



School Safety through a Social Emotional Framework

Climate Connection is a publication of the NYS Center for School Safety.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in New York State

Social-emotional learning “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 supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions” (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2024). The [CASEL framework](#) emphasizes five core competencies, each illustrated with specific examples: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

New York State recognizes that social-emotional learning is essential to effectively prepare all students to thrive, both in school and in life. In 2022 NYSED released updated [Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks](#), reflecting the State’s commitment to creating and sustaining a school culture and climate that enables all young people to thrive. These benchmarks offer progressive grade band indicators that identify skills and behaviors that adults can support, teach, and model for young people. They’re based on three goals that align with CASEL’s core competencies. Goal 1 reflects CASEL’s intrapersonal competencies and supports self-awareness and identity. Goal 2 reflects the interpersonal competencies and promotes social awareness and belonging. Goal three encourages decision-making and agency.

How can we effectively apply these five interconnected areas to enhance school safety planning and promote best practices in conducting trauma-informed drills?

<u>Core Competencies</u>	<u>Examples</u>	<u>Considerations for Safety Planning</u>
<p>Self-Awareness The ability to understand one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying one’s emotions Demonstrating honesty and integrity Linking feelings, values, and thoughts Experiencing self-efficacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we support students’ and adults’ emotions following trauma-informed drills? How have we created a welcoming, affirming environment where students and adults feel comfortable reporting something they see or hear? How do our safety plans and the way we conduct trauma-informed drills reflect our district and school values?



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<u>Core Competencies</u>	<u>Examples</u>	<u>Considerations for Safety Planning</u>
<p>Self Management The ability to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing one's emotions • Identifying and using stress- management strategies • Demonstrating personal and collective agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we support students and adults in managing their emotions during periods of high stress? • How do we provide students and adults with stress management strategies so they may call upon them and utilize them should an emergency arise? • How do we ensure our students and adults have the tools they need to express concerns or fears about school safety?
<p>Social Awareness The ability to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, & contexts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking others' perspectives • Demonstrating empathy and compassion • Showing concern for the feeling of others • Understanding and expressing gratitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we consider the perspectives of students and adults before, during, and after conducting trauma-informed drills? • How are we caring for students in need of intensive supports? • What do empathy and compassion look like for our community after a threat? • In what ways do we express gratitude when it comes to safety planning and/or conducting trauma-informed drills? (e.g., to staff, families, law enforcement)
<p>Relationship Skills The abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating effectively • Practicing teamwork and collaborative problem-solving • Developing positive relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have we established clear and concise communication protocols that all students and staff can follow? • How do we communicate and connect with families? • How do we incorporate teamwork and collaborative problem-solving into navigating conflicts? • What actions have we taken to establish positive relationships within the school and the community?



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<u>Core Competencies</u>	<u>Examples</u>	<u>Considerations for Safety Planning</u>
<p>Responsible Decision-Making The abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying solutions for social problems • Recognizing how critical thinking skills are useful inside of school • Reflecting on one's role to promote personal, family, and community well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we regularly demonstrate and effectively model critical thinking during an emergency? • What opportunities are we providing for students to think critically? • Can students and adults identify solutions for social problems independently? If not, how are we supporting them in their learning? • What opportunities exist for students and adults to support and improve the well-being of their school and community?

Evaluating Effectiveness

Successfully embedding SEL throughout the school requires ongoing planning, execution, assessment, and a commitment to continuous improvement from everyone in the school community. By harmonizing and enhancing SEL practices and programs, schools can foster an environment that weaves SEL into every aspect of adults' and students' educational journey, ultimately encouraging positive social, emotional, and academic results for all learners.



For additional details on school safety planning and trauma-informed drills, access the free resources on the [NYS CFSS website](#).

[District-Wide School Safety Plan Self-Assessment and Planning Tool](#)

[Conducting Trauma-Informed Drills](#)

[Standard Response Protocol and Standard Reunification Method](#)