

2018 NPC INNOVATION AWARD WINNING PROJECTS

2018 Joint Winner - Scoil Nano Nagle Junior National School Parents' Association, Bawnogue, Clondalkin, Dublin 22 with their project

'Developing awareness of the importance of 'wellbeing' in the home and school'

Purpose of the project:

- To develop an awareness of the importance of wellbeing in the home and school
- To highlight the importance of wellbeing on learning
- To create and enhance the school environment to support the development of mental wellbeing and healthy lifestyles.

The rationale being that improving the school environment and provision of resources for wellbeing would positively impact on the learning and overall mental and physical health of the children, families and the community.

Who needs to be involved?

The Parents' Association adopted a whole-school approach to involve children, staff and parents, which could be sustained over time.

How to implement in your school?

Developing a Health Promoting School (HPS) Model involves establishing and maintaining policies, practices and programmes that promote health over a sustained period of time. The process of working towards becoming a HPS involves attention and focus on four key areas:

- Environment
- Curriculum and Learning
- Policy and Planning
- Partnerships

To find out more about a Health Promoting School click this link <https://www.healthpromotion.ie/hp-files/docs/HPM00839.pdf>

Step 1: Decide on key areas of a HPS to concentrate on

The Parents' Association of Scoil Nano Nagle decided to concentrate on 3 key areas of a HPS.

- Environment
- Teaching and Learning
- Partnership.

Parents' Associations could focus on whatever areas work best for their children, parents and school staff.

Step 2: Engage with parent volunteers, teachers, HSCL and local agencies to further ideas.

Scoil Nano Nagle's endeavours under the chosen areas included doing the following:

Environment

- A parents room was created by removing partitions in a prefab, this was decorated and furnished.
- A play therapy room was creatively decorated by two artistic parents, who painted a mural on the wall; fluffy cushions and lots of creativity transformed this into a child-friendly space.

- A school garden was developed where children, parents and teachers could learn and develop a sense of wellbeing. Bright colours were used on outdoor furniture to be uplifting, fairy doors and a place for children to write their worries provided a simple way to meet the emotional needs of the children.

Teaching & Learning:

The Parents' Association provided funding for mindfulness CDs for the classrooms.

- Hints and tips were sent out in a weekly newsletter to show simple ways to enhance physical and mental health in the home.
- Adult classes focusing on wellbeing were organised by the HSCL Coordinator, these included classes on healthy eating, gardening and crafts.
- Activities such as baking for a cake sale, helping in the garden, doing crafts in the classroom saw children working together with their parents and grandparents.
- Family Fun Day ideas were circulated to all families, highlighting free events with an educational focus.

Partnership:

The final part of the project was two-fold, it involved creating two directories to be available on the school website.

- A directory of extra-curricular activities for the children in the locality. In order to develop this list, parents were asked to complete a short questionnaire asking for basic information on the clubs their children attend. This directory provides information on clubs and services in the area to help promote, support and develop children's talents, skills and interests, which was deemed to be a huge factor in promoting their overall wellbeing.
- A directory of agencies for parents to access family support. Information for this directory was collected by liaising with the HSCL Coordinator and local agencies.

In addition to these directories, the Parents' Association is compiling a list of places for family trips. This information is being gathered using a suggestion box in the school reception area, a note in the newsletter and again by liaising with the HSCL Coordinator.

The school planned to host a 'Wellbeing Week' in June 2018 to which parents and community agencies were to be invited.