



# **St Oliver Post Primary School**

## **Wellbeing Policy**

**March 2024**

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## Mission Statement of St Oliver Post Primary School

St. Oliver Post Primary School is committed to quality education. It seeks to enrich student's lives and empower them for life's many challenges. This is done in a caring atmosphere of good order and discipline and in partnership with parents.

In our daily life we value the principles of justice, mutual respect, equality and tolerance leading to promotion of a positive self-image and the confidence to achieve the highest standards.

## Rationale for, and Basis of this Wellbeing Policy

This policy is based on the Junior Cycle Wellbeing guidelines - the aim of which is to support schools in planning and developing a coherent Wellbeing programme that builds on the understandings, practices and curricula for wellbeing already existing in schools.

The framework for Junior Cycle (2015) provides for a new area of learning at junior cycle called Wellbeing. Wellbeing will cross the three years of junior cycle and build on substantial work already taking place in schools in support of students' wellbeing. This area of learning will make the school's culture and ethos and commitment to wellbeing visible to students. It will include learning opportunities to enhance the physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing of students. It will enable students to build life skills and develop a strong sense of connectedness to their school and to their community.

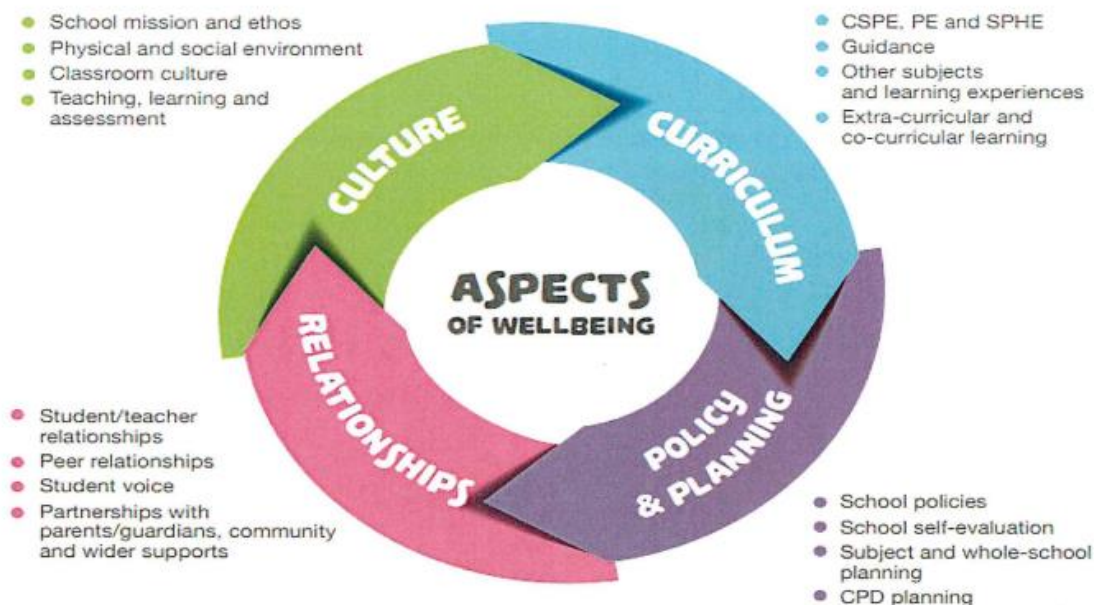
The Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme began with 300 hours of timetabled engagement in 2017 and has built up to 400 hours as the new junior cycle is implemented fully in schools.

## Wellbeing Indicators

Wellbeing is present when students realise their abilities, take care of their physical wellbeing, can cope with the normal stresses of life, and have a sense of place and belonging to a wider community. Wellbeing indicators are as follows – Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected, and Aware. These indicators are representative of the following key skills that St Oliver Post Primary strives to develop in our pupils:

- Being a confident and skilled participant in physical activity;
- Being physically active;
- Being able to take action to protect and promote their wellbeing and that of others;
- Making healthy eating choices;
- Knowing when and where their safety is at risk and enabling them to make the right choices;
- Feeling connected to their school, friends, community and the wider world;
- Understanding how their actions and interactions impact on their own wellbeing and that of others, in local and global contexts;
- Feeling confident in themselves and having the coping skills to deal with life's challenges;
- Knowing where they can go for help;
- Believing that, with effort, they can achieve;
- Showing care and respect for others;
- Having positive relationships with friends, peers, and staff members;
- Feeling listened to and valued;
- Being aware of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, and being able to make sense of them;
- Being aware of their personal values, and able to think through their decisions; and
- Being aware of themselves as learners, and knowing how they can improve.

## Aspects of Wellbeing



## Supporting and Promoting a Culture of Wellbeing in School

St Oliver Post Primary promotes a warm, welcoming, encouraging and positive school culture in the following ways:

- The physical environment conveys a message of warmth, welcome and inclusion;
- The school is a safe place for all students;
- All Child Protection procedures are in place, with all staff renewing their Child Protection training at regular intervals, most recently in August 2023;
- There are spaces for students to congregate socially and to have quiet time;
- An Grianán is used during breaktimes and at other times as a quiet space for pupils who are struggling socially or due to sensory overload;
- The school building is accessible for all students;
- Students and staff take pride and care in maintaining the physical environment;
- The school environment is conducive to promoting physical activity and healthy eating choices;
- Teachers have high expectations for all students;
- There are open, positive, supportive relationships between teachers and students in class and outside;
- A culture of collaboration and cooperation is promoted through day to day teaching, learning and assessment practices;
- Students feel safe, secure and respected in their classrooms;
- Our Student Voice programme offers a suite of options where students can be involved and influence the school;
- Extra-curricular activities provide opportunities to assist in the support of student wellbeing and their holistic education;

- Throughout the year, there are various themed weeks that highlight and support wellbeing, for example, Wellbeing Week, Stand Up Awareness Week, Sustainability Week, Neurodiversity Acceptance Week;
- Through our Additional Educational Needs provision, Inclusion is a cornerstone of our school culture;
- Students are encouraged to actively engage in their learning so that they may enjoy being at school;
- Students receive regular formative feedback about their learning and how they can improve;
- Students have regular opportunities to talk about their learning and what helps them to learn;
- Student achievements are recognised and celebrated through the tutor system, positive discipline system; structured assemblies and school reports (Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement);
- Teachers use active methodologies to develop the key skills in their subjects;
- Teaching and learning is differentiated and provides an appropriate challenge to enable all students to engage and experience success;
- Our Literacy Short Course for junior pupils helps to support pupil wellbeing through the positive benefits of reading;
- St Oliver Post Primary School have been a pilot school with Jigsaw since 2009, and have been officially recognised by Jigsaw for the 'One Good School' award in 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and the Gold Award for 2023. We continue to participate in the One Good School Jigsaw project, and
- Wellbeing has been targeted as part of our SSE themes in the last number of cycles. Our current focus (Wellbeing and Sustainability) has grown from the school's appreciation of the importance of the Junior Cycle "Sense of connectedness" Wellbeing indicator, and feels that by promoting sustainable development we can benefit our school community's sense of wellbeing.
  - Previously we worked on the well-documented positive impact of AFL practices on greater student self-esteem. By targeting AFL specifically, we aimed to bring about greater levels of self-esteem among all our students, thus contributing to their wellbeing.

## Recognising the Importance of Relationships for Wellbeing in School

St Oliver Post Primary recognises that true wellbeing can only be assured through the promotion and development of positive, nurturing and respectful relationships within our school community. We strive to achieve this in the following ways:

- Ensuring that student-teacher relationships are friendly, caring and respectful;
- Making sure that staff are fully aware that they may be the one adult that a student turns to for support and help during a difficult time;
- Fully informing students as to where to get support and how to access the care structures in the school;
- Resolving behaviour issues with care, respect and consistency;
- Ensuring that there is a shared vision and understanding of what student wellbeing means which emphasises strengths and capacities;
- Encouraging students to show respect, care and concern for each other so that they feel safe and supported amongst their peers;
- Recognising that staff are entitled to feel supported and cared for amongst their colleagues;

- Providing forums for students so that their voices may be heard and they are involved in making decisions about their life in school;
- Making sure that students know that their feedback is valued and, where appropriate, acted upon;
- Ensuring that parents feel welcome, respected, and listened to as partners in the education of their children;
- Sharing information with parents as to how they can support their child's wellbeing; and
- Maintaining strong links with the local community.

## Staff Wellbeing

- Staff at St. Oliver Post Primary work in a supported environment.
- At Board of Management meetings, the principal's report keeps the board informed of the work of staff. This is further affirmed at staff gatherings.
- The Staffroom has been recently upgraded to include more modern staff facilities. Our staff room is well equipped and provides a communal space for staff. There are two staff workroom areas also.
- Teacher based classrooms are in the majority and this has led to improved working conditions for staff.
- School management work collaboratively with the whole staff and respect the professional commitment of each staff member.
- Management is understanding of the complex pressures which may come to bear on all members of staff from time to time and respond with compassion. Where necessary staff are offered access to in-school supports and encouraged to access the supports provided by the Employee Assistance Scheme.
- Staff members are encouraged and supported to take on new roles, gain further qualifications or attend relevant CPD courses.

## Wellbeing Curricular Provision

### DES Guidelines

- St Oliver Post Primary offers as wide a range of subjects and programmes as we can, to cater for pupils' educational needs, thus supporting their wellbeing. We provide the following - a 2 class ASD SNU, L2LP, Junior Cycle, TY, LCA, LCVP and LCE.
- From September 2017 wellbeing has been allocated a minimum of 300 hours timetabled engagement and this has built up to 400 hours.
- All subject planning will include Wellbeing and teachers should embed wellbeing into their curriculum and ensure it is visible to students.
- Wellbeing will be further embedded into the school curriculum through three key Subject areas which are; CSPE, SPHE, PE and guidance related learning. Our Literacy Short Course also supports Wellbeing. The principles of wellbeing are embedded into the Literacy Short Course. The Literacy class uses metacognitive strategies to help students reflect on their progress and take responsibility for their learning. The curricular element focuses on the relationship between reading for pleasure and how it benefits to our wellbeing.
- Wellbeing is inclusive of all and appropriate students are offered Level 2 priority learning units including wellbeing.
- Information Note TC 0001/2024 on Whole School Guidance will inform how Guidance becomes embedded across all subject departments over time, which we envisage will also support pupils' wellbeing.

## Wellbeing Provision from 2023

SUBJECT	Periods per Week Over 3 Years	Total Weekly Hours Over 3 Years
PE	6	132
CSPE	4.25	94
SPHE	4.25	94
COMP LITERACY	3	66
LITERACY	3	66
CAREER GUIDANCE	0.25	5.5
Totals	20.75	457.5

## In-school Structures to Support Wellbeing

- SPHE and RSE is provided for all pupils in the school;
- Wellbeing and Pastoral Support Structures:
  - Senior Management Team and Weekly Wellbeing Meetings with key staff;
  - Pastoral Care System;
    - Tutors; and
    - Year Heads.
- Additional Educational Needs Department;
- An Grianán ASD Unit;
- Student Voice Programmes:
  - Mentoring Programmes;
    - Peer Mentors from 1st – 6th Year; provide a key role in peer support and early interventions for pupils who are struggling;
  - Student Council;
    - Enhances student voice and promotes a sense of involvement in the development of the school and a sense of partnership between students and teachers;
  - Senior Lead Learners;
  - Senior Prefect Programme;
  - Head Boy and Head Girl;
  - Digital Leaders Programme;
  - School News Team;
  - Class Captains and Vice Captains; and
  - Green Schools Team.
- School Library: to promote literacy among students;
- Study: Evening study is available to all students;
- Parents' Association;
- Wide variety of extra-curricular activities;
  - School Tours;
- Transition programme from Primary to Secondary School;
- Social Media: Either digital or print formats highlight student and community achievement and progress;
- Positive Discipline System and structured schedule of assemblies to support students;
- Tutor Time: 40 minutes per week contact time with tutor/yearhead;
- Approved Guest Speakers that support Wellbeing;

- Targeted programmes:
  - Ways to Wellbeing; and
  - Get Up Stand Up;
  - Friends for Youth.
- School Counselling Supports:
  - School Psychotherapy Service; and
  - School Guidance Counsellor.
- School Policies such as:
  - Anti-bullying Policy;
  - Code of Behaviour;
  - RSE Policy;
  - Attendance and Participation Strategy;
  - Critical Incident;
  - AEN Policy;
  - Child Protection Procedures;
  - Guidance Plan and Information Note TC 0001/2024 on Whole School Guidance; and
  - Safety Statement.

### Role of the Year Head

Year heads play a key role in supporting the wellbeing of pupils. All Yearhead positions are currently filled and actively so. The role of the Yearhead in terms of wellbeing is as follows:

- Monitoring of academic progress;
- Implementation of code of behaviour which helps provide a safe space for all students in which to develop linking directly to our ethos;
- Liaise with class tutors/mentors about the progress of the students individually and class groups collectively;
- Develop relationships with students, teachers and parents;
- Work within student pastoral support structures;
- Support a positive work ethic in the year;
- Acknowledgment of achievement through positive feedback; and
- Hold assemblies thus providing a forum for students to voice their issues/opinions.

### Implementation and Review

This plan will be implemented from March 2024. It will be reviewed every 2 years.

### Ratification

This revised plan was ratified by the Board of Management on

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**BOM & LMETB Ratification/Resolution Process for  
This Policy**

<b><i>Date Ratified by the Board of Management:</i></b>	
<b><i>Proposed By:</i></b>	
<b><i>Seconded By:</i></b>	
<b><i>Signed:</i></b>	<b><i>(Chairperson, BOM)</i></b>
<b><i>Signed:</i></b>	<b><i>(Secretary to the BOM)</i></b>
<b><i>Scheduled Date for Review of the Policy:</i></b>	

**LMETB Ratification/Resolution of the ETB Board**

<b><i>Date of Resolution of ETB Board</i></b>	
<b><i>Signed</i></b>	<b><i>(Chairperson)</i></b>