

Teachers are not therapists - Ógra FF

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Group to meet Minister to demand better supports for vulnerable young people

Cavan Ógra Fianna Fáil members are among a delegation set to meet the Education Minister to lobby for emotional counselling and therapeutic supports for primary and post primary students.

Minister Norma Foley is set to meet representatives along with Cork South West Deputy Christopher O’Sullivan to discuss the issues.

Ógra are working with Deputy O’Sullivan to bring a proposal to government for improved supports for vulnerable young people.

Ógra President, Tom Cahill, is highlighting a gap in the current system. “There is an urgent need for sustained, individual and intensive emotional counselling and therapeutic supports in and around schools. NEPS and well-being programmes are inadequate in meeting the needs of children suffering from trauma/anxiety issues and adverse childhood experiences. They are not suitable in providing these intensive, specialised supports.”

Seána Brady from Mullahoran is a national school teacher working in inner city Dublin and is involved with Cavan Ógra. She will be part of the delegation to meet with the Minister.

The teacher told the Celt that, while teachers can offer support as mental health promotion and stress prevention, they are not therapists.

Young people have a range of worries and stresses and need proper, qualified supports. In addition, schools can no longer refer children to Child and Adult Mental Health Services.

Seána explains that students’ problems can range from normal worries right up to more serious issues around “the death of a parent, incarceration of a parent, addiction in the home” and others. These concerns are being exacerbated by COVID-19 restrictions.

The type of supports being proposed would entail play and art therapy in primary schools, as well as emotional counselling in older primary and secondary schools.

“I know from working as a teacher myself that we cannot provide the level of support that some students need,” said Seána.

[Cavan Ógra’s Fianna Fáil also posted on its Facebook page on the issue.](#)