentional harm or assumed intentional harm, while a middle layer of an **incident report** or name in the yard book is sufficient for lesser cases of unacceptable behaviour.
3. Discretionary **Mighty Oak awards** no longer need to be presented as children have achieved them from 4th class up at this point.
4. **Our Mind Up programme** which addresses our mental wellbeing within our school is now embedded within our curriculum and forms part of the Learn Together yearly plan. The **brain breaks** are a daily opportunity to regulate and calm our bodies and minds and are used consistently throughout our school. Further training in the form of 2 workshops were provided to all staff in 2023. Our Mind Up library will continue to grow. As the Mind Up programme is the same for a two period we are this year piloting **A Lust for Life** programme to take place in one year, and Mind Up in the other.
5. **Anti- Bullying month** continues to take place each November whereby anti-bullying lessons are explicitly taught and activities are organised by the student council to highlight these issues. An anti-bullying survey in 2023 highlighted that children wanted more anti-bullying initiatives throughout the year. As a result of this we are running **Friendship February** whereby we focus on friendships within our class, with other classes and what it means to be a good friend. Activities to support this can be found on our school Padlet and our server.

The 2023 survey highlighted that 75% of pupils feel safe from bullies which was a decline from our previous review. It was identified that any bullying that was perceived to be taking place predominantly took place on the bus and in the yard and is mostly verbal or social bullying. This was discussed at ISM and staff meetings and for the 2024 survey figures had improved, with 84% of pupils feeling safe from bullies in school.

6. The school engaged in and was awarded our second **Active Schools Flag** in 2022. This was an initiative loved by the children, embraced by the teachers and a positive addition to the overall wellbeing of the students as it incorporates regular movement breaks, a wider variety of PE opportunities and increased activities at yard times and incorporates various challenges throughout the year. It also creates leadership opportunities for the children who are part of the Active School Committee. Further leadership and coaching opportunities are available to 5th and 6th class who volunteer as coaches (Playworks) during big breaks. These children organise fun and structured activities for all children who wish to participate. The climbing wall, sensory toys, increased PE equipment and construction toys that are utilised during yard times all contribute to the wellbeing of our pupils.
7. The **line stars** used to reward fast and quiet lining up at the end of yard times is another positive initiative that results in increased play time and wellbeing when 10 stars are achieved. We have amended the way in which we call for quiet lines at the end of yard time- hand in the air with fingers showing a silent 5 to 1 countdown.
8. The **Forest School programme** also benefits wellbeing and we now have 4 trained Forest School leaders. This allows for increased delivery of the programme to additional classes. This year 4 class groupings are accessing this programme at various times of the year for 6 to 8 week blocks. Our student and parent survey placed a high value on the benefits and enjoyment of Forest School.
9. The Covid-19 pandemic brought along **increased movement breaks** in order to promote ventilation in our classrooms. This is an initiative that has remained as it has a positive effect on pupils' wellbeing and on their ability to learn following movement breaks. An online learning platform was also needed during the pandemic and as a result of this we now use **Seesaw as an e-learning platform** across all class levels to record our learning. This has strengthened our connection with many parents and is another way to communicate learning to the home environment. Pupils are often proud of their work and enjoying sharing it with parents and caregivers.
10. **Wow cards** continue to be seen as positive by children in our recent (Feb 2024) survey. The characteristic of 'Care' has been changed to 'Empathy' to reflect care of people instead of things. Lessons have been carried out during Friendship February to reflect this change.
11. **Staff wellbeing** was also discussed with teachers on lunch duty getting a ten minute break before going on duty. This is now the norm with colleagues in the same building as the teacher on duty supervising their class while their class eat.
12. A **Right to Disconnect Policy** was also created, thereby formalising the times where teachers are expected to be responsive and connected, even when outside of school and being clear on the right to have downtime and a healthy work-life balance.

### Key findings from our Children's wellbeing survey (1st to 6th-133 responses)

- Children rated Forest schools, working with technology, movement breaks, wow cards and yard time the highest when surveyed about the many ways in which we learn at school
- Staff in our school were rated highly by the children-
  - There is an adult in the school who cares about me 85%
  - The adults are nice to the children 92%
  - The adults in my school praise and encourage me to do my best 85%
- Children also felt safe at school 85%
- Children also reported having friends at school 98%

The above information only reflects the 'Yes' does not include the 'Not sure' and 'No' responses and does not include Junior and Senior Infant responses

- Children had mixed feelings about brain breaks 8% really liked them, 17% liked them, 45% didn't mind them and 32% didn't like them (no information from Junior and Senior Infants)

### Key findings from our staff wellbeing survey (21 responses)

- Relationships scored highly
  - positive staff relationships with one another, 75% agreed or strongly agreed
  - positive staff relationships with children, 85% agreed or strongly agreed
  - positive staff relationships with parents, 80% agreed or strongly agreed
- The physical environment is modified to meet the needs of children including those with additional and/or complex needs e.g. sensory room/sensory gardens; lifting equipment; specialist technology/seating; buddy bench - this received very mixed results so we are working on creating a quieter indoor space during yard time
- There is someone at work who seems to genuinely care about me as a person scored 100%

### Areas that require attention

The 2 below areas require staff discussion. Ideas such as having a buddy system to discuss and address issues or using restorative practices as a staff have been suggested. Further consultation with staff is needed here and potential involvement of outside agencies.

There is no bullying in the workplace-  
19% strongly agree  
14.3% agree  
19% neutral  
28.6% disagree  
19% strongly disagree

- Staff are supported by management when issues arise with colleagues, work load, stress, etc
  - 23.8% strongly agree
  - 23.8% agree
  - 23.8% neutral
  - 23.8% disagree
  - 4.8% strongly disagree

### Key findings from the Parents wellbeing survey (131 responses)

- The school is welcoming and accessible to children and to adults scored very highly- 99% and 96 % respectively
- The school sees health and wellbeing as important scored very highly- 92% agreed or strongly agreed
- Overall Parents were happy with wellbeing in the school but in the comments section it was highlighted that we do not participate often in activities with or against other schools. This is an area in which we could improve.

### 3. Our improvement plan

On the next page we have recorded:

- The **targets** for improvement we have set
- The **actions** we will implement to achieve these
- **Who is responsible** for implementing, monitoring and reviewing our improvement plan
- How we will measure **progress** and check **outcomes** (criteria for success)

As we implement our improvement plan we will record:

- The **progress** made, and **adjustments** made, and **when**
- **Achievement of targets** (original and modified)

## Our Improvement Plan

Targets	Actions	Persons / groups responsible	Criteria for success	Progress and adjustments	Targets achieved
To provide a quieter space at yard times for children to go to if they need it	Identify a classroom and gather resources and an SNA timetable to facilitate quieter yard breaks	Anna and Jikke SNA facilitates the supervision (rota)	Children requiring a quieter space at breaktimes feel comfortable using the space and supported during this time	Many children are availing of breaks- It is very popular at present but that will level off. It is not reaching some students who we felt would benefit.	Quiet space is up and running effectively
Set up a cooking group for children in the Senior classes who will benefit (Health eating and wellbeing)	Provide the staff and children involved with the space, time and appropriate resources to run these sessions	Anna and SNA's working with this group	The children will learn from and enjoy these sessions	Buying more equipment to increase the enjoyment of these sessions	Sessions running effectively
Introduce the Helping Hands programme to identify and deal with hidden bullying	Purchase and implement the staff training during Croke Park hours Complete the classroom surveys and analysis of the data	Anna Whole Staff	Teachers can successfully use the data to create class grouping and pairs that are conducive to inclusion and working together successfully. Teacher can use the data to identify vulnerable students and put plans in place to help these children Teacher training initiated and completed in delivering the programme	All teachers have created class grouping and are currently trialling these groups for project work, seating, PE pairings etc Some classes have been resurveyed to see if groups have changed.	Programme purchased using attendance grant (if children are happier and safer at school, it may improve attendance). Training by staff completed in February and March 2024.
Survey the children, parents and staff in our schools to see where we are in terms of wellbeing	Create and disturbed survey and analyse results  Once a programme has been identified and approved by the Board, secure training for staff.	Jikke and Anna	Feedback from staff, parents and children is largely positive. Share our positive feedback with staff and continue to support initiatives that are having a positive impact (Example Forest school, brain breaks, wow cards)	Feedback used to inform	

## Review

November 2024

Following our School Self Evaluation in Wellbeing over the last academic year the following points are worth noting:

The **Helping Hands programme** was piloted for the year but teachers found it challenging to collect data and interpret it meaningfully. All teachers engaged with the training and classes were surveyed and grouped accordingly but the feedback was to discontinue with the programme into the future.

A hugely positive development was the setting up of a **Nurture Room**. Niabh and Sarah completed training in this, assessed children using the Boxall profiles and set up groups accordingly. The anecdotal evidence from parents and teachers to date is incredibly positive with students attending Nurture being more regulated and happier.

**Staff wellbeing** was addressed in a facilitated session with facilitator Berni Smyth. 3 key action points arose from that; to come back to school prior to school re-opening and go through the Code of Behaviour, to review the Dignity at Work Policy and to create a Communications Policy. These three items have now been actioned. The Board of Management also adopted the new INTO *Working Together* document and this was also discussed at a staff meeting in September. Staff have also been directed to Spectrum Life and the suite of supports available through that.