

## Education's Romance with Wellbeing

### How to make the relationship last

#### Develop a common language

- Create a goal, slogan, framework and shared definitions and ensure that they are part of the language used in school.
- Plan a significant time period in which to do this. It is the bedrock of what follows.
  - Create a team - or draw on strategic teams made up of champions of wellbeing, if you already have them. Involve teachers, support staff, board, parents, students.
  - Decide what areas of wellbeing need to be defined.
  - Feedback regularly to the whole staff.

#### RCHK example

Designing the Guiding Principles for our wellbeing approach took us one academic year. In August 2016, with the guidance of Dr. Paula Robinson, we posed four questions to all teachers and educational assistants within the school. A group of teachers formed a strategic team to look at the information gathered. They asked clarifying questions of representatives of the school community. In February, the team used all the data to draft the guiding principles which were shared with the rest of the staff. Teachers were asked to suggest designs for a framework during a PD day. The strategic teams worked on the language of the guiding principles during staff meetings, continuing to consult with the community including parents and students. In June 2017, our guiding principles and the model for our wellbeing approach - the heart of RCHK - were agreed and published.

## Focus on Faculty

### Personal wellbeing

- Ensure that wellbeing is central for all staff as well as students.
  - Encourage staff to value and take responsibility for their own wellbeing
  - Consider work-life balance
    - Schedule to have no staff meetings when reports are due
- Provide or subsidise classes in school for staff wellbeing (including teachers, educational assistants and support staff)

#### RCHK example

The school opens lanes in the swimming pool for staff before school. The gym is available before and after school.

#### RCHK example

- exercise classes (for example, zumba) - location provided free, member of our community provides sessions at a discount from usual rate
  - yoga classes - teachers who are qualified instructors have provided classes, external provider also gives paid classes with free use of space
  - art jamming - lead by one of the primary art teachers from time to time
  - personal mindfulness course ([dot B Foundations](#)) - provided after school, organised and paid for by school.
- Promote staff initiatives to increase connectedness e.g. staff barbecues, social gatherings and expeditions.
  - Consider if there are ways to provide counselling services to staff who need them - for example, set hours with school counsellors when staff can see them.

### Professional development

- Use staff meetings to share ideas and suggestions to support wellbeing
  - Share (or give to middle leaders or champions of wellbeing to share in a modelling approach) frequent, quick links to ideas and tips to support a wellbeing approach. (Many examples are available on [The Greater Good](#) website.)
- Share relevant research papers and presentations with those who show a particular interest.
  - If teachers are interested in mindfulness and use it in class, share research related to mindfulness. Create pockets of expertise.

- Share key points from research papers in staff emails, blogs or briefings. Relate it to what has happened or could happen at school.
- Promote professional development for wellbeing approaches
  - Seek out professional development opportunities and encourage applications from faculty. Strategically send those who are likely to share the ideas with others.
  - Vary the staff who attend sessions.
  - Share online training opportunities with all.
- Build a wellbeing focussed section of the staff library.
  - Talk to the budget manager to ring fence money for relevant books.
  - Showcase the resources and books during meetings.
  - Start a book club to discuss wellbeing focused books and articles, or suggest these books to an existing staff book club.

## Culture of innovation

- Support ways of embedding wellbeing in the curriculum.

### RCHK example

In Primary we have been revising our units of inquiry so that our central ideas reflect our focus on wellbeing. Two examples are the Year 2 central idea *Choices people make contribute to their health and wellbeing* and the Year 5 central idea *Learning communities can support the development of wellbeing*. A Year 3 Art unit of inquiry focused on different ways of portraying character strengths, which resulted in the figures on our own character strength cards.

In Secondary, the timetable was revised to allow Science of Wellbeing lessons to be regularly taught. Teachers who were enthusiastic about the curriculum had their timetables arranged so that they could teach it. The team are working on constructing Science of

- Encourage staff to try new wellbeing initiatives by ensuring they know they'll be caught if they fall.
  - Promote the initiatives in the school newsletter or through social media.
  - Leadership teams be prepared to respond to parent questions supportively.
  - Investigate the research behind the suggestion.
  - Be prepared to offer alternative suggestions or support if needed.



## RCHK example

Mindfulness in RCHK started with the interest of one teacher who undertook a course on her own. When she asked if she could share the practice with her class, she was encouraged to do so. Other teachers became interested and undertook the MBSR and training courses. Vice Principals in Primary School held information sessions for parents when the classes were being held in multiple year groups.

When teachers are putting into place new initiatives, when possible they are given time release from class to research and prepare. As the House system moves from a competition focus to a community focus, the leaders in that area have been given additional release time from class to give time to thoughtfully planning for the new approach.

Time was found in the school day for newly instituted (2018-19) Science of Wellbeing lessons that explicitly teach about relationships, mental health, appreciation and accomplishment.

## Embed in Policy and Strategy

- Use interactive, appreciative approaches to find out what is working well and where to next for planning.
  - Use questions to find out what the students and faculty appreciate about wellbeing initiatives and what they see as next steps.
  - For example in an online survey, ask for short answers to the questions:
    - What does this school do well for student wellbeing?
    - What one thing could this school do to improve student wellbeing?
    - What does this school do well for staff wellbeing?
    - What one thing could this school do to improve staff wellbeing?
  - Where possible, use teams to investigate further what is going well or make plans for where to go next. It helps for all members of the community to be engaged in the process.
- Identify champions of wellbeing and form a strategic team from them with a focus on embedding the approach throughout the school.



- Ensure written documentation and policy in the school refers to the school approach to wellbeing. This can be done in the normal review cycle of the school.
  - Address specific policies which are a vital part of wellbeing and ask if they reflect the wellbeing of your school. Perhaps start with:
    - Behaviour policy
    - Anti-bullying policy
    - Learning and teaching policy
    - Assessment policy

### RCHK example

We started by looking at our *Behaviour Management Policy* and our *Anti-Bullying Policy*. Working with strategic teams, we combined the two into a *Relationships Policy* and used it to articulate how we should treat each other in line with our wellbeing approach.

We spent time with teachers, parents and students, letting them know about the new policy and discussing what the approach to relationships looks like in practice.

- When strategic plans are being revised or written, ensure that wellbeing is either embedded throughout or has its own section.
  - If you are not part of the team that writes strategic plans for the school, try to get the ear of someone who is. Make them one of the champions! Put suggestions to these people in writing

### RCHK example

Our school has bedrock principle which underpin everything we do. On our ten year anniversary, we went back to our principles and reviewed them. When rewriting the one linked most closely to wellbeing, we drafted it to hone our focus on an approach that provides tools to flourish throughout life.

**“To cultivate an inclusive community that values positive relationships and enables students and staff to flourish.”**

## Recruit for the Future

- Interview with wellbeing in mind.
  - Ask questions at interview that are designed to find out information about the applicants opinion of wellbeing.  
For example, ask applicants how they promote the wellbeing of their students.
  - If relevant to your context, consider asking what applicants already know about positive psychology, positive education or wellbeing approaches in schools.
- Ensure that aspects of maintaining the wellbeing focus of the school are embedded in job descriptions.
  - As new posts and jobs are advertised, review the job descriptions. Use phrases like, “promote the wellbeing approach of the school” or “be committed to the wellbeing of students, colleagues and the community”.
  - Identify roles that will particularly impact on wellbeing and include this aspect in the job description. Highlight this to new applicants and existing members of staff.
- Create an induction programme for new staff to share the fundamental aspects of your wellbeing approach and make time to follow up during the year.
  - Make resources and notes available to the school community.
  - Have a succession plan for who will continue to deliver the training. For example, consider including this role in a job description; have more than one person responsible for it.
  - Find the most appropriate time to share this information with new staff by taking feedback and evolving the programme based on this.

## Engage your Community Students

- Listen to student council or student voice talking about their wellbeing.
  - If student council suggests purchasing specific equipment for the school that pertains in some way to wellbeing, support them in this.
  - If possible, make it part of the student council's remit that they share their perspective on student wellbeing with school leaders.
- Invite returning students to meet and greet new students. Encourage them to share information about the wellbeing approach of the school.

### RCHK example

The Secondary Student Council wanted to purchase Fußball tables to increase relatedness between students. The tables were cited according Student Council suggestions, and are now a regular part of socialising for many students across college.

When a new playground was opening at school, student voice was sought from all Primary students about what they wanted to see there. The architects designed and modified according the requests of the students.

### RCHK example

Parent University at Renaissance offers education for parents, with both external speakers and sessions on positive parenting run by our own staff.

Interested parents are welcome to engage. We have given interviews about our no-homework policy in primary to parents who worked for publications, and arranged information sessions with local schools through a parent who works with the Education Bureau in the government.

### Parents

- When agreeing on common language, invite parents to be part of the discussion, for example when reviewing policies have a parent session as part of the process.
- Invite parents into information sessions about wellbeing initiatives and approaches, provided both by members of staff and external speakers.
- Engage with any parents who are interested in the topic.
- When planning information sessions for parents, invite parents to be part of the planning process.

## Wider community

- When running parent sessions, consider reaching out to other parents in the community who might not send students to your school.
- Join (or form, if there isn't one!) a local Positive Schools network.
- Reach out to other schools in the network or area. Welcome other schools to visit to share learning with them.
  - Promote one part of your approach that you think your school does particularly well.
  - Volunteer to present at conference and workshops - in your local network and beyond.
  - Encourage other colleagues to sign up to mailing lists so that they are also kept in the loop.

## Promote and Celebrate

- Celebrate and share information about wellbeing in the school newsletters, websites and on social media.
  - Develop a school hashtag specifically related to wellbeing (i.e. #heartofRCHK)
  - Be prepared to trawl through school tweets to hashtag appropriate content yourself in the initial phases.
- If you have one, get your Communications team on board and ask them to spot appropriate information and opportunities to link to wellbeing as they arise. Take advantage of things that are already happening in school to highlight the focus on wellbeing that exists.
- Ask the students what social media they think the school should be sharing this information on.
- Create a wellbeing focused section of your school website and ensure that it is someone's role to maintain it.



## Positive Education at RCHK

### Guiding Principles

#heartofRCHK

**Goal:** Providing the tools to flourish throughout life.

#### DEFINITIONS

Positive Psychology: The study of strengths, and how people use them to thrive within relationships, work and play.

Positive Education: Nurturing strengths and personal motivation to promote learning and wellbeing based on a positive psychology approach.

Wellbeing: The physical, social and psychological state needed to manage life's challenges.



#### What we VALUE:

These are the values we share at RCHK as being important for us in building wellbeing and developing an understanding of our goal for positive education.

#### RELATIONSHIPS

A thriving community, built on mutual trust, support, open communication, empathy and respect.

#### HEALTH

Caring for one's psychological and physical wellbeing.

#### APPRECIATION

Recognising our opportunities and showing gratitude for them.

#### A sense of ACCOMPLISHMENT

Acknowledging and celebrating the progress we make towards our goals.

#### ENVIRONMENT

Creating and maintaining a loving, safe and secure space for learning in which to thrive.

#### CONSTRUCTS:

A construct is an idea or theory that is formed in people's minds. In psychology, constructs are related to aspects of human personality or behaviour, and positive psychology constructs specifically focus on a person's ability to thrive.

At Renaissance College we have selected five positive psychology constructs which support our values. The content of our formal positive education programme is based on these five constructs.

#### CHARACTER STRENGTHS

The positive parts of your personality that are the keys to being your best self.

#### MINDFULNESS

Bringing attention and awareness to your thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations and surrounding environment in the present moment.

#### POSITIVE EMOTIONS

Markers of people's overall wellbeing or happiness; they enhance future growth and success.

#### RESILIENCE

Bouncing back from and persisting through challenging times.

#### GROWTH MINDSET

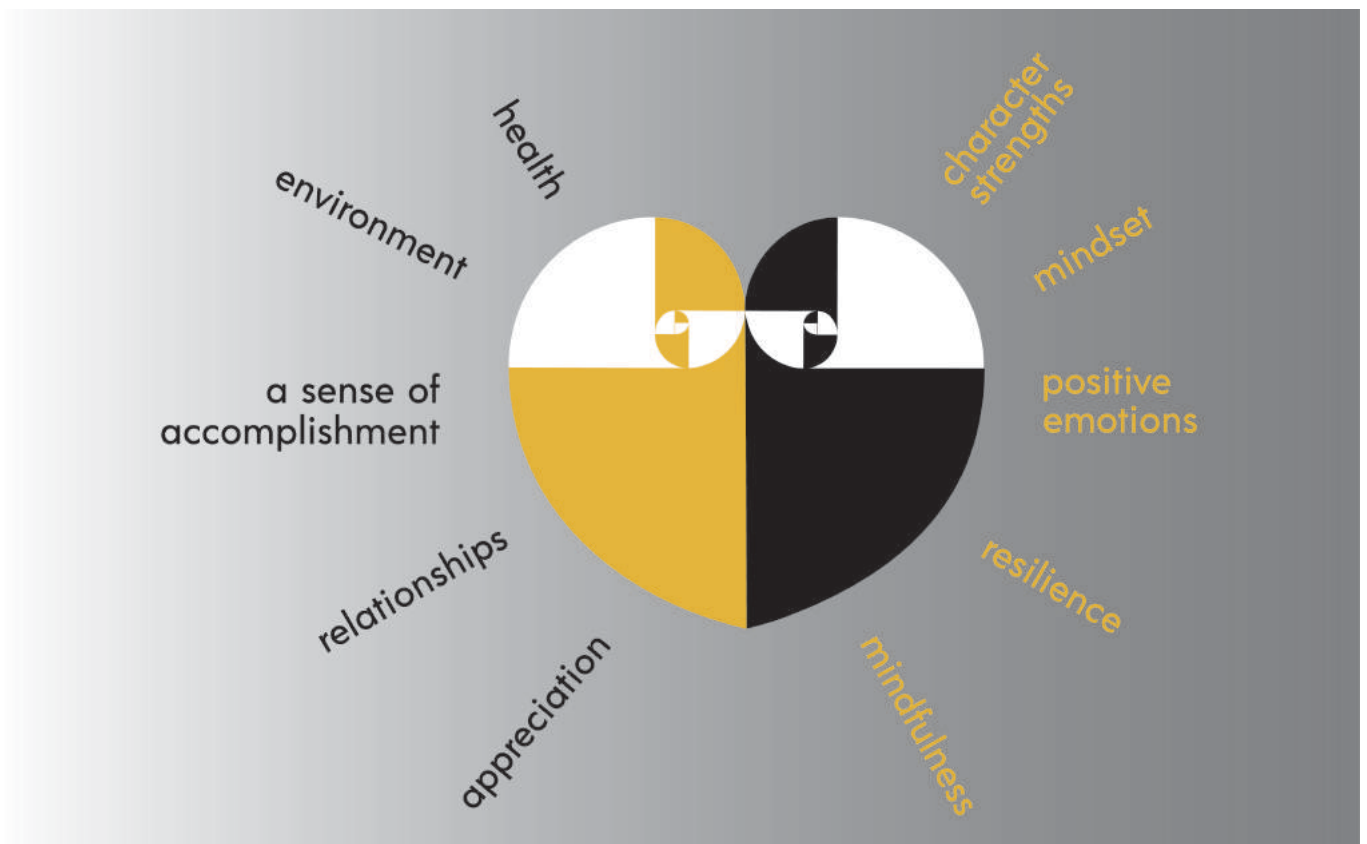
A state of mind in which you understand that your talents and abilities can be developed.

## Heart of RCHK

Our framework for wellbeing at RCHK reflects our values as a community.

Displayed on the left are our values, gleaned from data gathered in our appreciative inquiry and discussed and agreed upon by representatives from across the college. These are the **roots of our wellbeing**.

On the right are the positive psychology constructs that we currently choose to deliver our framework through. These are our routes to wellbeing, although we recognise that there are many others and that these may change as we grow as an organisation.



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## Further reading/ websites

Self determination theory: <http://selfdeterminationtheory.org/>

Examples of networks:

- Hong Kong Positive Schools Network <https://sites.google.com/connect.kellettschool.com/hongkongpositiveschoolsnetwork/home>
- Positive Education Schools Association (Australia) <https://www.pesa.edu.au/> (can become a branch)
- International Positive Education Network <http://ipen-network.com/>
- PIE (positive international educators) Network is a closed Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/951966051524606/>

Positive schools websites

<http://www.positiveschools.com.au/>

<http://positivetimes.com.au/>