

# Consultation on Draft Guidelines on Wellbeing in Junior Cycle

## Respondent's details

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**Position (if applicable)** Director

**Organization (if applicable)** Irish Development Education Association (IDEA)

IDEA is the national network for Development Education in Ireland. Our more than 100 members are involved in the practice, promotion and advancement of Development Education throughout the island of Ireland. Our membership reflects the full spectrum of Development Education and civil society in Ireland, including development NGOs, community and voluntary organisations, educational institutions and networks, trade unions, educators, researchers and activists, many of whom work in collaboration with practicing teachers and academics in the formal, further and higher education sectors. Since 2004, IDEA has been a voice for the Development Education sector in Ireland. IDEA plays an active role in national strategy processes relating to Development Education including: membership of the Department of Education and Skills Advisory Group on the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development; participation in National Council for Curriculum and Assessment consultations; the Global Education Network Europe (GENE) review of Development Education in Ireland; consultation on One World One Future - Ireland's policy for international development; the OECD DAC review of Ireland's development cooperation programme; and other relevant civil society initiatives. Within the IDEA structure, members form working groups to address issues of long-term importance to the sector. The Formal Education Working Group is one of the longest-running and is the largest IDEA working group. Members of the Formal Education Working Group include teachers/educators, education researchers, policy makers and civil society actors working in early childhood, primary, post-primary, further and higher education from twenty-eight institutions and organisations. This submission has been compiled by a subgroup of the Formal Education Working Group (see details in Appendix 1 for a list of contributing organizations).

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Is this response a personal view or is it made on behalf of an organization?

Personal

Organisation

What aspects of the *Draft Guidelines for Wellbeing* in Junior Cycle do you welcome?

IDEA's Formal Education Working Group (FEWG) welcomes the Draft Guidelines for Wellbeing in the Junior Cycle. We welcome how the guidelines acknowledge the importance of practical application, and not merely theoretical knowledge. We welcome the intention of the guidelines to be specific enough to guide the theory and practice of how Wellbeing can be incorporated into the classroom, while remaining broad enough that individual teachers and schools can approach Wellbeing in a way that is responsive to their own ethos, and the needs and abilities of the students.

We welcome the focus on the development of students and teachers through a whole school approach encompassing policies, student support systems, adequate timetabling, parental involvement, professional development and an appropriate pedagogical approach. We further welcome how the guidelines are consistent with 'The Framework for Junior Cycle: 8 Principles and 24 Statements of Learning'.

In particular, we welcome the fact that the Guidelines provide some protection for the citizenship education space in the junior cycle programme. We find a great deal of resonance between the guidelines and Development Education, and it is encouraging to see explicit reference to Development Education outlined in 'Programme 4' (page 52):

recommending two class periods for CSPE focusing on selected learning outcomes from each strand of the CSPE short course is welcomed – *CSPE: "Two class periods per week each year incorporating NCCA Short Course in CSPE plus other related learning such as Development Education..."*

We are further encouraged by the compatibility of the overall guidelines with the fundamental principles embedded in Development Education. In short, the guidelines' holistic approach to an education which cultivates inner resilience, Wellbeing and basic human values alongside, or through, traditional academic subjects are inherent in Development Education. Importantly, however, Development Education promotes a positive and universal focus on Wellbeing which emphasizes core values and competencies for relating to oneself and others as interconnected citizens in the world. These core competencies range from cultivating inner awareness of oneself, to cultivating empathy and concern for others, to cultivating a sense of shared solidarity with people across the world. We therefore welcome the focus on promoting Wellbeing through CSPE and SPHE. As development educators, we see this as an opportunity to embed a pedagogical approach which prepares young people to be life-long creative, connected and collaborative change-makers, and to be healthy, happy individuals who have the full capacity to contribute to the common good in today's globally interdependent world.

Other core competencies inherent in Development Education include critical literacy, media literacy, perspectives and knowledge and conceptualizations of the world through global and ethical lens. It is therefore encouraging to see reference both digital media literacy and philosophy short courses as illustrations of broader ways in which a school's Wellbeing

programme might be designed. (However, we recommend deleting the references to specific learning outcomes in relation to these two courses, to avoid a situation where wellbeing is perceived as being inherent only to the named learning outcomes, and so limiting the potential of these short courses to deliver in relation to wellbeing.)

In relation to all Development Education core competencies, we therefore welcome the 'Indicators of Wellbeing.' We see the potential of the indicators to shape new learning opportunities which do not simply focus on knowledge acquisition, but also nurture the 'whole' student to develop emotionally, physically and cognitively. However, we see an opportunity for the development of each of the 'Descriptors', to capture more deeply the spirit of this holistic educational approach. We will address this more thoroughly in the section 2 below.

2. What areas, if any, of the guidelines need further consideration/clarification? (Suggestions about how this might be done are welcome.)

We offer the recommendations below in an attempt to support the already comprehensive and detailed guidelines, whilst also highlighting possibilities for engaging with the Development Education sector and IDEA's member organisations.

IDEA's Formal Education Working Group (FEWG) believes that emotional intelligence, Wellbeing and self-awareness are critical aspects that are becoming increasingly more important for developing young people as active global citizens. Young people are growing up in a diverse world, where cultural, social, religious, technological and political boundaries are rapidly evolving. Hence, given the speed of such change, it is essential to know oneself emotionally, and have the skills and capacity to adapt to or challenge changing contexts, without giving into despair, apathy or burnout. Thus, it is vital that emotional intelligence and Wellbeing are rooted deeply in any attempt to prepare young people for global citizenship, so that they have the capacity to sustain ongoing participation in a changing world. In this respect, it is encouraging to see the inclusion of guidelines about how CSPE provides opportunities to explore wider social Wellbeing through a human development framework. However, we strongly recommend that the status of CSPE be further strengthened vis-à-vis the other core areas. This can be achieved by strengthening the place of citizenship education in the definition of wellbeing (the WHO definition favors a focus on physical and mental wellbeing, with insufficient reference to the importance of connectedness and a sense of belonging to a myriad of communities (not just school community), solidarity with others, disposition and capacity to contribute to the wellbeing of others, i.e. to be an active citizen). CSPE should be further strengthened by: highlighting the junior cycle principles (page 15) other than 'wellbeing' which can make important contribution to the programme, e.g. 'engagement and participation,': and finally by revising the order in which the core wellbeing areas currently appear in the Guidelines (PE, SPHE and CSPE), to an alphabetical order, which will automatically bestow greater parity.

Overall, we believe the Guidelines, particularly in relation to each of the 'Descriptors' (and particularly in relation to the 'Connected' and 'Respected' indicators, i.e. those which young people in second level are most likely to recognize as relevant to their wellbeing), could be further enhanced by making more explicit reference to Wellbeing in relation to Global Citizenship Education and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). We believe this would capture more deeply the guidelines' bid to ensure Wellbeing runs through these core areas. Furthermore, as development educators, we believe students who are nurtured through Wellbeing, should have the opportunity to 'critically explore' the extent to which we live in a well-becoming world system premised on global justice and equality for people and the planet. We therefore believe that the guidelines have the potential to set out more comprehensively the link between Wellbeing and key skills such as Being Literate, Being Creative, Managing Information and Thinking. Overall, visually setting out 'Descriptors' which capture the multifaceted range of key skills applicable to Wellbeing would assist teachers,

schools and students to grasp more firmly how Wellbeing can be taught in the context of all subject matters.

It is also important to note that these recommendations are offered within the broader context of the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the UN Assembly in September 2015. The SDGs, which have been ratified by Ireland, require UN member states to, *“by 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development”.*

Area	Recommendation
Situating Wellbeing as relevant to Global Citizenship, Education for Sustainable Development and Connection to the Wider World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Further clarity required on how Wellbeing, emotional literacy, and self- awareness are key competencies, which once nurtured, can be then ‘applied directly’ to Global Citizenship and Education for Sustainable Development. Hence, CSPE, SPHE and PE become coherently linked, with personal Wellbeing and caring for oneself becoming extended to others through an emphasis on human rights, empathy, solidarity and global interdependence. To be well in oneself is a pre-requisite to being well with others in society, and ultimately both are necessary for building a culture of global peace, solidarity, equality, justice, Wellbeing for the earth, and active citizenship.</li> <li>- Further clarity required on the ‘critical thinking/critical literacy’ skills applicable to exploring the context of Wellbeing in relation to the wider global world. What does it really mean for students to ‘become well’ and flourish in a knowledge-based, globalized, technology-driven world? How do students feel about this world, and do they think it is a world which fundamentally operates through a well-becoming value and power system? Do we live in a world which cultivates well-becoming systems for the planet? What does it mean for all people and cultures to flourish through Wellbeing? Can they truly flourish in the current world systems based on power imbalances and inequality? Ultimately, why is it vital for us to foster Wellbeing deep within ourselves as part of our evolving journey as interconnected and active global citizens in the world? Can being well in ourselves empower us to bring about a well-becoming world system and planet?</li> <li>- More emphasis on the ‘action’ component in relation to Wellbeing and CSPE is required. How do we take actions for our own Wellbeing and the Wellbeing of others? Understanding the</li> </ul>

	<p>injustices in the world, how can we take actions in solidarity with others to bring about a well-becoming and just world for everyone?</p>
<p>The Descriptors for the indicators for Wellbeing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The guidelines present a holistic approach to education which focuses on nurturing the values and competencies which will lead to increased Wellbeing for individuals and society at large. Ultimately, the ability to be well in oneself physically and emotionally, and the ability to cooperate and collaborate with others and society is at the heart of the guidelines. Wellbeing, therefore, is relevant to (1) the self, (2) self in relation to others, (3) self with others in wider society and the world. We therefore recommend that each descriptor encompasses these 3 components. This, we believe, would provide a clear connection as to how Wellbeing has a ripple effect from personal, emotional and physical health, to a human rights and human development approach to being in the world. For example, under the ‘active’ indicator, it would be useful to make reference to (1) students taking action to care for themselves both physically and emotionally (2) students taking shared action with others in their own school or communities (3) students extending active citizenship to the wider global context through social justice and environmental initiatives. We believe that such an approach would provide the scope for collaborative learning across subjects, specifically linking more clearly the connection between CSPE, SPHE, PE, Education for Sustainable Development and wider Global Citizenship Education.</li> </ul>
<p>Wellbeing and the Framework for Junior Cycle</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We recommend that ‘Staying Well’ is not set apart as most ‘directly relevant to Wellbeing’. We believe this is important in order to avoid Wellbeing becoming assigned to a specific skill set, rather than being seen as a core competency which should run through a diverse range of curriculum areas and key skills. We therefore believe that the reference to key skills (page 17 and also in appendix 2), could be enhanced with a more detailed depiction of how elements from all of the key skills can contribute to Wellbeing. In fact, as initiated in appendix 2, there is potential here to make a much stronger link to the key indicators of Wellbeing, by highlighting appropriate elements from each of the key skills. For example:        Key Skill: Working With Others        Element: Contributing to making the world a better place        Relevant Indicators: Responsible/Connected/Respected        Overall, a cross cutting depiction of various elements from each of the key skills, would represent the multitude of opportunities</li> </ul>

<p>Timetabling</p>	<p>to bring Wellbeing to the heart of the overall programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We recommend that all essential components of Wellbeing are sufficiently timetabled, so that students have adequate space to thoroughly explore all aspects of Wellbeing. 70 hours for CSPE should be seen as a transitional stage, until schools move to the full allocation of 400 hours for Wellbeing, at which time the Guidelines should include a strong statement encouraging schools to offer the 100-hour short course.</li> </ul>
<p>CPD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The success of the implementation of Wellbeing will be hinged upon the adequate training of teachers, ensuring they can utilize the best methods and approaches in class. A commitment to quality CPD which directly supports teacher implementation is essential. The guidelines might be enhanced with more detailed references to the importance of a CPD model which is based upon the principle of nurturing a well-becoming teacher who is adequately skilled in all aspects to Wellbeing education in keeping with the emphasis on teacher wellbeing in the Teaching Council’s An Cosan document.</li> <li>- We recommend that the guidelines capture the full range of possibilities for CPD through external agencies/organisations that are well placed to contribute to high quality CPD for teachers. This would give scope to schools for shaping a well-becoming teacher CPD model through engagement with high quality CPD providers in Development Education, civil society and community/voluntary settings.</li> </ul>

3. We would welcome your feedback on the proposals for assessment and reporting in Wellbeing.

IDEA FEWG makes the comments below in the context of a lack of access to the revised CSPE, SPHE and PE short courses. We would welcome the immediate uploading of these documents to [www.curriculumonline.ie](http://www.curriculumonline.ie), and would also like more detail on whether/when assessment specifications for each of these short courses will be made available. We are also concerned about the lack of information in the Guidelines for schools who might choose to retain their existing 70-hour CSPE programme (whether in the transition period up to the 400 hours of Wellbeing or on a more long-term basis), when in the context of a move from an SEC assessed programme to a situation where they could potentially elect not to engage in planning or operationalization of either formative or summative assessment for CSPE.

The IDEA FEWG believes that effective assessment will improve the overall quality and teaching of Wellbeing. However, as development educators we have an in depth understanding of the difficulties associated with setting standard benchmarks for holistic learning programmes such as Development Education and Wellbeing. Since such programmes move beyond knowledge acquisition to the development of the ‘whole’ student, then learning is not linear and easily measured. Learning rather becomes embedded in a process of transformation, where students may experience varying levels of changes in a non-systemic way. We therefore recommend that assessment strategies should have a strong focus on the process of engaging in wellbeing programmes, rather than an over-emphasis on wellbeing outcomes. We believe this should involve an ongoing approach where all stakeholders, including students, have the space to understand why the processes applied worked well or not-so-well. In this respect, we welcome how the guidelines refer to students playing a central role as active and motivated participants in their learning and assessment, and how reporting and feedback will have a focus on learning and progress. We also welcome the intention to create a space for both school comment and student comment on the Wellbeing section of the JCPA. For teachers, however, it is vital they are given more and sufficient guidance about how best to organize and allocate roles and responsibilities where reporting on wellbeing is concerned. They should also be encouraged to identify and comment on their professional development needs in order to improve the quality of their teaching, assessment and their own reporting and supporting their students to develop their Wellbeing comments for the JCPA.

Whilst honoring the importance of the overall process element of assessment, we also see potential for learning from creative assessment approaches, which might contribute to collating tangible evidence of impact. Such approaches are well illustrated in ‘*How Do We Know It’s Working?*’ a toolkit developed by RISC (Reading International Solidarity Centre)<sup>ii</sup>. This toolkit has been used successfully by a number of IDEA members. The RISC methodology is based on rigorous collection and comparison of baseline and follow-up data. Unlike most standardised toolkits, the tools and templates for data collection are creative and critically engaging. The toolkit also gives guidance on how to analyse and present data so that an evidence-based picture of complex, deep change emerges. This type of toolkit has great

potential to be applied to Wellbeing. In fact, as recommended earlier, if the 'Indicator Descriptors' are revised to capture the multifaceted range of key skills applicable to Wellbeing, then this would assist teachers, schools and students to grasp more firmly how Wellbeing can be taught in the context of all subject matters and key skills. Subsequently, this would provide teachers with wider scope to identify key assessment criteria which they can creatively implement through stimulus such as the RISC toolkit. However, it is important to point out that effective CPD is a critical aspect to support teachers in this endeavor.

\*Other useful assessment approaches include:

- Student Wellbeing Journals self-assessment and reflection could happen if students had a Wellbeing Journal to illustrate progress and provide an overview of how students are supporting their own Wellbeing
- Recording of CSPE Actions would allow assessment to take place using the indicators and perhaps revised 'Descriptors' as recommended. For example, to what extent students:
  - o take action to protect and promote their own Wellbeing and that of others
  - o have a sense of care and connection to their school, community or wider world
  - o are involved in relevant initiatives and can demonstrate how this is making a contribution to bring about a well-becoming world

4. Please include comments and suggestions to improve the accessibility and usefulness of the draft Guidelines for schools to support their planning in *Wellbeing*.

Consistent with our earlier recommendations, we believe that the guidelines would become more meaningful for schools if clear connections are made across key skills and core wellbeing curriculum areas. We believe this would assist schools and teachers to welcome Wellbeing as a means to implement and meet the demands of an already expanding curriculum, rather than see it as another extra area that they need to achieve.

We therefore recommend:

- Creating an illustrative picture of how Wellbeing can be approached as means to achieve a diverse range of required key skills through expanding the Wellbeing ‘Descriptors’ to cross-cut through a range of key skills
- Clearly illustrating how Wellbeing cross-cuts various subject strands including Global Citizenship Education and Education for Sustainable Development
- Providing a glossary of key terms relevant to the wider concept of Wellbeing e.g. *resilience, emotional intelligence, interdependence*. These key terms should complement the Wellbeing ‘Indicators’ and the wider curriculum key skills
- Make clearer curriculum connections as to how Critical Thinking is an essential aspect of Wellbeing, which in turn is vital for responsible decision-making and working towards realizing a well-becoming world. In our increasingly dynamic and globalized world, manifesting Wellbeing through ethical action requires a sophisticated appreciation of interdependence, systems and complexity

5. Any additional comments and suggestions you group would like to include.

Overall, we would like to reiterate our support for this initiative and how we see it as an essential aspect to fully prepare young people for participating in life. We would like to highlight that some of our member organisations, alongside formal education bodies, are currently working in this area by specifically piloting CPD approaches to link Wellbeing to wider Global Citizenship education, creating innovative ‘literacy’ approaches which combine emotional and critical thinking skills through ‘embodied action’ teaching methodologies. We would be happy to share learning and resources to complement ongoing developments of the overall Wellbeing initiative.

We strongly recommend removing the named NGOs and other agencies in the 7 programmes and elsewhere in the document. Given that the Guidelines are a government document this has the potential to be perceived as an ‘official’ validation of the named (and only the named) NGOs/other agencies, when in fact there is a much wider range of organizations who can potentially make quality contributions to schools’ wellbeing programmes. Perhaps a document listing relevant organizations or online platforms with relevant resources could be made available to schools, separate to the Guidelines proper? If so, IDEA’s formal education working group would be delighted to contribute as appropriate.

Although the status of citizenship education in junior cycle is more secure with the development of the Wellbeing guidelines, the guidelines do not, in our opinion, go far enough. With the implementation of senior cycle *Politics and Society* from September 2016, CSPE is the only curriculum areas within the Wellbeing framework to have a follow on subject at senior cycle. The existence of *Politics and Society* casts a further spotlight on the relatively ‘inferior’ status of CSPE within the Wellbeing framework, and we strongly recommend that this is rectified as outlined in section 2 of this submission.

Finally, we would like to suggest that the guidelines make reference The National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development in Ireland, 2014-2020, demonstrating how engaging with quality Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) can significantly contribute to Wellbeing for all.

The definition of Sustainable Development makes clear reference to Wellbeing for all: *‘Sustainable development’ can be defined as ‘development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’ Sustainable development is characterised as a continuous, guided process of economic, environmental and social change aimed at promoting Wellbeing of citizens now and into the future<sup>iii</sup>.*

## Appendix One: IDEA Formal Education Working Group Members

This submission has been compiled by the following subgroup:

- A Partnership with Africa (APA)
- Children in Crossfire
- Worldwide Global Schools Programme (Irish Aid – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade)
- St Patrick’s College, Drumcondra

On behalf of all IDEA Formal Education Working Group members:

- Amawele
- Amnesty International, Ireland
- An Taisce
- Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland
- St Patrick’s College
- CDET B Curriculum Development Unit
- Childfund
- Darran Irvine (individual)
- Sean Coakley (teacher)
- EcoUNESCO
- Friends of Londiani
- Galway One World Centre
- GOAL
- Gorta-Self Help Africa
- Global Citizenship Schools
- John Scottus Secondary School
- Kimmage Development Studies Centre
- Léargas
- Loreto Education Centre
- Ben Mallon (PhD student)
- Sightsavers
- Suas
- Ubuntu Network
- UNICEF
- Value Added in Africa
- Young Social Innovators

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<sup>i</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1579SDGs%20Proposal.pdf> Goal 4.7

<sup>ii</sup> Reading International Solidarity Centre (RISC), *How Do We Know it’s Working? A toolkit for measuring attitudinal change*, (2008).

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/National-Strategy-on-Education-for-Sustainable-Development-in-Ireland-2014-2020.pdf>