

Renaissance College Hong Kong

Approach to Wellbeing

Title	Renaissance College Hong Kong Wellbeing Stance
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Renaissance College Hong Kong Wellbeing Stance	1
Statement	1
Scope	2
Aims of this stance	3
Purpose of our wellbeing approach	3
Definition	3
Key staff members	4
How wellbeing and belonging are addressed for students	4
Wellbeing in learning and teaching	5
Wellbeing outside the curriculum	6
Tiers of support	7
Mechanisms of support	7
Staff Training	8
Staff Wellbeing	8
Commitments from the College	9
Expectations of staff members	9
Applications to positive behaviour management	10
Rights and responsibilities	10
The importance of intrinsic motivation	10
Rewards and sanctions	11

Statement

Renaissance College takes a wellbeing-centred approach in order to enhance connections and relationships, nurturing our community. We are committed to promoting wellbeing, belonging and positive mental health to and for all members of our community. We actively seek the involvement of our students and for their voices to be heard. Our students believe that all the aspects of wellbeing are linked together in our strong relationships, making relational wellbeing a vital part of our community.

As part of our RCHK wellbeing framework, we have identified five roots of wellbeing to nurture a thriving community: health, environment, a sense of accomplishment, relationships, and appreciation. Our wellbeing approach is strengths based and embedded in everything we do, in our lessons, staff training, and community relationships. We want to help our community flourish and keep wellbeing at the heart of RCHK.

In today's increasingly diverse and interconnected world, fostering a sense of belonging is paramount for the holistic wellbeing of everyone within our school community. Belonging encompasses the profound understanding that each individual is an integral part of a larger whole. RCHK defines belonging as creating a culture where people can be themselves, have psychological safety, appreciate each other and feel part of something bigger than themselves.

Throughout the school, we aim to recognise each student with their own unique identity. Identity is each person's individual experience of who they are and can include gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion and values. Building on the gender-inclusive work of Dr Lee Airtton, our intention is that no one in school is told that they are not who they are, implicitly or explicitly. We are open to all students' own presentations of their evolving identities and recognise that these presentations may require support from the school.

Recognising the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion within the community is crucial for creating an environment where every member feels valued, respected, and supported. A school community plays a vital role in cultivating this understanding and addressing these crucial aspects. By embracing diversity, promoting equity, and actively fostering inclusion, we seek to create a nurturing and empowering atmosphere that celebrates the unique identities and experiences of all individuals, thus ensuring a genuine sense of belonging for everyone involved.

Scope

This document is a guide to all staff and members of the community, outlining our approach to promoting, nurturing and maintaining wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with other documents linked to wellbeing in the school, including:

- Positive Relationships Guidelines
- RCHK Anti-bullying guidelines and procedures



- Wellbeing model
- Guidelines for the wellbeing model
- ESF Staff Code of Conduct for Child Protection
- ESF Strategic Planning Overview - Wellbeing Key Priority
- Curriculum planning, including:
 - PYP Who We Are unit plans
 - Primary Wellbeing continuum
 - ESF RSE continuum and related RSE curriculum
 - Secondary Science of Wellbeing Curriculum
- DEI stance for RCHK

Aims of this stance

Our wellbeing approach is known as the Heart of RCHK. Its primary function is to provide the tools to flourish throughout life. The aims of this document are to:

- Promote wellbeing and positive mental health in all staff and students
- Advise on support structures in place to enable community members to respond to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Draw together approaches, documentation and personnel who impact wellbeing at RCHK.

Purpose of our wellbeing approach

Through our agreed stance on our approach to wellbeing, our intention is to be a school where:

- All members of our community are valued for and supported to be who they are.
- All members of our community have a sense of belonging and feel safe.
- Students feel able to talk openly about any challenges without feeling any stigma.
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued.
- Positive relationships are fostered between all members of the community.

Definition

At RCHK, we define wellbeing as the physical, social and psychological state needed to manage life's challenges.

Our model of wellbeing, the #heartofRCHK, is based on five roots of wellbeing, agreed in consultation with our community. These are enhanced by constructs that we use to address wellbeing in the school. These constructs comprise the routes to wellbeing, which are pervasive but not exclusive, and are always considered in the wider context of student and community need.

We want all members of our community to:

- feel confident in themselves and their own identity;
- be able to express a range of emotions appropriately;

- be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others'
- manage times of stress and change effectively.



Fig 1: RCHK model of wellbeing

Key staff members

Because wellbeing is at the heart of our school, all members of the community take responsibility to promote the wellbeing of our students. There are some members of staff who have specific responsibilities relating to wellbeing, belonging and safeguarding

- Vice Principals for Wellbeing in the Primary and Secondary schools
- Child Protection Officers
- Head of Counselling and the Counselling team
- Heads of Year in Secondary and Year Level Leaders in Primary
- Advisory teachers in Secondary and classroom teachers in Primary
- Emotional Literacy Support Assistants

If anyone has a concern about the wellbeing or mental health of a student, they should make a report in RecordMy. This will automatically notify the appropriate people who can follow up as needed.

If there is a concern that a student is at high risk or in danger of immediate harm, a Child Protection Officer should be informed and our child protection procedures should be followed.

How wellbeing and belonging are addressed for students

In creating a wellbeing framework, the IB focuses on the importance of subjective wellbeing (see Laura Taylor et al., 2022). Renaissance College builds on this to seek wellbeing that is embedded in and moves through the relationships we build for every

member of our school community. Our beliefs about wellbeing underpin our approach to all aspects of school life, including learning and teaching, leisure time, behaviour management and parent involvement. We seek to nurture a community in which a sense of belonging is central. Wellbeing is at the heart of RCHK, and relationships are central to that.

There may be times where a student's evolving identity, engagement with our community or relationships with others require support as they develop. In such situations support will be coordinated by the VP (Wellbeing) of the respective phase, and include discussion with students, families, faculty and counsellors as appropriate.

Wellbeing in learning and teaching

In **Primary School** wellbeing is addressed throughout the curriculum by both homeroom and specialist teachers.

- A school wide Unit of Inquiry under the transdisciplinary theme of *Who We Are* has the central idea "An understanding of the self helps humans flourish throughout life." Lines of inquiry vary between year levels, to direct the inquiry into increasingly complex ideas about how humans understand themselves and enhance their own and others' wellbeing.
- A wellbeing continuum for the Primary School incorporates learning outcomes spanning the five strands of health, environment, a sense of appreciation, relationships and gratitude and extends to include a strand focused on identity.
- Two periods a week are designated as social skill development time. The Committee For Children Second Step programme is used to guide some of the learning and teaching that takes place during these periods.
- Mindfulness practices are taught throughout the primary school using a range of different programmes in different year levels to ensure that there is variety in the approach that students are exposed to.
- The wellbeing continuum also incorporates learning outcomes from the IB PSHE scope and sequence and the ESF Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) continuum.

In **Secondary School**, the skills, knowledge and understanding our students need to keep themselves - and others - physically and mentally healthy and safe are included most explicitly within the Science of Wellbeing programme which is built into the school timetable.

- The Science of Wellbeing curriculum is built to promote a positive understanding of self through four areas linked to the #heartofRCHK which are: Appreciation, Health, A Sense of Accomplishment and Relationships.
- Wellbeing is embedded across the wider curriculum areas but also supported and developed through:
 - Year level assemblies,
 - Advisory time and through many teacher-led initiatives.

- Learning and teaching strategies within the secondary school that contribute to a wellbeing approach include a heavy emphasis on:
 - Student agency
 - Increased opportunities for autonomy
 - A commitment to personalised learning across all subject areas.
- Within secondary school if a teacher does not have a direct advisory responsibility they are allocated the role of “floating advisor” and assigned to a year group to build a higher level of consistency across advisory times and to increase positive relationships within year group teams.

Wellbeing outside the curriculum

Wellbeing is nurtured throughout college life. A range of systems, structures and student groups have the specific remit of promoting relationships and enhancing opportunities for a sense of belonging.

- The house system is an intrinsic part of the wellbeing approach at RCHK, striving to embed a sense of community and belonging across the College. It develops student leadership, collaboration and resilience through engaging and enjoyable opportunities. The House Directors and elected student Captains seek opportunities for connection with other groups college-wide. They actively engage students and staff in decision making, in order to enhance participation across the community.
- Student councils operate in Primary and Secondary school. Elected in Secondary school and recommended/ elected in Primary School depending on numbers, these groups offer student voice to decision making in the college, as well as bringing forward and finding solutions to issues that are relevant to the student body.
- In the Secondary school, all students are invited to take part in year-level focus groups. These focus groups drive the agenda of the Secondary Student Council meetings
- Playground ambassadors are trained in the upper years of Primary to equip students with the skills and strategies to promote and support peaceful playtimes.
- A range of out of class activities (including After School Activities or ASAs) allow students to explore and express their identities. These include interest, religious and minority groups.
- From a physical wellbeing standpoint and to nurture a strong sense of belonging, the Black Kites Program is a fully inclusive competitive sports program that provides every student within the secondary school the opportunity to participate within team sports at RCHK.
- Peer Mentors within the Secondary school are dedicated to supporting the wellbeing of other students academically, socially and emotionally. This provides an opportunity for students to give back to the community and be role models for younger students.
- “Service as Action” is an opportunity for Secondary students to partake in service within the school, as well as local and wider communities. This empowers students to understand the importance of service in modern society and the part they can play to directly improve the lives of others.

- Secondary School Legacy Projects are student-led initiatives that are passed down through year groups to continue to support charitable foundations and the wellbeing of people both within RCHK and the wider community. Legacy Projects at RCHK support belonging and exemplify the agency given to students to create a positive impact on their own community.

Tiers of support

While we focus on wellbeing in all areas of learning and teaching, therefore taking a whole school approach, we also recognise that there are times when particular individuals require support with mental ill health. We take a tiered approach to the wellbeing support that is provided in school, as shown in Fig. 2.

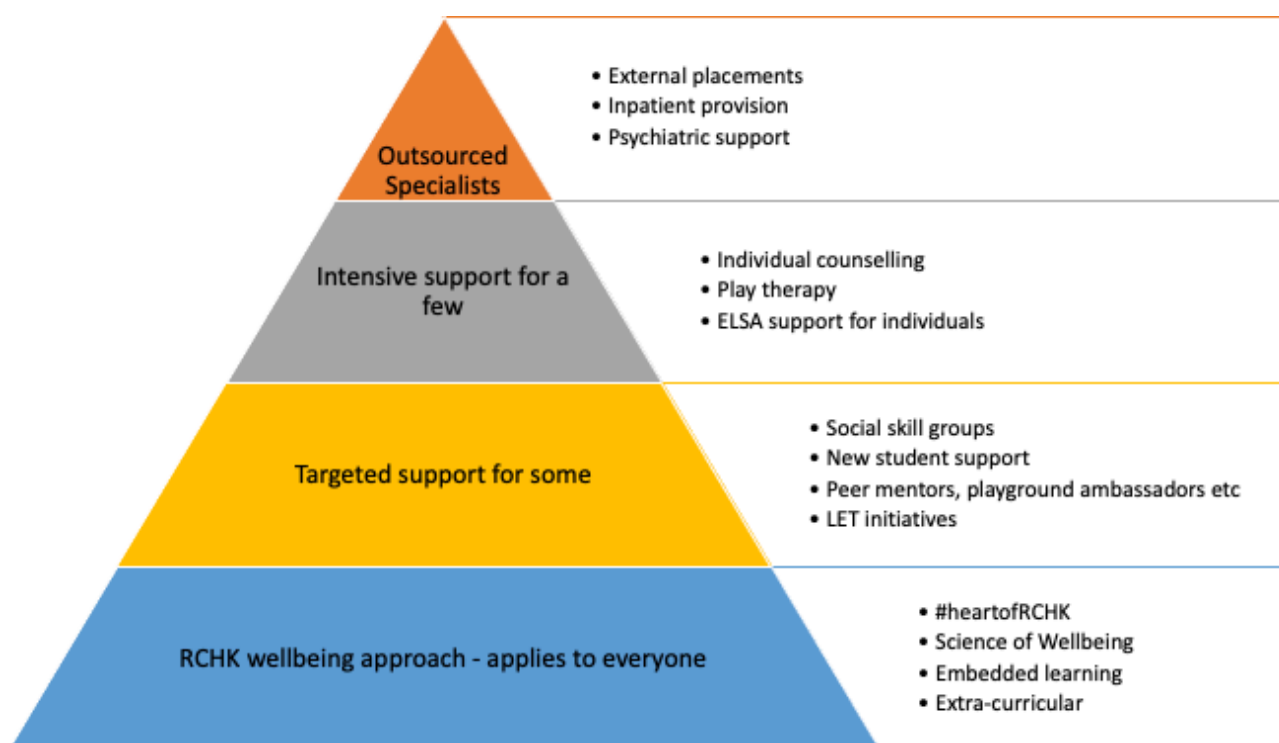


Fig 2 - Multi-tiered system of support for wellbeing at RCHK

Mechanisms of support

We aim to ensure that all members of the community know where they can seek support, should it be required. We encourage students, families and staff to advocate for themselves and for others, reaching out to one of the teams for help if needed.

- All teachers and Educational Assistants are ready and able to listen if needed, and able to signpost support from other members of the school community.
- Our school counselling service includes counsellors, social workers and play therapists with particular specialities. They are also able to refer families to external services if needed. The Head of Counselling and the Vice Principals for Wellbeing

meet weekly to review current cases, discuss referrals and maintain awareness of emergent needs.

- In the Primary school, a team of EAs have received additional training as Emotional Literacy Support Assistants. They offer proactive support to students with particular needs such as anger management, friendship challenges and social skills development. They also provide support for students who are new to the school.
- The Learning Enhancement Team (LET) works closely with students who exhibit needs in five dimensions of schooling, including aspects of social and emotional need.
- A school nurse is available on site. As well as helping with physical ailments and injuries, the school nurse notes and reports concerns that might be physiological.
- We use software (RecordMy) to keep track of concerns in a student centred approach.
- We work with external agencies to support children returning to school after mental health events that may have prevented their attendance at school. This work is led by the VP (Wellbeing) in the appropriate phase, in conjunction with other relevant parties.
- We recognise that when a student is experiencing mental health challenges, there can be a burden on their friends and peers. Peers may want to help but do not know how to, or may be emotionally affected themselves. We will consult with students, parents and appropriate school staff including counselling teams, HOYs, YLLs and teachers to consider on a case-by-case basis what information is appropriate and helpful to share, and what support might be necessary.

Staff Training

In order to ensure that our approach to learning and school is consistently underpinned by our wellbeing approach, we aim to provide regular, appropriate and timely training to our staff. We endeavour to embed wellbeing training into other, planned professional development either as stand alone workshops or as aspects of staff meetings. We also provide targeted and specific training for staff to focus on the different aspects of wellbeing, including mental illbeing or mental health challenges.

- Child Protection training both online (through Educare) and in person in order to ensure that training is context specific.
- Suicide awareness and prevention training for all teachers and EAs.
- Youth Mental Health First Aid available through ESF and undertaken on a request basis by members of staff.
- In-house training as needed, including context setting.

Staff Wellbeing

It is recognised that staff and community wellbeing is a vitally important aspect of wellbeing in a school. At RCHK we consider that we have a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our staff, as far as is reasonably practical. This includes managing

factors that could harm staff members' physical and mental wellbeing. When considering the wellbeing of individual members of our community, we base our consideration of the wellbeing of individual members of our community on the three basic psychological needs highlighted in Self Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2018, pp. 10): competence, autonomy and relatedness.

Commitments from the College

In particular, we strive to:

- Create a working environment where potential work related stressors are understood and mitigated as far as possible through good management practices such as:
 - Careful consideration of timetabling
 - Assigning playground duties based on other expectations during the day
 - Maintaining an awareness of periods of heavier workload (such as reporting and conferencing) and limiting other expectations (such as staff meetings) during this time
- Increase staff members' awareness of the causes and effects of stress and ways of managing our own wellbeing, including signposting sources of support
- Encourage staff to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing through effective health promotion programmes and initiatives, including
 - Providing subsidised exercise classes and yoga at school
 - Providing locations for mindfulness based practitioners to share practice with the community
 - Opening the school gym and swimming pool to staff members before and after learning hours
- Develop a culture of cooperation, trust and mutual respect that is open and supportive of people experiencing mental ill-health
- Engage with staff to create constructive and effective working relationships, both within teams and across the college
- Ensure workload is distributed equitably among team members and that colleagues have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet expectations.
- Provide ongoing information about ESF funded counselling services available to staff members
- Take a trauma informed approach in managing leave requests and those seeking support, either overtly or obliquely.

Expectations of staff members

All staff members are expected to:

- Treat colleagues and others they interact with during the course of their work with fairness, consideration and respect.
- Support efforts to keep wellbeing at the heart of RCHK, raising their own awareness of the causes and effects of stress and poor wellbeing.

- Raise concerns with their line manager if they feel there are work issues that are causing them stress and having a negative impact on their wellbeing.
- Be responsible for their own health and wellbeing as far as is reasonably possible.
- Take responsibility for working effectively in their assigned roles, supporting others as appropriate and helping to avoid causing stress to their colleagues.

Applications to positive behaviour management

Rights and responsibilities

The school approach to managing behaviour is outlined in the Positive Relationships Guidelines. At RCHK we maintain a focus on positive relationships and positive behaviour management. Students are taught that there are rights and responsibilities that come with being part of a community. These rights include:

- a safe, secure and positive learning environment for all.
- engagement in a diverse and inclusive community.
- a learning community that promotes self-esteem, self-regulation, emotional wellbeing and positive relationships.
- clear expectations and consequences for behaviour.

The responsibilities associated with this are:

- to critically and creatively apply thinking skills to recognize and approach complex problems, making reasoned, ethical decisions;
- to work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others;
- to be upstanders, acting with integrity and honesty, showing a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities;
- to take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them;
- to be open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities, and show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and the feelings of others;
- to act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.

Teachers treat students as partners in learning, using appropriate and positive language. If students do not meet expectations, consequences for their actions are commensurate with the action itself and consistent with school behaviour guidelines and graduated response.

The importance of intrinsic motivation

In line with Ryan and Deci's Self Determination Theory, and specifically Basic Psychological Needs Theory, Renaissance College is striving to cultivate intrinsic motivation in its community members by nurturing competence, autonomy and relatedness.

Autonomy supportive teaching approaches are encouraged in order to promote intrinsic motivation and thus wellbeing. These approaches are indicative of an inquiry based approach to learning and include:

- Creating opportunities for students to work in their own way.
- Listening attentively to students and to colleagues.
- Providing opportunities for students to talk together.
- Active engagement in learning rather than passive reception of teaching.
- Identifying and nurturing students' preferences, interests and needs.

Rewards and sanctions

At RCHK, we believe that intrinsic motivation is essential for fostering long-term behavioural change and creating a positive school culture. While external rewards and punishments may sometimes yield short-term compliance, they often fail to address the underlying causes of behaviour and can result in a reliance on extrinsic incentives rather than an internal drive to do well. We recognize that students are more likely to engage in positive behaviours when they feel a sense of ownership and autonomy over their actions. Therefore, we prioritise providing students with opportunities to make choices, set goals, and take responsibility for their behaviour.

To achieve lasting change, our school takes a proactive and preventative approach to behaviour management. We focus on creating a positive and inclusive school climate where students feel valued, respected, and supported. Our teachers and staff are trained to build positive relationships with students, promoting a sense of trust and open communication. We emphasise restorative practices, encouraging students to reflect on their actions, take accountability, and make amends when necessary.

Rather than relying solely on punitive responses, we prioritise teaching and reinforcing positive behaviour. Our curriculum includes explicit instruction on social-emotional skills, character development, and conflict resolution. We understand that behaviour change requires collaboration between the school, students, parents, and the wider community. We actively involve parents and guardians in the behaviour management process, seeking their input and support.

When used judiciously and in specific contexts, rewards can serve as a form of positive reinforcement or recognition. The key is to strike a balance and ensure that intrinsic motivation remains the primary driver of student behaviour and engagement. In doing so, we aim to create an environment that fosters self-directed learning, autonomy, and a genuine love for knowledge acquisition.



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