*Supporting Every Student Learning Series*

CONVERSATION GUIDE

**Social-Emotional Learning and Bullying Behaviour**

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*Social-emotional learning can reduce bullying behaviour, which in turn can contribute to the creation of welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments.*

**Key understandings:**

* CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning) defines social –emotional learning as the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to:
	+ understand and manage emotions,
	+ set and achieve positive goals,
	+ feel and show empathy for others,
	+ establish and maintain positive relationships, and
	+ make responsible decisions.
* Five inter-related competencies that make up social-emotional learning, include:
	+ Self-awareness—the ability to recognize emotions and thoughts.
	+ Self-management—the ability to regulate emotions, thoughts and behaviour in different settings, including impulse control and setting goals.
	+ Social awareness—the ability to take the perspective of others, to show empathy, and to respect diversity.
	+ Relationship skills—the ability to establish and maintain healthy relationships, built on clear communication, active listening, cooperation, negotiating conflict, and the ability to seek and offer help.
	+ Responsible decision**-**making—the ability to make constructive and respectful decisions, including weighing alternatives and thinking through consequences.
* Characteristics of welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments include:
	+ feeling safe,
	+ learning the importance of caring for others,
	+ being treated fairly,
	+ fostering healthy and respectful relationships,
	+ promoting positive mental health,
	+ respecting, celebrating and understanding diversity as a strength.
* Social-emotional skills provide a foundation for a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment.

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**Key understandings (cont.):**

* Bullying behaviour in the learning environment:
	+ compromises students’ feeling of safety,
	+ undermines healthy relationships,
	+ negatively impacts mental health,
	+ violates students’ rights,
	+ undermines efforts to respect diversity.
* Students are more likely to bully others if they lack self-control or emotion regulation skills; gaining self-awareness and self-management skills reduces bullying behaviour
* Empathy is foundational for developing socially-responsible behaviour. Students who are empathetic are more likely to stand up for someone who is experiencing bullying behaviour.
* Relationship skills contribute to students’ ability to make and sustain friendships; high-quality friendships help protect individuals from bullying behaviour.
* Relationship skills also enhance the ability of students to intervene actively or seek out an adult when they witness bullying behaviour.
* Responsible decision-making fosters students’ ability to think through and solve problems, including how to shut down or avoid bullying behaviour.

**Questions for reflection and discussion:**

* What strategies could be used to assess the current social-emotional competencies of students in your school?
* What are some of the untapped opportunities throughout the school day that could be used to promote social-emotional learning?
* What school-wide approaches are currently being implemented in your school that could be leveraged to support social-emotional learning?

**For more information:**

* Alberta Government [information on social-emotional learning](https://education.alberta.ca/social-emotional-learning/what-is-social-emotional-learning/), including a [video](https://education.alberta.ca/social-emotional-learning/what-is-social-emotional-learning/everyone/social-emotional-learning-video/), related [conversation guide](https://education.alberta.ca/media/3069624/social-emotional-learning-conversation-guide-002.pdf), and a [fact sheet to help choose resources](https://education.alberta.ca/media/1626505/choosing-social-emotional-learning-resources-fact-sheet.pdf) and [links](https://education.alberta.ca/social-emotional-learning/what-is-social-emotional-learning/everyone/other-sites/) for further information.