

Planting the seeds of wellbeing

CASE STUDY SUMMARY

School:	St Conleth's College
Location:	Dublin, Ireland
School Type:	Independent, Catholic
MiSP Curriculum:	Paws b & .b
Age Group/s:	Primary & Secondary
Author:	Julien Porzadny
Role:	French & mindfulness teacher
Issue/s Addressed:	Student wellbeing

When I meet past pupils in the street, they don't ask me how the French classes are going, but rather: "So, how's the mindfulness going?" I do believe it's all about planting a seed and letting it grow. One student at this year's past-pupil dinner was very keen to talk to me, all of his friends told me that he wanted to say hello and when I met him he had such a big smile on his face, his eyes were bright and he gave me a big hug saying: "Thank you for introducing me to mindfulness sir!".

So yes, I believe mindfulness has had a great impact on my students. After a **Paws b** course last year, the 4th form students did the survey from MiSP and the results were very positive. I went back to see them this year during World Mental Health Day and the welcome I got was so heartwarming. I asked them if they still practiced some mindfulness, some said yes, others no, and some said they had been teaching practices to their families!

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After I finished the **.b** course three years ago, mindfulness was added to the students' timetable. What I have noticed, especially with the senior-cycle students (transition year to 6th year), even though the class can be chatty at times, whenever we start the practice every

single student jumps into their bubble and gives their full attention to it - as if their mind and body really needed this simple moment of being. At the end of one class a student even made the effort to thank me and tell me that it 'really worked'. Those little things you hear now and then are what tell me mindfulness is playing a positive part in our students' lives. I have also received positive feedback from parents at parent-teacher meetings and during our school open days where many parents who are visiting the school for the first time are happy to hear that we have wellbeing and mindfulness classes.

With the extra wellbeing hours that are being added into the new Junior Cycle from the Department of Education I feel mindfulness classes will become more and more in demand - definitely a good thing

On top of our weekly mindfulness classes I have been hosting 15 minute mindful sits for students and teachers alike on Friday lunchtimes. The nationwide **Schools Sit Together** organised by MiSP fitted perfectly into the timetable.



It has also been four years since a Health Awareness Week was set up in our school. During the week staff and students are encouraged to take a small step towards improving their own wellbeing and the school organises guest speakers to come and hold workshops for students about various topics (nutrition, sports, internet use, etc.) and daily mindful sit is organised at lunchtimes.

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Having really enjoyed teaching mindfulness to children and teenagers I have now decided to start a training to teach the MBSR course to adults. First to deepen my own practice but also to be able to bring mindfulness to teachers. With this in mind, another mindfulness teacher and I sent an application to the Teaching Council to join Féilte 2019, their annual Celebration of teachers working in schools in Ireland. We got picked and had the chance to talk and share our experience of introducing mindfulness to our schools and to help teachers start on their own mindfulness journey. A rich experience that has taught me that there is still so much that can be done ... How great is that?



**Julien Porzadny, French & mindfulness teacher,
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