

1. Introduction

Ardcoil Rís plays 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 students, and is underpinned by the [Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter](#). The rationale behind this policy is based on the area of learning at Junior Cycle called Wellbeing which is outlined in the framework for Junior Cycle (2015). The Junior Cycle Wellbeing Programme is across the three years of Junior Cycle, building on the substantial work already taking place in Ardcoil Rís in support of students' wellbeing.

Through several initiatives, Ardcoil Rís ensures that Wellbeing Promotion will be at the core of the ethos of the school and will provide evidence-informed approaches appropriate to the needs of its students. 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 which is in keeping with the ERST.

2. Mission Statement

Wellbeing comprises “many interrelated aspects including being active, responsible, connected, resilient, appreciated, respected and aware” (DES & NCCA, 2017). Ardcoil Rís seeks to promote a caring and committed school community, for both students and staff, where our caring community nurtures the holistic development and uniqueness of each individual. This also aligns with the spirit and ethos of the ERST Charter. To achieve this state of being comfortable, healthy, resilient and happy requires a balancing process between skills/resources and challenges.

Our school is responding to a changing world, and we plan to support the leaders of the future to work in partnership, to care for the environment, to equally look after themselves and others, and to be inspirational and responsible citizens.

The Five Key Elements of the ERST Charter, outlined below, clearly promote access and participation and reflect the Six indicators of wellbeing that have been identified by the NCCA.

- Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values
- Promoting partnership
- Excelling in teaching and learning
- Creating a caring school community
- Inspiring transformational leadership

3. Wellbeing Aims

Ardscoil Rís acknowledges that the wellbeing of our school community is paramount.

“The goal of wellbeing is human flourishing, and flourishing rests on the following: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment” (DES, 2015)

The aims of the Wellbeing policy are to:

- Ensure that student wellbeing is central to teaching practices and student learning
- Make visible our ongoing efforts to enhance student Wellbeing by outlining the policies, procedures, culture, ethos and the activities which serve to assist the wellbeing of students at Ardscoil Rís
- Outline our informal support which allows a holistic approach to enhancing our school community’s wellbeing in accordance with our mission statement
- Protect and enhance student self-worth whilst offering students a chance to understand themselves better
- Encourage all staff to contribute to promoting a caring and inclusive environment within the school that is supportive of school wellbeing
- Illustrate that there is a shared vision and understanding of what student wellbeing means, which emphasises strengths and capacities
- Recognise the relationship between positive experiences of school life, student achievement and long-term wellbeing
- Ensure that respectful and caring relationships are fostered between staff and students, students and students, and staff and parents
- Offer a coordinated structure in supporting our young people through the creation of a multiplicity of opportunities both inside and out of the classroom focused on the promotion of wellbeing
- Outline the ways in which the expertise of the staff and outside agencies are engaged to support and respond to needs of students
- Provide an umbrella policy which outlines a structure that links a series of other policies that relate to wellbeing

The above aims are underpinned by the six wellbeing Indicators which have been identified by the NCCA.

4. Wellbeing



Indicators

The six Wellbeing Indicators identified by the NCCA are described as follows:

- Active - Being physically active is an important element in staying well
- Responsible - Each person must take responsibility for their own choices and make decisions, which promote their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others
- Connected - It is important to feel connected and also to appreciate that actions and interactions taken by one person will impact on their wellbeing and that of others
- Resilient - Everyone goes through challenges in their life. By building resilience, students learn the skills to cope with life's challenges
- Respected - Feeling respected, listened to and valued are key aspects of wellbeing. Positive, respectful relationships are central to maintaining wellbeing
- Aware - Self-awareness is important for wellbeing, being able to make sense of thoughts, feelings and behaviours and being aware of personal values and personal limitations

5. Junior Cycle Statements of Learning

“The learning at the core of Junior Cycle is described in twenty-four statements of learning ... They are central to planning for, the students’ experience of, and the evaluation of the school’s Junior Cycle programme” (Framework for Junior Cycle, 2015, p. 12)

The purposes of the Statements of Learning (SOL) are:

- To ensure a rich educational experience for students.
- Learning that has both breadth and depth and is varied.
- To enable development of the key skills.
- To give access to a varied curriculum of knowledge

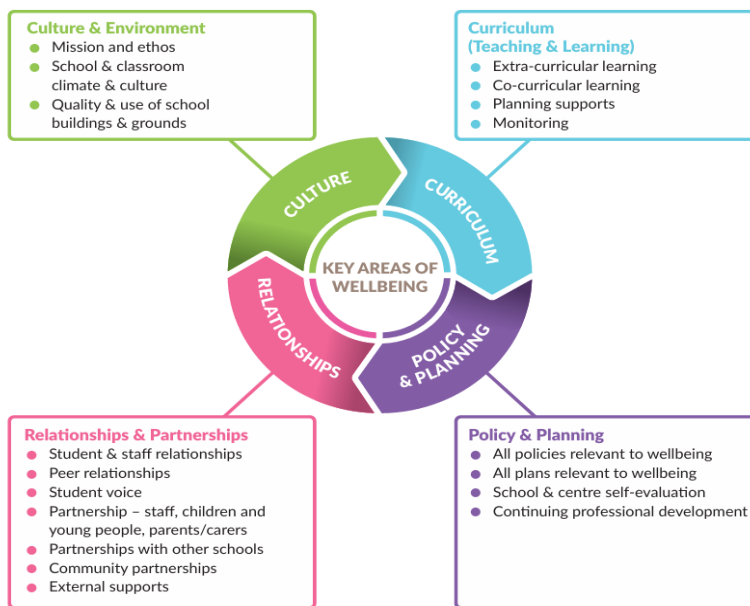
The following SOL are particularly applicable to Wellbeing:

SOL 5: The student has an awareness of personal values and an understanding of the process of moral decision making.
SOL 7: The student values what it means to be an active citizen with rights and responsibilities in local and wider contexts.
SOL 10: The student has the awareness, knowledge, skills, values and motivation to live sustainably.
SOL 11: The student takes action to safeguard and promote her/his Wellbeing and that of others.
SOL 12: The student is a confident and competent participant in physical activity and is motivated to be physically active.
SOL 13: The student understands the importance of food and diet in making healthy lifestyle choices.

6. Whole School Vision of Wellbeing

Ardscoil Rís is currently undergoing a review of how best to promote the four key areas of Wellbeing within a whole school approach based on the guidance from the *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018–2023, Revised October 2019*, p.16.

Figure 2: Whole School Approach - Four Key Areas Wellbeing Promotion



✓ Wellbeing Culture and Environment

a. School Mission and Ethos

The mission and ethos of Ardscoil Rís was outlined at the start of this Wellbeing Policy. Our Catholic ethos supports Wellbeing in several ways:

- We promote inclusivity of all Faiths and Cultures
- All students in Religion classes learn different ways to meditate, reflect and pray and get many opportunities to practice this throughout the year, enhancing their spiritual growth and supporting their Wellbeing
- The whole school community is involved in several liturgies throughout the year. There is a sense of togetherness and support at these times of reflection.
- Ethos is a recurring agenda item in staff meetings and Board of Management meetings

b. School & classroom climate & culture

Classroom culture incorporates teaching, learning and assessment in a Wellbeing manner as:

- Students feel safe, secure and respected in their classrooms
- Students are encouraged to actively engage in their learning so that they may enjoy being at school
- Students receive regular formative feedback about their learning and how they can improve
 - Feedback is also given in the classroom in either groups or one-to-one
- Students have opportunities to talk about their learning and what helps them to learn (student support)
- Teachers use active methodologies to develop the key skills in their subjects, to maintain student engagement and maximise learning and achievement

- Teaching and learning are differentiated and provides an appropriate challenge to enable all students to engage and experience success
- A culture of collaboration and cooperation is promoted through day-to-day teaching (team teaching), learning and assessment practices
- Emphasis is placed on the integration of ICT into teaching and learning in the school
- SEN students, as sanctioned by the DES, have access to a laptop
- Team teaching for SEN support is also in place where appropriate
- Collaboration and sharing of teaching methodologies through staff meetings and through our shared Google Drive
- Assessment practices take the form of both Summative and Formative assessment
- A staff working group has been set up to assess and improve the print environment

C. Quality & use of school buildings & grounds

The physical environment of Ardscoil Rís conveys a message of warmth, welcome and inclusion

- The school is a safe place for all students
- There are spaces for students to congregate socially
- The school building is mostly accessible for all students
- Students and staff take pride and care in maintaining the physical environment
- Encouragement of social engagement through the promotion of extra-curricular and lunch-time activities such as Amber Flag Club, Social Club and Japanese Club

✓ Wellbeing Relationships and Partnerships

d. Student/Staff Relationships and Peer Relationships

Ardscoil Rís recognises that true wellbeing can only be assured through the promotion and development of positive, nurturing and respectful relationships within our school community. We strive to achieve this in the following ways:

- Ensuring that student-teacher relationships are friendly, caring and respectful both in the classroom and interactions on the corridor
- Ensuring that staff are fully aware that they may be the one adult that a student turns to for support and help during a difficult time through our Child Protection Policy
- Fully informing students as to where to get support and how to access the care structures in the school through our Student Support Team as well as all staff members
- Resolving behaviour issues with care, respect and consistency as per our Code of Behaviour
- Encouraging students to show respect, care and concern for each other so that they feel safe and supported amongst their peers

- Encouraging staff to formally praise students through the use of positive comments on VShare
- Recognising that staff are entitled to feel supported and cared for amongst their colleagues
- The Senior Leadership Team operate an open door policy

e. Student Voice

- Forums are provided for students so that their voices may be heard via the Student Council
- All of our students are encouraged to join in with the development of our school community. Students of all year groups are represented on the Student Council
- The aim of the Student Council is to promote the interests of the school and the involvement of the students in the affairs of the school in cooperation with the Board of Management, parents and teachers. This partnership works for the benefit of the school and its students. The Student Council works with the liaison teacher and meets weekly
- Student led initiatives are facilitated, such as no-uniform days/Zambia walk

f. Partnership with parents/guardians, community and external supports

The parents/guardians of the students of Ardscoil Rís are a highly respected and valued stakeholder. Parents/Guardians are the primary educators of their children. The most important gift that any parent can give their child is the opportunity to fulfil their potential. It is paramount to us to ensure that parents feel welcome, respected, and listened to as partners in the education of their children.

- The Parents Council meets regularly and fundraises, organises events, assists policy development in order to sustain and enhance wellbeing in the school community
- Regular reporting home: parent/teacher meeting, term reports, the sharing of academic mentor reports, use of Vshare and social media ensure open and ongoing communications between the school and home.
- Other Ways in which the school provides support to parents in relation to student wellbeing:
 - Parent information evenings
 - Parent teacher meetings
 - One-to-one meetings and/or phone calls arranged with any staff member, class teacher, Year Head or Senior Leadership Team as requested/needs be
 - Facilitation of family meetings with outside agencies, if required

✓ **Wellbeing Curriculum (Teaching & Learning)**

The Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme requires a minimum of 400 hours timetabled engagement by September 2022. This is adhered to at Ardcoil Rís, evident from the table below.

Wellbeing	CSPE (minimum 100 hours)	1	1	1	100
	SPHE (minimum 100 hours)	1	1	1	100
	PE (Minimum 135 hrs)	1	2	2	166
	Digital Media Literacy/Guidance	1	0	0	33
Total		4	4	4	400

All subject planning includes Wellbeing, and teachers are required to embed Wellbeing into their curriculum and ensure it is visible to students. Wellbeing is further embedded into the school curriculum through three key subject areas which are; CSPE, SPHE, PE, Digital Literacy and guidance related learning at Junior Cycle. We focus on Digital Literacy in 1st Year so students are ready to complete their CBA's. In 2nd and 3rd Year the students do one extra hour of PE to promote the 'Being Active' Wellbeing Indicators.

Extra-curricular Learning

- GAA
- Basketball
- Athletics
- Badminton
- Cricket
- Tennis
- Drama
- Maths Club
- Japanese Club
- Zambian Immersion Project
- After School Study
- Sports Day
- Awards Day

i. Planning & Supports

The following is a list of policies underpinning whole school wellbeing at Ardscoil Rís:

- Admissions Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Additional Educational Needs Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Whole school Guidance Plan
- RSE Policy

j. Monitoring

The following structures are in place to support and plan for both students and staff wellbeing at Ardscoil Rís.

i. Student Support Team

Our Wellbeing Team consists of the Principal/Deputy Principal/AEN Coordinator/Year Heads and Guidance Counsellors. The team meets once a week and focuses on wellbeing and support through the NEPS continuum of support - Individual Support/Support for a few/Support for all.

ii. The Additional Educational Needs Team

This team works closely with students and their parents/guardians and aims to remove barriers for students with additional/learning needs to ensure a positive school experience, and achievement of potential.

iii. Year Head Structure

The role of the Year Head is essential in the school community. Year Heads meet every week with the Principal and Deputy Principal.

iv. Class Tutors

Members of the teaching staff act voluntarily as Class Tutors. The tutor is a consistent point of contact for the student for day-to-day management (e.g. signing journal / monitoring of positive behaviour) but is also there in a pastoral role supporting individual students. This is done in collaboration with the Year Head.

v. Student Council

Student involvement and leadership is an essential part of wellbeing in our school community. The Student Council meets weekly and considers issues that affect the student population. It allows students a voice to bring any concerns that may arise to the wider school community.

Vi. Staff Wellbeing

Staff at Ardcoil Rís work in a supported environment in a collaborative manner.

- 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.
- The staff room is well equipped and provides a safe area for staff breaks
- The Principal respects the professional commitment of each staff member. Both are understanding of the complex pressures which may come to bear on all members of staff from time to time and respond with compassion.
- Staff members are encouraged and supported to take on new roles, gain further qualifications or attend relevant CPD courses
- At Ardcoil Rís we promote a culture of collaborative collegiality. This is achieved through regular subject department meetings, whole staff meetings, staff planning committees as well as informal conversations and peer observations.
- The whole-school email system ensures all staff are aware of important events
- The Senior Leadership Team operate an open door policy
- The school has a staff social committee which organizes celebratory events periodically throughout the year, such as Christmas, which helps to enhance personal relationships between staff members

✓ Policy & Planning**k. Policies relevant to Wellbeing**

All these policies were mentioned in "i Planning & Supports" above

l. Plans relevant to Wellbeing

Please see "i Planning & Supports" for further information

m. Continuing Professional Development

Ardcoil Rís staff are continuously encouraged by the Senior Leadership Team to attend relevant CPD courses. The SLT informs the staff of various courses and welcomes teachers to share their experience/findings at staff meetings.

Wellbeing Calendar

Month	Event
August	1 st Year Team Bonding Day
	TY Induction
	6 th Year Pilgrimage
	Student Assemblies
September	Ice Cream Day
	1 st Year Welcome Mass
	Lourdes Pilgrimage
	1 st Year Parents Information Evening
	6 th Year Higher Options
October	Study Skills
	Student Assemblies
	Science Fair
	Soccer Blitz
November	Stand Up Awareness Week
	Charity Fundraising Activities: SVDP, Capuchin's
	Student Assemblies
December	Charity Fundraising Activities: SVDP, Capuchin's
	Carol Service
January	Breakfast for Champions
	Mock Guidance
February	Zambian Immersion Project
	Student Assemblies
	Student Photographs
March	Diversity Day
	Parent Info Evenings: Incoming 1 st Years/TY/Subject Options
April	Zambian Walk
	Grandparents Day

		Student Assemblies
		End of Year Trips
May		Graduations
		TY Foreign Trip
		Year Book
		6 th Year/Staff Lunch
		Prize Giving

Ongoing Wellbeing Events
Posting Updates over intercom and social media
Hurling
Football
Tennis
Cricket
Basketball
Badminton
Amber Club
Japanese Club
Maths Club
Food Village providing warm meals for all
6 th Year Study programme during Staff CPD days
Guest Speakers
Past Pupils Union
Year Group Retreats

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management 20th March 2025.

Signed: 

Date: 20th March 2025

Mary Fox, Chairperson of the Board of Management

Signed: 

Date: 20th March 2025

John McHugh, Principal