

NearT

Supporting mental health in post-primary schools

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An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Information Pack for Student Support Teams





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Welcome to Neart – Jigsaw’s mental health supports for post-primary schools

Jigsaw, in partnership with the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)/Department of Education, provides a comprehensive suite of mental health and wellbeing resources, training and programmes for post-primary schools. Over the next 3 years, Neart will support schools to provide learning opportunities for students to promote mental health and wellbeing, as well as mental health webinars and eLearning courses for school staff and parents. Our work will complement the supports already available in schools which include the provision of guidance counselling, the work of NEPS, as well as the SPHE curriculum and other existing wellbeing programmes and initiatives, including the Student Support Team structure.

The role of the Student Support Team in promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools:

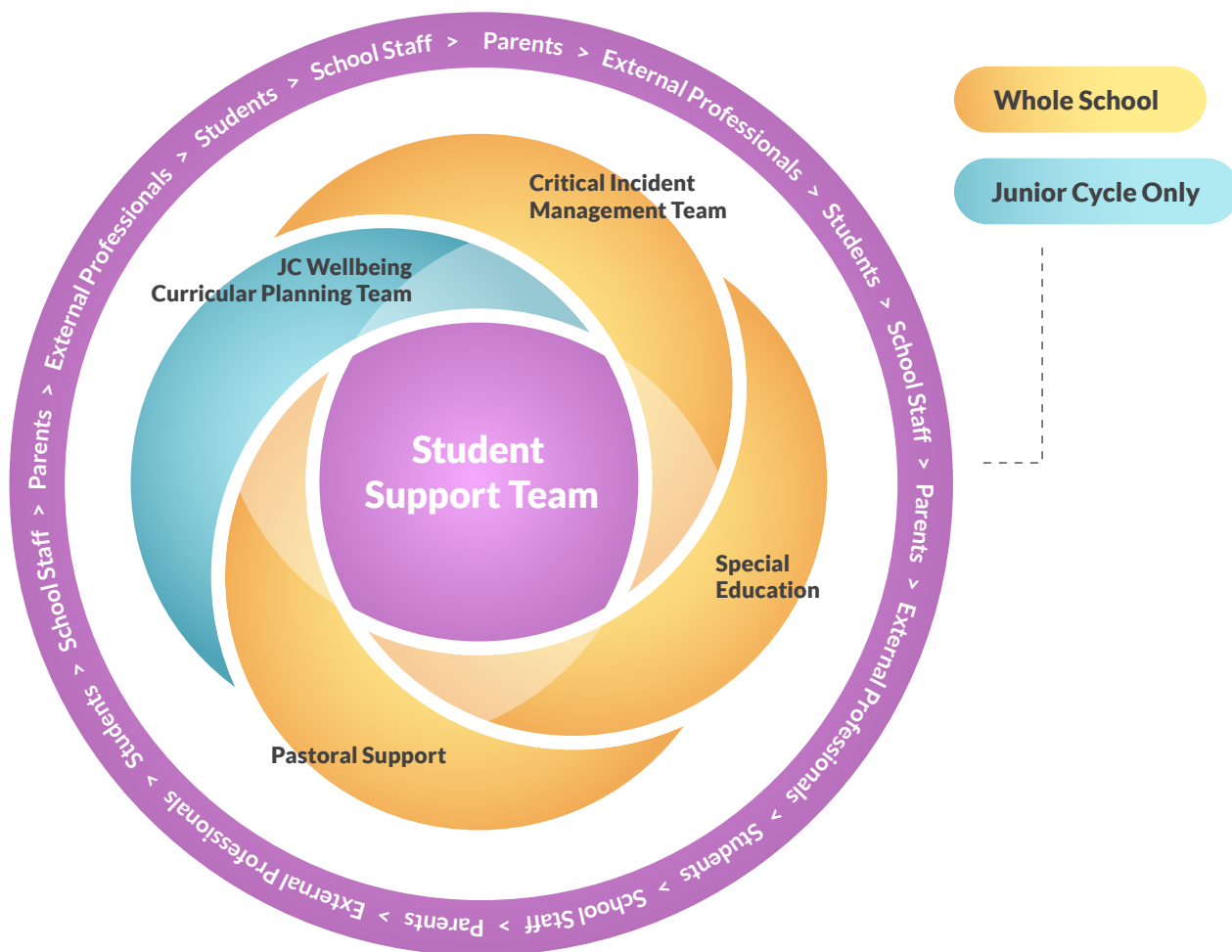
We know that schools in Ireland play a vital role in the promotion of wellbeing through a range of activities and approaches to support the academic, physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual development of all children and young people. We also know that the wellbeing of our children and young people is critical to their success in education and in life (Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice, 2018) <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/24725/07cc07626f6a426eb6eab4c523fb2ee2.pdf#page=null>

Student Support Teams in Post-Primary Schools - A Guide to establishing a Team or reviewing an existing Team (2021), provided by NEPS / Department of Education, highlights the importance of the Student Support Team as follows:

“To support a holistic approach to wellbeing promotion in schools, the Department of Education has published a Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (2018- 2025) for all schools which informs how schools can best promote whole school wellbeing. Best practice indicates that schools adopt a whole school, multi-component, preventative approach to wellbeing promotion that includes both universal and targeted interventions. The work of the Student Support Team is central to this approach...”

A whole-school approach involves all members of the school community engaging to improve specific areas of school life that impact on wellbeing (Weare and Gray, 2003). Embedded in this approach is the recognition that students may have different needs at different times. Those at greater risk and with greater needs may require more specific and targeted support, in addition to the support provided to students at the universal level.

The Student Support Team is a central part of the student support system. It is the overarching team concerned with progressing actions for the welfare and wellbeing of all students. It is a mechanism through which many of the existing student supports are co-ordinated and planned. The Student Support Team acts as a school hub, bringing coherence to the support system by coordinating the valuable work of departments, teams and/or groups such as the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Curricular Planning team, the Special Education Needs (SEN) Department, the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) along with guidance and pastoral staff (See Student Support Team diagram below). School Leadership also has a significant role in guiding and supporting the school’s Student Support Team. Student Support Team members often ask for further training on wellbeing initiatives, that can support their work in supporting students.



What will Neart provide for Student Support Teams from January 2025?

Over the next 3 years, the Neart programme will provide additional, readily accessible support, to enhance Student Support Team capacity to operate optimally in schools. This additional support will build on the good work already happening in schools to enhance wellbeing and mental health, and will complement existing supports (through NEPS, Oide, etc.) with additional capacity, advice and support through self-directed eLearning, live webinars and masterclasses, interactive multi-media toolkits and in-person clinically led seminars.

How to register your interest in Neart: Please complete this short typeform [here](#) which will register your interest in receiving further information about the programme components of most interest to you, as they become available. A more detailed outline of each of the programme components can be found [here](#). Please also pass on this information to your staff colleagues in your school.

Supports for Student Support Teams available from January 2025 are as follows:

Target audience	Programme areas	Approach	Available from...
For Student Support Teams	Best practice and evidence-based approaches for mental health promotion in schools	1hr live online master-class webinar (clinician led)	Feb 2025
	Maximising student voice for mental health and wellbeing in schools	1hr live online master-class (clinician led)	Mar 2025
	Supporting trauma-informed practice in schools (<i>developed and delivered in partnership with NEPS</i>)	1hr live online master-class (clinician led)	Apr 2025
	Relationships as the foundation for mental health and wellbeing in schools	1hr live online master-class (clinician led)	Sept 2025
	Developing compassionate schools	1hr live online master-class (clinician led)	Oct 2025
	Relational and compassionate approaches to responding to parents concerned about their child's mental health and wellbeing (responding to distressed parents)	1hr live online master-class (clinician led)	Nov 2025
	Interactive, multi-media toolkit for SSTs focused on the top presenting issues relating to student mental health and wellbeing	Interactive Toolkit	Sept 2025 Onwards
	In-person seminars for Student Support Teams (county-based)	In-person 1-day seminars (county/ Education Centre based)	Oct - Dec 2025



Links to existing mental health and wellbeing supports and resources for post-primary schools:

It is important to re-emphasise that the Neart programme of supports, resources and training is designed to complement the existing supports provided to post-primary schools by the other key education stakeholders. Please follow the relevant links below to access these resources and supports.

Department of Education resources:

- [Wellbeing in Education](#) (this site provides access to a wide range of wellbeing information and supports for schools, students and parents.)
- TPL directory - [gov.ie - Wellbeing information for school staff – post primary](#)
- Catalogue of resources - [gov.ie - Wellbeing information for school staff – post primary](#)

NEPS resources:

- [National Educational Psychological Service \(NEPS\) Resources and Publications](#)
- [National Educational Psychological Service \(NEPS\) Guidelines, Tips and Handouts for Parents and Teachers](#) which includes the following:
 - [Wellbeing support for Leaving Certificate Students, parents and school staff](#)
 - [Critical Incident resources on gov.ie](#)
 - [Responding to Self-Harm in Schools](#)
 - [Psychological First Aid](#)
 - [Feelings cards](#)
 - [Managing Stress and Anxiety](#)
 - [Panic Attacks](#)
 - [Normalising Thoughts, Feelings and Behaviours: A Guide for School Staff](#)
 - [The Response to Stress: Information for School Staff](#)
 - [Self-regulation for pupils](#)
 - [Student Support Teams Guidelines](#)
- Wellbeing supports for students from the Ukraine ([Primary](#) and [Post Primary](#))
- [Wellbeing information for schools: Ukraine](#)

NEPS eLearning training:

- [Introducing a Trauma Informed Approach: The Stress Factor. Getting the Balance Right A NEPS e-Learning course for schools](#)
- [Critical Incidents e-Learning module for schools](#)

Other relevant wellbeing resources:

- NCCA: Junior and Senior Cycle SPHE curriculum and resources: [Home - National Council for Curriculum and Assessment](#) and [SPHE | Curriculum Online](#) and <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/senior-cycle/sphe-old/sphe-toolkit/>
- Oide wellbeing supports: <https://oide.ie/post-primary/home/wellbeing/>
- Self-care and EAP programme for school staff provided by Spectrum.Life: [gov.ie - Employee Assistance Service for school staff in recognised primary and post-primary schools \(www.gov.ie\)](#)

Other information and resources:

- [HSE Mental Health supports](#)
- Other Jigsaw resources, articles and supports available at [jigsaw.ie](#)



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