

**Title of Research Project:** An Exploration of How Teacher Wellbeing is Conceptualised and Supported by the Main Stakeholders in Post-Primary Schools in Ireland

**Researchers:** Dr Annemarie Doran



**Contact Details:** [ainemaire@osrai.ie](mailto:ainemaire@osrai.ie)

**Relevant key words:** Wellbeing; Teachers' voice; Definition; Collaboration; Accountability; Perceptions; Visibility

**Summary:**

This research project focused on the gap in research on teacher wellbeing and how it is conceptualised and supported by the 'three voices' i.e., the managerial agencies, principals/deputy principals, and teachers in post-primary schools in Ireland. It used an interpretivist approach, which was underpinned by dialectical pluralism.

Phase One used an online survey to investigate if there were differences in opinion in how teachers and school leaders viewed wellbeing in relation to:

- policy;
- management caring about them;
- wellbeing being on meeting agendas;
- support strategies in place; and
- wellbeing related continuous professional development.

It also examined how much of the variance in wellbeing scores could be explained by the same variables, after controlling for age. The data showed statistically significant differences with principals/deputy principals scoring higher overall wellbeing than teachers. The Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF) was used, with results showing that having a wellbeing policy and/or reinforcing it did not make a difference to teachers' personal wellbeing. The difference in participants' wellbeing scores was due to support strategies for teachers and the attitude of school management to teachers.

Seven interviews and a focus group (6 participants) were used in Phase Two to gather further data that were analysed by themes to determine the key findings. Three main themes emerged: accountability, visibility, and perceptions. Analysis showed that an emphasis on student wellbeing adversely affected the wellbeing of teachers as they feel left behind. The results indicated that while there has been extensive circulars and guidelines issued, there is evidence of inadequate provision for teacher wellbeing in the Wellbeing Framework. While the focus on wellbeing has created more awareness of wellbeing among teachers, the evidence of supports for them is lacking. The researcher concludes that there is more work required at policy level for this to be effective. There is also a need for a collaborative approach to the establishment of a definition of teachers' wellbeing for schools.

**Published:** September 2022