Key Skills for Junior Cycle

Staying Well

This key skill recognises that learners' overall wellbeing must be supported alongside their intellectual development. Being healthy, being socially active and being able to take care of yourself and of others helps students become happy and confident. This key skill also helps young people to be positive and engaged in their learning.

Staying Well

1. **Being healthy, physical and active**

2. **Being social**

3. **Being safe**

4. **Being spiritual**

5. **Being confident**

6. **Being positive about learning**

7. **Being responsible, safe and ethical in using digital technology**

The whole school environment and the formal and informal relationships between teachers and students all impact on students' experience of wellbeing in school. This resource offers some ideas that teachers can use to help students develop the skill of staying well. No doubt you and your colleagues will think of additional ways to develop this skill.


Pick one of the elements related to **Staying Well** and read through its learning outcomes.

Then brainstorm (either alone or with a colleague) these questions

What is happening in our school now that helps students to develop this key skill?

Where do you see opportunities for developing students' wellbeing within day-to-day teaching, learning and assessment?

We know that students need to feel happy and safe so that they can learn and flourish in school. Looking at student wellbeing through the lens of Maslow's hierarchy of needs helps us to see that different students are at different places on Maslow's hierarchy.
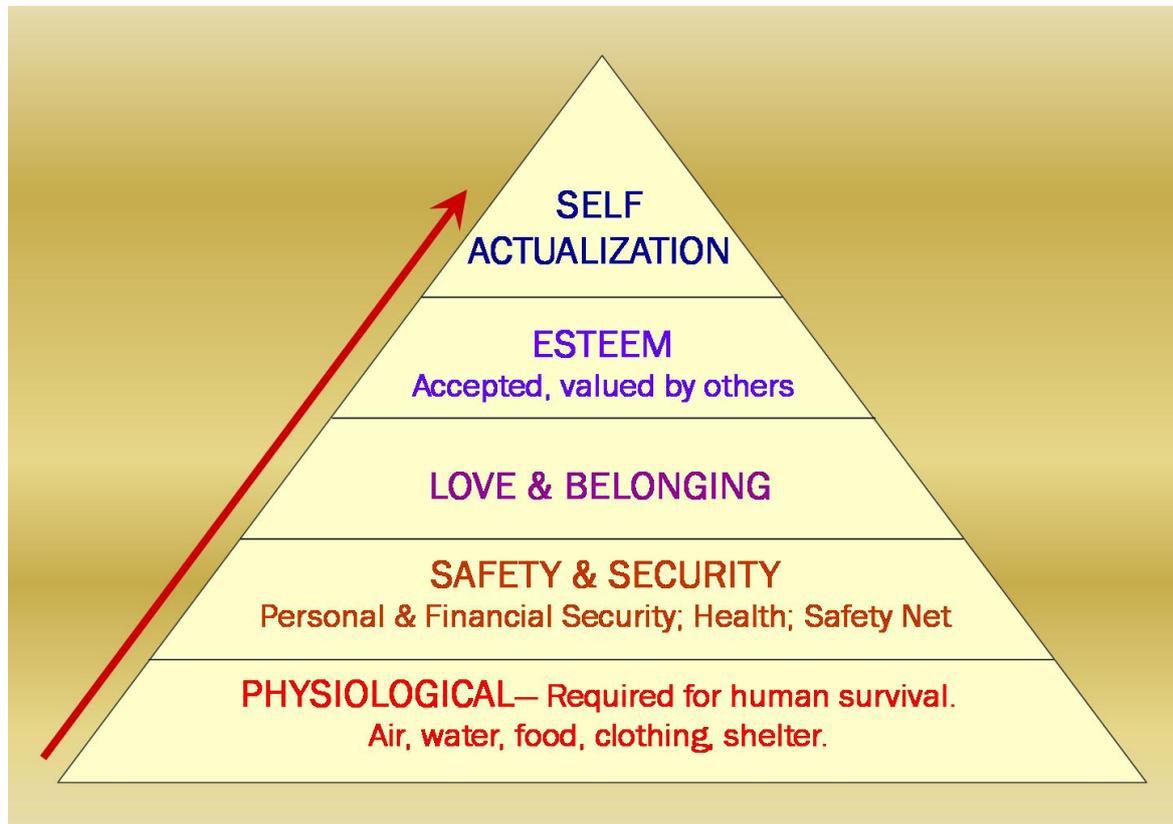
Read this short account of what happens when these needs are met and what happens when they are not met. Think about how this applies in the classroom.

http://www.teacherstoolbox.co.uk/T_maslow.html

 Watch this short video where Geoff Petty explains the link between student motivation for learning and having their psychological needs met
http://www.teacherstoolbox.co.uk/maslow.html   (1 min 50)

Movie

Supporting students' wellbeing in your school - what matters?

- A positive school climate that celebrates the success and involvement of all

- Positive day-to-day interactions with and among students

- All students being encouraged to get involved in school activities

- Mixed ability groups

- Active and collaborative teaching and learning approaches

- Positive behaviour policies

- A shared belief that everyone can grow in ability and achievement with effort

What makes the biggest difference to students' sense of wellbeing?

- Positive relationships - belonging to a positive peer group

- At least one positive adult relationship in their lives – sometimes a teacher!
- The ability to use positive self-talk
- A feeling of being connected to 'the bigger picture'.

In your school, how is information shared between staff about students who are experiencing difficulty in their lives? Think of situations when an individual and/or collective response might be appropriate.

How about organising a wellbeing week in your school?

Many schools are organising special events to raise awareness about wellbeing amongst students. This article tells how one school organised such a week.

http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/education/the-school-for-smiles-as-pupils-give-lessons-in-wellbeing-31074095.html

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A Growth Mindset - what's the link with wellbeing?

Fixed view	Growth view
• Intelligence is fixed. • If something is taught (explained) then it should be learned. • If students don't learn it is due to a deficit on their part. • Knowledge is transmitted	• Intelligence and ability can grow • Learning requires effort over time • Difficulties and mistakes can help learning • Knowledge is constructed by the learner

How students view learning – whether they have a fixed view or a growth view – will greatly influence their attitude and frame of mind when meeting new challenges. You might like to download this 'Mindset choices' poster for your classroom http://www.whatkidscando.org/featurestories/2012/07_great_expectations/pdf/Mindset%20Choices.pdf

Watch Carol Dweck talk about the difference between having a growth mindset and a fixed mindset to learning https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QGvR_0mNpWM (26 mins)

Or watch this Ted talk in which Carol Dweck explains 'The power of believing that you can improve' (10 mins) http://www.ted.com/talks/carol_dweck_the_power_of_believing_that_you_can_improve?language=en

Assessment - what's the link with wellbeing?

Many studies have shown that the way students experience assessment can have a huge impact on their motivation to learn and engage in school, their self-esteem and psychological wellbeing.

If, for example, students are simply given a grade, (even a good one) this doesn't motivate them in moving forward with their learning or provide them with the necessary feedback they need to help them identify next steps in improving their learning.

One of the most powerful and effective ways to build students' confidence in themselves as learners is through quality feedback. Listen to Dylan Wiliam, explain the power of feedback in this short clip

http://www.journeytoexcellence.org.uk/videos/expertspeakers/feedbackonlearningdylanwiliam.asp
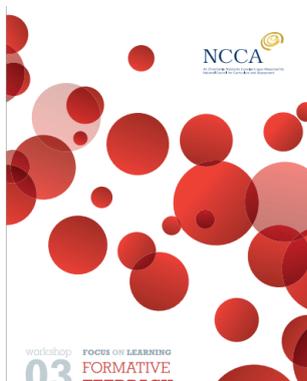
Check out assessment ideas at this link which will help you to support students' learning and wellbeing through different assessment

practices http://www.juniorcycle.ie/Assessment/On-going-assessment-approaches

Some further readings

Wellbeing in post primary schools; ten actions a school can take to promote the emotional health and wellbeing of the school community	http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Resources-Guidance/Well-Being-in-Post-Primary-Schools-Ten-Actions-that-Schools-can-undertake-to-promote-the-Emotional-Health-and-Well-Being-of-a-School-Community.pdf
Wellbeing and post primary schools; A review of the literature and research. Dr. Maeve O Brien (2008)	http://www.ncca.ie/uploadedfiles/Curriculum/post-primary/wellbeing/Well-being_report_en.pdf
Six secrets of a happy classroom.	http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/schools/the-six-secrets-of-a-happy-classroom-2086855.html
Intercultural Education: Guidelines for schools (NCCA)	http://www.ncca.ie/uploadedfiles/publications/Interc%20Guide_Eng.pdf
General Guidelines for students with learning disabilities (NCCA)	http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Inclusion/Special_Educational_Needs/Download_Special_Educational_Needs_Guidelines/
5 ways to tackle mental health taboos in the classroom	http://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2014/dec/02/mental-health-taboo-classroom
Minded – online education to help adults understand and support young people with mental health issues	www.minded.org.uk

Watch this video entitled '*The 8 secrets of happy teenagers'* (3mins 56) with your students and ask them if they agree with these ideas or if they can suggest other 'secrets' to happiness.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrMa9I1guGY&index=3&list=PLC247AF057231E7C1

Movie

Useful websites:

www.aware.ie

www.headstrong.ie

www.foroige.ie

Being healthy, physical and active

The learning outcomes are

I can make informed choices in relation to my food, personal care and lifestyle

I can demonstrate care and respect for myself and others

I can participate in regular physical exercise and recognise its benefits

I can use a range of coping strategies to deal with personal problems and stress

I can practice relaxation and mindfulness techniques
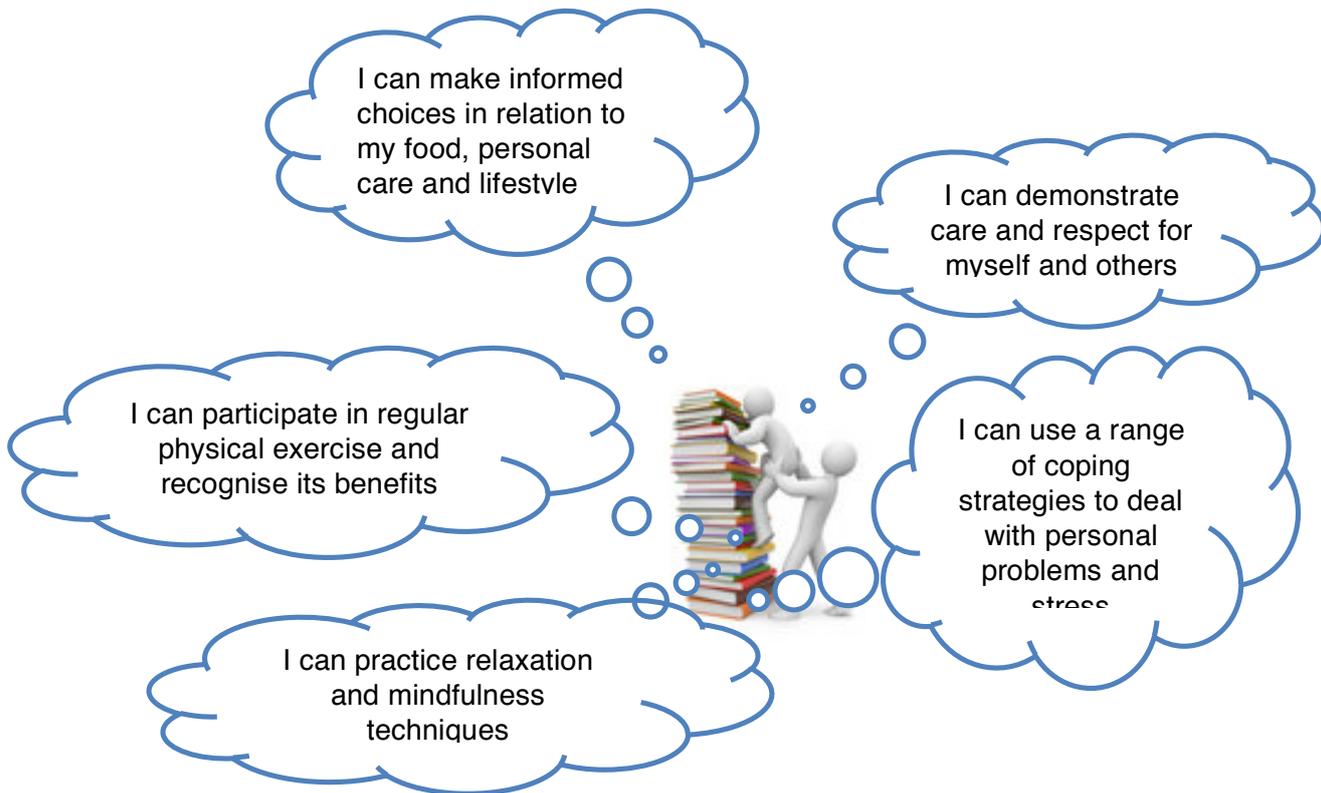
Making informed choices in relation to my food, personal care and lifestyle

In junior cycle, students have greater autonomy about what and how much they eat, their personal care and appearance and their lifestyle choices.

Here are some websites where students can find out more about making informed decisions about healthy lifestyles

http://kidshealth.org/kid/stay_healthy/food/labels.html

http://www.fooducate.com/

Whole school approaches – Healthy Eating Policy

For guidelines on how your school can develop a healthy eating policy, check this out.
http://www.healthyfoodforall.com/documents/Healthy_Eating_Post_Primary_text.pdf

Concerned that someone in your class has an eating disorder? This is a helpful site on how to approach the problem http://www.bodywhys.ie/

Practical classroom ideas

Art	In groups, design a model of a food pyramid using real food . Curate an exhibition about food/physical activity/body shape in art. Design a resource encouraging healthy eating and positive lifestyle choices in junior cycle. Organise a photography exhition about young people and different lifestyle decisons they make to help or hinder a healthy lifestyle.
Geography	On a map of the world, indicate the main countries which produce the different food groups in the food pyramid. Discuss the challenges of providing enough food for an increasing global population? Review their 'built environment' and its impact of healthy lifestyle choices.
English	Critque food advertments, identifying the language used in different media to promote different lifestyle choices and messages. Read and review texts, newspaper articles about sport and other physical activities. Debate the topic – There is enough food for everyone's need.
Physical Education	Track the class's health related fitness scores over time. Profile students who participate in activity other than PE class Display photographs of students being active.
Modern Forgein Languages	Learn the vocalulary to order a healthy meal, or to discuss your favourite activity.
Mathematics	Carry out a survey about lifestyle choices in the year group in relation to healthy eating, physical activity, smoking, etc. Represent the findings graphically.
Science.	Discuss the effect of exercise and lack of exercise on the body?

	Outline a balanced diet for health and wellbeing.
Home Economic	Display a range of healthy lunches and receipe sheets for students in their year group
	Discuss the food options available to students in school.
	What's on a label?
	http://www.safefood.eu/Education/Post-primary-(ROI)-/What-s-on-a-label.aspx

Teaching students to care for and respect themselves and others

We know from the research that the formal and informal relationships that students have with their teachers and each other are very important for students' sense of wellbeing and their full engagement in school.

Promoting a classroom climate that is caring and respectful

- Encourage students to show care and respect for each other as they enter and leave class

- Get to know students' names as quickly as possible

- Use cooperative learning methodologies where everybody feels included

- Use lollipop sticks (with their names) to randomly select who you will ask to answer questions

- Teach students to actively listen to each other. (See **Working with Others toolkit**)

- Don't ignore casual 'slagging' that is clearly offensive. Appeal to students' better nature and remind them that off-hand remarks may offend or embarrass their classmates

- Agree a protocol with the students about acceptable and unacceptable 'banter'
- Make it part of classroom practice that students keep notes and/or resources for absent students
- When a student returns from an absence, allow time for the student to be brought up to date with the learning.
- When a student has experienced bereavement or a challenging life event, talk to the class about how they can support the student now and on their return to school.

Use a T chart

One approach to teaching the social skills of care and respect is to build a **T Chart** and keep it on view in the classroom. To do this, write the name of the skill to be practiced at the top the board. Create two columns. Label the left side '*Looks like'* and the right side '**Sounds like'**. Then under each column ask the students to brainstorm examples for each side and write them down.

Showing that you care

Looks like	Sounds like
Eye contact when talking	Encouraging comments
We look out for each other when times are tough	Students don't speak over each other
	We listen to each other
We don't tolerate hurtful or homophobic remarks	We celebrate each other's success
	We give each other helpful feedback
We report behaviour that concerns us	Don't shout or speak roughly
We try to include everybody	

Some tips for teaching coping strategies

Whole class activity

Encourage students to talk about their coping strategies.

- In this subject, what stresses you out?   What does that look like, feel like? How do you behave when you feel stressed?
- Are these coping strategies helpful and unhelpful?
- How can you help yourself? How can others help you?
- Agree a 'Top Five' coping strategies with the class.

Worry Box

Sometimes students may be worried or pre-occupied about something un-related to the class. Encourage them to write the worry down and place it in the 'worry box' (metaphorical or 'real') until after the class.   It is important to acknowledge students' concerns and anxieties but also to teach them that they can get on with other parts of their lives and come back to addressing the worry/concern at the appropriate time. This may also involve you, as the teacher, being prepared to listen at the end of class and perhaps offer suggestions about where the student(s) can get support in addressing this issue.

Encourage students to see worries and anxieties as issues that can and must be addressed, a 'call for action'.
These questions can be used in addressing any worry?

- What is the problem?
- Who is involved?
- What can I do?
- Who can help me?

Check out some useful resources that have been developed for use with Australian students http://www.mindmatters.edu.au

<div align="center">**Relaxation and mindfulness techniques**</div>

Definition of mindfulness

<div align="center">Mindfulness is paying attention to the present moment in a particular way, on purpose and non-judgementally.</div>

<div align="right">Jon Kabat</div>

If you would like to gain an understanding of mindfulness check out this site: http://www.everydaymindfulness.ie/

In the classroom, mindfulness practice can benefit every student. It is about students being able to pause in the moment and to take in what is happening in their heads, hearts and bodies. Even when under stress it can help students learn not to go into the 'default mode' where they might drop out, hit out or retreat into negative thinking or withdraw from learning.

Simple mindfulness meditation practice

Ask students to close their eyes or focus their attention on a spot on the floor. Read the following short meditation out to them.

Just breathe normally and notice the way that your breath fills your lungs and then flows out of your lungs. Just focus on your breathing, let your thoughts and feelings come and go. When a thought or feeling arises, just notice and let it go, returning your attention to your breathing. When a thought arises, you can simply label it 'thought' and then let it go. When a feeling arises, you can simply label it "feeling" and let it go. Be patient with yourself; don't judge yourself when your focus moves from breathing. Just keep returning your attention to your breath.

Mindful ways to start and finish your class.

If your feel your class is on edge and/or they need to relax or calm down, 7/11 is a quick and useful technique to focus students. Invite students to close their eyes. Ask students to inhale for the count of seven and exhale for the count of 11. Repeat this for 1-2 mins.
It is a very simple exercise and can calm/ relax stressful students.

Further resources

Bruce, N., Cap, R., Wall, S., Gilsenan, L., and Keogh, A. (2010) *I can feel my toes breathe Bringing Meditation and Stillness to Young People* Dublin: Veritas.

Check out mindfulness initiatives for young people at the Sanctuary
http://www.sanctuary.ie/sanctuary-for-young-people/resources-and-development.aspx

Watch these two short videos about the *Mindfulness in Schools project* and the benefits of mindfulness in the classroom
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6mlk6xD_xAQ
http://mindfulnessinschools.org/what-is-b/

Movie

Read more about the evidence that mindfulness works at
http://mindfulnessinschools.org/mindfulness/the-evidence/
http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/docs/documents/impact-of-mindfulness---katherine-weare.pdf

Being social

The learning outcomes of this element are

I can participate in actions that make a positive contribution in my school, community and the wider world

I can recognise my rights and responsibilities as a local and global citizen

I can recognise the qualities of relationships that are positive and those that are not

I can make decisions based on the common good

I can develop positive relationships
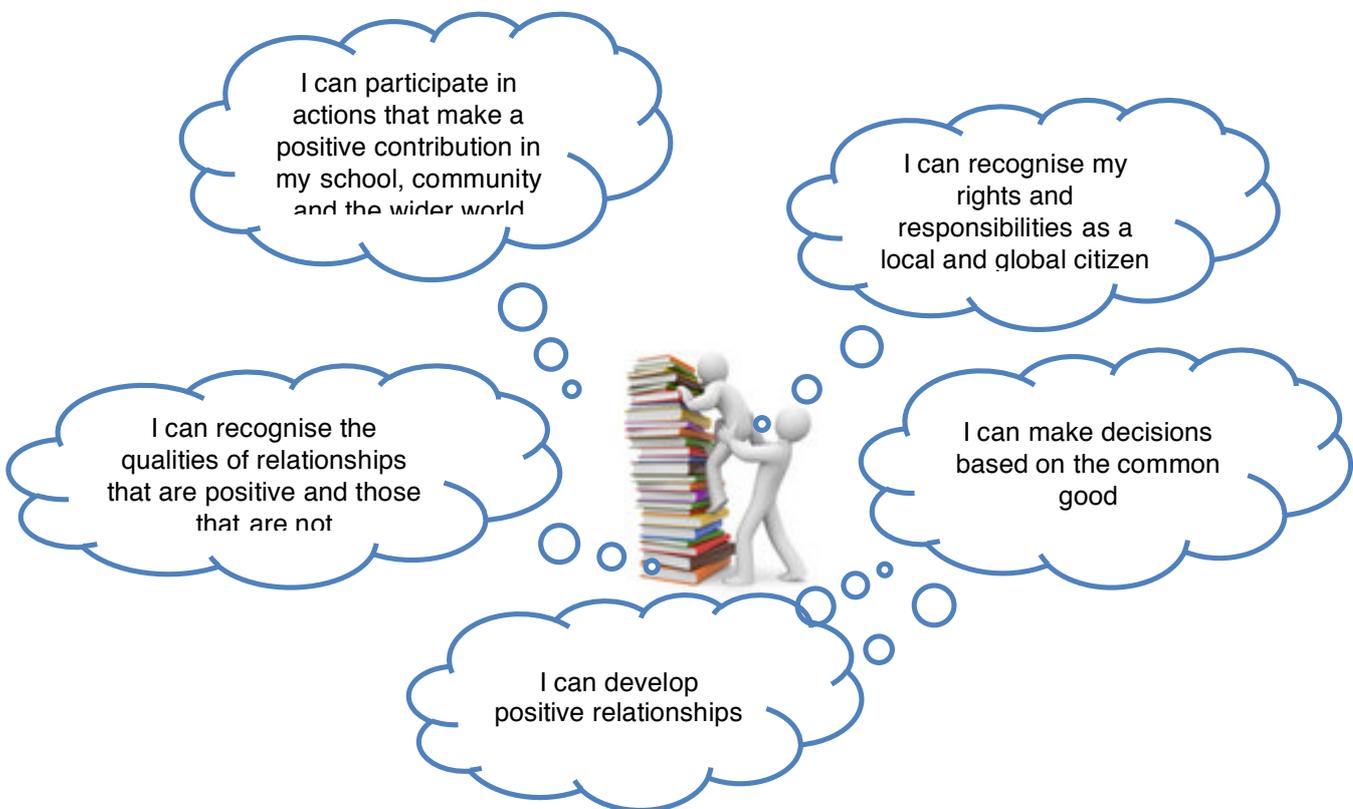
Being social is an important skill for every young person for their health and wellbeing now and in the future. One of the most important aspects of school for students is the social aspect – being with their friends and having opportunities to enjoy each other's company and share lots of different experiences. Learning too, should offer opportunities for social engagement for students.

Consider the following questions

What opportunities does your subject offer students to work together, e.g. collaborative learning, project work, research, peer assessment?

Do you encourage your students to reflect on these collaborative learning experiences, e.g. what went well, who they worked well with and why, what the student themselves contributed to the group work and what they found helpful from the contributions of others?

Making a positive contribution to my school community and the wider world

Create opportunities for students to reflect on how they can make a positive contribution in their school, community and the wider world

CSPE	Students compile a list of all the school's social groups, e.g. Student Council, Mentors, Student Amnesty Group, Green School Committee, St Vincent De Paul. In groups, students research the different groups - who is involved, why are they involved, what do they do, why is it a worthwhile group/activity to be involved with? Profile members of the different groups for a school newsletter.
P.E.	Students research and promote the different sports and physical activity groups in the school and in the community open to junior cycle students. Invite students who are involved in clubs to talk to the class about their involvement and why it is important for them Encourage students to join a club or to start a activity of interest to them.
Maths	Carry out research into how many students in junior cycle belong to clubs and why? Present this information graphically.
Religious education	Heighten students' awareness about how they are or could be connected to making a difference in their community or the wider world. Check out *Being Spiritual* section of this toolkit.
Geography	Locate the different countries that organisations such as Amnesty International and Trocaire are active. Research what the particular challenges are that this country faces and what the organisation does to help.
History	Research a club or organisation that has been in their community for many years. Interview some members about what the organisation/group has meant to them and why they think it is important for the community.
English	Make a presentation about a club/organisation that you admire.
All subjects	Show an interest in students' involvement in whole school initiatives such as

	Student Council, Active School Flag, Green School Flag, sponsored events, petitions, etc.
	Be flexible, within reason, when students need to be out of class and encourage them to be helpful and responsible in their involvement in these activities.
	Invite speakers into your class to talk about their work for the good of others, e.g. Geography – a person involved in Tidy Towns.
	Provide opportunities for students to make decisions for the common good, e.g. how project tasks will be shared, for what cause money collected will be spent, how they can collectively improve the class or school environment?

Useful websites

Student Councils   http://www.studentcouncil.ie/Publications

The SVP Youth For Justice   http://www.svp.ie/what-we-do/young-svp.aspx

Amnesty International Youth http://amnesty.ie/resources/education#SECONDARY

The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI)   http://www.youth.ie

Dáil na nÓg (The national youth parliament)   http://www.dailnanog.ie

When including any of these ideas in your class, you can help students to make the connection between how these groups demonstrate a respect for the rights of others and their rights as young people. Check out UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in child friendly language here http://www.unicef.org/rightsite/484_540.htm

Recognising my rights and responsibilities as a local and global citizen and making decisions for the common good.

Every student has a role to play in making the whole school environment a supportive, engaging and happy place for all students and staff. The school's policies and guidelines and those provided by the Department of Education and Science reflect this aspiration. Every teacher, as part of their everyday interactions with students in junior cycle, will have opportunities to encourage students to respect and co-operate with the school's policies and guidelines.

It is important that all teachers take the time to ensure that students are

- familiar with them and understand the rationale behind them
- encouraged to consider the impact of their behavior on their own wellbeing and that of others
- aware what they should do if they observe another students being mistreated
- familiar with what they should do if they need help and support for themselves or another student
- given opportunities to develop and/or give feedback on school policies and guidelines
- recognized for their positive contribution to the school community, e.g. Behavior in class, at school events, school outings.

Is your school involved in initiatives, such as the Active Schools' Flag, Amnesty International, Young Environmentalist Award, Young Social Innovators and many more?

How familiar is staff with what is being done by students in these initiatives?

How might learning in your subject contribute to these initiatives?

How can you encourage students to get involved in these initiatives for the common good?

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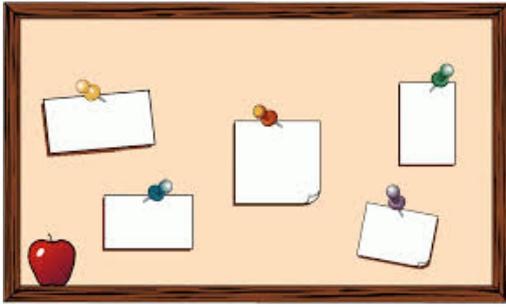
Set up a notice board where inspirational quotes can be shared such as these…

"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the water to create many ripples." -Mother Teresa

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." -Maya Angelou

"I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination." -Jimmy Dean

"Nothing is impossible, the word itself says 'I'm possible'!" -Audrey Hepburn

"To handle yourself, use your head; to handle others, use your heart." -Eleanor Roosevelt

"Build your own dreams, or someone else will hire you to build theirs." -Farrah Gray

"A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new." -Albert Einstein

Developing positive relationships

Some tips for developing positive relationships in your class

- Encourage students to work and learn together whenever possible, e.g. think, pair share, co-operative reading, maths pairs, placemats. For lots of ideas, check out the *Working with Others* toolkit**.**
- Agree protocols for working together including how to give and receive feedback . Check out *Managing Myself* toolkit to learn more.

- Following group work activities encourage students to reflect on what worked well and what problems their group encountered. Highlight the positive relational qualities identified. Plan to be vigilant about the negative ones. Use the student checklist 'Reviewing my working together skills' in the **Working with Others** toolkit, page 14
- Check out ideas about promoting a classroom climate that is caring and respectful on page 9 of this Toolkit.
- Check out ideas for creating a classroom climate that promotes creativity in **Being Creative** toolkit, page 3.

I can identify the likely consequences of risky and unhealthy behaviour

I can recognise when my personal safety is threatened and respond appropriately.
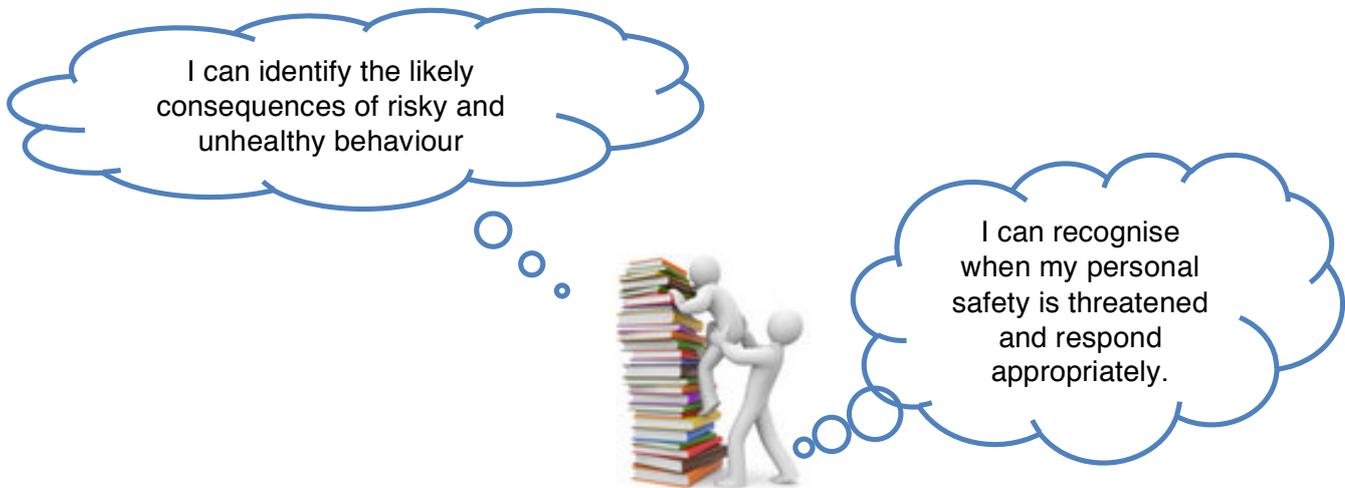
Introduction

Being safe is about more than physical safety, i.e. freedom from physical harm. It includes psychological safety and freedom from worry about physical safety or the threat of being victimized. It is also about being able to reduce risk, use good common sense and trust one's instincts.

Discuss the following questions with your colleagues

- Do students feel safe (in the fullest sense) in this school?
- In what ways might their sense of safety be enhanced?
- What supports are there for students in this context?
- Do the students know how to access these supports?

Helping students feel safe in your classroom.

A positive classroom culture ensures that students can feel safe and can learn. Maslow's Hierachy of Needs reminds us that we all have the fundamnetal need to feel safe and secure. Without it we cannot function optimally.

Identifying the likely consequences of risky and unhealthy behaviours

Recognising when my personal safety is threatened and knowing how to respond approriately

Subject Specific Ideas

Geography	Students use their mapping skills from geography class to mark out the safest route from their home to school on a map of the local area, taking note of pedestrian crossings, etc.
English	Read a poem/short story/ newspaper article in class where the safety of a person is challenged in some way. Students then write a letter to the person advising them on how they could deal with the situation.
Science	Students agree on a set of laboratory safety rules which are then displayed on the lab. wall. Posters of appropriate safety symbols e.g. toxic, flammable, etc are designed by students.
Art	Students research a specific area of safety e.g. road safety, personal safety, water safety. They then design and create a resource to promote a safe behaviour.
SPHE	Students are familiar with the school's anti-bullying policy and know what to do if their safety is threatened. Students make a video about personal safety suitable for their own peer group. The video could highlight, for example, tips for avoiding dangerous situations, advice for someone who feels threatened and where they can go for help.
Physical education	Students learn about the safe use of equipment, the rules and protocols for different activities and the safety rationale for these. They design their own activities and safety considerations must be a feature in the design of these activities.
CSPE	Students learn about human rights and discuss their relevance in their own lives. They review the school's anti-bullying policy

2	and agree feedback for school management as appropriate. They learn about human rights violations and to empathise with people whose rights have been violated.

Characteristics of a 'safe' classroom

- Protocols are in place for entering and leaving the classroom to ensure students' safety
- Rules in relation to safety are adhered to, e.g. keeping floor spaces clear, safe use of equipment, etc
- It's not ok to laugh at or belittle others
- Hurtful and offensive 'banter' is challenged and not tolerated
- It's ok to be wrong – we learn from our mistakes
- A class charter in support of a helpful, caring, respectful and safe classroom is displayed prominently and referred to frequently
- Helpful and caring behaviour is hghlighted and celebarated
- Students are encouraged to look out for each other's safety.

Being spiritual

The learning outcomes of this element are

I can ask questions to broaden my understanding of various world views

I can respect life, in all its diversity, and know that life has a meaning and a purpose

I can recognise that there are different ways of expressing spirituality

Background reading

These short articles can help stimulate staff discussion about the role of the spiritual in all subject areas.

From American educationalist, Parker Palmer, "Evoking the Spirit in Public Education" *Educational Leadership*, 56 (4), 3 pages. www.couragerenewal.org/parker/writings/evoking-the-spirit

Put the Awe Back in "Awesome" -- Helping Students Develop Purpose http://www.edutopia.org/blog/awe-helping-students-develop-purpose-vicki-zakrzewski

Some definitions of spirituality

"The search for meaning in life events and a yearning for connectedness to the universe" (**Coles,** 1990).

"A person's experience of, or a belief in a power apart from his or her own existence". (**Mohr,** 2006)

"A quality that goes beyond religious affiliation, that strives for inspiration, reverence, awe, meaning and purpose, even in those who do not believe in God". (**Murray & Zentner,** 1989).

"Spirituality is about the relationship between ourselves and something larger. That something can be for the good of the community or the people who are served by your agency or school or with energies greater than ourselves. Spirituality means being in the right relationship with all that is. It is a stance of harmlessness toward all living beings and an understanding of their mutual interdependence". (**Kaiser,** 2000)

"Spirituality is the heart of helping. It is the heart of empathy and care, the pulse of compassion". (**Canda and Furman**,1999)

Spirituality is finding what **Thomas Merton** called the 'hidden wholeness'.

Which of the above do you agree with? How would you define spirituality?

Would you agree that "*Spirituality—the human quest for connectedness—is not something that needs to be "brought into" or "added onto" the curriculum. It is at the heart of every subject we teach, where it waits to be brought forth."* (Parker J Palmer)

Discuss with colleagues

1.   What is the distinctive *spirit* of this school? How do we as teachers express this in our classroom?

2.   How can we support students' search for understanding about the meaning and purpose of life?

3.   How do we help them see a meaning in what they are doing in school?

4.   How do we support students in moments of injury, hurt, illness and death in the school community?

5.   Do we take time to express awe and wonder in the normal 'bit's n pieces' of the everyday?

What do students think?

These are some answers Transition Year and 5th year students gave when they were asked – ***How does your school educate your soul?*** How might your students respond?

Our school teaches us to use our full potential

It helps us to develop our confidence

Our school helps us to be unique

Our school educates our soul by giving us room to express our opinions

Our school combines learning with happiness

It educates our soul by helping us look deeper into things

Our school calms and motivates your mind and gives you awareness

It gives you a reason to get up in the morning
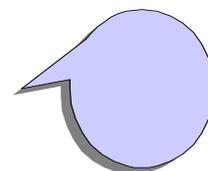
It happens everyday!   It happens unknown to you.

The role of questioning

All teachers can ask questions that turn students to their deepest self or their 'deep hearts' core'?

These include questions like…

What amazes you?

What/who inspires you?

What gives you hope?

What do you *really* think?

What really matters?

What brings real happiness?

How does this make sense or connect for you and your life?

Can we find wisdom in what we're learning for our lives?

The role of silence

All spirituality is predicated upon the idea of an 'inner life' from which we draw strength and inspiration. By occasionally making space for quiet reflective time students can become more aware of their inner self.

Goal setting

Goal setting is another important way to help students connect with the deeper meaning and purpose of what they are doing. It can also help them see beyond the day-to-day tedium of their studies and focus on a longer term vision of what they hope to achieve and who they hope to become?

Movie

For ideas on goal-setting take a look in the **Managing Myself** toolkit and watch this short video which shows students in Cork setting goals
https://vimeo.com/ncca/review/16246088/ce12014e17 (4minutes)

Useful website for goal setting

Here you will find some nice printable templates that you can adapt or use with your students when goal-setting.

http://www.abcteach.com/directory/subjects-goal-setting-10374-2-1

 Opportunities to approach spirituality in the classroom

Poetry and Literature	Questions about life, meaning and purpose can be explored through literature and poetry. Here is one example "Lost Generation", www.youtube.com/watch?v=42E2fAWM6rA (1 min 44 sec) Students might watch this and then compose their own statements to sum up their sense of purpose and their deepest beliefs. Students can find inspiration and wisdom in literature. How about getting students to keep a notebook in which they record quotes that they come across that inspire or speak deeply to them.
Religious Education	Check out short videos such as 'What is the soul? And 'Proving God exists' on www.truetube.co.uk as discussion starters. Check out the "big history project" for cross-curricular ideas on how to approach some of the big questions https://course.bighistoryproject.com/bhplive
Physical Education	Students can be introduced to yoga or tai chi and discover the potential of connecting with spirituality through their bodies, breath and movement.
Maths	Maths can examine patterns in the natural world and the wonder of Maths all around us.
Science	Science opens up ultimate questions such as - Why is there something rather than nothing? Why do I exist rather than not? What is the source of order, beauty and intelligibility in the

	universe?
Geography	Study of the natural world can help students recognise we are part of something greater than ourselves and that all the parts are connected and have a purpose.
History	History presents opportunities to discuss suffering and loss, the human capacity for good and evil, hope and despair and other deep questions. It also presents opportunities to identify inspirational people and people of wisdom from different times and traditions from whom we can gain wisdom and hope. At a deeper level it can encourage students to think about the mark they want to leave on history and what gifts they have that the world needs?
Music	Students might select pieces of music which nourish their inner self or which arouse a sense of deep awe, tranquillity or beauty.
All subjects	Create a *Wisdom wall* or notice board where inspirational quotes can be displayed. Invite students to contribute to this. Provide opportunities for students to express their spirituality through working for social justice. Help them to see how they can develop their own spiritual path through justice, peace and kindness.

Encourage students to discuss and debate the bigger issues

The website Debate (http://www.debate.org/) has many ideas that could be used in across a variety of subjects. Use a keyword search with religion, science, maths, atheism, etc.

In the **Working with Others** toolkit, the Respecting Differences element includes examples of critical questioning that you can use with your students as they engage in debate and discussion.

Each second we live is a new and unique moment of the universe, a moment that will never be again. And what do we teach our children? We teach them that two and two make four, and that Paris is the capital of France. When will we also teach them what they are?

We should say to each of them: Do you know what you are? You are a marvel. You are unique. In all the years that have passed, there has never been another child like you. Your legs, your arms, your clever fingers, the way you move.

You may become a Shakespeare, a Michelangelo, a Beethoven. You have the capacity for anything. Yes, you are a marvel. And when you grow up, can you then harm another who is, like you, a marvel? You must work, we must all work, to make the world worthy of its children.

Pablo Casals, Spanish Cellist

Being confident

Young people who are confident tend to be more effective learners and are more comfortable taking risks and seeking out new knowledge. Conversely, we all know young people who lack self-confidence and who find learning difficult as a result. They see more risks than opportunities, they don't perform particularly well in new situations, and they often have low self-esteem. They rarely trust their own judgment, and they often attribute any successes they have to 'luck' rather than to their own efforts.

The learning outcomes are
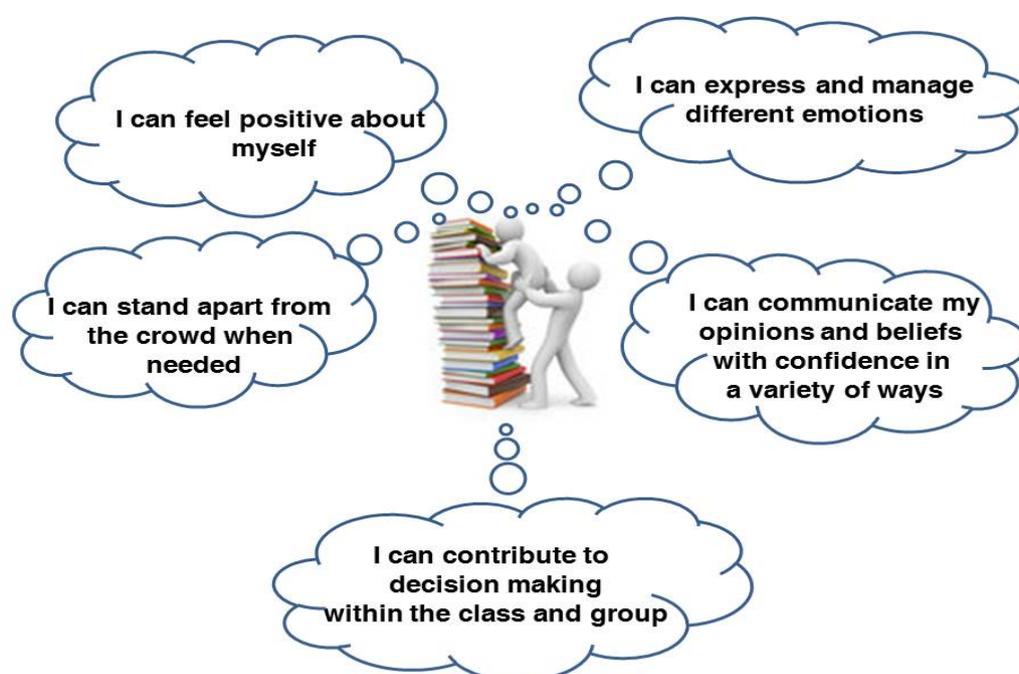
Why being positive about and engaged with learning matters

When students feel engaged with and positive about learning they are happy and feel connected to the main business of the school. Without engagement in learning, students risk being marginalised within the school, losing confidence, motivation and a reason for attending (Appleton et al. 2006).

How would you describe students who are positive about learning – their behaviour, their disposition and engagement?   What is it about these students' experience of school life that supports them in being positive about school and learning?

Students become disengaged with learning when

- they do not feel included
- teachers' attitudes and practices are perceived as non-supportive
- they feel that they are not treated well
- school structures are inflexible
- there is restricted subject choice
- what school offers is perceived as being irrelevant to their experience or future
- social interactions/relationships are unsatisfactory.

Follow this link to read *28 ways to build persistent and confident students:*

http://teaching.monster.com/benefits/articles/10348-28-ways-to-build-persistent-confident-students

Getting started

Consider using icebreakers or short group exercises at the start of each class to build students' confidence and engagement with learning. Icebreakers help to create a good atmosphere for learning and participation. Visit this link for icebreaker suggestions. http://insight.typepad.co.uk/40_icebreakers_for_small_groups.pdf

At the end of a block of work, or last class in the evening, or first in the morning, ask students to jot down three things that they are grateful for in their lives in and/or beyond school.

Check out Martin Seligman's **Actions for Happiness** here http://www.actionforhappiness.org/take-action

In groups of four, ask your students to rank the ten actions in order of their importance for this class and for making it a positive place to learn.

For practical ideas for helping students to feel confident check out the following hand-out and short video.

http://www.teacherstoolbox.co.uk/T_maslow.html

http://www.teacherstoolbox.co.uk/maslow.html (video).

ideas
ideas **Some strategies for encouraging students to be positive about learning**

- Develop supportive relationships – get to know students' names as quickly as possible. and show interest and concern for them both in and beyond your classroom.
- Ensure that your classroom is a safe, secure and respectful environment
- Ask students for feedback and respond to it.
- Vary your teaching styles.
- Have transparent and accessible school/classroom processes and ensure that students know how they work.
- Ensure that all students are encouraged to avail of the range of learning opportunities offered within the school.
- Value and celebrate a wide range of achievements.
- Creating a culture where it is ok to make mistakes and learn from them.

[Adapted from the Social Inclusion Board, SA 2007]

Movie

Consider the implications of the key messages in these videos for your classroom

- Dylan Williams talks about the importance of building students' self-efficacy - their sense of confidence about what they can do/learn/accomplish as well as their self-esteem. (3mins)
  http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/mp4/lal/selfefficacydylanwiliam.mp
- David Perkins outlines the important considerations for encouraging a positive mind set toward learning in students – (3 mins).
  http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/mp4/lal/positivemindsetsdavidperkins.mp4

- The characteristics of an inclusive classroom and the role that every teacher can play. (3.05mins)
  http://www.journeytoexcellence.org.uk/videos/martynrousetheinclusiveclassroom.asp
- *Characteristics of excellent inclusive schools (4 mins)*
  http://www.journeytoexcellence.org.uk/videos/martynrouseinclusiveexcellentschools.asp

Students develop the confidence to communicate opinions and beliefs with confidence in a variety of ways

More ideas for the classroom

Introducing a new topic in class? Invite students to walk around the room exchanging any information they might have on the topic with others. Consider the following questions:

What do you know already about this topic?

What would you like to know about it?

Record any suggestions or contributions from the students at the end of the exercise.

Language teachers, for example, might find this exercise very useful for oral work, as it encourages the students to speak without fear of *'getting it wrong.*'

Preparing for a debate, presentation, oral assessment? Encourage students to audio/video record themselves and either self or peer assess using agreed criteria for success to assess their performance and plan for improvement.
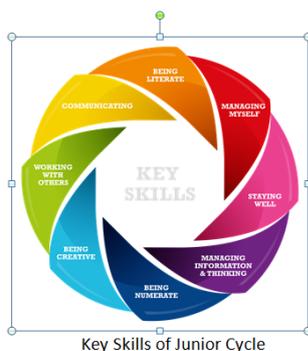
You'll find lots of ideas to help you build students' confidence in communicating and presenting in class in the **Communicating** toolkit

Key Skills of Junior Cycle

Communicating

Helping students to express and manage different emotions

Many young people can find it difficult to express and manage different emotions appropriately.   They can also worry about being laughed at if they express their feelings honestly and openly. Teachers too can find some emotional responses from students challenging to manage. It is worth remembering that emotions are neither good nor bad, acceptable or unacceptable. What is important is that students learn to manage their emotions in a way that is respectful of themselves and others.

  *Look out for **teachable moments**, i.e. moments in a lesson where emotions may come to fore, e.g. making a presentation, receiving feedback, making a mistake, being excluded, finding work challenging, being moved by a text, film, or image.*

Students can, for example, be encouraged to make their feelings known when presenting on a topic that they feel strongly about. They should be guided in doing this in a way that is respectful and cognisant of the feelings of others.

Watch this short video of an English class where the teacher used a short story to develop students' capacity to discuss emotions.

https://vimeo.com/ncca/review/100580612/f1648b9248
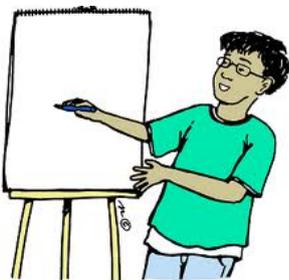
 Following a presentation, students can be invited to reflect on the different feelings experienced before, during and after   the presentation. Quesitons such as these might be helpful -

- What was it like for you to make a presentation to the group?
- How did you feel before, during and after the presentation?
- How would you feel if you had to make another presentation, now that you have finished this one?

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Alternatively, students could either write a reflective piece in responce to these questions or work with a partner on the reflection.

Encourage student reflection

Invite students to fill in an *emotional response sheet* following a particular learning experience. First, brainstorm with the class all the different emotions that they experienced while reading the story or watching the film. These are recorded on the sheet. Invite students to record their personal experience of each of these emotions where 1 is *not at all* and 5 is a *very strong responce*. Students could then be encouraged to discuss in small groups or to write about their emotional response to the learning experience. Below find an example of an emotional response sheet which could be used after reading the book or watching the film *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*

THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PYJAMAS by John Boyne

1. Describe how you feel about the young Jewish boy Shmuel
   _____
   _____
   _____

2. Say who would feel most sympathy for, Bruno's mother or Bruno's dad …and why?
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

3. Name any character in the film that you feel you dislike and say why?
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

4. Identify a part of the film which could make you feel angry and say why.
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

5. How did you feel at the very end of the film?
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

Movie

Dylan Williams talks about the link between emotions and learning (3 minutes)

http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/mp4/lal/emotionsandlearningdylanwiliam.mp4

Contribute to decision-making within the class and group

Standing apart from the group when needed

Group research projects: In this exercise, each student is working on their own section of a group project. They are asked to compile a single powerpoint presentation with each person contributing a single powerpoint slide as part of the overall group presentation. This activity encourages collaboration, while at the same time, facilitiating individual work and expression.

Speed discussion

Prepare a set of postcards on which is written a statement of interest to young people in the context of the subject/short course being taught. For younger students, it is a good idea to encourage them to research the various topics in preparation for the speed discussion.

Examples: Homework is a pointless activity

Our government needs to do much more to help the less well-off members of our society.

This area is a great place to grow up in.

Character A in the novel would be a good friend to have.

Reality TV programmes have an adverse effect on young people.

Students sit opposite each other in rows. The topic cards are face down on the desk. The students have 3 minutes between them to discuss the topic on the card.
After 3 minutes the bell rings and the student moves to the right. Pick up the topic card on that desk and begin the process again.   To ensure that the students are staying on task, the teacher can pause the discussion at intervals and choose students to summarise the discussion they have had so far.

Negotiating homework and/or deadlines

Setting homework and deadlines provides an opportunity to involve students in decision making. Ask students to agree on deadlines when work should be submitted.

Have a Suggestion Box

Encourage an open classroom by having a suggestion box in your classroom. Always set the ground rules however. For example, comments must be related to classroom climate, suggestions for learning and assessment activities and/or homework approaches.

Key Skills of Junior Cycle
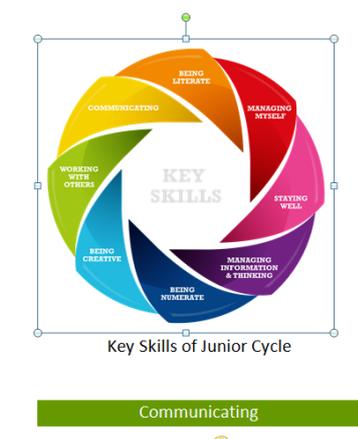
Communicating

For lots of ideas to building students' confidence in discussing and debating, check out the *Communicating* toolkit

Check out this website for ideas about teaching students to stand up for themselves and others safely in bullying situations http://www.micheleborba.com/blog/2011/12/09/mobilizing-bystanders-to-stand-up-to-bullies/

Being positive about learning

The learning outcomes are

I can find enjoyment and fun in learning.

I can learn from my mistakes and move on

I can recognise and celebrate my achievement.

I can sick with things and work them through until I succeed
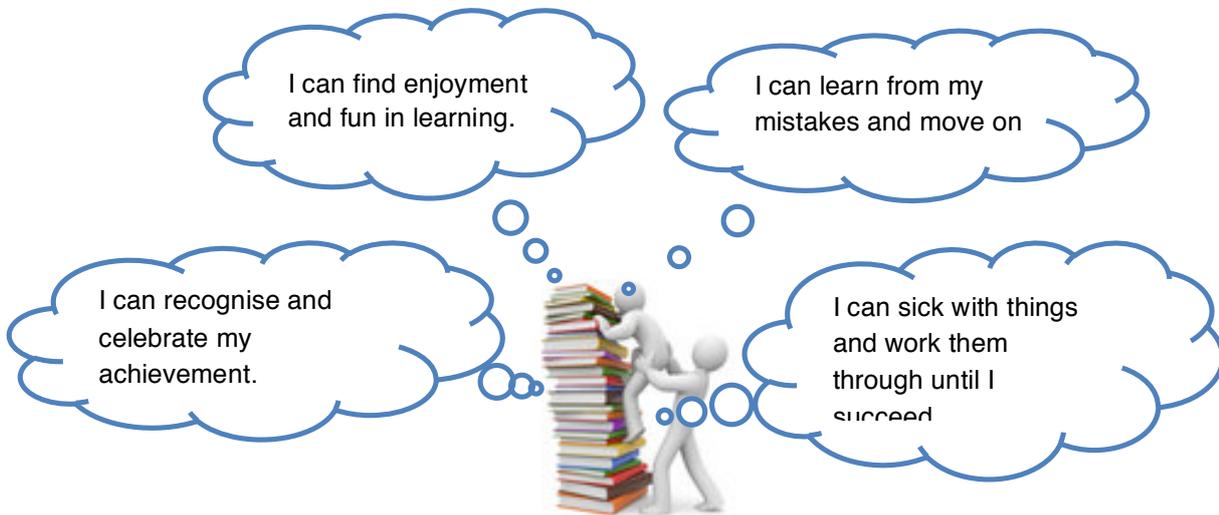
Discuss the following questions with colleagues

What have you found useful for helping students to become more positive about their learning?

What have you found useful in helping the 'disengaged student?

What do you find the most challenging in this context?

How do you help students to recognise/celebrate their learning achievements? How might we do this better?

Finding enjoyment and fun in learning

Learning from mistakes and moving on.

Check out the following video

Movie

Six strategies to encourage all students to participate

http://www.edutopia.org/blog/6-strategies-motivate-student-participation-maddie-witter?utm_source=SilverpopMailing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=enews%2

Getting started in the classroom -
Ideas that every teacher can use

Think about the layout of your classroom. Is it conducive to action based learning? Or does it communicate that the teacher teaches and the students listen?

Teacher Checklist ... Ask yourself how positive a place is your classroom?

- How cheerful and stimulating a place is your classroom?
- How approachable are you?
- Is it ok to make mistakes in your class?
- How do you deal with students who make mistakes?
- How do you feel about a 'noisy' classroom?
- Is your praise generic or does it explicitly state the reasons for the praise? Do you give supportive comments to all students on a regular basis?
- Is there an area for your students to display your work?
- Do you ask for your students' opinion on homework tasks, deadlines or methodologies?
- Do you convey high expectations for students' learning?   How do you do this?
- How often do students work in groups?
- Does your seating arrangements communicate that it is a student-centred space?
- How do you reward progress?
- Do you provide opportunities for your students to give feedback to each other about their learning?
- Do you communicate students' progress with their parents/guardians?
- Do you reward effort as well as end result?
- Do you communicate the belief that your students can succeed?
- Do you ever acknowledge the difficulty of tasks and discuss this with your students?
- Do you support them as they work through problems and learn from their mistakes?

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Surround your classroom with positive messages!

For example:

'The first problem for all of us, men and women, is not to learn, but to unlearn' **Gloria Steinem**

"One of the biggest things that I have learned is that I don't always have to be right." **Jeffrey Swartz**

'The important thing is not to stop questioning'. **Albert Einstein**

'Success is not something to wait for, it is something to work for ' **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**

'If people did not do silly things, nothing intelligent would ever get done' **Ludwig Wittgenstein**

'Genius is 10% inspiration, 90% perspiration' **Thomas Edison**

'Excellence is a habit. The things you do the most are the things you will do the best' **Anon**

"Our thoughts create our reality-where we put our focus is the direction we tend to go." **Peter McWilliams**

''Learning is not a spectator sport' . **Anon**

'If you don't know where you are going, than you probably won't end up there." **Forrest Gump**

Ask students to bring in their own inspirational quotes and images!
Ask them to pick a quote of the month for your class. Ask them to talk/write about why they choose the particular quote and how they hope to use in the coming month.

How assessment can support a positive attitude to learning

Ensure students know at the outset of a unit of study

- **what** they are going to learn (learning intentions)
- **how** they will recognise when they have succeeded (criteria for success)
- **why** they should learn it in the first place

  As the unit progresses, provide opportunities/activities where students can show
  what they are learning and can get helpful feedback on what they need to do to meet
  all of the criteria for success.

For ideas on setting learning intentions and success criteria, and on giving students
constructive feedback, check out the **Assessment** toolkit and the *Managing Myself* toolkit
and at www.juniorcycle.ie

Flashcards – helping students to focus on a particular aspect of their learning

Improving written work can be perceived by some students as an
overwhelming task. Provide an opportunity for success by breaking the
task down to achievable stages is helpful. This is known as 'mastery
learning'. Laminate strips of paper with the key words such as the
following:

- Planning
- Proof Reading
- Key words and phrases
- Punctuation
- Quotation Use
- Introduction and Conclusion
- Use of paragraphs

When assigning written work, focus students on one or two of these cards only. When you are providing feedback, limit your feedback to this one area of focus.

<p style="text-align:center">**Sticking with things and working them through until I succeed**</p>

Learning to handle failure – Practical suggestions on how to support students when they make mistakes (2.30 mins)

http://www.journeytoexcellence.org.uk/videos/expertspeakers/handlingfailurebrianboyd.asp

Movie

Some short inspirational videos worth sharing with your students

If a student feels that he or she is capable of completing a task, then he or she will have the confidence to do so. If they think they will fail, then they will lack confidence and failure becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy. View this video and discuss how the ideas expressed could apply to your class.

No arms, no legs, no worries http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOzsjEmjjHs (4 minutes)

Powerful inspirational true story…don't give up! http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZlXWp6vFdE

Discuss students' responses to the videos. Draw attention to the range of responses in the class.   Talk about the individual nature of our responses and how we can learn helpful and unhelpful responses.

Encouraging students to reflect on their learning – some ideas

- Award marks for student reflection on tasks they are doing or have completed.
- When students are submitting their work, ask them to draw either a smiley face or an unhappy face to indicate their experience of completing the task.

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- Ask students to keep a reflection journal for recording reflections on successes and challenges, and for recording goals and targets. Help them focus their thoughts by giving them the words and phrases useful in reflections.

Sample questions to prompt reflection:

What have you done well? What are you pleased with?

What specific areas do you need to improve?

Why is improving on this area important for you?

How did you work on your target this week?

How did you remind yourself to work on your target?

What prevents you from achieving success in this area?

Give students opportunities to re-draft work

Give students the opportunity to re-draft a written piece, even partially. This allows them to use the feedback that you or their peers have provided.

Use of negative exemplars

Ask your students to review an exemplar of poor work and to suggest areas for improvement or to re-draft it. Here you are asking students to focus on improving something that is within their capability as opposed to asking them to attempt to produce an 'A' grade answer that is beyond some students.

Make a contract with students about their grades

Negotiate with your students about which grade they are aiming for. Make it difficult for them to choose a lower grade. The student must complete the requirements necessary to achieve this grade. This approach ensures that students know that their success is completely dependent upon themselves.

Key Skills of Junior Cycle
Managing Myself

You'll find more ideas to support students in becoming more positive and resilient as learners in the **Managing Myself** toolkit

Being responsible, safe and ethical in using digital technology

The learning outcomes of this element are

I can identify situations where my personal safety and wellbeing, and that of others, is put at risk by digital technology and know how to cope

I can protect my personal privacy online

I can respect the rights and responsibilities of others in using digital technology.

In junior cycle, at part of their core learning students will be learning 'to use technology and digital media tools to learn, communicate, work and think collaboratively and creatively in a responsible and ethical manner' (Statement of learning 24). In this context, it is essential that students learn to be responsible, safe and ethical in using digital technology.

With your colleagues, consider the following questions:

How do you currently use digital media to support learning in junior cycle?

How might you develop its use?

What safeguards have you in place when using digital technology?   Are you familiar with the school's digital use policy? What are your concerns, if any?

Students learn to identify situations where their personal safety and wellbeing, and that of others, is put at risk by digital technology and know how to cope.

Getting started with your students – practical classroom ideas

Make sure your students know how to protect themselves online.

Play online games that teach online safety

The game "Cyber Café" will test students' knowledge of staying safe while using email, chat areas, mobiles and other new technologies in a fun way!

http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/8_10/cybercafe/Cyber-Cafe-Base/

Useful websites

Webwise is an internet safety initiative designed to raise awareness about online safety and good practice among students, their parents and teachers. http://www.webwise.ie/Teachers.aspx

Insafe network produces a range of information and resources to help schools to raise awareness of online safety.

http://www.saferinternetday.org/web/guest/home

Think before you click is a resource for junior cycle students learn about online privacy in the context of online rights and responsibilities.   http://www.thinkb4uclick.ie/

The *Watch Your Space* anti cyber-bullying campaign has information and advice for secondary school students about coping with online situations and facilitating positive intervention by witnesses. http://watchyourspace.ie/AboutUs.shtm

Design a poster

Cool kids stay safe online

Do you know how to stay safe online?

Watch out for advertising

Delete junk mail

Keep your passwords safe

Choose difficult passwords

The internet is a really fun but you need to be safe when you surf. It's better to be safe than to be sorry!
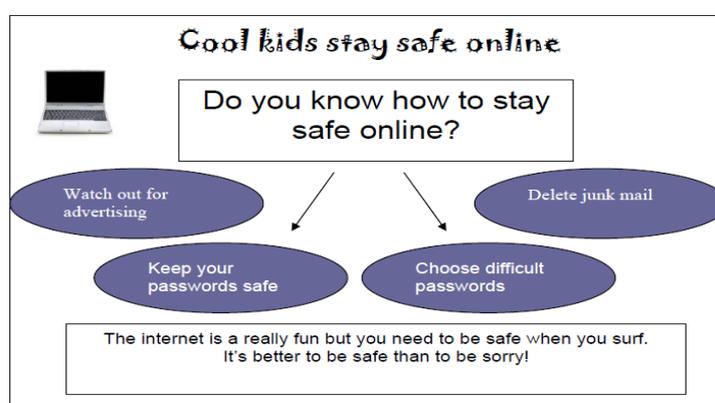
Students should

- not share personal information online.
- know how to block people who are annoying or upsetting them.
- know how to save conversations in case something unpleasant happens.

Students need to be aware

Ask students to come up with their **own checklist** of how to be safe online.

Some ideas: students should be aware of…

The school's internet safety policy

What information is appropriate to share online

Who they make friends with

Who they chat to

Who can see their profile and their pictures

Where to go for help if they are concerned about their safety

Protocols about uploading pictures

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Students learn about respecting the rights and responsibilities of others when using digital technology

Why not host a "Safer Internet Day (SID)" in your school to promote safer and more responsible use of online technology and mobile phones. Use this annual event to encourage and promote safer and ethical use of the internet in your school. Get students to design posters, act out scenarios, debate, read articles on internet safety…

Scenarios Activity 1

Ask your class to discuss the following scenario.

"The whole class were allowed to take cameras on a trip hillwalking. Plenty of fun photos were taken. Last night you were looking at your friend's website. He has uploaded lots of photos from the visit. There are many photos of you and your friends in school uniform and your full names have been added to the site. What should you do next?

Scenario Activity 2

Ask your students to discuss the following scenario:
"Your friend Emily tells you about her internet buddy Amy. Emily has never met Amy in the real world, they just chat on the internet. Amy has asked Emily if she would like to chat on webcam the next time they speak. What would your advice be to your friend?"

Check out the following sites for further information and teaching ideas

http://www.webwise.ie
http://www.thinkb4uclick.ie
http://watchyourspace.ie/
http://www.saferinternetday.org/web/guest/home
http://www.ncte.ie/InternetSafety/
http://www.childnet.com/safety/
http://www.ikeepsafe.org/educators_old/more/google/
http://www.kidsmart.org.uk/teachers/KS2/lessonplans.aspx

Making it my own

Take a little time to think about how you can incorporate some of these ideas into your practice.

Consider maintaining a diary or blog noting your actions and how your students are responding. There is no need for this to be a secret.

Why not involve the students, and ask them to keep a journal too, and discuss it with you? And it would be great to share your experiences with some of your colleagues.

Next steps

1. Review and list all the ideas in this resource or those you gathered whilst watching the short videos.

2. Identify one idea or a manageable number of ideas that you feel you could develop and which would improve your students' learning in a significant way.

3. Plan how you will develop those aspects with identified classes over a period of time. You might even consider how you might establish baselines for pupils' learning which will allow you to judge impact and learning gain.

4. Over the next month, keep a diary/blog to record changes in the way you help students manage their learning, agree outcomes and goals for students; the ways in which you carry out assessments of learning and the ways in which you record and use the data arising.

5. Record also any benefits you notice for students and for yourself. Share your reflections with appropriate colleagues.

Use or adapt the reflection sheets that follow.

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Teacher reflection sheet

Class:

Topic:

Date:

Teaching approach tried:

1. Give a brief description of the task you set for the students

2. What was the impact on the students? How did they respond?

3. What key skills were evident?

4. How might you improve this approach or adapt it for future use?

Student's reflection sheet

Class:

Topic:

Date:

Give a brief description of how you participated in class today

The main thing I learned is…

I liked/didn't like this way of learning because…

The skill/s I developed were…