St. Joseph Catholic School

Promoting Positive School
Climate and Well-being

Preamble

The ALCDSB is dedicated to creating and promoting positive school climate and well-being in all of our schools. Respecting the dignity of all persons by fostering trusting relationships through policies and practices that promote equity, inclusion and diversity are at the core of our Catholic values, the Board's spiritual theme of *Faith in Action* and our provincial *Catholic Graduate Expectations*. A positive school climate is directly linked to student success and well-being ensuring students are motivated to do well and will realize their full potential. We are committed to sustaining healthy and nurturing communities of belonging that are safe, caring and respectful and built on the principles of restorative practice and progressive discipline.

The ALCDSB and its school communities engage in a whole school approach in putting prevention and intervention strategies in place to facilitate a positive relationship between students, staff, parents and community partners.

Mission Statement

We use our gifts to make a difference to others and to ourselves.

We believe that we belong to something bigger than just ourselves and that God has blessed every person in our community with a unique set of gifts by which to make a difference to themselves and to others. The strong, supportive relationships between Home, Parish, and School are the cornerstones by which we provide opportunities for every child's growth and well-being.

School Goals 2019-2020

1) **To increase student's pro-social development skills**
2) **To decrease incidences of social bullying**

Rationale

Sound social and emotional skills within a strong social network, are necessary for our children to be happy, healthy, successful, and contributing citizens at school and in their greater communities throughout their lives. Children learn how to establish positive relationships as they develop emotional maturity, self-regulation, empathy, and responsible decision-making skills. In addition, learning developmentally appropriate ways to recognize and express both positive and negative emotions enables children to effectively advocate for themselves and for others. Emotionally healthy children are prepared to learn, persist in the face of challenging tasks, and are well equipped to navigate a host of social interactions, including bullying.
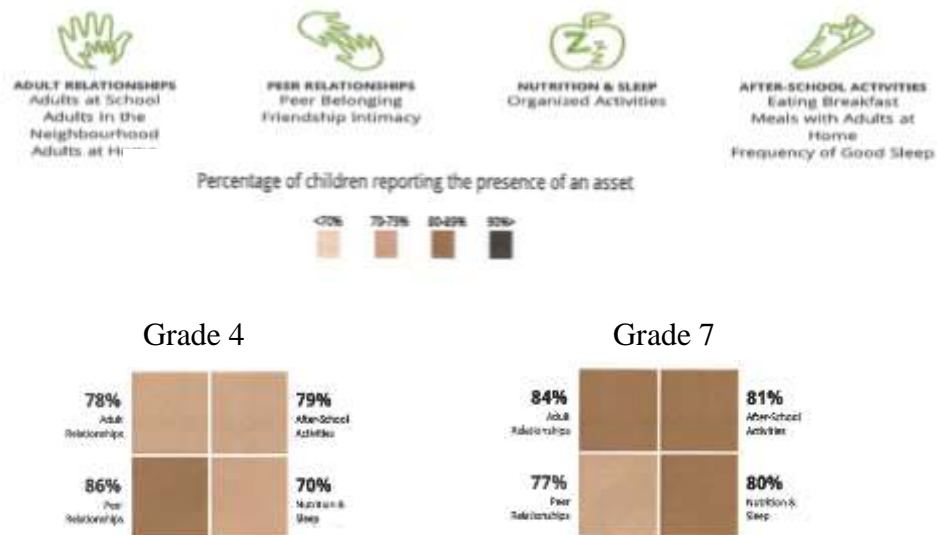
Evidence

Our children are active participants in our community who provide important insights that enable us to be responsive to their needs. Data from our Early Development Instrument and Middle Years Development Instrument surveys show that our children have many assets. Supportive adult relationships at home and school, positive peer relationships, proper nutrition and sleep, as well as involvement in afterschool activities are all protective factors that foster a child's well-being.

The data also indicated areas of growth, which are the foci of our Positive School Climate and Well-Being plan.

Distribution of EDI scores:
St Joseph Catholic 5 (n = 38)
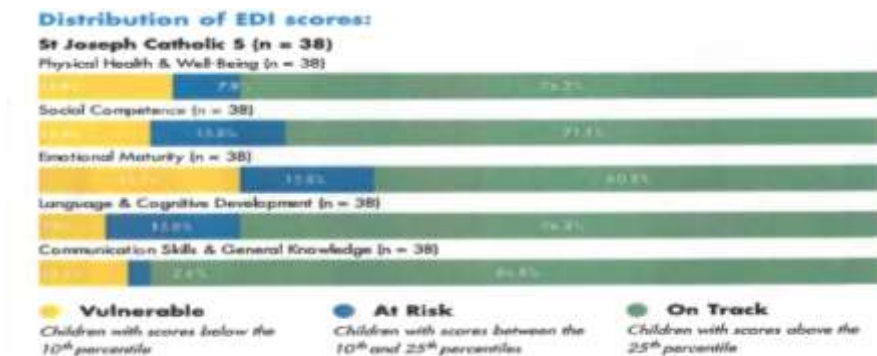
The Early Development Instrument is completed by kindergarten educators. It assesses the developmental health of children in a holistic manner as it includes the five major areas of child development. On average, 74.2% of our early Primary cohort have met the age-appropriate developmental expectations across the domains. The Emotional Maturity domain was identified as our area of focus as 39.5% of students were identified as "at risk" or "vulnerable". Emotional maturity, as defined by EDI, is "the ability to think before acting, a balance between too fearful and too impulsive, an ability to deal with feelings at the age-appropriate level, and empathetic response to other people's feelings". Parents can learn more about the EDI at https://edi.offordcentre.com/.

Our Junior and Intermediate cohorts participated in the Middle Development Years Development Instrument. Students were asked about their thoughts, feelings, and experiences across the four key assets that promote well-being.

Percentage of children reporting the presence of an asset

Grade 4

78% Adult Relationships	79% After-School Activities
86% Peer Relationships	70% Nutrition & Sleep

Grade 7

84% Adult Relationships	81% After-School Activities
77% Peer Relationships	80% Nutrition & Sleep

Data from the Social and Emotional domain showed that our Junior and Intermediate cohorts rated themselves higher than the Board average in all areas including Optimism, Empathy, Self-esteem, Happiness, and Absence of Sadness. Students rated themselves below the Board

average in pro-social behaviour. MDI defines pro-social behaviour as, "voluntarily choosing behaviours that help and benefit others, such as sharing and cooperation. Prosocial skills help children have healthy relationships with adults and peers, can protect them against bullying, anxiety and depression, and can improve academic achievement". Information about the MDI can be found at: http://www.discovermdi.ca/ .

Grade 4	Grade 7

OPTIMISM
Optimism refers to the mindset of having positive expectations for the future. e.g., "I have more good times than bad times."

EMPATHY
Empathy is the experience of understanding and sharing the feelings of others. e.g., "I care about the feelings of others."

PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR
Prosocial behaviour refers to actions that benefit others. e.g., "I helped someone who was hurt."

SELF-ESTEEM
Self-esteem refers to a person's sense of self-worth. e.g., "A lot of things about me are good."

HAPPINESS
Happiness refers to how content or satisfied children are with their lives. e.g., "I am happy with my life."

ABSENCE OF SADNESS
Sadness measures the beginning symptoms of depression. e.g., "I feel unhappy a lot of the time."

I.   Education, Awareness, and Outreach

St. Joseph Catholic School proclaims that all people are created in the image and likeness of God and, as such, have the right to be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness. Children develop emotional maturity and pro-social skills over time within nurturing environments. Parents and educators work together, as both play critical roles in teaching children how to effectively manage their emotions in healthy and appropriate ways while also maintaining positive relationships that balance their needs with the needs of others.

To these ends, the school will utilise the Ministry of Education definition of bullying in communications with the school community. See page 10.

In its communication efforts, the school will:
- Make known that a positive school climate is essential for student achievement and well-being

- Identify the factors that contribute to a safe, inclusive caring and accepting school climate (i.e. positive relationships, sense of belonging and contributing, clear rules and expectations)

- Support relationship building and focus on promoting healthy relationships using a variety of strategies

- Educate parents and students regarding the differences between bullying, conflict, aggression and teasing

- Explore and identify the underlying factors that contribute to conflict and/or bullying

- Work in partnership with parents and the broader school community to build awareness about the resources and pathways available.

- Be responsive to parental concerns and continue to build relationships and resiliency.

St. Joseph Catholic School will communicate and share with the school community, policies and procedures including the Board/school Code of Conduct, equity and inclusive education policy and guidelines for religious accommodations, procedures to address incidents of discrimination, progressive discipline approach, and promoting positive school climate and well-being."

1. The school will endeavour to increase education, awareness and outreach by using the following best practices:
   - A whole-school approach to creating a safe and caring school through our focus on our Catholic virtues, MindUp program, and resiliency building strategies via the development of Executive Function skills.

   - Religious and Family Life Education curriculum focused on building affirming relationships.

   - Making direct links to pro-social competencies and social bullying through curriculum connections (Social Studies, Health, History, and Geography) as well as social justice activities

   - Educating educators regarding Self-Reg and the stressors within the five domains-biological, emotion, cognitive, social, and prosocial.

2. The school has identified the following strategies to engage parents in conversations about promoting a positive school climate:
   - Parent representation on Caring and Safe Catholic Schools Team - each school has a team.

   - Discussions with School Council regarding the results of our school climate survey, school code of conduct, as well as growth mindset and resiliency building strategies.

   - Guest speakers, such as Dr. Alex Russell

II.   Evaluation of Evidence

St. Joseph Catholic School recognizes that effective prevention strategies must be evidence-based. The school will base its interventions, strategies, practices and programs on evidence from the school climate surveys and other relevant information. The school will take the following steps to assess prevention initiatives and strategies:

- Evaluate the evidence to determine the main areas of concern, identify issues in the physical environment, determine current procedures, and assess the strategies in place based on results of the school climate surveys and other relevant information.

- Identify children and youth involved in bullying (including the bully, the person being bullied, and those who may have witnessed or been affected by the bullying). The School will consider using a risk assessment approach in this process.

- Review and update the school's strategies based on new information.

- Share the updated strategies with the school community.

Pre-evaluation strategy

1. The school's main issues of concern raised by students, staff and parents in the school climate surveys and based on other relevant information are addressed by the following:
   - Teaching students how to invest in their personal development, be accountable for their actions, and advocate for themselves and others.

   - Ensuring that students, parents, and staff have a common understanding of bullying and positive conflict resolution strategies.

2. The school's areas of focus with respect to the physical environment are:
   - Ensuring supervision of students inside the school and on school property.

   - Ensuring students, parents, and staff are knowledgeable of our school rules and permitted areas both inside the school and on school property.

3. The school's current processes for reporting on, responding to, supporting, and following up on issues are as follows:
   - Use of the Board's *Caring and Safe Catholic School Administrative Procedures;*

   - Students and parents will inform staff of issues.

   - Staff will respond to all reported information in a way that supports the needs, development, and rights of all students involved.

   - Supports may involve Board personnel and/or community agencies.

4. Based on a review of the school climate survey results and other relevant information, the following areas have shown success/improvement:
   - Students have identified one or more important adults at school who cares about them and believes they will be successful.

- Students have identified one or more adults at home who will listen to them and believes they will be successful.

- Students feel that they are accepted and valued by their peers.

- Students feel strongly connected at school and believe they are in a safe, caring, and supportive environment with high expectations for all students to succeed.

- Students possess a positive academic self-concept. They believe they can learn taught skills and have goals and plans for the future. 100% of grade 7 students said they planned to graduate from university, college, or other post-secondary training.

- Most students eat breakfast five or more times a week as well as eat meals with a parent or other adult at home.

- Most students have a positive sense of body image and identified and generally healthy.

- Many students participate in after-school activities (lessons, sports, clubs, youth organizations, etc.) two times a week or more.

- The majority of students said they spend their after-school time wither playing video/computer games and/or watching television, Netflix, YouTube, or other social media.

5. Based on the school climate survey and other relevant data, the school proposes the following action plan to address areas requiring improvement:
    - Provide students with regular opportunities to develop pro-social competencies including emotion management, social responsibility, problem solving, and a sense of purpose.

    - Capitalize on students' positive sense of connectedness by fostering interpersonal relationship skills through daily interactions and regular opportunities to volunteer.

    - Staff will use morning meetings as well as specific MindUp and Executive Function lessons to teach about social bullying, learn social competencies, emotion management, as well as reinforce appropriate problem solving strategies.

    - Develop pro-social competencies by providing students with moments of awe through inquiry learning and activities provided by the Social Justice Arts sub-committee

    - Staff will continue to reinforce positive conflict resolution strategies during classroom meetings and restorative justice circles.

    - Staff will work with students and families to reframe issues and needs through a lens of Self-Reg, as we work toward building a Self-Reg haven.

Post-evaluation Strategy
The school will reassess the results of subsequent school climate surveys to verify the efficacy of the positive initiatives implemented. The "post-evaluation phase gathers evidence to test the efficacy of the prevention, responses, interventions or supports provided in order

for changes to be made, where necessary." Upon re-evaluation, the school will update the information in this template to reflect the effectiveness of its bullying prevention initiatives.

III. Policies and Procedures

The School recognizes that a whole school approach and the policies and procedures of ALCDSB are important for promoting positive school climate and well-being.

The school also recognizes that the goals of policy initiatives must address the areas of challenge identified in school/Board climate surveys and other relevant data.

1. The school will actively communicate its policies, procedures and guidelines to the school community (including involving the school community in the review and/or development of policies, procedures and guidelines relating to Caring and Safe Catholic Schools), by taking the following steps:
   - The school Code of Conduct is at the front of all students' agendas.

   - Sharing the ALCDSB Caring and Safe Catholic School Administrative Process with parents, when needed.

   - Directing parents to the Ministry of Education Provincial Parent Guide, when needed.

2. The roles/responsibilities of the school community (students, staff, parents, and community members) are as follows:
   - To follow the standards of behaviour as outlined in the Code of Conduct. The code of conduct is located at the front of each child's agenda.

   - To participate in a whole-school approach to positive school climate in order to ensure that schools are safe, inclusive, and accepting. The Ministry of Education Provincial Parent Guide link: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/code.pdf.

IV. Prevention

The school recognizes that fostering a positive learning environment will help to reduce possible bullying, harassment, and discrimination incidents. The school is committed to taking steps to strengthen prevention measures.

1. The roles and responsibilities of the Caring and Safe Catholic Schools Team (which will be communicated to the school community) are as follows:
   - Team members are responsible for addressing issues identified in the School Climate Surveys and other related data.

   - Team members attend in-services and work with school staff to implement strategies.

   - Team members share information at Catholic School Council meetings.

2. From its evidence-based analysis, the school has identified the following practices and initiatives for promoting positive school climate and well-being:

a) Bullying prevention and intervention programs or activities that are evidence-informed and that address the needs identified by the Board or the School:

- Community building meetings such as circles, sharing, and daily meetings.

- MindUp program and Executive Function lessons to build students' resiliency and self-advocacy.

- Reframing issues through a Self-Reg lens, identifying stressors across the five domains.

b) Relationship-building and community-building resources that are present in the school, classroom and in the larger community:

- Promoting connections to caring adults

- Peer assistance and mentoring programs

- Youth Workers

- Mental Health and Addictions Nurse

- Big Buddies program

- Kindness Committee

- Intermediate Leadership Committees

c) Activities that promote students' pro-social skills and decrease social bullying:

- School-wide focus on gospel values, virtues, & Catholic Graduate Expectations to foster students' appreciation of their God-given gifts in relation to their social responsibilities

- School-wide social justice and charity initiatives to build students' understanding of equity as well as their impact on others and themselves

- Daily messages regarding Catholic virtues, positive mindset, and pro-social competencies in the morning announcements

- Intermediate Leadership teams to promote opportunities to volunteer

- Spirit Days to maintain students' sense of belonging and connectedness

- Kindness Committee will provide activities that build students' appreciation of equity and social justice, in addition to offering opportunities for play at recesses

- Big Buddies program to protect and nurture students' sense of awe within inquiry-based learning

- ECO Team activities to foster students' social responsibility

d) Awareness-raising strategies for students, e.g. social-emotional learning, empathy, developing self-regulation skills:

- Roots of Empathy to develop students' empathy and personal awareness

- MindUp program to provide students with tools for self-regulation, emotion control, and stress management

- Activated Learning Executive Function skills development to teach students how to become invested and accountable members of a community

   e) Awareness-raising strategies to engage community partners and parents in early and ongoing dialogue:
- Presentation to Caring and Safe Catholic Schools Team and School Council on results from School Climate Surveys

- Regular communication through monthly newsletters, school website, classroom newsletters, and Twitter

- Guest speakers and workshops, when possible

   f) Strategies for linking curriculum and daily learning for promoting positive school climate and well-being:
- School-wide focus on restorative practice as a whole-school approach

- School-wide focus on the Catholic virtues

- Curriculum planning through the lens of our Catholic faith.

- Curriculum-related activities that promote pro-social skills and opportunities to develop students' social responsibility

   g) Strategies to support and encourage role modeling by caring adults and student leaders within the School and school community:
- Catholic Student Council

- Peer assistance and mentoring programs

- Weekly staff prayer

- Professional development regarding Self-Reg and Executive Function for Activated Learning

3. The school has identified the following learning and training opportunities for school staff and the school community that are needed:
- Annual training promoting positive school climate and well-being

- Promoting Positive School Climate and Well-being pamphlet for parents (available at the Board's website www.alcdsb.on.ca)

V. Interventions and Support Strategies

St. Joseph Catholic School recognizes the importance of using timely interventions and supports with a school-wide approach.

1. To this end, the school will:
- Use teachable moments within a progressive discipline approach to address inappropriate behaviour, and consider mitigating and other factors

- Have in place processes and strategies to identify and respond to bullying when it happens

- Restorative Practices are in place to support prevention and intervention practices.

- Communicate the progressive discipline approach to the school community and the procedures in place to support the student.

2. The school supports the use, in a timely manner and using a whole school approach, of the following evidence-informed interventions and support strategies:
   - Restorative practices

   - Discussion with Board Social Worker (Mental Health Leader)

   - Referral of students to school Youth Worker

   - Referral of students to the Board Mental Health and Addictions Nurse

   - Supporting students by working with outside agencies such as Children's Mental Health, Counseling Services of Belleville and District, Community Living, etc.

Bullying *-* means aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a pupil where,

a) the behaviour is intended by the pupil to have the effect of, or the pupil ought to know that the behaviour would be likely to have the effect of,

   i) causing harm, fear or distress to another individual, including physical, psychological, social or academic harm, harm to the individual's reputation or harm to the individual's property, or

   ii) creating a negative environment at a school for another individual, and

b) the behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the pupil and the individual based on factors such as size, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, disability or the receipt of special education ("intimidation")

   For the purposes of the definition of "bullying" above, behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

Cyber-bullying
For the purposes of the definition of "bullying" above, bullying includes bullying by electronic means (commonly known as cyber-bullying), including,

a) creating a web page or a blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;

b) impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the internet; and

c) communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals.