

# Wellness & Positive Relationships



Wellness is a state of dynamic physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being that enables a person to achieve full potential and an enjoyable life ([Joint Consortium for School Health](#)).

Physical and mental health are supported by encouraging health promoting behaviors such as getting adequate sleep and physical activity, eating healthy, preventing and reducing substance-related harms (nicotine, alcohol, and other substances of concern) and reducing hazards (exposure to elements, environmental hazards).

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships and make responsible and caring decisions. A focus on social and emotional learning involves moving beyond a problem-focused approach to proactive, whole-school strategies supporting all learners including students, staff, families and caregivers.

As each of these components of wellness highly impacts each other, it is essential to consider them together in the overall picture of wellness and provide opportunities for teaching and modeling of skills in all components. In addition, a school that has engaging classrooms where students participate in authentic learning will have high indicators of wellness.

A focus on wellness and positive relationships requires:

- a safe, welcoming environment for students, staff, families, caregivers and community members.
- a respectful social environment that is inclusive, restorative, peaceful and promotes equity and democratic processes in all aspects of school life.
- safe comfortable spaces for students to eat, socialize, play and learn.
- opportunities to engage in physical activity in line with the 24-hour movement guidelines for the school day, including in class, recess and lunch times.
- offering healthy food and beverage options that meet the Provincial School Food Guidelines at all school and school-sponsored events.
- initiatives that focus on student involvement, leadership and engagement (peer mentoring, mental health committee, a range of extracurricular activities, etc.).
- initiatives to reduce stigma associated with 2SLGBTQ+ identities, race and mental health concerns.



- allocating resources for health promotion/protection activities including professional learning opportunities for staff (e.g., Mental Health First Aid, First Aid/CPR; Substance Use Prevention; Trauma Informed Practice etc.).
- health is included within the school's mission statement and school policies.
- increased awareness, implementation and communication of healthy living policies (safe and caring schools policy, healthy eating policy, cannabis and smoke-free living policy, daily physical activity policy etc.).
- school procedures that incorporate relational and restorative measures.



Fostering connections between school, families and the broader school community is important in supporting and promoting student and staff health and well-being. Working collaboratively, school staff, students, parents/caregivers and community members can be actively engaged in leading and coordinating health promoting actions and services for the school community.

Schools that are successful in reducing barriers to family engagement do so by:

- visibly embracing and celebrating diversity.
- providing defined, actionable opportunities for families to participate in leadership and volunteer opportunities.
- regularly communicating with families and caregivers about their children's learning.
- working with the school community to develop, communicate and uphold agreed upon expectations for school staff, families, caregivers and community members.

Well-being is an essential aspect of student achievement. Healthy students are better learners, and better-educated individuals are healthier.

# Reflection

The following data sources and questions can be used to guide the group's discussion.

## Performance Measurement Framework:

**Outcome 2:** Students experience a safe, caring and inclusive school environment.

- Indicator 2.1: Positive School Climate – Student
- Indicator 2.2: Positive School Climate - Staff
- Indicator 2.3: Positive School Climate - Family
- Indicator 2.4: School Safety – Student
- Indicator 2.5: School Safety - Family
- Indicator 2.6: School Belonging - Student
- Indicator 2.7: Major Behaviours

**Outcome 3:** The education system is responsive to students' strengths and needs.

- Indicator 3.1: School Engagement - Student
- Indicator 3.4: School Fit - Family

**School Development Survey Scales:** these results are reported separately from the PMF Report.

- Barriers to Engagement (Family Survey)
- Family Engagement (Family Survey)
- Teacher-Student Relationships ( Student Survey Grade 7-12)

## National Health Data Surveys:

**The Canadian Student Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Survey (CSTADS)** administered to students in grades 7-12 in select schools. Participating schools receive school level reports, Newfoundland and Labrador receives provincial level data from this survey, conducted every 2 years: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/canadian-student-tobacco-alcohol-drugs-survey.html>

## Reference Documents

Safe and Caring Schools Policy;

Provincial School Food Guidelines;

Daily Physical Activity Policy;

CASEL: What is social emotional learning?;

District and school based policies and procedures.



**Health Behaviors of School-Aged Children (HBSC)** administered to students in grades 7-10 in select schools. Participating schools receive school level reports, Newfoundland and Labrador may receive provincial level data from this survey, conducted every 4 years: [The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children \(HBSC\) study in Canada - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/school-aged-children/hbcs.html)

## Questions to Consider



Use evidence of current practices to support your discussion points, strengths, and opportunities for growth.



Consider teaching and learning within your school.

How are wellness and positive relationships integrated into teaching and learning practices?

How are you assessing the impact of this work?



Consider the social and physical environment within your school.

How are you assessing the effectiveness of actions to improve the social and physical environment?

When considering the effectiveness of the actions, how will you continue to improve the social and physical environment within your school?



Consider the partnerships and services within your school.

How are students and families/caregivers involved as partners in learning?

How does your school promote student and family engagement?

How do you assess the effectiveness of efforts in your school to promote family engagement?

How are community partners involved in enhancing the teaching and learning environment within school?



Consider the implementation of healthy living policies within your school:

- safe and caring schools policy,
- healthy eating policy,
- cannabis and smoke-free living policy,
- physical activity policy.

How are you assessing the impact of these policies?

What evidence do you have of impact and how are you using that evidence to inform decision making?

#### References:

School Mental Health Ontario. (2021). <https://smho-smso.ca/>

CASEL. (2023). *Fundamentals of SEL*. <https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/>

Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health. (2020). *Joint Consortium for School Health*. <https://www.jcsh-cces.ca/>