



## Wellbeing policy

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## 1 Introduction

Saint Joseph's Community College seeks to create an inclusive school community where values, attitudes and behaviours consistent with its core values are fostered. In partnership with parents and the wider community, it respects individual self-worth and aims to provide a safe environment in which each student may achieve his/her full potential.

We are a state, co-educational, multi-denominational school underpinned by the core values of:

- Excellence in education
- Care
- Equality
- Community
- Respect



## 2 Rationale for the policy

The Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) highlights the necessity for a new area of learning at junior cycle, that of Wellbeing. 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.

There are already evident similarities between our own mission statement and the definition of 'Student Wellbeing' as outlined in the NCCA guidelines. '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.' (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).

At Saint Joseph's our priority is the wellbeing of our students. This is outlined in our mission statement's aim to "seek to create an inclusive school community where values, attitudes and behaviours consistent with its ethos are fostered. In partnership with parents and the wider community, it respects individual self-worth and aims to provide a safe environment in which each student may achieve his/her full potential inclusive of spiritual and academic."

Through our Wellbeing programme at Saint Joseph's Community 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. Saint Joseph's 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.

Saint Joseph’s Community College is committed to promoting the emotional and social wellbeing of all, creating a respectful atmosphere between all individuals: management, teachers, staff members, students, parents, and visitors. Moreover, we recognise the importance that positive role models have on our students.

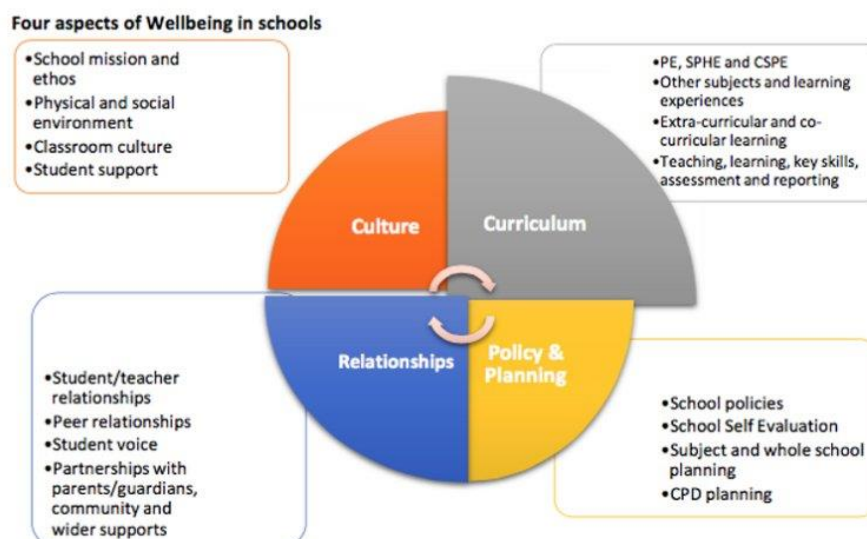
### 3 The structure of the Wellbeing policy

The philosophy of this policy is based on the junior cycle Wellbeing guidelines. Planning and developing a Wellbeing programme that builds on the understandings, practises and curricula for Wellbeing already exists in schools. Wellbeing will cross the three years of junior cycle and is based on substantial work already taking place in schools in support of students’ wellbeing.

This area of learning will make the school’s culture, ethos and commitment to Wellbeing visible to students. It will include learning opportunities to enhance the physical, mental, emotional and social Wellbeing of students. It will enable students to build life skills and develop a strong sense of connectedness to their school and their community. The Junior Cycle Wellbeing Programme has built up to 400 hours as the new junior cycle is implemented fully in schools.

### 4 Whole school approach

At Saint Joseph’s Community College the wellbeing of our school community is paramount. Our environment of care and support is both formal and informal. 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 while being. 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”.



Planning for Wellbeing involves consideration of these aspects: culture, relationships, policy and planning and the curriculum. This section focuses on the first three of these and looks at ways in which a whole school community can contribute to building the kind of culture,

relationships and policies that support student Wellbeing. These four aspects coincide with the four areas of action recommended in the Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention (2013) and with Schools for Health in Ireland: Framework for Developing a Health Promoting School. The question of Wellbeing and the curriculum is the subject of detailed discussion in Section 4.

## **5 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

- All staff contribute to 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 and ETB student charter.
- Outline the policies, procedures, culture, ethos and activities that have served to assess the wellbeing of students at Saint Joseph’s Community College.
- There is a shared vision of and understanding of what student wellbeing means, which emphasises students’ strengths and capacities.
- Recognise the relationship between positive experiences of school life, student achievement and long-term wellbeing.
- Respectful and caring relationships are fostered between staff and students, students and students, and staff and parents both staff
- 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 that 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.
- To provide an umbrella policy which outlines a structure that links to a series of other policies that relates to well being
- To conduct a two-year review of Wellbeing within the school.

## **6 Aims of the Wellbeing policy**

- Developing and implementing policies and procedures to support student and staff wellbeing.
- Ensuring student wellbeing is central to teaching practises and student learning.
- Raising

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

Saint Joseph’s Community 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 in the school lobby and the names of the DLP and DDLP are on display inside the front door.
- 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.
- All areas of the school building are accessible for all students.
- 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 ensures the safety of staff and students through compliance with Health and Safety requirements.
- The student journal contains useful information on wellbeing, healthy eating and study guides.
- Teachers have high expectations for all students.
- 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 and staff feel safe, secure and respected on the school premises.
- Students are encouraged to actively engage in their learning so that they may enjoy being at school.
- 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.
- Student support meetings are held each week.
- The school has positive partnerships with outside agencies regarding student wellbeing, such as NEPS, CAHMS, TUSLA and the DES.

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

Saint Joseph's Community 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 are 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 the Webwise.ie website in Wellbeing, 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.
- The school operates a restorative practice approach when dealing with incidents between students.
- 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 are 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.

## **9 Whole school Wellbeing**

In Saint Joseph's Community College, whole school wellbeing is evident in the following areas.

### **9.1 School Policies**

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
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Protection
- Data Protection

- Homework
- Health & Safety
- RSE
- SEN
- Critical Incident

## **9.2 Student support**

Under the next continuum of provision as a framework – “Wellbeing in post primary schools” this policy provides an overview after provision in the school in relation to supporting and promoting the Wellbeing up all students.

### **Supports for all**

At this level we adopt a whole school 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 of 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 substance abuse acceptable usage policies etc. Additionally, supported by our commitment to quality teaching and learning, broad provision of programmes and a comprehensive curriculum, study skills, homework, and assessment policies.

### **Support for some**

There is a more focused approach adopt us with several identifiable groups of young people who are 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. Other supports available are a proactive student support team, SEN teamwork, guidance counselling and year heads tracking behaviour.

### **Support for a few**

This support focuses on the guidance counsellor, SEN co-ordinators, year heads and others, putting in place interventions for young people with more complex and enduring needs. Work with this group of students is structured under the development of a care plan / IBP / IEP. in some cases, students under the care of the student support team will also have a student support file.

## **9.3 Staff Wellbeing**

Staff of Saint Joseph’s Community 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.

Saint Joseph's promotes a culture of collaborative learning. This is achieved through regular subject Department meetings, whole staff meetings, staff planning committees and an 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. Care call is available to all teachers, provided by the ETB, as well as individual Union related sports the staff can avail off.

#### **9.4 Wellbeing Team**

A Wellbeing Team is established in the school. Members of staff who are teaching Wellbeing/ SPHE / CSPE/ PE, extra-curricular staff and the Principal / Deputy Principal are involved. All members of this team have an interest in promoting Wellbeing in the school community. All staff within the school are involved in the promotion of Wellbeing activities throughout the year, especially during Wellbeing Week.

#### **9.5 The SEN 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.

#### **9.6 The Year Head**

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 work with others e.g. SEN, student support etc., to focus on the task of overseeing the welfare of the various year groups so that all students are supported at every level.

#### **9.7 Student mentors**

The mentoring system is a critical element of student transition from primary to post-primary. Mentors are senior students who are partnered with a group of first year students who meet with them at various stages throughout the year. The supportive approach through these meetings provides an additional layer of support for students, assists with any difficulties they may have and helps them settle into school easier.

#### **9.8 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. Student Council and student mentors. The Student Council meets on a regular basis and considers issues that affect the student population. It provides students with a voice to bring any issues they may have to the wider school community.



## **9.9 Extra-Curricular Activities**

The extensive options include sporting activities (basketball, Gaelic football, soccer). 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.

## **10 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:**

Apart from the banding of core subjects to allow for uptake at differentiated levels. 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 each individual 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.

## **11 Wellbeing initiatives in Saint Joseph's Community College**

- **Wellbeing Week:** The aim of the annual health and wellbeing week is to create awareness around mental health, promote health and wellbeing, resilience, as well as adding to the positive atmosphere of the school. Ultimately it seeks to highlight what keeps us positive. Activities include- Martial Arts, Dance Yoga, Gym sessions, Bake Off, Drumming, Music sessions every day, fruit patters and healthy food provided each day, information area with posters on health and wellbeing, meditation classes,

positive thoughts presentation, mindfulness colouring competition's, sporting camps, talks on mental wellness/coping strategies from outside agencies.

- **Enterprise:** In enterprise activities teacher's help students make informed decisions based on careful research and analysis, setting up and running their own enterprise projects. It helps students to grasp real life skills: working as part of a team, managing production/ finances, organising a sales and marketing campaign and liaising directly with customers and media.
- **Subject weeks:** Help to build positive relationships (e.g. Maths week), improve self-esteem and develop transferable skills. They contribute to the wellbeing of the students by giving them the opportunity to learn in many ways. By interacting with their classmates and teachers, and by taking part in activities inside and outside the classroom, each student is challenged to problem solve outside of their comfort zone promoting positive supportive relationships within the school.
- **Mentoring Programmes:** Transition Year students act as mentors for first year students. They complete an Induction process at the beginning of the Year to ensure the smooth transition of each student is met. The first years meet regularly with their mentor throughout the year to discuss any potential problems or issues.
- **Anti-Bullying week:** Anti-Bullying Week is an initiative that highlights the issue of bullying and encourages individuals to take action against it. It emphasizes the importance of fostering a culture of respect and support, where bullying is not tolerated, and every person is valued.
- **School Library:** Comfortable and welcoming environment. Open shelf policy
- **Study:** Evening study is available to students in the hall after school.
- **Student Council:** Enhances student voice and promotes a sense of involvement in the development of the school and a sense of partnership between students and teachers
- **Parents Council:** Fundraises, organises events, assists policy development in order to sustain and enhance wellbeing in the school community
- Wide variety of **extra-curricular activities** including Soccer, Gaelic, Basketball, Badminton etc
- **Media:** Either digital or print formats highlight student and community achievement and progress
- **Tutor:**
- **Year head assembly:** Held intermittently to support students
- **Study seminars:** Study skill seminars are organised annually to support and enhance student attainment/wellbeing
- **Meditation:** Incorporated in Ways to Wellbeing/Friends for Life/SPHE
- **School Internal Supports:** School Counselling Service/ Career Guidance Counsellor/Pastoral Care Team/Year head
- **School Tours:** Local, national and international tours where students develop intercultural skills and enhance cultural awareness.

## 12 Curricular planning of Wellbeing

### 12.1 Timetable for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle

374 Curricular Hours and 61 hours 20 minutes Other Hours which is a total of 435 Hours and 20 minutes for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle (complying with DES Circular 0015/2017) although this may increase as all subject specifications phase through all 3 years of the Junior Cycle. Below is the breakdown of this information. The individual subject plans for PE, SPHE, CSPE and Guidance will highlight how the Statements of Learning, and Learning Outcomes are uncovered in these subjects

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Year

| Subject                             | Periods per week | Minutes per week   | Hours per year            |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|--|---------------------------|
| PE                                  | 2                | 80   |                           |
| SPHE                                | 1                | 40   |                           |
| CSPE                                | 1                | 40   |                           |
| Wellbeing Modules                   | 1                | 40   |                           |
| Tutor / Humanities                  | 1                | 40   |                           |
|                                     |                  |  |                           |
| <b>Total in 1<sup>st</sup> Year</b> |                  | <b>240 Mins per week<br/>240 * 33 weeks =<br/>7920 mins per year</b> | <b>132 hours per year</b> |

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Year

| Subject                             | Periods per week | Minutes per week   | Hours per year            |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|--|---------------------------|
| PE                                  | 2                | 80   |                           |
| SPHE                                | 1                | 40   |                           |
| CSPE                                | 1                | 40   |                           |
| Wellbeing Modules                   | 1                | 40   |                           |
| Tutor / Humanities                  | 1                | 40   |                           |
|                                     |                  |  |                           |
| <b>Total in 2<sup>nd</sup> Year</b> |                  | <b>240 Mins per week<br/>240 * 33 weeks =<br/>7920 mins per year</b> | <b>132 hours per year</b> |

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Year

| Subject            | Periods per week | Minutes per week | Hours per year |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| PE                 | 2                | 80               |                |
| SPHE               | 1                | 40               |                |
| CSPE               | 1                | 40               |                |
| Tutor / Humanities | 1                | 40               |                |
|                    |                  |                  |                |

|                                     |  |  |                           |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|---------------------------|
| <b>Total in 3<sup>rd</sup> Year</b> |  | <b>200 Mins per week<br/>200 * 33 weeks =<br/>6600 mins per year</b> | <b>110 hours per year</b> |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|---------------------------|

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| <b>Curriculum Grand Total in 2023-2024</b> | <b>374 Hours</b> |
|--|------------------|

## 12.2 Other areas of learning in Saint Joseph's Community College

### 1<sup>st</sup> Year

| Type of Event                       | Minutes | Hours           | Aware | Respected | Resilient | Connected | Responsible | Active |
|-------------------------------------|---------|-----------------|-------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|--------|
| Induction Day                       | 180     | 3 Hours         | √     | √         | √         | √         | √           |        |
| Friendship Week                     | 240     | 4 Hours         | √     | √         | √         | √         | √           |        |
| Bonding Trip                        | 240     | 4 Hours         | √     | √         | √         | √         | √           | √      |
| Study Skills                        | 120     | 2 Hours         | √     | √         | √         | √         | √           | √      |
| Digital Wellbeing Seminar           | 120     | 2 Hours         | √     | √         | √         | √         | √           |        |
| Nutrition Workshop                  | 40      | 40 min          | √     | √         | √         | √         | √           |        |
| Lough Key Forest Park               | 360     | 6 Hours         | √     | √         | √         | √         | √           | √      |
| Whole School Table Quiz             | 120     | 2 Hours         | √     | √         | √         | √         | √           |        |
| Soccer Blitz                        | 140     | 2 HR<br>20 Mins | √     | √         | √         | √         | √           |        |
|                                     |         |                 |       |           |           |           |             |        |
| Basketball Blitz                    | 60      | 1 Hour          |       |           |           |           |             |        |
| <b>Total in 1<sup>st</sup> Year</b> |         | <b>27 Hrs</b>   |       |           |           |           |             |        |

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Year

| Type of Event                     | Minutes | Hours             | Aware | Respected | Resilient | Connected | Responsible | Active |
|-----------------------------------|---------|-------------------|-------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|--------|
| Induction to 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year | 120     | 2 Hours           | √     | √         | √         | √         | √           |        |
| Anti-Bullying Refresher           | 40      | 40 Mins           | √     | √         | √         | √         | √           |        |
| Study Skills                      | 120     | 2 Hours           | √     | √         | √         | √         | √           | √      |
| Digital Wellbeing Seminar         | 120     | 2 Hours           | √     | √         | √         | √         | √           |        |
| Nutrition Workshop                | 40      | 40 min            | √     | √         | √         | √         | √           |        |
| Lough Key Forest Park             | 360     | 6 Hours           | √     | √         | √         | √         | √           | √      |
| Whole School Table Quiz           | 120     | 2 Hours           | √     | √         | √         | √         | √           |        |
| Soccer Blitz                      | 80      | 2 HR<br>20 Mins   | √     | √         | √         | √         | √           |        |
|                                   |         |                   |       |           |           |           |             |        |
| Basketball Blitz                  | 120     | 2 Hours           |       |           |           |           |             |        |
| Total in 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year     |         | 18 Hrs<br>40 Mins |       |           |           |           |             |        |

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Year

| Type of Event                     | Minutes | Hours   | Aware | Respected | Resilient | Connected | Responsible | Active |
|-----------------------------------|---------|---------|-------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|--------|
| Induction to 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year | 120     | 2 Hours | √     | √         | √         | √         | √           |        |
| Anti-Bullying Refresher           | 40      | 40 Mins | √     | √         | √         | √         | √           |        |
| Study Skills                      | 120     | 2 Hours | √     | √         | √         | √         | √           | √      |
| Digital Wellbeing Seminar         | 120     | 2 Hours | √     | √         | √         | √         | √           |        |
| Lough Key Forest Park             | 360     | 6 Hours | √     | √         | √         | √         | √           | √      |

|                                     |     |               |   |   |  |   |   |  |
|-------------------------------------|-----|---------------|---|---|--|---|---|--|
| Whole School Table Quiz             | 120 | 2 Hours       | √ | √ |  | √ | √ |  |
| Soccer Blitz                        | 80  | 2 HR 20 Mins  | √ | √ |  | √ | √ |  |
| Subject Choice Information          | 120 | 2 HRS         | √ | √ |  | √ | √ |  |
| Transition Year Information         | 120 | 2 HRS         | √ |   |  | √ | √ |  |
|                                     |     |               |   |   |  |   |   |  |
| Basketball Blitz                    | 60  | 2 Hour        |   |   |  |   |   |  |
| <b>Total in 3<sup>rd</sup> Year</b> |     | <b>22 Hrs</b> |   |   |  |   |   |  |

|             |  |                |
|-------------|--|----------------|
| Grand Total |  | 67 Hrs 20 Mins |
|             |  |                |

### 13 Implementation

The date from which the Policy will apply is 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024, which is the date of adoption by the Board of Management, Saint Joseph's Community College.

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

*Bernadette Rowland*  
**Chairperson of BOM**

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

*John Bones*  
**Secretary of BOM**