



**Wellbeing in  
Our Lady's Girls' NS  
Ballinteer Avenue  
Dublin 16  
19396J**

## **Rationale**

Our aim at Our Lady's National School is to create a well-ordered, safe, caring, happy, and secure environment for learning. We are dedicated to delivering a curriculum that enables our pupils to reach their full potential, prepares them for the transition to second-level education, and nurtures all aspects of their development. In line with our child-centred and holistic approach to education, the school places a strong emphasis on wellbeing for pupils, staff, and the wider school community.

## **Student Wellbeing**

### **1. Anti-Bullying Policy**

We have a highly effective anti-bullying policy/Bí Cineálta that is reviewed annually. This policy promotes a culture of respect, inclusion, and kindness, with clear guidelines for addressing bullying incidents promptly and sensitively. It is communicated widely to ensure everyone knows the steps to follow. The Board of Management complete an Oversight Report at every meeting.

### **2. Code of Behaviour**

Our Code of Behaviour outlines clear expectations for student conduct, emphasising respect, responsibility, and promoting positive behaviour. The code is regularly reinforced to create a positive, respectful school culture where every child can feel safe and supported.

### **3. Student Voice and Leadership Opportunities**

- Student Council: Provides a platform for students to express their ideas, concerns, and suggestions, ensuring pupil voice is heard and acted upon.
- Green School Committee: Promotes sustainability and environmental awareness within the school.
- Active School Committee: Encourages physical activity, fostering the link between movement and mental wellbeing.

### **4. Promotion of Sport, Activity and Music**

We promote sports, physical activity and music as key components of wellbeing. Regular PE classes, active playtime, movement breaks, dancing breaks, and music breaks between lessons help students stay active, engaged, and focused throughout the school day. The active committee organises yard sports equipment daily and music on Fridays to promote wellbeing at break times.

## 5. SPHE Whole-School Plan

Our SPHE plan promotes wellbeing through the teaching of:

- **Stay Safe Programme** (Junior Infants, 1st, 3rd, and 5th Classes): This programme provides age-appropriate guidance on personal safety, including recognizing and responding to potentially harmful situations.
- **We All Belong Inclusion Programme** (All Classes): This promotes inclusivity, fostering an understanding and appreciation of diversity within the school, which is essential for creating a supportive environment for all students.
- **All Together Now** (5th and 6th Classes): This anti-homophobic programme educates students about issues, promoting respect and acceptance, and countering homophobic bullying.
- **Class Contracts**: Class Contracts to establish ground rules collaboratively created by each class, reinforcing respect, inclusion, and positive behaviour as core values.
- **Webwise Internet Safety Programme** (6th Class): This is critical for helping students navigate online spaces responsibly and safely, covering topics such as cyberbullying, privacy, and digital footprints.
- **INTO Different Families, Same Love Poster** (Displayed in all classrooms): This visible symbol of inclusivity acknowledges diverse family structures, fostering an environment of acceptance and understanding.
- **Weaving Wellbeing Resources**: These resources provide teachers with structured activities and lessons to promote mental health and emotional literacy, supporting students' overall well-being and resilience.
- **Worry Boxes**: Some classrooms use a worry box, offering students a safe, anonymous way to share their concerns with their teacher. This initiative encourages children to express their worries and ensures teachers can respond appropriately. Other rooms use teacher check ins with pupils.

## 6. Healthy Eating Policy

Our Healthy Eating Policy encourages nutritious food choices. We believe in the importance of a balanced diet to support both academic and physical performance, discouraging sugary snacks while promoting wholesome foods.

## 7. Daily Check-ins with Students

Teachers engage in daily check-ins with students to assess their emotional wellbeing and provide support where necessary. This ensures students know that they have a trusted adult to turn to whenever needed.

## 8. Wellbeing Events



- Friendship Fortnight (September): Focuses on building friendships, inclusion, and respect. Activities during this fortnight also raise awareness about anti-bullying.
- Feelgood Fortnight (January): Promotes self-care, emotional wellness, and a positive mindset. It reinforces the themes of inclusion and respect.
- Whole School Assemblies: We hold whole school assemblies every two weeks to bring our school community together and reinforce our values of respect, inclusion, and wellbeing. These assemblies provide an opportunity to highlight key messages on anti-bullying, celebrate positive behaviour, and share updates on wellbeing initiatives. They play an essential role in fostering a positive, respectful, and unified school culture.

### **9. Teachers' Inclusion Committee**

This committee was established to complement our Autism Class in September 2022. Our Teachers' Inclusion Committee works to ensure that every classroom is inclusive, adaptive, and responsive to the needs of all students. Since the committee was established, all classrooms now have a calm corner and a set of sensory resources. This committee meets regularly to assess and implement support strategies, ensuring that all students feel included and supported and integrate fully into OLGNS.

### **10. Sensory Room**

We have a sensory room available for mainstream students who need a calm space to self-regulate and manage stress. This resource provides a safe, quiet area to support emotional and sensory needs. We also use the Autism Sensory Room when it is available.

### **11. Support from SNAs and SETs**

We have 5 supportive SNAs (Special Needs Assistants) and 3 Special Education Teachers (SETs) who work closely with students requiring additional support, particularly those on School Support Plus. This team helps to reduce student anxiety and provides tailored support to meet individual needs with parental support and guidance.

### **12. Collaboration with NEPS and External Supports**

We work closely with NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service), our school psychologist, and our Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO). This collaboration allows us to provide targeted mental health and wellbeing interventions for students, ensuring the best possible support.

#### **- GAP Programme**

The GAP (Gratitude, Altruism and Praise) Programme is offered to our 4th Class students. Delivered by an Educational Wellbeing Practitioner (EWP) from NEPS, this programme focuses on learning problem solving skills, teaching friendship skills and developing coping strategies. The GAP Programme helps students cultivate a sense of emotional wellbeing and equips them with practical tools to face challenges with confidence.

## - Emotional Coaching for Classes

In addition to the GAP Programme, our EWP provides Emotional Coaching sessions to other classes within the school. These sessions focus on helping students understand and manage their emotions, resolve conflicts, and develop empathy. The emotional coaching approach encourages students to express their feelings constructively, fostering emotional intelligence and supporting a positive learning environment.

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## Staff Wellbeing

At Our Lady's Girls' National School, we recognize that the wellbeing of our staff is just as important as the wellbeing of our students. We strive to create a supportive and positive working environment where staff feel valued, connected, and professionally fulfilled.

### 1. Social Events and Community Building

- We regularly hold coffee mornings at little breaks to provide a relaxed space for staff to connect and unwind.
- Social events throughout the year further promote a sense of camaraderie and help to build strong, supportive relationships among staff members.

### 2. Promotion of Support Services

We highlight the availability of the staff wellbeing helpline regularly, ensuring all staff are aware of the mental health and wellbeing resources available to them.

### 3. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

We encourage staff to pursue Continuing Professional Development (CPD), offering a range of opportunities to enhance their skills and support their professional growth. Regular CPD opportunities ensure that our staff feel confident, competent, and valued in their roles.

### 4. Teachers' Inclusion Committee

Our Teachers' Inclusion Committee also focuses on staff support, discussing how to make every classroom an inclusive and supportive environment, not only for students but for the teaching staff as well.



## 5. Emotional Coaching CPD

All staff have received CPD on emotional coaching, equipping them with tools and strategies to support students in managing emotions and navigating challenging situations. This training helps staff effectively address tricky emotional moments, fostering a safe and emotionally aware environment for students. Emotional coaching promotes understanding, empathy, and problem-solving, ensuring that our staff can offer compassionate support during difficult times.

## 5. EPV Days

The Board of Management supports staff wellbeing by allowing teachers to avail of up to 5 EPV (Extra Personal Vacation) days each year. These days provide teachers with additional flexibility to take time for personal or professional reasons, promoting work-life balance and reducing stress.

By prioritising both student and staff wellbeing, Our Lady's Girls' National School aims to foster a thriving school environment where everyone can succeed academically, socially, and emotionally.

Date: 17/12/2024  
Signed: Elizabeth Murray  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 17/12/24  
Signed: R. Mc My  
Principal