An Chomhairle Náisiúnta um Oideachas Speisialta
National Council for Special Education

NCSE Annual Research Conference 2026
Conference Theme: Championing Inclusion and Sense of Belonging in Ireland

Wednesday 4th November 09.30-16.00hrs
Cusack Suite, Croke Park, Dublin

Time	
08.30	**Registration and Tea/Coffee**
09.30	Welcome: Dr Fergal Lynch, NCSE Council Chairperson
09.40	Conference Address: Michael Moynihan, TD & Minister of State at the Department of Education and Youth with special responsibility for Special Education and Inclusion
09.50	**Session 1** Chair: John Kearney, Chief Executive Officer, NCSE
10.05	Professor Erik Carter, Executive Director of the Baylor Center for Disability and Flourishing, Baylor University, Texas *When Inclusion Becomes Belonging: What Matters Most for Students with Disabilities*
10.50	Q&A
11.00	**Tea/Coffee**
11.45	Dr Mary Kelly, President of Hibernia Colleges Group and Dr Deirdre MacIntyre, Dean of Research and Academic Affairs, ICEP Europe Findings from the NCSE-commissioned study *The Growth in Demand for Special Classes and Special Schools in Ireland: An Examination of Key Drivers.*
12.35	Q&A
12.45	**Lunch**

14.00 **Session 2**
Chair: Dr Peter Archer, NCSE Research Committee Chairperson

14.05 Professor Elizabeth Walton, Professor of Education, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Nottingham

An ecology of knowledges for inclusion and belonging: Beyond hierarchies and silos

14.50 Q&A

15.00 Dr Caoimhe Dempsey, Lecturer, School of Applied Psychology, University College Cork

Wellbeing and mental health in school contexts: emerging evidence and future directions

15.45 Q&A

15.55 **Thank you and conference close**

Posters from our Practice-Based Research Programme

Posters are exhibited in the tea/coffee area from 8.30am. Teachers from each school will be present during the breaks to discuss findings from their research with delegates.

Questions and Answers

To submit questions during the conference please use the QR code or go to www.slido.com and enter code #NCSE2026

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Sign Language Interpretation will be provided and closed captions are available on the livestream.

Conference evaluation

To submit your conference evaluation, please scan the QR code or click on the link.

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