

It is possible that students who reported lower levels of stress resistance and emotional control are generally more anxious than other students, not just in test situations. Test anxiety is a specific form of a more general group of problems characterised by feelings of anxiety. Individuals with (trait) anxiety have the tendency to present state anxiety in diverse situations and not just in a specific moment (McDonald, 2001[11]). In any case, coping with test anxiety is inextricably related to emotional regulation (Schutz and Davis, 2000[20]; Stoeber and Pekrun, 2004[21]).

Box 3.2.

Measures to enhance students' well-being in the classroom

Junior Cycle Well-being Guidelines, Ireland

In 2015, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment in Ireland introduced the Junior Cycle Well-being Guidelines to support teachers and schools in planning, developing and implementing comprehensive programmes to enhance the physical, mental, social and emotional well-being of students. The framework aims to develop a sense of personal values and moral decision-making, promote active citizenship skills, encourage students to live sustainably and teach them to safeguard their well-being. The guidelines provide frameworks that schools can adopt to promote their students' well-being in areas such as civic and social engagement, physical education and personal and health education. In order to develop a sustainable and comprehensive programme, schools are recommended to engage with multiple stakeholders and organise consultations with parents, teachers and students to understand how well-being measures in school can be improved. This can help schools plan activities that support student well-being. Actions taken by schools to achieve their well-being goals include developing short courses to target specific areas of well-being, integrating well-being in existing courses, organising initiatives such as school retreats, sports days and sessions on digital media literacy. The impact of these steps on student well-being is reported regularly through the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement, which tracks student performance across different activities that promote well-being.

Source: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2017[22])

Holistic Health Framework, Singapore

Under the aegis of its Trim and Fit programme to reduce obesity, the Ministry of Education in Singapore introduced the Holistic Health Framework (HHF). These are a set of guidelines to support students' overall physical, mental and social well-being. The broad aims of HHF are to support students' well-being in an inclusive manner and ensure that every child receives the knowledge, resources and opportunities to lead a healthy lifestyle. To achieve this, schools and teachers are trained to educate students on the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Schools that adopt HHF undertake various steps to reach their goals such as developing comprehensive formal and non-formal curricula to promote health; partnering with stakeholders to share expertise and resources; and developing an action plan for fast delivery. Common steps taken by schools include counselling pupils on nutrition and promoting physical activities.

Source: Ministry of Education (2007[23]); Lee (2003[24])

Australian Student Well-being Framework

Australia's Department of Education, Skills and Employment introduced the Student Well-being Framework, which aims to provide every student with the necessary resources to promote well-being, safety and positive relationships for them to reach their full potential. The five key elements of the framework are developing effective school leadership; including all members of the community to promote well-being; giving students space to voice their opinions; developing partnerships with families and communities to support well-being; and cultivating a collective understanding of positive behaviors required to improve well-being. To assess whether schools are incorporating the above elements to promote student well-being, the School Well-being Check Survey is administered. This survey contains 25 questions to help school leaders think about areas of improvement with respect to the five target elements the framework defines. Items included in this survey cover themes such as tolerance for diversity; teaching social and emotional skills through evidence-informed practices; building staff capacity through training; and active engagement with students and members of the extended community to promote well-being.

Source: Department of Education, Skills and Employment (2018[25])