

Scoil Eoin Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy

Introduction: In Scoil Eoin we are committed to providing a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment where every student can thrive academically, emotionally, and socially. Our Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy outlines our dedication to promoting the wellbeing of all members of our school community, with a specific focus on the unique needs and challenges faced by students in Ireland.

Mission Statement: Scoil Eoin is dedicated to fostering a positive and inclusive school culture that promotes the wellbeing of all students, staff, and parents/guardians. We believe that a strong sense of wellbeing is essential for effective learning and personal development.

Wellbeing Framework: We follow the Department of Education and Skills (DES) Wellbeing Framework for primary schools in Ireland, which includes the following key components:

- a. Physical Wellbeing: Promoting healthy lifestyles, physical activity, and nutrition.
- b. Mental Health: Offering support and resources to promote mental health awareness and resilience.
- c. Emotional Wellbeing: Creating a safe space for students to express their emotions and seek help when needed.
- d. Social Wellbeing: Encouraging positive relationships, empathy, and conflict resolution.
- e. Spiritual Wellbeing: Respecting and supporting students' diverse spiritual beliefs.
- f. Civic Wellbeing: Fostering active citizenship, community involvement, and social responsibility.

Bullying Prevention: Scoil Eoin has a zero-tolerance policy for bullying. We provide comprehensive anti-bullying programs, support for victims, and education on bullying prevention for all students.

Wellbeing Education:

- a. Curriculum: Our school integrates wellbeing education into the curriculum to promote emotional intelligence and life skills.
- b. Parent/Guardian Involvement: We involve parents/guardians in wellbeing education initiatives and provide resources to support them in fostering wellbeing at home.
- c. Inclusivity: Scoil Eoin is committed to inclusivity and supporting the wellbeing of all students, including those with diverse backgrounds, abilities, and needs.
- d. Monitoring and Evaluation: We regularly assess and evaluate the effectiveness of our Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy through feedback from students, parents/guardians, staff, and external agencies.

Specialised Programs by SET Team that foster Wellbeing and Pastoral Care:

- a. **Spraioi Club – Gross Motor Group:** The Spraoi Club, led by Scoil Eoin's Special Education Teachers, provides essential support to children with diverse needs. This program encompasses areas such as gross motor skills development, sensory diet, sensory regulation support, calming techniques, alerting strategies, and self-esteem building. The teacher plays a pivotal role in creating an inclusive and supportive environment for all children, including

those on the autism spectrum. This group caters to children diagnosed with DCD (Developmental Coordination Disorder) and others facing challenges in coordination, balance, hand-eye coordination, visual tracking, bilateral coordination skills, movement, and core body strength. This group also offers assistance to children who find it difficult to concentrate and lack motivation, thereby enhancing their motor skills and engagement in learning.

b. Braincalm Program – 3rd- 6th:

The Braincalm program is designed to support students experiencing anxiety, poor concentration, low self-esteem, or sensory issues. This initiative equips students with effective strategies to manage their challenges, promoting their overall wellbeing.

c. Suaimhneas Groups – Infants-2nd:

The Suaimhneas Groups provide targeted children with social and emotional development and support using various strategies and interventions. Children who have been deemed anxious or nervous are catered to and supported by staff to enhance their overall wellbeing.

d. Draw and Talk Program:

This program is an individualised, one to one, therapeutic program. It is a gentle, non-intrusive program designed to boost self-esteem and build confidence

SST

Our school prioritizes the wellbeing of every student, guided by the Department of Education’s Wellbeing Policy. This policy emphasizes a “whole-school” approach, meaning that everyone in the school community—students, teachers, staff, and parents—works together to create a positive, supportive environment. We aim to promote wellbeing for all students and recognize that some may need additional support at different times.

To ensure we address a variety of needs, we’re currently involved in training for a pilot program introducing a Student Support Team (SST) at the primary school level. SSTs have already been successfully implemented in secondary schools, and now we’re helping to shape how this model can best serve younger students. This team will play a central role in coordinating the support that students receive at school.

What the SST Does

Our school already has a range of supports in place, including:

- **Classroom Supports:** Teachers provide strategies and resources to help students within their everyday lessons.
- **Individualized Supports:** Some students receive one-on-one help for learning, behaviour, or health needs.
- **Group Supports:** We offer programs like Gross Motor Groups and Social Skills Groups to foster physical and social development.

- **Collaborative Support from Specialists and External Agencies:** We work closely with professionals like NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service), SENO (Special Education Needs Officer), TUSLA (the child and family agency), and more, to ensure students' needs are met.

The SST will serve as a central hub, helping to bring all of these supports together so that they're well-coordinated and effective. By ensuring everyone is on the same page, the SST can streamline support for students and address needs efficiently.

A Focus on Early Intervention and Prevention

While we continue to focus on students with additional needs, the SST will also focus on early intervention. This means we'll identify and address issues early on to prevent them from becoming bigger challenges. The SST's work includes:

- **Universal Support** for all students, such as organizing events like anti-bullying week and implementing social and emotional learning programs.
- **Targeted Support** for some students who may need a bit more guidance with social skills, emotional regulation, or other areas.
- **Individualized Support** for a few students who have specific, ongoing needs.

How the SST Helps Our School Community

The SST's goal is to enhance the support systems already in place. The team will:

- **Coordinate Resources:** Bringing together teachers, support staff, and external agencies to ensure students receive well-rounded help.
- **Assist Staff:** Providing teachers and staff with the tools, training, and resources needed to support students effectively.
- **Maintain Strong Connections:** Strengthening links between the school and community services to create a seamless support network for students.
- **Support New Staff:** Ensuring that new teachers and staff understand the school's wellbeing policies and procedures.
- **Guide School Leadership:** Advising school leaders on policies and initiatives that will continue to support student wellbeing.

In short, the SST is here to make sure that all students—whether they need occasional help or more dedicated support—have the resources they need to feel safe, supported, and ready to learn. This pilot initiative allows us to offer tailored support, improve coordination, and provide a safe, inclusive environment for every child.

We aim to embed the SST on a practical basis from January 2025. The SST Team will meet on Wednesdays (every 2nd week) for 30 minutes. Referrals will be submitted (using a School Referral Form) by 12 o'clock on the preceding Wednesday. The co-ordinators (Mrs Bolger & Mrs O Dowd) have been timetabled to follow up on any referrals (2:00 – 2:30pm) where necessary.

All minutes and related documents will be stored on the school's secure OneDrive platform.

Supporting Policies: In alignment with our Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy, Scoil Eoin maintains various policies and statements to ensure the safety, wellbeing, and overall development of our students:

- Intimate Care Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Antbullying Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Administration of Medicine Policy
- SPHE (Social, Personal, and Health Education) Policy
- RSE Policy
- Safety Statement
- Critical Incident Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Code of Behaviour
- Attendance Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy for Children with additional needs

Supporting Agencies: Scoil Eoin collaborates with several agencies and stakeholders to enhance the wellbeing and pastoral care of our students:

- Parents and Parents Association
- Board of Management
- Fr. Pdraig Walsh, School Chaplain
- Tusla (Child and Family Agency)
- TESS (Tusla Education Support Service)
- Meitheal and the Area based Approach
- EWO (Educational Welfare Officer)
- NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service)
- SENO (Special Educational Needs Organizer)
- HSE - Occupational Therapists; Speech and Language Therapists
- ICBN (Irish Childhood Bereavement Network)

The Role of the Teacher

The relationship that teachers develop with the children has a key influence on wellbeing development. By working sensitively and consistently with students, they have a powerful impact on influencing students' attitudes, values and behaviour, in all aspects of wellbeing education. Many initiatives are undertaken by staff to advance a culture wellbeing in our school, for example:

- Monthly Assemblies
- Speech and Language, Fine Motor and Social Groups
- Yoga for Kids
- Gratitude Journals
- Buddy System with older classes in the school to team up for various projects
- RE.Mind.Ed – Mind Moment Cards giving simple exercises and activities to promote wellbeing.

- Mind You Mind Me - Wellbeing Program with online resources

The Role of Special Needs Assistants (SNAs): Our team of 13 dedicated Special Needs Assistants plays a crucial role in providing one-on-one support to students with diverse needs, ensuring their full participation in the school community.

School Facilities: Scoil Eoin offers a wide range of facilities to enhance the overall wellbeing and educational experience of our students, including a Butterfly Reading and Storytelling outdoor garden space, extensive grounds, new playgrounds, a state-of-the-art library, a computer room, a cookery room, a concert hall, an extensive range of gross motor equipment and modern classrooms.

Local Facilities: Our urban setting allows easy access to Tralee Town. This enables us to avail of all the facilities that Tralee has to offer, including The Kerry Museum, Siamsa Tire Theatre, Tralee Town Park to name a few. Our Lady and St. Brendan's Church is made readily available to our school for our spiritual care, marking our school year with many Masses and for Sacramental purposes too. Using our local environment instils a pride of place and further enhances wellbeing opportunities.

Students' Council – Students' Voice: The Scoil Eoin Student Council is vibrant and hard working. It undertakes several worthwhile projects throughout the school year. This allows the student voice to be heard, as they give their opinions on many topics. The Student Council ends the year on a high note, as they select the "School Spirit Award", anonymously. This award celebrates inclusiveness and fairness in a student, who is a good role model and displays exemplary behaviour. The essence of this award promotes wellbeing and positivity, inherently in Scoil Eoin.

Monthly Assemblies: We hold monthly assemblies that celebrate positivity within our school. These assemblies provide a platform to acknowledge kindness through kindness awards, celebrate birthdays, and recognize the achievements of school sports teams, promoting a culture of encouragement and support.

Pastoral Care Framework

1. **Pupils:** Our Pastoral Care Framework for pupils focuses on their holistic development, emotional support, and overall wellbeing. It includes:

- a. Emotional Support: Providing a safe space for pupils to express their feelings and concerns, with trained staff members available to listen and offer guidance.
- b. Bullying Prevention: Implementing anti-bullying programs and policies to ensure that pupils feel safe and supported in the school environment.
- c. Social Skills Development: Promoting positive relationships, teamwork, conflict resolution, empathy, and peer support.
- d. Wellbeing Education: Integrating social-emotional learning and wellbeing education into the curriculum to enhance pupils' emotional intelligence and resilience.

2. **Staff:** Our Pastoral Care Framework for staff emphasises their wellbeing, professional development, and support. It includes:

- a. Staff Wellbeing: Prioritizing the physical and mental health of staff members and promoting a work-life balance.
- b. Professional Development: Offering opportunities for ongoing training, workshops, and resources to enhance staff's capacity to support pupils and each other.

c. Peer Support: Encouraging a culture of collaboration and support among staff members, where they can share concerns and seek guidance.

d. New Staff Members: Welcoming and mentoring newly appointed staff. A welcome pack from the Principal ensures a smooth transition to life in our busy, vibrant school.

3. Parents: Our Pastoral Care Framework for parents aims to strengthen the partnership between home and school, recognizing parents as essential partners in their child's education and wellbeing. It includes:

a. Communication: Establishing clear and open channels of communication between parents and the school, including regular newsletters, meetings, and online platforms.

b. Parental Involvement: Encouraging parents to participate in school activities, committees, and events to foster a sense of belonging and collaboration.

c. Parent Support: Providing resources and workshops to support parents in their role as caregivers and partners in their child's emotional and educational development.

Documents which have informed our Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy

- Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (DES, 2018)
- Schools for Health in Ireland: Framework for Developing a Health Promoting School (HSE, 2013)
- Looking at Our School: A Quality Framework for Primary Schools (DES, Inspectorate, 2016)
- Well-Being in Primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, DOH & HSE, 2015)
- Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (NCCA, 2009)

Scoil Eoin Primary School remains committed to promoting the wellbeing and pastoral care of pupils, staff, and parents. By embracing the frameworks for Wellbeing and Pastoral Care, we aim to create a nurturing and inclusive community where everyone can thrive emotionally, socially, and academically.

This policy was reviewed, updated and ratified by the Board of Management on Dec 13th 2023

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