



St. Joseph's College, Garbally  
Ballinasloe

## Wellbeing Policy

Approved by:	
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Date for Revision:	

Version	Date Approved	List section numbers changed	Author

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

1. St. Joseph's College, Garbally Child Protection Policy.
2. St. Joseph's College, Garbally RSE Policy.
3. St. Joseph's College, Garbally Religious Education Policy
4. St. Joseph's College Anti-Bullying Policy.

## Mission Statement

Ours is a Catholic boy's school which aims to provide a holistic education for our students, enabling them to acquire the life skills necessary to live fulfilled lives. The qualities of respect, justice, and compassion, which are rooted in Gospel values, should permeate all school policies. We believe that promoting healthy relationships and a spirit of collaboration within the school itself and with the wider community are the best means of ensuring a good school. We recognise that each pupil entrusted to us is unique and has different gifts as well as different needs. St. Joseph's College, Garbally, Ballinasloe does not discriminate against its students on grounds of religion, disability, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status, membership of any minority or other group or organisation or on any grounds whatsoever.

## Rationale for the Policy

The Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) highlights the necessity for a new area of learning at Junior Cycle, Wellbeing. Wellbeing encompasses quality of life and the ability of people and societies to contribute to the world with a sense of meaning and purpose. World Health Organisation, 2001, or the WHO defines mental health as not just an absence of depression but as a "state of wellbeing in which an individual can realise his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and can contribute to his or her own community". (WHO 2001). The necessity for the introduction of Wellbeing into post primary education has been long overdue. This policy has been introduced to ensure the school is responding adequately to the changing and diverse needs of each of our pupils.

*'Student wellbeing is present when students realise their abilities, take care of their physical wellbeing, can cope with the normal stresses of life, and have a sense of purpose and belonging to a wider community.'* (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, NCCA, 2017)



Education and Wellbeing are inextricably linked. ESRI research has found that *'children with higher levels of emotional, behavioural, social and school wellbeing had higher levels of academic achievement subsequently (at ages 11, 14, and 16)'* (Smyth, E. 2015). Within our Wellbeing programme at St. Joseph's College our vision is to enable students to build life skills and develop a strong sense of connectedness to their school and to their community. St. Joseph's College will endeavour to facilitate the holistic development of each of our students using the six indicators of Wellbeing as the focal point of our actions: Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient and Respected and Aware.

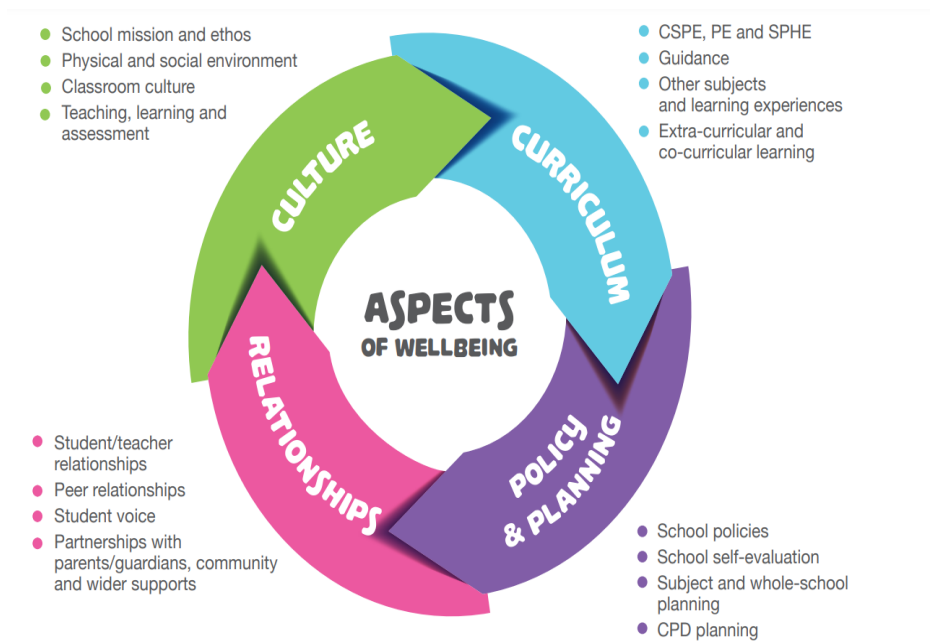
### The Structure of the Wellbeing Policy:

The foundation of this policy is based on the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines and Wellbeing indicators published by the NCCA.

### Holistic Approach

At St Joseph’s College the wellbeing of our school community is paramount. Our environment of care and support is both formal and informal. We develop and maintain a safe, caring culture and climate within the school, we build positive relationships, we support and implement a well-planned, consistent and integrated Social, Personal, Health Education, (SPHE). This policy aims to make visible our ongoing efforts to enhance student wellbeing. It aims to outline our curricular offerings which have at its core student wellbeing. This policy also aims to outline our informal supports which allow a holistic approach to enhancing our school communities as outlined in the Department of Educations “Aspects of Wellbeing”.

### The Four Aspects of Wellbeing in Schools



(Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines, NCCA, 2017; Figure 6, page 26)

Planning for Wellbeing involves consideration of these aspects: culture, relationships, policy and planning and the curriculum.

## Wellbeing and the Curriculum St. Joseph's College, Garbally

The curricular aspect of our Wellbeing policy has been discussed at length and devised with the student at the centre of learning in mind. A core group consisting of members of management, the curricular and the wellbeing teams was established. The areas of Physical Education, PE, SPHE, Civic, Social and Political, CSPE, Pastoral Care, and Digital Leadership have been identified as areas in which our Wellbeing programme will be embedded heavily although Wellbeing will be embedded across all subject areas.

At St. Joseph's College, Garbally we believe that a Junior Cycle programme that builds the foundations for Wellbeing:

- Is broad and balanced.
- Provides choice of subjects.
- Has meaning and relevance.
- Is enjoyable and engaging.
- Provides opportunities to experience challenge and success.
- Equips students with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to develop as learners and build positive relationships.

All of this enhances motivation, decreases disciplinary problems, increases academic achievement, and leads to the flourishing of individuals.

Wellbeing at St. Joseph's will extend across the three Junior Cycle years from First to Third Year. Although there is a strong framework already in place with regards to Wellbeing, we hope to raise further awareness of its necessity by highlighting the importance of Wellbeing on the timetable.

*"Junior cycle places students at the centre of the educational experience, enabling them to actively participate in their communities and in society and to be resourceful and confident learners in all aspects and stages of their lives".*

(Framework for Junior Cycle, 2015, page 6)

### Key Skills of Junior Cycle

The six key skills of junior cycle are Managing Myself, Staying Well, Communicating, Being Creative, Working with Others, and Managing Information and Thinking. Working with digital technology also forms part of each of the skills.

*"Key skills will be embedded in the learning outcomes of every junior cycle subject and short course".*

(Framework for Junior Cycle, 2015, page15)



As stated in the latest *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (2018-2023)*

*'The promotion of wellbeing for all is central to the Department's mission to enable individuals to achieve their full potential and contribute to Ireland's social, cultural and economic development.'*

As schools play a vital role in the promotion of Wellbeing, we hope to highlight the increasing importance of the area by providing a wide range of approaches and activities which support our students academically, physically, socially, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. It is our hope in St. Joseph's College that through our curriculum students will develop the skills and sense of connectedness their own self, their peers, their teachers, their school, and their community.

## **Goals of the Wellbeing Policy**

“The goal of Wellbeing is human flourishing, and flourishing rests on the following: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment” (DES 2015)

The goal of this policy document is.

- That all staff contributes and works towards promoting a caring and inclusive environment within the school that is supportive of school wellbeing.
- To provide for the wellbeing of all students in the school in accordance with the school's Mission statement.
- To outline the policies, procedures, culture, ethos, and activities that have served to underpin the wellbeing of students at St Joseph’s College.
- To ensure there is a shared vision of and understanding of what student wellbeing means, which emphasises students’ strengths and capacities.
- To recognise the relationship between positive experiences of school life, student achievement and long-term wellbeing.
- To ensure that respectful and caring relationships are fostered between staff and students, students and students, and staff and parents.
- To outline structures and players designed to support the wellbeing of pupils.
- To offer a coordinated structure in supporting our young people that creates opportunities both within and without the classroom which are focused on the promotion of Wellbeing.
- To outline the ways in which the expertise of the staff and outside agencies are engaged to support and respond to needs of students.

## **Supporting & Promoting a Culture of Wellbeing in School**

St. Joseph’s College promotes a warm, welcoming, encouraging, and positive school culture in the following ways:

- The school is a safe place for all students. A copy of the school's child safeguarding policy is available.
- Students and staff feel safe, secure, and respected on the school premises.
- There are open, positive, supportive relationships between teachers and students in class and outside.
- A culture of collaboration and cooperation is promoted through day-to-day teaching, learning and assessment practices.
- Students are encouraged to actively engage in their learning so that they may enjoy being at school.
- Photographs, posters, and student artwork are displayed on the walls around the school to promote a positive atmosphere of school life and inspire pride in our school.
- Students and staff take pride and care in maintaining the physical environment.
- A wide range of curricular and extra-curricular activities are available to all students.
- The school provides Occupational First Aid training to staff to ensure that the safety of students and staff are catered for on site.
- Teachers have high expectations for all students.
- A study facility is available to all students Monday to Friday each week to provide students with a quiet space to study.
- Students receive regular formative feedback about their learning and how they can improve.
- Students have regular opportunities to talk about their learning and what helps them to learn.
- Teachers use active methodologies to develop the key skills in their subjects.
- Teaching and learning is differentiated and provides an appropriate challenge to enable all students to engage and experience success.
- Teachers are provided with referral forms to facilitate quick and easy referral to the Guidance Counsellor, Anti-Bullying Team, and Additional Educational Needs, AEN Co-ordinators.

The school has good connections and working relationships with outside agencies regarding student wellbeing, such as National Educational Psychological Service, NEPS, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, CAHMS, TUSLA and the Department of Education and Skills, DES.

## **Recognising the Importance of Relationships for Wellbeing**

St. Joseph's College recognises that true wellbeing can only be assured through the promotion and development of positive, nurturing, and respectful relationships within our school community. We strive to achieve this in the following ways:

- Ensuring that student-teacher relationships are friendly, caring, and respectful.
- Ensuring that students are aware of the school's child safeguarding procedures through SPHE and RSE.
- Making sure that staff is fully aware that they may be the one adult that a student turns to for support and help during a difficult time.
- Fully informing students as to where to get support and how to access the care structures in the school such as their Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, and members of senior management.
- Fully informing students and parents of the school's Anti Bullying Policy and ensuring that students are aware of how to report incidents of bullying.
  - The school's Anti Bullying Policy has a no blame approach, which enables bullying to be dealt with at student level in the first instance.
- Utilising the resources available on <https://www.webwise.ie/> in SPHE and CSPE to teach students about respecting each other and online safety.
- Resolving behaviour issues with care, respect and consistency and ensuring that student voice is heard.
- Ensuring that there is a shared vision and understanding of what student wellbeing means which emphasises strengths and capacities.
- Encouraging students to show respect, care, and concern for each other so that they feel safe and supported amongst their peers.
- Recognising that staff is entitled to feel supported and cared for amongst their colleagues.
- Providing forums for students so that their voices may be heard, and they are involved in making decisions about their life in school such as the Student Council.
- Making sure that students know that their feedback is valued and, where appropriate, acted upon.
- Ensuring that parents feel welcome, respected, and listened to as partners in the education of their children.
- Sharing information with parents as to how they can support their child's wellbeing.
- Maintaining strong links with the local community and sports clubs.

## **Whole School Wellbeing**

### **1. School Policies**

School policies are developed with staff, parents/guardians, students, and the Board of Management. The following school policies are related to Wellbeing and are reviewed regularly:

- Admissions
- Anti-Bullying
- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Child Protection
- Data Protection
- Homework
- Health & Safety
- Internet/Devices Acceptable Usage Policy
- Relationship Education, Relationship and Sex Education, RSE
- Additional Educational Needs, AEN
- Social, Personal, Health Education, SPHE

### **2. Student support**

A) Supports for all.

We adopt a holistic approach. We have a series of policies and procedures that promote Wellbeing for all members of the school community. Processes on this level aim to establish a safe environment that is conducive to Wellbeing, and which supports the prevention of factors that negatively impact on Wellbeing. These steps are reflected in various school policies such as Codes of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, and Acceptable Usage Policies etc. Additionally, our codified approach through our policies is supported by our commitment to quality teaching and learning, broad provision of programmes and a comprehensive curriculum, study skills, homework, and assessment policies.

## B) Support for some

We adopt a more focused approach with groups of young people who have been identified by staff, management, or Pastoral Care Team of being at risk of developing unhealthy patterns of behaviour. These structures seek to provide a more targeted support structure to promote and scaffold Wellbeing for these identified groups. Our recent addition in this area is the Friends for Life programme. This is a school-based positive mental health programme that promotes emotional resilience and reduces anxiety in children and adolescents. Other supports available are a proactive student support team, AEN teamwork, guidance counselling and year heads tracking behaviour.

## C) Support for a few

This support focuses on the guidance counsellor, AEN co-ordinators, year heads and others, putting in place interventions for young people with more complex and enduring needs.

## 3. Staff Wellbeing

Staff at St. Joseph's College work in a supported environment. At Board of Management meetings, the Principal keeps the Board informed of the work of the staff. School management work collaboratively with the whole staff. Management respect the professional commitment of each staff member. Management is understanding of the complex pressures which may come to bear on all members of staff from time to time and respond with compassion. Staff members are encouraged to take on new roles, gain further qualifications or attend relevant CPD courses.

St. Joseph's College promotes a culture of collaborative learning. This is achieved through regular subject Department meetings, whole staff meetings, staff planning committees and an on online network of resources on Office 365. The whole staff email system ensures all staff are aware of important events and opportunities. The school has a staff social committee which organises events throughout the year to enhance personal relationships between staff members.

## 4. How our Catholic Ethos supports Wellbeing

All students in Religion classes learn different ways to meditate, reflect and pray and get many opportunities to practice this throughout the year, enhancing their spiritual growth and supporting their Wellbeing.

Retreats are offered for all students from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6th Year.

As a Catholic Secondary School, the whole school community are involved in several liturgies throughout the year such as our Opening Mass, Carol Service, End of Year Mass. We follow the liturgical calendar, and the seasons of Advent and Lent are times of Spiritual reflection. November is the month to remember the Holy Souls.

We have a beautiful Sacred Space in our school. It is a place of calm and quiet. It is available to all students to use during break and lunch. There are candles and quiet music as well as many visual resources used there to aid quiet reflection and prayer.

## 5. Wellbeing Team

A Wellbeing Team was set up involving members of staff who are teaching SPHE, SNAs and/or teaching staff who have an interest in promoting Wellbeing in the school community plus the Student Voice.

## 6. The Inclusion and AEN Team

This team works closely with students and their parents/guardians and aims to remove barriers for students with additional/learning needs to ensure a positive school experience, and achievement of potential.

## 7. Pastoral Care Team

This team is comprised of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, Sr. Regina, and Fr. Daniels. The Team works collaboratively to support students with significant social, emotional, and circumstantial difficulties. The team often works with external agencies such as Tusla, CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health) in supporting students.

## 8. Year Head Structure

The role of the Year Head is essential in the school community. This was identified in the Whole School Needs Analysis and the Post of Responsibility review. Year Heads meet every week with Principal and Deputy Principal. This team works to focus on the task of overseeing the welfare of the various year groups so that all students are supported at every level.

## 9. Student Voice

Student involvement and leadership is an essential part of wellbeing in our school community. Student involvement is encouraged in many areas e.g. The Student Voice. The Student Voice meet every two weeks; however, this may vary during the year depending on what issues arise. They consider issues that affect the student population. It allows students a voice to bring any concerns that may arise to the wider school community.

Leaders work with First and Second years. They are also present at the bonding day for First Years. This is held on the first day of the school year.

## **10. May Prize Giving**

This is a yearly prize giving day where students are rewarded for achievement in sport, music, and other roles. Effort and involvement are recognised and acknowledged during the Prize Giving. These awards build on positive self-esteem and student Wellbeing & highlight the importance of getting involved in school life.

## **11. Extra-Curricular Activities**

The extensive options include Choir, Trad group, Sporting Activities (Hurling, Gaelic football, Cross Country running, Rugby), Debating, Seachtain na Gaeilge, Musical Society and Shows etc. The school offers many extra-curricular activities and students get involved in after-school or lunch time activities which help them grow in self-confidence and very much enhance their sense of well-being. Staff who are involved in these activities do so on a voluntary basis.

## **12. Class trips**

There are class trips organised by individual teachers during the year. TYs go on a class trip abroad. 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> years are usually brought to the country in which the language they are studying is spoken. A group has also visited China. This is a chance for bonding with others but is also a break from school life. TY trips involve many group activities which encourage students to mix and take part in various activities allowing new experiences. Trips are clearly identified as privileges, and upholding our Wellbeing Policy in respect of others is an expectation of the College of anyone who'd hope to enjoy those privileges.

## **13. Sports Day**

This is held once a year in May on St. Joseph's Day. It involves various sporting activities -individual and group. Most activities are for fun to encourage all to take part. Physical activity is a very important part of wellbeing before exam time. World Health Organisation, WHO, 2022 states that evidence suggests that the health and wellbeing of children and young people is essential to the attainment of educational outcomes. Although the mechanics are unclear, there is evidence that physical activity is associated with improved cognitive functioning, concentration and attention and memory and planning, all of which contribute to an improved capacity to learn, and educational success.

## **14. Fun Run**

This is held in October. Students collect sponsorship for various needy groups.

## **15. Wellbeing in our Teaching and Learning**

*Use of a variety of learning & teaching methodologies and strategies:* Mindful of the mixed ability settings in most classes, staff utilise a variety of teaching approaches and methodologies to maintain student engagement and maximise learning and achievement. Emphasis has also been placed in recent years on the integration of ICT into teaching and learning in the school. Team teaching for SEN support is also in place.

*Mixed ability class grouping:* This serves to promote a sense of democracy and a sense of community in all classes. In keeping with best practice staff view this structure as central to the promotion of student self-esteem.

*Positive relationships:* Our promotion of positive relationships is based on the recognition of the dignity of everyone and the importance of respectful relationships between teachers, students, and parents. Building an emphasis on positivity and on rewarding positive behaviour enhances our school community.

*Professional and personal commitment to the wellbeing of our students.* Our staff sees its role as supporting and developing student potential. In keeping with our mission statement, we seek to promote a caring and committed school community where everyone is valued as unique. Staff at the school aspire to develop the whole person, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, social, cultural, and physical. All relationships in our school are built on the central tenet of respect.



## School Self- Evaluation and Wellbeing

We undertook self-evaluation of teaching and learning. We then revisited our School Self Evaluation, SSE planning in September 2019 whereby we focused on the area of Assessment for Learning, AFL strategies, Differentiation all to aid the learning experience of students which in turn helps Wellbeing.

The school community have chosen to focus on the area of Remote/Hybrid learning as it connects with the new and important changes which are occurring. The area was also selected as it applies to the whole school community and therefore any progression can be benefitted by all as. As students and teachers were learning and teaching from home, we needed to make that transition as seamless as possible as not to add to any anxiety people may already have had.

*'We know that students who have higher levels of wellbeing tend to have better cognitive outcomes in school.'*  
(Student Wellbeing, 2015)

Also, ESRI research found that.

*'Children with higher levels of emotional, behavioural, social, and school wellbeing had higher levels of academic achievement subsequently (at ages 11, 14, and 16)'*  
(Smyth, E. 2015)

The required implementation of Wellbeing as part of the framework for Junior Cycle allows us to review both our provision and our practice. As part of this process several surveys were carried out with students and staff to determine how best to implement these 400 hours of Wellbeing. These were then analysed.

To align our needs with the SSE process and the implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle we sought an advisory visit from the Inspectorate to consider the implementation of Wellbeing both at Junior Cycle and throughout school life. On discussing both the new *SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION GUIDELINES 2016-2020 Post-Primary*, in conjunction with *Looking at Our School 2022, A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools* (LAOS) the necessity for the alignment between the new Junior Cycle and LAOS Quality Framework was clear.

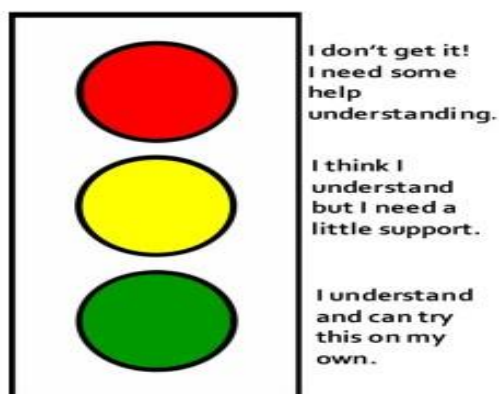
As outlined in the LAOS Quality Framework, it is evident that:

*'The wellbeing of school leaders and teachers contributes to a safe and healthy learning environment for students, the promotion of student wellbeing and positive student outcomes '.*  
(Looking At Our School 2022, A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools, page 9)

The LAOS Quality Framework takes a holistic view of learning and of the learner. It emphasises the need for students to develop a broad range of skills, competences and values that enable personal wellbeing, active citizenship, and lifelong learning.

The specific aspects of teaching and learning the school identified and prioritised as being good for Wellbeing which needed to be imbedded in the school were.

- How to give and receive formative feedback,
  - e.g., sharing success criteria
  - Sharing learning intentions, comment making etc.
- A whole school / subject department approach was followed implementing the Traffic Lights System.



- Developing Microsoft 365 App teams.
- An official Wellbeing Week – led by a committee of students and staff.
- Formal establishment of a Wellbeing team
- Explicit links need to be made for students between personal wellbeing and effective learning.

## Timetable for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle in St. Joseph's College, Garbally

In St. Joseph's College, Garbally we have 401 Curricular Hours of Wellbeing from Sept 2020. This is Wellbeing in Junior Cycle Below is the breakdown of this information.

Since August 2020 schools are obliged to dedicate a minimum of 400 hours to wellbeing. St. Joseph's College is fulfilling these hours.







### Curricular Subjects

The individual subject plans for PE, SPHE, CSPE, Digital Learning and Guidance will highlight how the Statements of Learning, and Learning Outcomes are uncovered in these subjects.

### Wellbeing Areas

Class per week	1 <sup>st</sup> Year	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	
CSPE (Minimum 100 hours)	1	1	1	100 hours
SPHE (Minimum 100 hours)	1	1	1	100 hours
PE (Minimum 135 hours)	1	2	1	134 hours
Computers	2	0	0	67 hours

### Other Areas of Wellbeing across Junior Cycle in St. Joseph's College, Garbally

Year	Type of Event	Aware	Respected	Resilient	Connected	Responsible	Active
							
	<b>1<sup>st</sup> year Transition to Secondary School Programme</b>						
<b>a</b>	Assemblies	√	√		√	√	
<b>b</b>	Friends for Life	√	√		√	√	√
<b>c</b>	Induction Day	√	√	√	√	√	
<b>d</b>	School Trip	√	√	√	√	√	
<b>e</b>	Awards Ceremony	√	√	√	√	√	
<b>f</b>	Sports Day	√	√	√	√	√	√
<b>g</b>	Check and connect	√	√	√	√	√	√
<b>h</b>	Fun Run	√	√	√	√	√	
<b>i</b>	Retreat	√	√		√	√	

## 2<sup>nd</sup> year Secondary School Programme

<b>a</b>	Assemblies	√	√		√	√	
<b>b</b>	Friends for Life	√	√		√	√	√
<b>c</b>	Induction Day	√	√	√	√	√	
<b>d</b>	School Trip	√	√	√	√	√	
<b>e</b>	Awards Ceremony	√	√	√	√	√	
<b>f</b>	Sports Day	√	√	√	√	√	√
<b>g</b>	Check and connect	√	√	√	√	√	√
<b>h</b>	Fun Run	√	√	√	√	√	
<b>i</b>	Retreat	√	√		√	√	

## 3<sup>rd</sup> year Secondary School Programme

<b>a</b>	Assemblies	√	√		√	√	
<b>b</b>	Friends for Life	√	√		√	√	√
<b>c</b>	Induction Day	√	√	√	√	√	
<b>d</b>	School Trip	√	√	√	√	√	
<b>e</b>	Awards Ceremony	√	√	√	√	√	
<b>f</b>	Sports Day	√	√	√	√	√	√
<b>g</b>	Check and connect	√	√	√	√	√	√
<b>h</b>	Fun Run	√	√	√	√	√	
<b>i</b>	Retreat	√	√		√	√	

### Senior Cycle Wellbeing Activities

At St. Joseph's College, wellbeing is a whole school approach, below is a list of activities that students in senior cycle participated in for wellbeing.

<b>Activities</b>
Guidance classes in 4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> , and 6 <sup>th</sup> Year
Work Experience (4 <sup>th</sup> Years)
Study Skills Seminar
Retreat
Whole School Table Quiz
Carol Service
Guest speakers
Musical
CAO info night (6 <sup>th</sup> Years)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chairperson of Board of Management**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Principal**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_