

# SUPPORTING SOCIAL–EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Social–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, achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.” (The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, [www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org))

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

Skills learned through social, emotional, and behavioral instruction create a foundation for career, family, and civic life. It is important for all students no matter their academic levels, behavior challenges or life circumstances.



### RECOGNIZE LINKS BETWEEN SEL AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS

SEL practices build skills that increase academic achievement while creating supportive learning environments.

- Establish processes and policies for screening and identifying students' needs.
- Embed SEL into the core academic content areas.
- Explicitly teach the SEL skills.



### ADDRESS THE POTENTIAL FOR TRAUMA REACTIONS

Some students and staff may be at higher risk because of trauma history or chronic stress.

- Use adverse childhood experiences (ACES) as a guide.
- Be attentive to stigma and racism that may occur in the community.
- Share physical and psychological safety protocols for students and staff.
- Embed self-care and staff well-being into the SEL culture.



### IDENTIFY DISCIPLINE CHALLENGES

SEL helps reduce challenging behavior and improve mental health.

- Build on the social and emotional strengths that students already possess through SEL.
- Implement positive and effective discipline practices.
- Recognize and address systemic and situational racism.
- Adopt culturally responsive, restorative practices.
- View behavior through a trauma–focused lens.
- Implement discipline policies that promote SEL.



### ENSURE ACCESS TO SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

School mental health professionals support systemic SEL, as well as individual students.

- Provide students access to supports during the school day.
- Consider ways to increase availability and accessibility to students and families.
- Ensure that supports are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

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## KEY COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE SEL PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS

Schools should intentionally create an environment where students feel safe, demonstrate positive relationships with peers and adults, and learn academic skills for life success.



### SYSTEMS AND TEAMS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS AND ADULTS

- SEL instruction that focuses on caring, just, inclusive, and healthy schools to support all young people
- Coordinated activities to involve all students and adults in learning and practicing social, emotional, and behavioral skills
- Evidence-based programs and continuous improvement measures
- Supportive classroom environments and explicit teaching of SEL



### FAMILY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- SEL strategies that advance educational equity and excellence through school-family-community partnerships
- Activities for schools, families, and community partners to help determine goals and plans for social, emotional, and behavioral learning in their schools
- Information and resources that are culturally relevant and in family's native language
- Community resources that support the partnership between schools and families



### DELIBERATE OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

- Opportunities to participate in traditions, rituals, or activities
- An inclusive school community
- Activities where students work cooperatively and support one another



### EVALUATION AND FUTURE PLANNING

- Regular, relevant professional development for staff
- Capacity to identify and address service gaps
- Structure for reviewing and adjusting policies
- Commitment to review and adjust short-term and long-term plans