



SAINT FINIAN'S NATIONAL  
SCHOOL

# Wellbeing Policy

## 2022

# **St Finian's N.S. Wellbeing Policy 2022**

## **Introduction**

St Finian's National School seeks to promote healthy lifestyles and the wellbeing of our school community, in a safe, supportive and non-threatening environment. Through its policies, procedures, activities and structures the school aims to create an environment in which:

- People feel valued
- Self-esteem is fostered
- There is respect, tolerance and fairness
- People in difficulty are supported
- There is open and honest communication
- Effort is recognised and striving for improvement is taught
- Difference and diversity are valued
- Conflict is handled constructively
- Social, moral and civic values are promoted
- Initiative and creativity are stressed.

These aims are implemented in the daily transactions between management, staff, children and the wider school community.

## **Mission Statement:**

St Finian's N.S. is situated in the parish of Rivermount, in Finglas South. We are guided by the Catholic ethos of our school which we have summed up for wellbeing with one sentence from the gospel; Our mission is to provide a safe, secure, happy learning environment for the entire school community.

'That they may have life and have it in abundance'. John 10.

## **Ethos and Aims**

A number of key principles and values determine the ethos, characteristic, spirit and practices in our school.

- St Finian's is a catholic school. We aim to communicate to our children by word and by deed what it means to live and work in community.

- We aim to work in a spirit of close co-operation with each child's home as we take a shared responsibility for his/her overall formation and development.
- We place considerable emphasis on the importance of a happy working atmosphere in the school that is based on mutual respect amongst all who learn and work here.
- We recognise that each child in the school has strengths, weaknesses, needs and wants that are particular to him/her.
- Within the confines of a school system, we do all in our power to both recognise and cater for individuality and diversity. It is for this reason that we attach great importance to providing ...
  - A curriculum tailored for our context,
  - A range of after school activities,
  - Targeted support for families from the Home School Community Liaison Co-Ordinator
  - School Completion key workers for target children and
  - Comprehensive support structures for all students, in line with the continuum of support.

## **Philosophy**

The St. Finian's school motto is 'mol an oige agus tìochfaidh si'. Our school is a trauma informed/nurturing/creative school and commits to using its resources to ensure and promote the care and wellbeing of our children. We strive to develop and maintain ...

- Courteous relationships within the school
- A well-chosen curriculum, appropriate for our context
- Understanding of our particular context
- After school activities
- Thoughtfully crafted systems, structures and policies
- Good Communications
- Interest and concern for the children
- Gratitude, for our parents, our children, our talented staff and the support of the wider community (The Primary Care Teams, Better Finglas, Barnardos, The Lions Club, St Joseph the Helper, The Peter McVerry Trust)

The eight points above are central to how our school operates. They are also central to ensuring the wellbeing of the whole school community.

## Definition of Wellbeing

This policy is guided by 5 key principles as outlined by the “Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023 Revised October 2019”. These principles are that a Wellbeing Policy be ...

1. Child/Young person-centred
2. Equitable, fair and inclusive
3. Evidence-informed
4. Outcomes focused
5. Partnership/Collaboration

The Wellbeing Policy document recognises that Wellbeing does not necessarily mean the absence of stress or negative emotions in life or the absence of mental health difficulties and that everyone experiences vulnerability and a need for care at some stages in their journey through life.

*(Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023 Revised October 2019)*

Wellbeing is present when a person

- realises their potential
- is resilient in dealing with the normal stresses of their life,
- takes care of their physical wellbeing and
- has a sense of purpose, connection and belonging to a wider community.

It is a fluid way of being and needs nurturing throughout life.

*(Adapted from the World Health Organisation (WHO) mental health definition, also adapted for the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines definition developed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA))*

## Context

This is a whole school policy which is informed by other policies, including the following:

- Code of Behaviour
- Dignity in the workplace
- SPHE Policy
- RSE Policy
- Restorative Practice
- Homework Policy
- Digital Wellbeing
- Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Critical Incident Policy

## The five point plan for promoting Wellbeing

1; **Be Active:** All movement helps develop and maintain wellbeing

2. **Learn:** St. Finian's is committed to life-long learning

3. **And Notice:** All actions which bring us back to the present moment promote wellbeing eg mindfulness in St. Finian's is centred on grounding and mindful breath work

4. **Connect:** Our connections to each other and our relationships with the children and with each other are key. We are a vibrant, dynamic community. We have a committed, dedicated staff who give very generously of themselves daily. Every single member of our school community is performing a vital role. We appreciate our differences and we value each individual and the gifts they bring to our school. We are also aware that we need each other.

5. **Give or Exercise generosity:** In giving to others and/or each other we know that we receive.

This is our **BALANCE**

*(Adapted from Making Life Better, Together: Belfast Strategic Partnership)*

## Indicators of Wellbeing

Six indicators of Wellbeing have been identified. They are:

- **Active:** Being physically active is an important element in staying well.
- **Responsible:** Each person must take responsibility for their own choices and make decisions which promote their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others.
- **Connected:** It is important, for our wellbeing, to be connected to other people and to interact with others in a positive way. We should also appreciate the implications of our actions for those around us and further afield.
- **Resilient:** Everyone goes through challenges in their life. By building resilience, we hope to give our students the skills to cope with difficult situations.
- **Respected:** Feeling respected, listened to and cared for are key aspects of feeling well. Positive, respectful relationships are also central to maintaining our wellbeing.
- **Aware:** To stay well, we need to be aware of our thoughts, our emotions and our limitations. We should also be aware of those around us, conscious of how our actions might impact on their wellbeing.

## Ten Actions to Promote the Wellbeing of a School Community

1. Developing and maintaining a safe, caring culture and climate within the school where a sense of **belonging** and **connectedness** is fostered.
2. Building positive **relationships** between teachers and children to promote participation, social interaction and pro-social behaviour.
3. Adopting a whole-school approach to health promotion, where health is promoted by all and not just by a few members of staff.
4. **Actively involving children, their parents/guardians** and the wider community in developing and implementing school policies to support mental health and health promotion; via Parents Association and Pupil Council .
5. Supporting and implementing a well-planned, consistent and integrated **SPHE curriculum** to enable children to enhance their coping, resilience, communication, conflict resolution, and problem-solving skills.
6. Developing whole-school systems and structures to **support the early identification of children** experiencing social, emotional, behavioural or learning difficulties via Care Team meetings.

7. Actively involving, supporting and encouraging children's participation in **after school activities**.
8. Fostering a whole-school **ethos that accepts and values diversity** within the pupil and staff population.
9. Providing easy access to **information for pupils and staff on supports** available to them within the school and wider community.
10. Facilitating access to **continuing professional development** for school staff on the promotion of the mental health and well-being of children.

*(Well-being in Primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (2015))*

In addition to these actions we also recognise the importance of providing opportunities to develop the necessary skills to cope with using online technology in a safe and appropriate way and as well as providing opportunities to develop skills to manage stress that may be linked to school work e.g. Homework policy etc.

*(Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023 Revised October 2019)*

The school has always placed a strong emphasis on the wellbeing of the school community. Through its policies and procedures, the school seeks to provide a safe, caring environment for all.



The school recognises the importance of addressing all educational needs through the Continuum of Support:

The school organises a number of events each year, aimed at the wellbeing of our school community. These events are organised by various teachers over the course of the year. The following summarises some of these initiatives:

- Mindful moment daily
- Wellbeing Week held the week before every school holiday
- Mindful Monday, Tunes on Tuesday, Walk (move) on Wednesday, Thankful Thursday and Friends on Friday
- Active School Week
- Monthly adult challenges and each class challenge eg junior infants to march to yard by end of September, 2nd class will be enabled to do 10 squats in a row, adults to try the 3 minute plank challenge
- Creative Journaling; piloted in 2022 and to be rolled out from 1st to 6th from September 2023
- Play: Whole school approach; ‘play’ to begin of every day, in every class
- Playground games and movement breaks and Brain Calm following whole staff training
- Creative Wellbeing Council
- Our pupil council is a representative structure working from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>, under the guidance of the wellbeing post holder. It introduces a system in which the pupils can have a voice in the school and be part of the decisions to be taken for our creative wellbeing processes.

### **Staff wellbeing**

The wellbeing of school staff is also of extreme importance. As a school, we aim to support staff wellbeing through our policies, procedures and practices. For example:

- The promotion of a safe, comfortable teaching environment
- An open door policy whereby staff can discuss issues of concern with the Principal and/or Deputy Principals in a confidential manner
- Regular staff meetings
- CPD is provided, encouraged and supported by the Board of Management
- Classes are resourced as well as possible. Requests for extra resources are considered and authorised, as appropriate
- Staff have the opportunity to develop their leadership capacity through various initiatives, committees and groups.
- Minding our emotional wellbeing, reminders to BALANCE in school and in home life eg treat days for staff, guest speakers to build resilience as a community, awareness of Employee Assistance Service.



## **Wellbeing and School Self Evaluation (SSE):**

The school keeps its policies, curriculum and procedures under ongoing review. The school will use the SSE process to reflect on how we promote wellbeing in the school. The SSE process will allow us to examine our strengths and weaknesses in this area and consider areas for improvement. This will involve the views of all stakeholders. In line with Circular 0042/2018 we will use the SSE process to develop and implement our wellbeing process.

From September 2022 our SSE in our school will focus on Wellbeing and the implementation of our Wellbeing policy. We aim to use the Indicators of Success as outlined in the “*Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023 revised October 2018*” as means of identifying our strengths and weaknesses as a starting point on our wellness journey.

Key Areas	Indicators of Success
<b>Culture &amp; Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children, young people and staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.</li> <li>• Systems are in place so that the voice of the child/young person, teacher and parent are heard and lead to improvements in school culture and ethos.</li> </ul>
<b>Curriculum (Teaching &amp; Learning)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and young people experience positive, high-quality teaching, learning and assessment, which provides opportunities for success for all.</li> <li>• Children and young people access curricular activities to promote their physical, social and emotional competence to enhance their overall wellbeing.</li> </ul>
<b>Policy &amp; Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools and centres for education use a Self-Evaluation Wellbeing Promotion Process to develop, implement and review wellbeing promotion.</li> <li>• Schools and centres for education incorporate wellbeing promotion into whole school policies and practices.</li> </ul>
<b>Relationships &amp; Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and young people, their parents and other external partners are actively involved in wellbeing promotion within the school community.</li> <li>• All adults in schools and centres for education have an increased awareness of the importance of wellbeing promotion, including listening to children and young people, and signposting them to internal or external pathways for support when needed.</li> </ul>

*“Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023 revised October 2019”*

Suggested measures of success

1. School attendance: Constant monitoring and end of term and yearly review by post holder with responsibility.

2. School Completion Programme: Success to be measured firstly anecdotally, secondly in the willingness of parents to complete intake form with HSCL and finally in our retention of pupils in the programme.
3. Successful transition of pupils
  - from Home to Early Start
  - from Early Start to Junior Infants
  - from 6<sup>th</sup> class to post primary school
4. Data gathered through consultation with children and their parents and all school staff.

This policy will be revisited in November 2023, that is yearly review

Signed:

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(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date: 22<sup>th</sup> November 2022