

# Our Flourishing School Why You Matter

Why your own values and wellbeing  
are so important for our school



[www.flourishproject.net](http://www.flourishproject.net)

 **Flourish  
Project**  
The Ecology of Wellbeing



## The School as a living system

A school is much more than just teachers and students. Instead it is a complex network of people, all of whom share the hugely important role of ensuring that future generations can grow up to become knowing, caring and thoughtful people, who are in tune with themselves, with others and with the natural world.

The Flourish Model engages everyone in the school community to think about what shapes human values and worldviews and what really creates good and meaningful lives. It explores big questions and future solutions, promotes empathy and deep-thinking and empowers students to make the personal choices that help to shape the future that they want, rather than the one that is imposed upon them.

## The roots of difference

Of all the 113 billion (and counting!) people that have ever lived, every single one of us has been unique – which is totally amazing. Difference is built into the system, with everybody carrying forward the patterns of the past, but also being able to choose at any moment how to respond to the things that life throws at us.



## Life is messy!

The Flourish Project doesn't think life is all about seeking happiness (although moments are nice). Instead it suggests that life is gloriously messy – with challenge, difficulty, struggle, pain, joy, confusion, frustration, creativity, despair, hope and achievement all part of our unique learning journeys.

What does matter is our sense of being connected – to our Selves, to Others and to the Natural World. Because without connection life can feel as though it has no meaning. **That's why loving and feeling loved is so important.**

## Values, beliefs and behaviours

We are all born with these seven core human developmental needs:

Growth	to expand who we are and what we know
Contribution	to contribute to something greater than our selves
Fulfilment	to know that we can overcome challenges
Engagement	to explore and take risks in order to learn
Independence	to feel a sense of self-worth
Relationship	to love and be loved
Security	to have a safe and secure place to live

## Our developmental needs

No matter where we live in the world, these needs are the same. As we grow and develop, we each seek to fulfil these needs in ways that have meaning for us and whether or not they are met then shape the values, beliefs and behaviours that become our personalities.

The single most important factor in how we fulfil our needs is the quality of our relationships – and especially those we have with the adults in our worlds when we are young. Children adopt and model the values, beliefs and behaviours that they see going on around them, that help them to feel secure and that give them a sense of belonging.

**This means that every adult in the school really needs to be mindful about whether or not they are acting as good role models for the sort of people that we want young children to grow up to be.**

Values are formed on the inside, but are carried in the relationships of life.

## Family patterns

We all carry forward our family patterns, both good and bad. The important thing is to realise this and to choose which ones you want carried forward by your own children and grandchildren – and to the children in your care. If you went back one hundred years in your own family what patterns of belief and behaviours would stand out? Which ones would you hold on to? And which ones would you want to let go of?

This degree of awareness or is not something that happens overnight. But, by regularly observing our thoughts and behaviours, and reflecting on where they came from, we can start to break the predictability of the future and to give children the best possible chance to flourish.

In doing so, you will not only letting go of limiting values and beliefs for yourself, but also for everyone in your ongoing family lines.



## Cultural wounds

Humans, more than any other species, are subject to a huge range of environmental pressures that impact our ways of thinking, our way of looking at things, and our behaviours. We are shaped by our birth country, the cultures where we live, our religions, our communities, our educational settings, those we spend the most time with, which programmes we watch, which news channels we follow etc, etc

The more people share a common belief, the more powerful the influence of their common field becomes. Think about all the external pressures that you have become part of and how they have impacted how you see the world. Think about your own beliefs and behaviours - which ones you chose to adopt, and which ones have been imposed on you by external systems. Finally, ask yourself which ones you would like to keep because they serve you and the others, and which ones you can work on letting go of.

The systems that children are exposed to, go on to shape their worlds.

## Honouring worldviews

The more we unpick 'why we are the way we are' and the external patterns that have shaped us, the more we can understand that we all have maps of the world that are different. Our worldviews shape what we perceive to be real and true, but others have different backgrounds and experiences that mean that they literally see and understand the world differently.

Our brains are programmed for survival and react protectively to people that we see as different from ourselves. But in reality we all share a common humanity, and we live in an increasingly interconnected world.

## Conscious parenting and teaching

Mindfulness helps us to step back and become aware of our patterns – and once we are aware we can decide whether they are serving us or not. It's not always easy to let go of long-held beliefs and behaviours, but every time we create a space we make an opening for something new.

And it's very powerful for children to see the adults in their worlds actively talking about this and trying to bring change to their own lives

## Kindness – it starts with you!

Kindness first starts with you understanding that all the things that you have loved and disliked about yourself have created who you are today, and that there were some things from the past that you could not alter. Once you understand this, you automatically start to see others differently and to have more understanding and compassion for the beliefs and behaviours that you see around you.

If you model kindness – towards Self, Others and the Natural World, you will become a role model for the children in your care.

## Protecting future generations

The Flourish Project invites all the adults in the school community to realise that their own wellbeing matters and that their values, beliefs and behaviours will always have an impact on the whole. It encourages school-wide discussions about what shapes personalities and worldviews and gets everyone actively engaged in creating a flourishing school environment.



