

# SPHE and Wellbeing Policy of Glinsk NS

## *Introductory Statement and Rationale*

The promotion of wellbeing is central to the Department's mission to enable children and young people to achieve their full potential and contribute to Ireland's social, cultural and economic development. Schools play a vital role in the promotion of wellbeing through a range of activities and approaches to support the academic, physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual development of all children and young people. Our education system is key to equipping children and young people with the knowledge, skills and competencies to deal with challenges that impact on their wellbeing (Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice, 2018) Children and young people learn more effectively and have better academic outcomes if they are happy in their work, believe in themselves and feel acknowledged and supported in their schools. National and international research highlights that the wellbeing of our children and young people is critical to their success in education and in life (Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice).

This school plan was reviewed during the school year 2022-2023 by the whole staff. This policy was reviewed in response to the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice, School Self Evaluation Guidelines and the SPHE curriculum. It will provide a coherent approach to the teaching of Social Personal Health Education across the whole school, with a strong focus on pupil wellbeing. This policy displays existing and developing work in wellbeing promotion in Glinsk NS. Its implementation is an ongoing, reflective and self evaluative process that aims to focus on supporting children in having a sense of purpose and fulfilment, and the skills necessary to deal with life's challenges.

Aspects of SPHE have been taught in Glinsk N.S. for many years through various programmes and initiatives such as Stay Safe, Walk Tall, Relationships and Sexuality Education. It has also been taught through integration with other subject areas such as Physical Education, Religion, Geography, etc. However, we wish to formalise our teaching of SPHE/Wellbeing and plan for it on a whole school basis.

### Vision

This policy sets out the vision and ambition of Glinsk NS to ensure that the experience of our children from the early years throughout their primary education will be one that enhances, promotes, values and nurtures their wellbeing.

Our wellbeing policy is:

- **Child-centred:** The wellbeing needs and the best interests of our children are a central focus of this policy. This requires us to respect and value the voice of children and young people and foster their belonging and connectedness to our school community.
- **Fair and inclusive:** All children receive fair and inclusive opportunities to develop their wellbeing in ways that are responsive and suitable to their

particular needs and contexts. Practices are tailored and relevant, building on the existing strengths of children, school staff, families and school communities.

- **Evidence-informed:** This policy promotes the use of evidence-informed practice, which brings together local experience and expertise with the best available evidence from research.
- **Outcomes focused:** This policy promotes continuous improvement practices and the use of data relating to outcomes to guide practice in our school in relation to the promotion of wellbeing for all children.
- **Partnership/Collaboration:** The wellbeing of our children is a shared responsibility. Working in partnership with parents, guardians, school staff and external agencies is key to ensuring this policy is implemented.

Documents which have informed our Wellbeing Policy planning:

- [Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice \(DES, 2018\)](#)
- [Schools for Health in Ireland: Framework for Developing a Health Promoting School \(HSE, 2013\)](#)
- [Looking at Our School: A Quality Framework for Primary Schools \(DES, Inspectorate, 2016\)](#)
- [Well-Being in Primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion \(DES, DOH & HSE, 2015\)](#)
- [Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework \(NCCA, 2009\)](#)

### **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 in the areas of:

- Culture and environment
- Curriculum (teaching and learning)
- Policy and planning
- Relationships and partnerships

### **Environment**

Glinsk NS aims to foster an environment that enhances competence and well-being; one that consciously fosters warm relationships, encourages participation, develops pupil and teacher autonomy and cultivates clarity about boundaries, rules and positive expectations. Glinsk NS provides a safe, secure and stimulating environment that encourages and supports pupils, staff and members of the whole school community, both in and out of school. We encourage and promote self-esteem and self-confidence by providing opportunities for all members of the school community to contribute to school life. The school community is encouraged to make healthy choices and to take responsibility for their own health. Glinsk NS continues to provide a climate in which good relationships,

respect and consideration for others prosper, and where individuals are encouraged to make a vital contribution through their personal skills and qualities.

## **Curriculum and Learning**

The teaching and learning in Glinsk NS aims to be democratic, inclusive, engaging, differentiated, fostering expectations of high achievement and providing opportunity for success. The SPHE curriculum in Glinsk NS strongly supports the social and emotional well-being of our pupils, by placing an emphasis on children's social and emotional skills, attitudes, behaviour and therefore learning performance. In line with best practice, the Continuum of Support model delivered within our school offers a flexible framework within which we can address all educational needs, including well-being needs of our pupils. Glinsk NS adheres to statutory requirements and is accessible to all pupils. We provide challenges for pupils and staff through a wide range of physical, academic, social and community activities.

### **Curriculum Content**

Active learning is the principal teaching and learning approach recommended for SPHE. The SPHE programme reflects a spiral approach, where similar aspects are revisited in different ways according to the age, stage of development and readiness of the child. SPHE is intrinsic to the learning and teaching that occurs both formally and informally in the school and in the classroom. S.P.H.E. must be planned in such a way that the child will receive a comprehensive programme in S.P.H.E. over a two-year period. Strand units are chosen from each of the strands in any one year. The strand units not covered in year one must be included in the teacher's planning for the following year.

### **1. *Strands and Strand Units***

Since S.P.H.E. is spiral in nature we will cover the following content at each level throughout the school over a two-year period:

#### ***Strands***

- Myself
- Myself and Others
- Myself and the Wider World

<i>Myself deals with the personal development of the individual child and his/her health and well-being.</i>	<i>Myself and Others focuses on developing a sense of care and respect for other people and the facility for relating to and communicating effectively with others.</i>	<i>Myself and the Wider World enables children to explore the various communities in which they live, to learn to operate competently in society and to understand what it means to</i>
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		<i>belong and to share a sense of purpose.</i>
<b>Strand Units</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-identity</li> <li>• Taking care of my body</li> <li>• Growing and changing</li> <li>• Safety and Protection</li> </ul>	<b>Strand Units</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Myself and my family</li> <li>• My friends and other people</li> <li>• Relating to others</li> </ul>	<b>Strand Units</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing citizenship</li> <li>• Media education</li> </ul>

<b>Social, Personal and Health Education - Two Year Grid</b>		
<b>Strand</b>	<b>Strand Units (Year 1)</b>	<b>Strand Units (Year 2)</b>
<b>Myself</b>	<i>Self-identity (Sept.– Oct.)</i>	<i>Safety and Protection (Jan-Feb)-Stay Safe</i>
	<i>Taking care of my body(Jan-Feb)</i>	<i>Making Decisions (March-April)</i> <i>*This strand unit is for third to sixth only. Infants to second complete the Safety Issues section of Safety and Protection</i>
	<i>Growing and Changing (Mar-April)</i>	
<b>Myself and others</b>	<i>Myself and My Family (Nov.-Dec.)</i>	<i>My friends and other people (May-June)</i>
		<i>Relating to others (Sept-Oct.)</i>
<b>Myself and the wider world</b>	<i>Developing Citizenship (May-June)</i>	<i>Media Education (Nov-Dec.)</i>

### **School Based Initiatives that Promote Well-being**

Glinsk NS implements a number of programmes and initiatives throughout daily school life that support the well-being of our pupils; this list is not exhaustive;

- Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (NCCA, 2009) which encompasses four themes, Well-being, Identity and Belonging, Communication, Exploring and Thinking.
- Amber Flag Initiative
- SPHE Curriculum (RSE, Stay Safe, Friendship and Anti-Bullying.
- Friends for Life (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Class)
- Weaving Wellbeing programmes (2nd - 6th class)

- Welcome to Wellbeing (Infants -1st class)
- Continuum of Support Model
- Student Committees: Green School Committee, Amber Flag Committee
- Outdoor Learning
- Internet Safety activities
- Partnership with Green Schools programme/ Galway County Cycling- 5 week programme for 5th and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils
- External teachers for different strands of PE to promote active living e.g. GAA dance
- School subsidised swimming lessons – 6 week block for 2nd to 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils.
- Healthy Eating
- Annual Sports Day
- Cookery sessions in each classroom
- Social groups e.g. lego therapy, chess games, friendship terrace
- Themed Weeks (e.g. Maths Week, Science Week, Engineers Week, Book Week)
- Promoting the Arts – whole-school Christmas performance, Seachtain na Gaeilge performances, Grandparents Day performances, Sports Day, Active Schools Week, music lessons- tin whistle, song singing.
- Worry boxes and kindness boxes
- Strength spotting activities
- Gonoodle and yoga activities
- Mindfulness colouring and art activities
- Communicating with National Council for Special Education (NCSE) regarding SNA support for pupils
- Links with HSE personnel e.g. Primary Care Team, School Age Team, Early Intervention Team, Assessment of Need Team.
- Links with Local Education centre for online wellbeing sessions

## **Policy and Planning**

Policies are written documents which support the everyday running of the school through active implementation on a day-to-day basis. They form the background script by which the school navigates its way. They are developed and implemented by the whole school community. Glinsk NS regularly reviews our school policies for staff and pupils that are in accordance with the school aims, philosophy, vision and ethos.

## **Partnerships**

Glinsk NS continues to develop strong partnerships with parents/guardians and the wider community, which is a central part of the well-being process. We efficiently engage with appropriate agencies and specialist services to advise, support and contribute to health and well-being, teaching and learning.

The following stakeholders collaborate regularly:

- Parents/Guardians
- Board of Management
- Patronage
- Parents Association
- Student Committees - Green schools/ Amber Flag
- Local schools
- Voluntary/sports/arts groups
- State agencies
- Community groups

- Support services

### **Role of teachers**

It is essential that all staff continue to develop their competence and confidence in the promotion of wellbeing. The qualified classroom teacher is the best placed professional to work sensitively and consistently with students and she/he can have a powerful impact on influencing students' attitudes, values, and behaviour in all aspects of well-being education. This can be achieved through accessing continuing professional development (CPD) which includes the sharing of expertise and learning, and having opportunities to model and engage in collaborative working. The curricular elements of well-being promotion will be delivered by staff who are trained for this purpose having completed relevant CPD.

### **Indicators of Success**

In Glinsk NS, we use the *Wellbeing Indicators of Success* to identify our strengths and targets for improvement, and to actively monitor our progress and outcomes in relation to wellbeing promotion over time. We achieve this by accessing the opinions and views of all stakeholders throughout the process through school self evaluation. The *Wellbeing Indicators of Success*, outlined in Table 5, are the broad outcomes to which the Department aspires and wants schools and centres for education to accomplish.

*Table 5: Wellbeing Promotion Indicators of Success*

Key Areas	Indicators of Success
Culture & Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children, young people and staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.</li> <li>Systems are in place so that the voice of the child/young person, teacher and parent are heard and lead to improvements in school culture and ethos.</li> </ul>
Curriculum (Teaching & Learning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and young people experience positive, high-quality teaching, learning and assessment, which provides opportunities for success for all.</li> <li>Children and young people access curricular activities to promote their physical, social and emotional competence to enhance their overall wellbeing.</li> </ul>
Policy & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools and centres for education use a Self-Evaluation Wellbeing Promotion Process to develop, implement and review wellbeing promotion.</li> <li>Schools and centres for education incorporate wellbeing promotion into whole school policies and practices.</li> </ul>
Relationships & Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and young people, their parents and other external partners are actively involved in wellbeing promotion within the school community.</li> <li>All adults in schools and centres for education have an increased awareness of the importance of wellbeing promotion, including listening to children and young people, and signposting them to internal or external pathways for support when needed.</li> </ul>

These Indicators of Success in the four key areas of wellbeing are further expanded upon as Statements of Effective Practice which provide a set of standards for wellbeing practices across the Continuum of Support at the whole school preventative level (Support for All) and also at the targeted and more individualised levels (Support for Some and Few). These Statements of Effective Practice form the basis of the school's self-reflective Wellbeing Promotion Process. They enable us to identify strengths and areas to target and therefore plan the next stage in the improvement journey.

### **School Self-Evaluation Wellbeing Promotion Process**

To implement this policy our school is required to use the six-step School Self-Evaluation (SSE) process with the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice, to initiate a Wellbeing Promotion review and development cycle. We will consider our existing provision for wellbeing under each of the four key areas (culture and environment, curriculum, policy and planning, and relationships and partnerships), and devise and implement a plan for improvement in one key area, as appropriate for our school. In devising and implementing the improvement plan, we

will refer to the Statements of Effective Practice in key areas relevant to the specific focus we have chosen.

We will firstly gather information by consulting with and collecting information from key stakeholders, including staff, pupils and parents/guardians, relating to current practice in the key areas of wellbeing promotion. This information is essential in order to highlight positive aspects and strengths in our practice and identify areas for development – the analysis and judgement stage. This analysis will inform actions for wellbeing in a selected area. At an intervention stage, appropriate school interventions and strategies will be generated and agreed. We will incorporate these actions into our School Improvement Plan (SIP). Steps will be put in place to implement the agreed actions. At the monitoring stage, actions will be reviewed on an ongoing basis which will assist us in evaluating impact and tracking our progress in this process of continuous improvement.

*Table 6: Using the SSE process with the Wellbeing Framework for Practice*



## **Glinsk NS well-being protective factors**

In Glinsk NS well-being protective factors include:

- positive relationships with peers and teachers - including positive teacher classroom management strategies and a sharing of positive behaviour management practices with parents
- a sense of belonging, security and connectedness to school through a positive school climate and participation in school and community activities
- opportunities for social and emotional learning including the development of attention and planning, self-awareness, self-management, relationship and responsible decision-making skills



- opportunities for the development of knowledge and skills providing a sense of mastery and self-efficacy
- fostering expectations, recognising contributions, effort and achievement and providing opportunities for success
- well-being of school personnel
- protocols and support systems that proactively support children and their families should difficulties arise
- opportunities to develop the necessary skills to cope with using online technology in a safe and appropriate way
- opportunities to develop skills to manage stress that may be linked to school work

### **Well-being risk factors**

#### **In our school setting, well-being risk factors include:**

- absenteeism
- bullying and relationship difficulties
- low achievement/learning difficulties/special educational needs including social, emotional and behavioural needs
- school transitions
- poor connection between family and school

### **Staff Wellbeing**

Support for the wellbeing of staff is also an essential element in wellbeing promotion, and crucial to sustaining teacher/staff engagement, enthusiasm and the ability to model resilience. It builds staff capacity to cope with challenges and adapt to change, and creates conditions to support and motivate staff to be effective.

Glinsk NS is a safe and supportive environment for staff members. All staff members are supported in maintaining their personal health and wellbeing. Our staff benefit from reflecting on our own wellbeing and general attitudes to mental health. All staff are made aware of supports for teacher wellbeing and that individual teachers requiring additional support at a particular time may access the Employee Assistance Service (EAS). Spectrum.Life was awarded the EAS contract in July 2020. The service provided is known as 'Wellbeing Together: Folláine le Chéile'.

The EAS provides advice to employees on a range of issues including wellbeing, legal, financial, bereavement, conflict and mediation. It also provides advice and support to school leaders and delivers interventions to help them deal with health and wellbeing issues in the workplace.

Where appropriate, short-term counselling is available to employees and their family members. A family member includes a spouse, civil partner or dependent, where the family member can be described as a person over the age of 18 and residing at the family home. In addition, online cognitive behavioural therapy is also provided to employees.

A bespoke wellbeing portal and app is available offering a host of online services with access to live chats, videos, podcasts and blogs on topics around mental health, family life, exercise and nutrition. The platform is available via Web, iOS App or Android App.

As part of the EAS, a Mental Health Promotion Manager is also available to develop and deliver evidence based mental health and wellbeing initiatives. Spectrum.Life also provides a series of webinars and presentations to promote wellbeing in schools.

Employee Assistance Service: Free-phone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 or text 'Hi' to 0873690010 - available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management of Glinsk NS.

Chairperson:

Date: