

Student Mental Health and Well-being	
Adopted: October 18, 2011	Last Reviewed/Revised: May 17, 2022
Next Scheduled Review: 2024-2025	
Associated Policies & Procedures: II-45 Equity and Inclusive Education	

Purpose

The Halton Catholic District School Board (HCDSB) recognizes the critical importance of positive mental health and well-being to school success. Further, the Halton Catholic District School Board is committed to building awareness through mental health literacy and the development of board-wide and school-wide inclusive and equitable programs and practices that actively engage students and staff in promoting positive mental health and well-being while addressing mental health issues using a multi-tiered approach. The HCDSB assists our school communities in helping to identify students in need of early intervention and developing integrated pathways of supports.

Application and Scope

This policy applies to student mental health and programming and all schools within the Halton Catholic District School Board.

References

- [Education Act](#)
- [Ontario Education Equity Action Plan](#)
- [Ontario Human Rights Code](#)
- [PPM 149](#)
- [School Mental Health Ontario \(SMHO\)](#)
- [Supporting Minds: An Educator's Guide to Promoting Students' Mental Health and Well-being](#)

Definitions

Tiered Model of Intervention - is a continuum of mental health supports that provides a tiered consistent model for evidence-based services that involve the promotion of mentally healthy classrooms and schools, early identification, prevention and early intervention, and more intensive interventions and services.

Principles

The Halton Catholic District School Board is committed to:

- responding to the teachings of Jesus Christ to “Love one another, as I have loved you” (John 13:33-35)
- student mental health and well-being which is a collective responsibility of our Catholic communities by supporting the promotion of positive mental health for all students
- building the capacity and conditions to create safe, caring, accepting, inclusive and welcoming mentally healthy schools and classrooms and acknowledging this as foundational to positive mental health and well-being
- responding appropriately to the mental health needs of students and schools through an evidence-based tiered model of intervention, with equity, engagement, and evidence as the foundational pillars at all tiers
- supporting students, parents/guardians and families with mental health issues or distress
- promoting positive mental health while reducing stigma
- prioritizing mental health and well-being for all students, while acknowledging the intersection between mental health and equity, and embedding a culturally responsive approach
- ensuring that all interventions center human rights based, anti-racist/anti-oppressive frameworks to eliminate systemic barriers to mental health and well-being

Requirements

The Halton Catholic District School Board, under the direction of the Director of Education, in conjunction with the Chief of Mental Health Programming (in collaboration with the Chief Social Worker and the Chief Psychologist), will guide the Mental Health Leadership Team, made up of applicable HCDSB employees, students, and members of the community in order to facilitate the directives of this policy.

Focus Area A: Strategy for Mental Health Engagement

Continue to make positive mental health in school settings a priority, maintain and update the existing board-wide Mental Health and Addictions Strategy.

Board-level Responsibility:

- among the members of the Mental Health Leadership Team, continue with the implementation of our board-wide strategy of promotion, prevention and early intervention in the school context for mental health issues
- to update the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy every three years, based on current evidence and best practice
- to maintain and update guidelines for program selection, development, implementation, and monitoring
- to ensure that within each school there are employees who are knowledgeable and compassionate in dealing with mental health issues

- to make known any appropriate services provided by either the HCDSB, or community organizations, to all school communities in order to increase the level of awareness and communication between the HCDSB and school communities regarding any mental health needs and pathways to care, as required
- to continue to create and sustain partnerships and deepen integration initiatives that will assist in the promotion, prevention, and intervention related to mental health
- to continue to create sustainable student engagement in mental health matters and promotion

School Responsibility:

- to provide to the Mental Health Leadership Team information regarding school-based programs that address mental health promotion, prevention, and intervention
- to engage students in mental health promotion activities that foster sustained galvanization of student voice

Focus Area B: Building Mental Health Literacy and Minimizing Stigma

Maintain and update board-wide initiative in order to educate and raise awareness within school communities of the importance of mental health.

Board-level Responsibility:

- to continue ongoing engagement in the design and implementation of a board-wide strategy to promote the de-stigmatization that is associated with mental health
- to work with all staff groups to increase the level of mental health education through ongoing professional learning
- to maintain a systematic approach to mental health literacy training for students, educators and parents including curricula and training of appropriate staff to respond to mental health issues
- to commit to celebrating and acknowledging Mental Health Awareness Week

School Responsibility:

- to work with students, school staff, and board-level staff to increase mental health education within classrooms and school communities
- to include parents/guardians in mental health promotion and to assist families in addressing mental health issues, as they may arise, and guiding access to supports

Focus Area C: Suicide Prevention, Intervention, Postvention

Continue to implement our board wide strategy to build a common awareness and understanding about suicide, providing prevention, intervention and postvention strategies and provide recommendations for actions at the school level in alignment with School Mental Health Ontario training.

Board-level Responsibility:

- to build a common understanding about suicide amongst senior staff, administration, school staff, and school support workers
- to highlight effective prevention, intervention, and postvention strategies and to communicate pathways to resources and supports



- to identify ongoing system needs in program development and delivery and to approach interventions with the recognition of a student's identity and lived experiences

School Responsibility:

- to build common understanding about suicide amongst staff and school mental health leaders
- to understand when to engage school-based personnel and resources in addressing student needs
- to communicate pathways to resources and supports to staff, students, and parents/guardians

APPROVED: Regular Meeting of the Board

AUTHORIZED BY: _____
Chair of the Board