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## Wellbeing. What do young people want? Why should we listen?

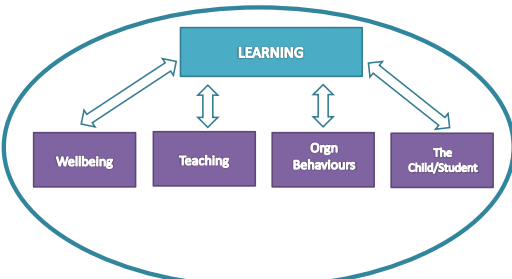
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### Overview of the Presentation

1. Leadership and Wellbeing
2. Snapshot findings from *Wellbeing in Schools* study
3. The findings and recognition theory
4. Implications for Policy


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### The Context. The Argument.







**Congruence. Safety. (Staff and Students)**


### Wellbeing Study

 **Listening to the Voices of Children and Young People**

- Phase 1: Analysis – how is wellbeing conceptualized
- Phase 2: Interviews with teachers and Principals (n=89); focus groups with primary and secondary students (n=606 students) across 3 states
- Phase 3: On-line survey with students and teachers (n=9975)

Research partners:    

### Wellbeing is Multi-Dimensional



**Being**


- Trusted
- Free & safe
- Connected
- Hopeful
- Energetic
- Visible
- Courageous

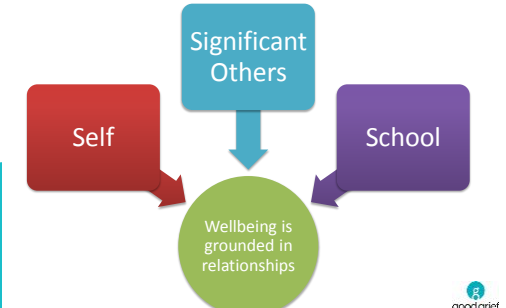
**Having**

- Positive relationships
- Enough sleep
- Fun
- Equality
- Privacy
- Justice
- Rights Respected
- Morals
- Your Views taken into account
- Responsibility

**Doing**


- Looking after yourself
- Being nice
- Saying yes to Challenges
- Accepting yourself
- Keeping a positive outlook
- Being good

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**Self** **Significant Others** **School**

**Wellbeing is grounded in relationships**

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## Relationships

### Primary Students

- Parents/Carers and Close Friends

### Secondary Students

- Parents/Carers and Close Friends

### Staff

- Teachers and Students
- Students and parents
- Students and Friends



## Recognition (and Misrecognition)

Children and Young People described their needs:

- to be “known:”
- to be “noticed”
- “visible”
- “everybody knowing you”
- “everybody knowing you are there”
- “people not forgetting about you”



## Conversation

Students wanted teachers to take the time to “really listen” and did not want just “one-off” conversations:

*“Talking to someone – helps you when you are down – you know you have someone there to look after you”*

*“[Also] you can just have a normal conversation with [the teachers], which I think is important.”*



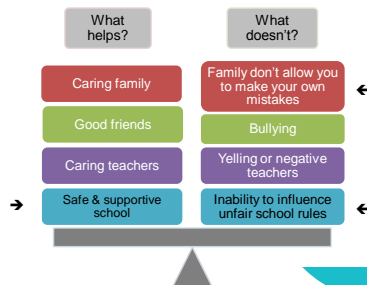
## Having a Say

*“Having a say so people actually listen to you”*

*“I think having things forced upon you can make you feel that your decisions don’t matter”*



the students reflected on what they felt helps and hinders their wellbeing at school:



## Power & Reciprocity



## Recognition Theory

*"Due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people, it is a vital human need"* (Taylor, 1995, p. 226).

Recognition is simply defined by Bingham (2003, p.3) as *"the act of acknowledging others, and coming to be acknowledged by others."*



In the Wellbeing in Schools study we drew upon the work of Axel Honneth.

A framework for wellbeing:

- Cared for
- Respected
- Valued



## A Framework for Wellbeing

- **Being cared for** is about how we are there for each other. When we are cared for we know and trust someone enough to ask them for help.

CARED  
FOR  
(love)

- **Being respected** is about the way we treat each other. For example, it means that we all should respect each other's rights to be listened to and treated fairly.

RESPECTED  
(rights)

- **Being valued** is about our abilities being noticed by people important to us. When we are valued we feel encouraged to work together to make things better.

VALUED  
(solidarity)



## Key Messages

Children and young people feel more cared for, respected and valued when:

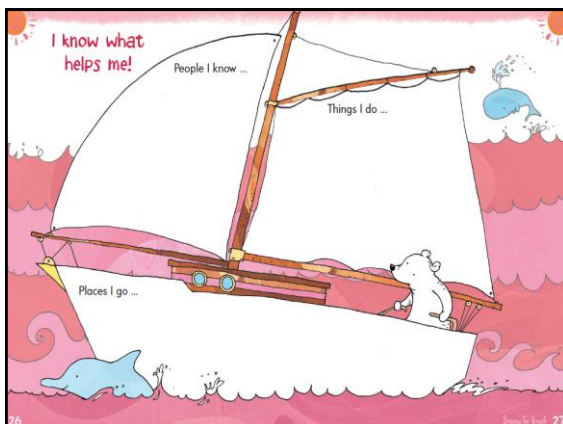
- Time is spent with them
- They are listened to and valued in their own right
- They are "known" well
- They can have a say



## 4. Policy

Wellbeing policy must acknowledge:

- Relationships are key
- Frame the routines of school to support relationships not work against them
- Time for conversation really matters
- Opportunities for students to have a say and make decisions that count are critically important
- Have a theory - Recognition is important
- Start with Staff



*"Children are not the people of tomorrow, but are people of today. They have a right to be taken seriously, and to be treated with tenderness and respect"* (Janusz Korczak, 1929).

Thank you

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