Wellbeing Policy - Rathpeacon N.S.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to document the implementation of the Self-Evaluation Wellbeing Promotion Process in Rathpeacon NS, as outlined in the Wellbeing in Education Framework for Practice.

The process began in March 2022, with the establishment of a Wellbeing Committee in Rathpeacon NS comprised of several members of staff with particular interest in the area of Wellbeing who volunteered to join the committee. Two of these members attended CPD on the Wellbeing in Education Framework in Cork Education Centre in April 2022. The group then set about following the six step process based on the concept of School Self-Evaluation.

Definition of Wellbeing

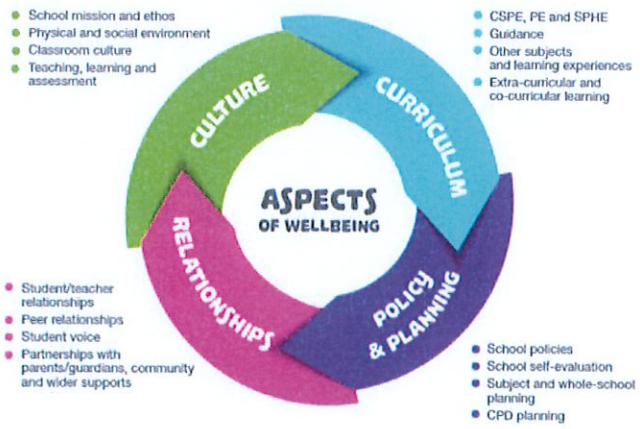
Wellbeing is present when a person realises their potential, is resilient in dealing with the normal stresses of their life, takes care of their physical wellbeing and has a sense of purpose, connection and belonging to a wider community. It is a fluid way of being and needs nurturing throughout life. (World Health Organisation (WHO), 2001).

School Self-Evaluation Process for Wellbeing Promotion

Year 1 (April 2022 to June 2023)

Step 1: Identify a Focus *(April 2022)*

The Wellbeing Committee studied the 4 key areas of Wellbeing Promotion. A common theme that emerged from initial discussions was the negative impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on staff and students. As such, it was decided to focus on Culture and Relationships as two possible areas for improvement.



Step 2: Data Gathering *(June 2022)*

A survey of Staff and Parents was undertaken online using Microsoft Forms. 90 parents and 26 staff members responded to the questionnaire. See Appendices for results of surveys.

Step 3: Analyse Data and make Judgements *(June 2022)*

The Wellbeing Committee analysed the results of the surveys. From studying the data it became particularly apparent that Staff morale was quite low.

Significant numbers of staff members reported feeling overwhelmed, stressed, and rushed. Equally, only six members of staff noted that they felt appreciated. Other issues for staff were managing challenging behavior in students, workload, parental demands and expectations.

Many observed that since COVID-19, the staff had become increasingly fragmented. Others felt overwhelmed from trying to fit too many things into the school day and that the school was doing too many initiatives. Coping with stress and burnout was also a common theme.

The Wellbeing Committee made the judgement that aiming to improve staff morale and Wellbeing would be a worthwhile cause.

Step 4: Write and Share School Improvement Plan *(September 2022)*

Having analysed the data and drawn conclusions, the Wellbeing Committee formalized a School Improvement plan with specific, measurable targets. The different strands of Staff feedback were collated into 4 'risk factors to Wellbeing' as per the Framework.

1) Deteriorating Staff Relationships
2) Initiative overload
3) Appreciation levels and workload
4) Inadequate coping strategies

The Committee then identified Protective Factors that could be put in place, namely:

Protective Factors
1) **Deteriorating Staff Relationships** a) *Croke park hour:* Use Croke Park hour for staff bonding (coffee cart, etc) b) *Lunchtimes:* Merge the 4 streams on last Friday of every month. c) *Team teaching/ Subject Swap:* use your strengths
2) **Initiative Overload** a) *Calendar for initiatives:* This allows staff to plan accordingly. b) *New initiatives procedure:* Staff member suggests new initiative to ISM and it is judged in term of workload vs benefit to students. It is then brought to staff meeting for discussion before approval.

3) <u>Appreciation Levels and workload</u>

a) *Emails:*

- -Staff training re writing concise replies/ not replying at all.
- -Remind parents in September.
- -Replace email forwards for CPD to a display in Staffroom

b) *Paperwork:*

- Change short terms to monthly? Focus on the most important areas: Objectives, Activities & Differentiation, Assessment/ Reflection.

c) *Culture change:*

- -Culture of Fear in Education: Fear of inspector, parents, a judge. Fear stifles creativity and risk taking.
- -High Expectations: The feeling that everything needs to be done to a high standard (often our own worst enemy)

4) <u>Coping strategies</u>

- *Guest speaker:* to provide some useful strategies for coping with stress and switching off.
- *Out of hours contact:* Staff Whatsapp just for social use? Don't check or reply to emails after leaving school.
- c) *Staffroom Display:* Positive quotes, etc

Step 5: Put our Improvement Plan into Action *(September 2022)*

Representatives from the Wellbeing Committee presented the results of the staff survey to the ISM team and to Staff at the first Staff Meeting of the School year. Using a PowerPoint Presentation, the identified Risk Factors and targeted Protective Factors were explained to all staff members. Feedback was welcomed.

During the discussion, staff commented on how positive it was to be talking about Wellbeing and remarked that they enjoyed the opportunity to give constructive feedback using the survey. The Improvement Plan was adopted.

Step 6: Monitoring and Evaluating *(October 2022 - June 2023)*

The Wellbeing Committee met several times over the course of the year, to monitor the progress of the Improvement Plan and to oversee the implementation of some of the targets at specific times.

This Rubric was used to keep track of the specific targets.

Green= target achieved, Yellow = in progress, Red= not yet started.

Staff Relationships (Protective Factors)		
Merge the 4 streams on last Friday of every month	Croke park hour: staff bonding	
Initiative Overload (Protective Factors)		
	Google Calendar for initiatives	
Appreciation Levels and Workload (Protective Factors)		
-Send message about emails to parents -Replace email forwards for CPD to opt in -Change short term to monthly. Focus on important areas		
Coping Strategies (Protective Factors)		
Guest speaker: to provide some useful strategies for stress and switching off. (Fiona Foreman from Weaving Wellbeing) Staffroom display		

Over the course of the year, some targets were reframed as Reminders. At Staff Meetings, these were outlined to staff members.

Reminders for staff members
• Emails: Write short replies. Switch off after school. • Staff Whatsapp: For social use 5pm to 8am (no school talk!) • New Initiative Procedure: Bring idea to ISM/ Staff Meeting for discussion first. • Team-Teaching: Consider Team teaching and subject swaps. • High Expectations: Everything can't be done to perfection. We are often our own worst enemies and put pressure on ourselves. • Culture of Fear in Primary Education: Fear of inspector, parents, a judge. Fear stifles creativity. Take educational risks with your students! Try something new!

As can be seen from the Rubric, most of the Targets were met. It proved difficult to source a coffee cart due to financial reasons and so an alternative idea must be used next year. Work on using a "live" Google Calendar to track Initiatives is ongoing. A trial will begin in September 23 using one representative from each level of the school to input events. Going forward, the

reminders should be shown at every staff meeting and if new Staff Wellbeing targets arise, they can be added to the Rubric.

Staff were subsequently surveyed online using Microsoft Forms in November 22 and May 23. These results were analysed and compared to the initial survey taken in May 22.

Conclusion: Year 1 of Wellbeing Self-Evaluation Process

As seen in the surveys (in the Appendices), there was a substantial increase in Staff general Wellbeing over the course of the 12 months from June 22 to May 23.

In November 2022 and subsequently, May 2023, staff reported feeling less overwhelmed and stressed compared to May 22. There were dramatic improvements in the areas of workload, managing challenging behaviours, and coping with parental demands and expectations. From looking at comments, staff members felt better able to cope with the demands of their job and relationships with other staff members had also improved.

This Policy was discussed and noted by the Board of Management at its meeting of September 19th, 2023.

Signed: _____ Signed: Susanna O'Neill

Chairperson Board of Management Principal

Date: 19.09.2023

Attached:

Appendix A: Staff Survey Results

Appendix B: Parent Survey Results

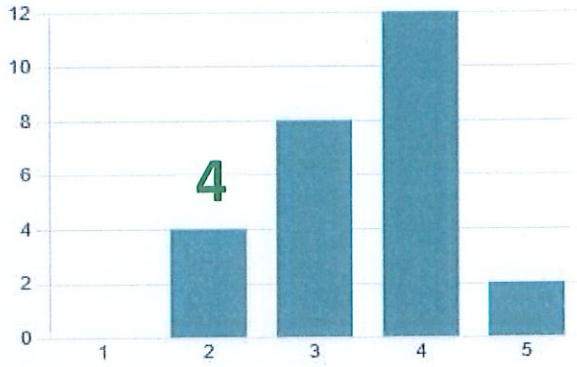
Appendix A: Staff Survey Results

Rate your sense of Wellbeing in general at work on a scale of 1 to 5

More Details

June 2022

3.46
Average Rating

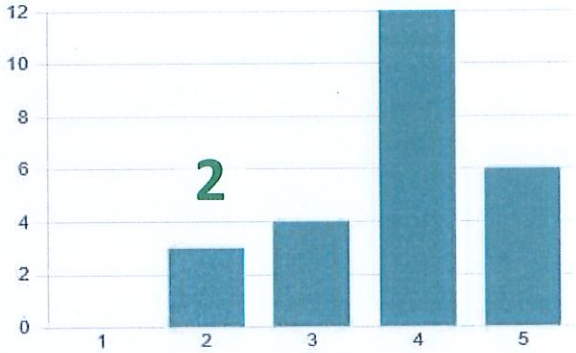


Rate your general sense of Wellbeing at work on a scale of 1 to 5

More Details

November 2022

3.84
Average Rating

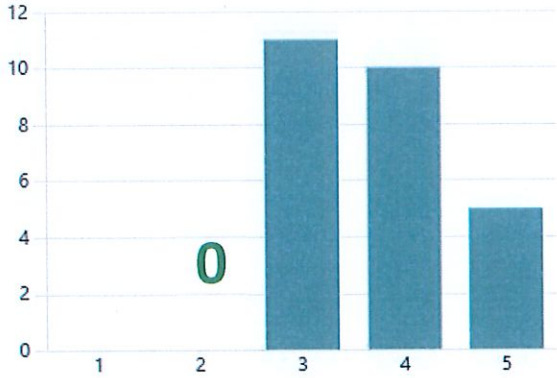


1. Rate your general sense of Wellbeing at work on a scale of 1 to 5

More Details

May 2023

3.77
Average Rating

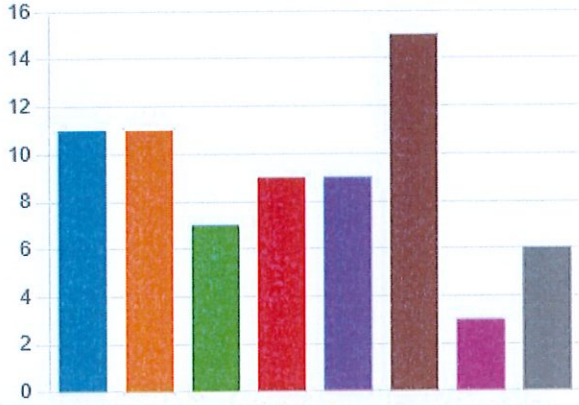


5. Which of these are your dominant feelings in work in the past fortnight? (select all that apply)

More Details

June 2022

Overwhelmed	11
Enthusiastic	11
Motivated	7
Stressed	9
Organised	9
Rushed	15
Calm	3
Appreciated	6

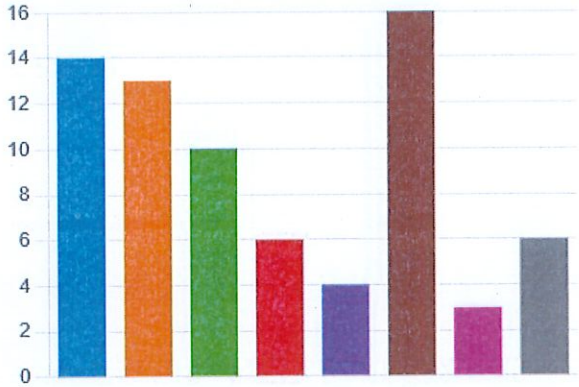


. Which of these are your dominant feelings in work in the past fortnight? (select all that apply)

More Details

November 2022

Enthusiastic	14
Overwhelmed	13
Motivated	10
Stressed	6
Organised	4
Rushed	16
Calm	3
Appreciated	6

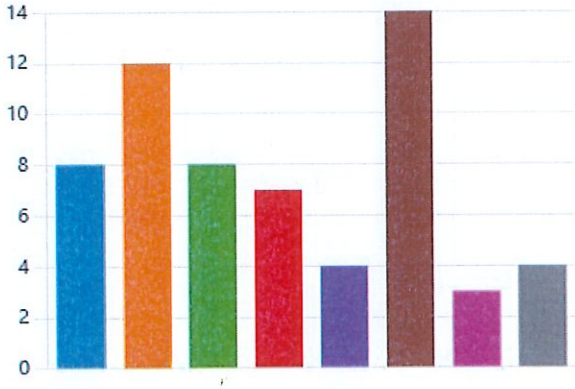


2. Which of these are your dominant feelings in work in the past fortnight? (select all that apply)

More Details

May 2023

Overwhelmed	8
Enthusiastic	12
Motivated	8
Stressed	7
Organised	4
Rushed	14
Calm	3
Appreciated	4

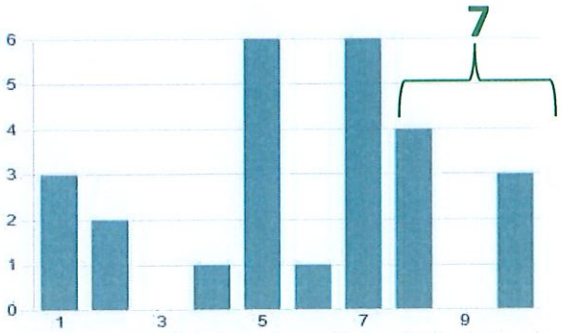


To what extent does **workload in school** impact negatively on your Wellbeing in work? (1= a little, 10= a lot)

More Details

June 2022

5.81
Average Rating

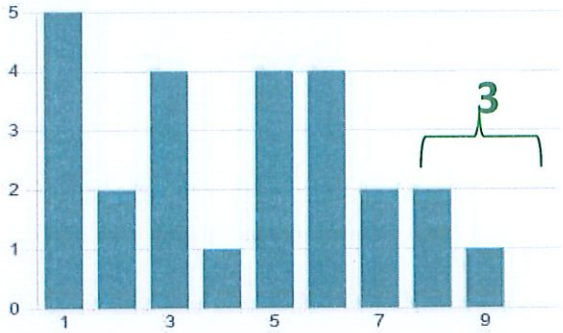


To what extent is **workload in school** impacting negatively on your Wellbeing? (1= a little, 10= a lot)

More Details

November 2022

4.32
Average Rating



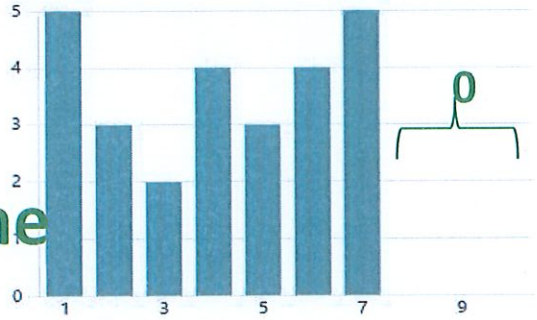
3. To what extent is **workload in school** impacting negatively on your Wellbeing in work? (1= not at all, 10= a lot)

More Details

May 2023

4.12
Average Rating

-30% from June

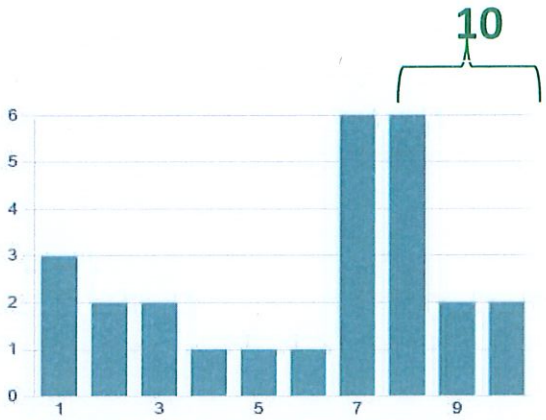


To what extent does **managing challenging behaviour in students** impact negatively on your Wellbeing in work? (1= a little, 10= a lot)

More Details

June 2022

6.00
Average Rating

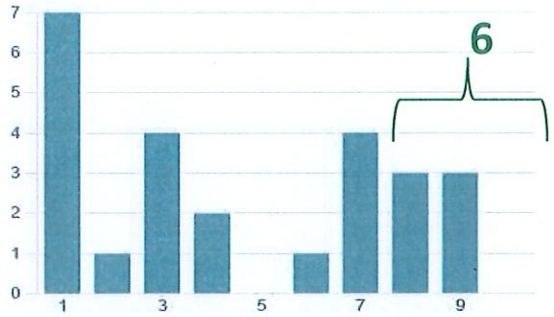


To what extent is **managing challenging behaviour in students** impact negatively on your Wellbeing? (1= a little, 10= a lot)

More Details

November 2022

4.56
Average Rating



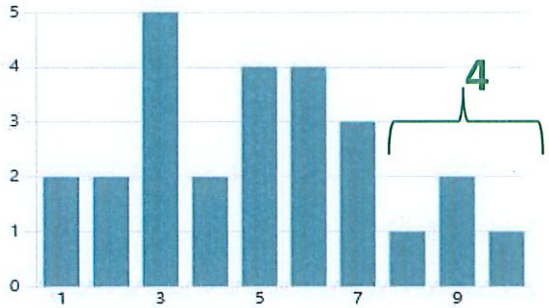
4. To what extent is **managing challenging behaviour in students** impacting negatively on your Wellbeing in work? (1= not at all, 10= a lot)

More Details

May 2023

-16%

5.00
Average Rating

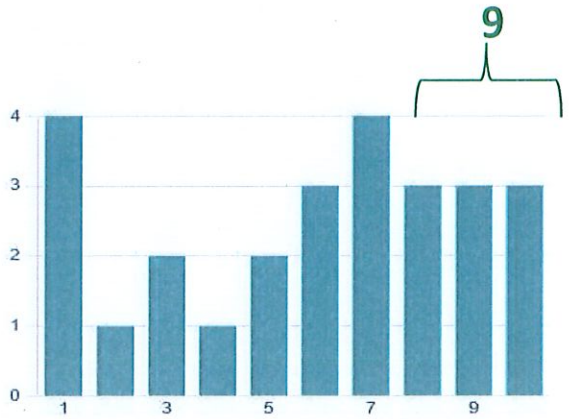


To what extent do **administrative tasks and paperwork** impact negatively on your Wellbeing in work? (1= a little, 10= a lot)

More Details

June 2022

5.88
Average Rating

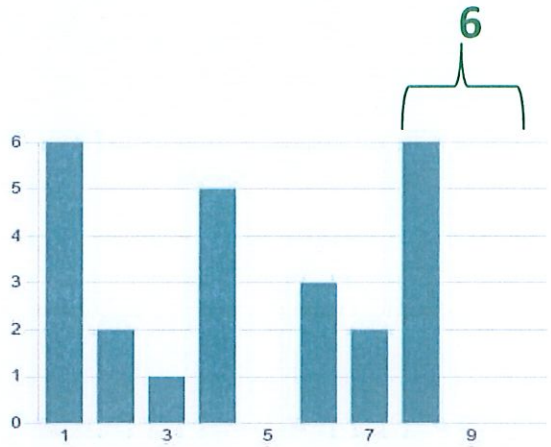


To what extent are **administrative tasks and paperwork** impacting negatively on your Wellbeing? (1= a little, 10= a lot)

More Details

November 2022

4.52
Average Rating



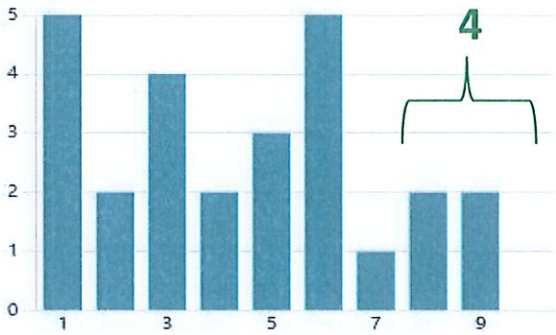
To what extent is **administrative tasks and paperwork** impacting negatively on your Wellbeing in work? (1= not at all, 10= a lot)

More Details

May 2023

-25%

4.42
Average Rating

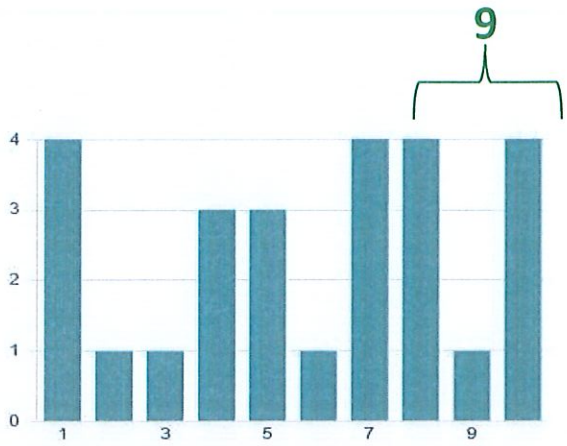


To what extent do **parental demands and expectations** impact negatively on your Wellbeing in work? (1= a little, 10= a lot)

More Details

June 2022

5.81
Average Rating

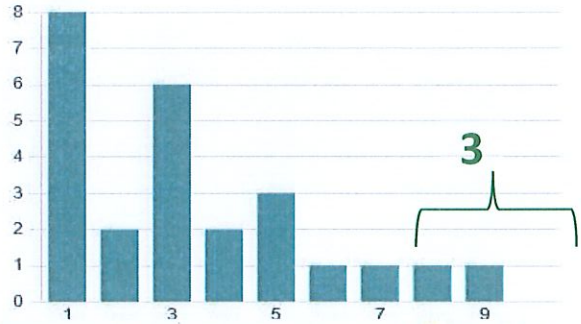


To what extent are **parental demands and expectations** impacting negatively on your Wellbeing? (1= a little, 10= a lot)

More Details

November 2022

3.32
Average Rating

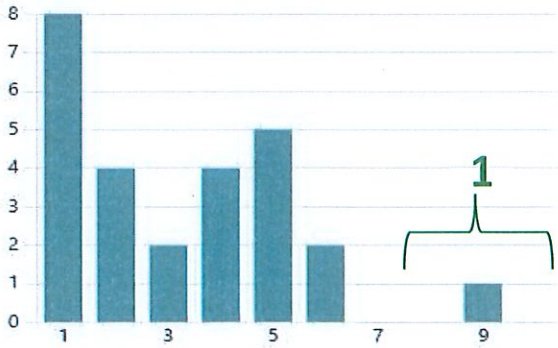


To what extent is **parental demands and expectations** impacting negatively on your Wellbeing in work? (1= not at all, 10= a lot)

More Details

May 2023

3.23 **(-44%)**
Average Rating

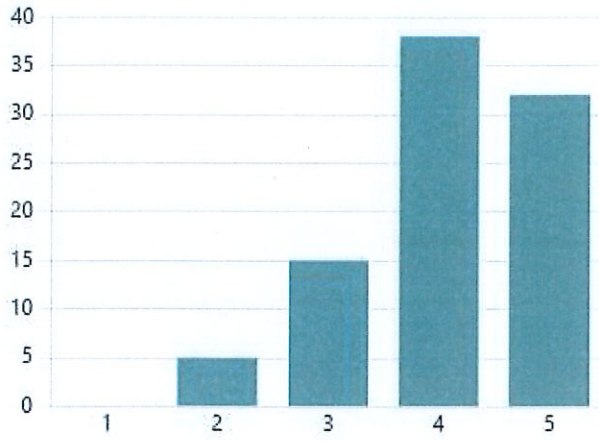


Appendix B: Parent Survey

In your opinion, what is your child's general sense of Wellbeing (1=low sense of Wellbeing, 5=high sense of Wellbeing)

More Details

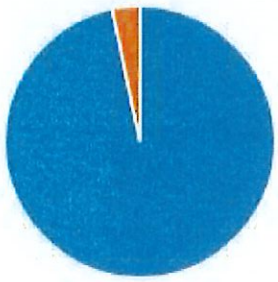
4.08
Average Rating



Does attending Rathpeacon NS impact on your child's Wellbeing in a positive way or in a negative way?

More Details

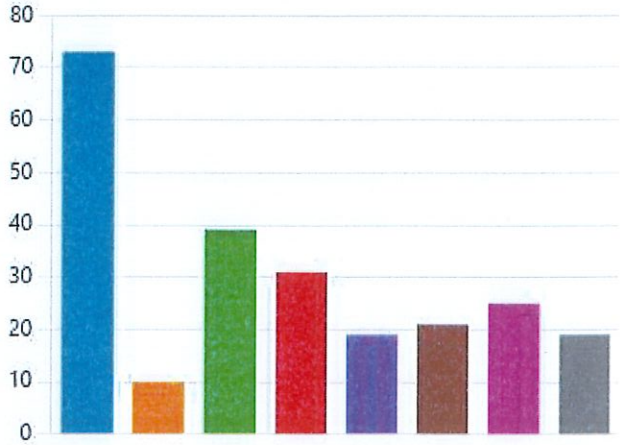
Positive	87
Negative	3



In your opinion, which of these are the dominant feelings that your child experienced in school in the last fortnight? (select all that apply)

More Details

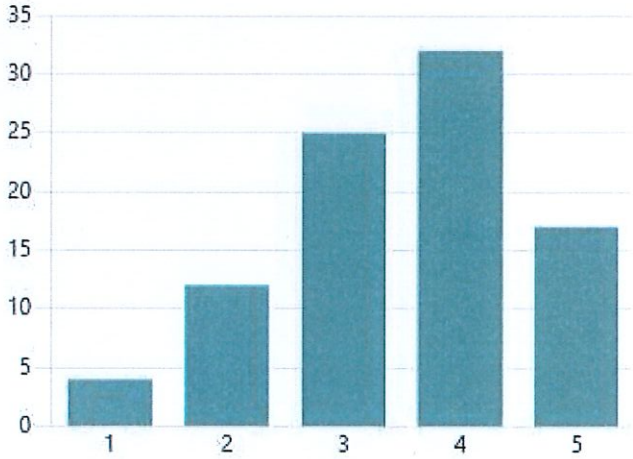
Happiness	73
Sadness	10
Enthusiasm	39
Worry	31
Frustration	19
Pride	21
Confidence	25
Shyness	19



Rate your child's resilience (ability to cope with difficult situations)

More Details

3.51
Average Rating

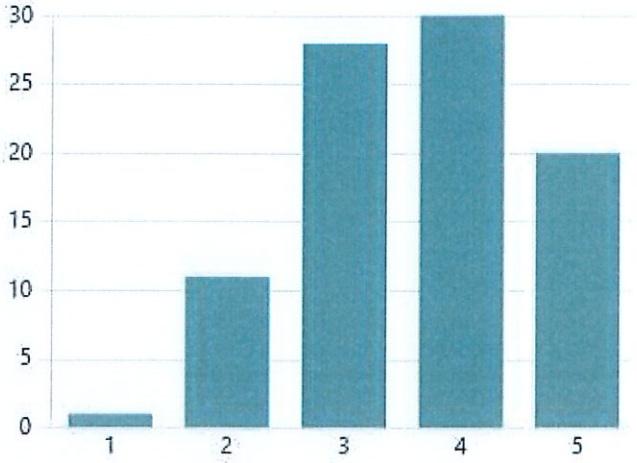


Rate your child's self esteem

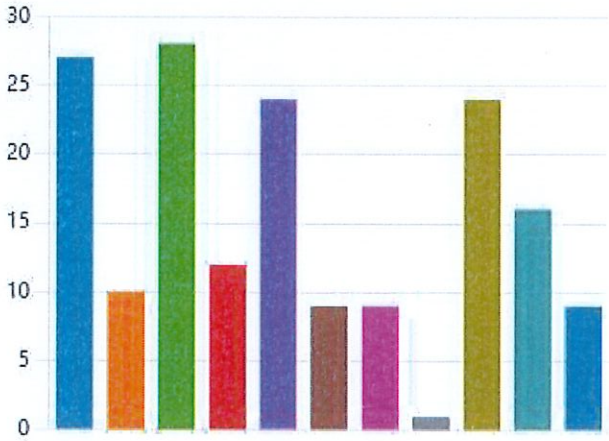
More Details

3.63

Average Rating



In your opinion, do any of the following have a negative impact on your child's sense of Wellbeing? (tick any that apply)

More Details

Difficulties with school work	27
Peer Pressure in school	10
Excessive worrying	28
Gaming/ Phone over-dependence	12
Pressure to please others	24
Negative body image	9
Difficulties forming and maintai...	9
Social Media	1
Difficulties regulating emotions	24
Low self-esteem	16
Other	9