Wellbeing Policy.

School Address*: Our Lady of Good Counsel School,*

Innishmore, Ballincollig, Cork. P31FH22

Phone number: *0214878370*

Roll number: *18208A*

School Patron: *The Bishop of Cork and Ross, Bishop Fintan Gavin*.

Principal: *Aisling Power*.

Deputy Principal: *Nollaig Moynihan.*

Chairperson: *Billy Murphy.*

Draft approved by the Board in Sept 2023- Chairperson Harold Brooks

Draft circulated to Staff on 14/10/2026 for review.

Policy ratified by the Board on:

Wellbeing Policy

Vision Statement

Our Lady of Good Counsel Special School (OLGC) is committed to promoting the wellbeing of every member of the school community. We believe that wellbeing is fundamental to learning, personal development, participation and achievement.

We strive to create a safe, caring, inclusive and supportive environment where students, staff and families experience respect, belonging, positive relationships and opportunities to flourish.

The school recognises that wellbeing encompasses social, emotional, physical, mental, spiritual and educational wellbeing and that all members of the school community have a role in promoting and supporting positive wellbeing.

Rationale

This policy has been developed in line with the Department of Education's Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice and reflects the school's commitment to creating an environment where wellbeing is promoted, protected and supported.

The policy provides a framework through which OLGC:

- Promotes positive mental health and wellbeing.
- Supports student learning and development.
- Fosters positive relationships.
- Encourages healthy lifestyles.
- Supports staff wellbeing.
- Strengthens partnerships with families and external agencies.
- Creates a culture of belonging and respect.

Aims

OLGC aims to:

- Promote the wellbeing of all students, staff and families.
- Foster a positive, supportive and inclusive school culture.
- Develop students' confidence, resilience, independence and self-esteem.
- Support positive mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Encourage healthy lifestyles and physical activity.
- Promote positive relationships and respectful interactions.
- Provide opportunities for student voice and participation.
- Support students experiencing barriers to wellbeing.
- Strengthen partnerships with parents and support services.
- Create an environment where all students feel safe, valued and respected.

Definition of Wellbeing

OLGC recognises wellbeing as:

A state in which students and staff can realise their abilities, cope with the normal challenges of life, experience positive relationships, learn effectively and contribute meaningfully to their school and community.

Wellbeing includes:

- Social wellbeing
- Emotional wellbeing
- Mental wellbeing
- Physical wellbeing
- Spiritual wellbeing
- Educational wellbeing

School Context

Our Lady of Good Counsel Special School provides education for students with special educational needs in a caring and supportive environment.

The school recognises that student wellbeing is enhanced through:

- Positive relationships.
- Meaningful participation.
- Student voice.
- Inclusive practice.
- Opportunities for success.
- Physical activity.
- Community engagement.
- Strong home-school partnerships.

The school works collaboratively with families and external agencies to support the holistic development of every student.

Key Area 1: Culture and Environment

Statements of Effective Practice for All

OLGC actively promotes a positive school culture where wellbeing is valued and nurtured.

The school:

- Promotes a safe, welcoming and supportive environment.
- Encourages mutual respect among students, staff and families.
- Recognises that wellbeing is central to the school's ethos.

- Supports positive behaviour through care, consistency and restorative practices where appropriate.
- Celebrates student achievements and successes.
- Promotes attendance and active participation in school life.
- Encourages student voice through consultation and participation in school activities.
- Maintains a clean, accessible and well-resourced learning environment.
- Ensures school facilities meet the needs of all students.
- Provides opportunities for social interaction, recreation and relaxation.
- Promotes healthy eating and healthy lifestyle choices.
- Supports physical activity throughout the school day.
- Provides opportunities for students to experience success and achievement.

Physical Environment

To support student wellbeing, OLGC provides access to:

- Accessible classrooms and learning spaces.
- Sensory room.
- Sensory garden.
- Safe spaces for regulation and support.
- Interactive technology.
- Outdoor play and recreation facilities.
- Life-skills kitchen.
- Horticulture and gardening areas.
- School transport for educational and recreational activities.
- Specialist resources and equipment.

Statements of Effective Practice for Some and Few

The school:

- Identifies students requiring additional wellbeing supports.
- Provides targeted interventions where appropriate.
- Adapts environments to meet sensory, communication and behavioural needs.
- Works closely with families and external professionals.
- Implements individualised support plans where required.
- Supports vulnerable students through a continuum of support approach.

Key Area 2: Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

OLGC recognises that student wellbeing and learning are inextricably linked.

Students learn best when they feel safe, supported and valued.

Statements of Effective Practice for All

Teachers:

- Create positive and supportive learning environments.
- Use teaching approaches that promote engagement and achievement.
- Differentiate learning experiences to meet individual needs.
- Promote communication, independence and social development.
- Encourage student choice and participation.
- Foster confidence and self-esteem.
- Recognise and celebrate progress.
- Promote collaborative learning opportunities.
- Provide opportunities for students to develop social and emotional skills.

Wellbeing Through the Curriculum

Wellbeing is promoted through:

- SPHE
- Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)
- Physical Education
- Physical activity programmes
- Communication programmes
- Independent living skills
- Community participation activities
- Digital citizenship education
- Social skills development
- Positive behaviour support

The curriculum supports students to develop:

- Self-awareness
- Resilience
- Self-regulation
- Communication skills
- Relationship skills
- Personal safety awareness
- Decision-making skills
- Independence
- Healthy lifestyle habits

Statements of Effective Practice for Some and Few

The school:

- Provides differentiated teaching and learning approaches.

- Develops individualised targets where appropriate.
- Implements evidence-informed interventions.
- Supports students through small-group and individual programmes.
- Provides opportunities for specialised support.
- Enables staff participation in relevant professional learning.

Key Area 3: Policy and Planning

The wellbeing of the school community informs school policies, planning and decision-making.

Statements of Effective Practice for All

OLGC:

- Embeds wellbeing across school policies and procedures.
- Reviews wellbeing through School Self-Evaluation processes.
- Consults with students, families and staff when reviewing policies.
- Promotes inclusive practice throughout the school.
- Supports staff professional learning relating to wellbeing.
- Maintains policies that support student safety and welfare.
- Monitors wellbeing initiatives and outcomes.

Relevant policies include:

- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Attendance Policy
- Health and Safety Statement
- Critical Incident Management Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Data Protection Policy

Statements of Effective Practice for Some and Few

The school:

- Develops individual support plans when required.
- Collaborates with external professionals.
- Uses assessment information to identify support needs.
- Supports students experiencing difficulties with attendance, learning or wellbeing.
- Plans carefully for key transitions.
- Maintains appropriate procedures for confidential information.

Key Area 4: Relationships and Partnerships

Positive relationships are central to wellbeing promotion.

OLGC recognises the importance of strong relationships between students, families, staff and external partners.

Statements of Effective Practice for All

The school:

- Models respect, empathy and positive communication.
- Promotes meaningful partnerships with parents and guardians.
- Encourages student voice and participation.
- Supports collaborative working among staff.
- Recognises and supports staff wellbeing.
- Maintains effective communication systems.
- Strengthens links with community services and support agencies.
- Promotes positive peer relationships.
- Facilitates successful transitions for students.

Support Networks

The school works collaboratively with:

- Parents and guardians
- Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNT)
- HSE Services
- CAMHS
- Jigsaw
- Educational Psychology Services
- NCSE
- Community and voluntary organisations
- Educational partners where appropriate

Statements of Effective Practice for Some and Few

The school:

- Provides additional support during times of difficulty or crisis.
- Supports students through individual and small-group interventions.
- Utilises buddy and friendship systems where appropriate.
- Encourages collaborative problem-solving involving students and families.
- Supports students during transition periods.
- Provides access to appropriate internal and external support pathways.

Staff Wellbeing

OLGC recognises that staff wellbeing contributes directly to a positive school environment and effective teaching and learning.

The school will:

- Promote a supportive and respectful workplace culture.
- Foster positive professional relationships.
- Encourage work-life balance where possible.
- Provide opportunities for professional development.
- Support staff through mentoring and collegial support.
- Share information regarding employee wellbeing services.
- Recognise and value staff contributions.

Role of Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians are key partners in promoting wellbeing.

The school will:

- Communicate regularly with families.
- Encourage parental involvement.
- Provide opportunities for consultation.
- Work collaboratively to support students' needs.
- Signpost families to external supports where appropriate.

Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through:

- Student feedback.
- Parent feedback.
- Staff consultation.
- Attendance data.
- Participation levels.
- School Self-Evaluation processes.
- Review of student support systems.
- Review of wellbeing initiatives.

The policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the school community.

Relationship with the Inclusion Policy

OLGC recognises the strong connection between inclusion and wellbeing.

Meaningful participation, belonging, friendship, accessibility and community engagement contribute significantly to positive wellbeing outcomes for students.

The school's approach to:

- Inclusive education
- Community participation
- Educational partnerships
- NCSE Inclusion Pilot Programme
- NCSE Pilot Transitional Programme
- Transition planning
- Access and participation

are outlined in the **OLGC Inclusion Policy**.

Board of Management Approval

This policy was reviewed and approved by the Board of Management of Our Lady of Good Counsel Special School on:

Date: _____

Chairperson: _____

Signature: _____

Review Date: _____
