



# Northeastern Catholic District School Board

## STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

Policy Number: E-37

Authority:

### POLICY STATEMENT

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The Northeastern Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) is committed to promoting the mental health of its students in safe, inclusive, equitable, and caring Catholic school communities. The nurturing of a mentally healthy school is a shared responsibility of all members of the school community, working collaboratively to foster students' sense of belonging, while proactively promoting positive mental health, and intervening to provide supports when mental health challenges arise. The goal of the NCDSB is to ensure all students can thrive in our Catholic school communities.

### REFERENCES

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*Education Act*

*Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004 (PHIPA)*

Ontario Curriculum

School and Community System of Care Collaborative, 2022

*Right time, right care: Strengthening Ontario's mental health and addictions system of care for children and young people*

#### Policy Program Memorandum (PPM)

- 81 Provision of health support services in school settings
- 119 Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools
- 144 Bullying prevention and intervention
- 149 Protocol for partnerships with external agencies for the provision of services by regulated health professionals
- 169 Student mental health

#### NCDSB Administrative Procedure

- APE006 Provision of Health Support Services in Schools
- APE020 Response to Tragic Events
- APE024-1 Personal Information Management
- APE032 Equity and Inclusive Education
- APE034-2 Safe Schools: Bullying Prevention and Intervention

#### NCDSB Protocols

- Anti-Sex Trafficking
- Partnerships with External Agencies
- Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention
- Tragic Events

## DEFINITIONS

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### **Addiction**

A complex process where problematic patterns of substance use or behaviours can interfere with a person's life, broadly defined as a condition that leads to a compulsive engagement with a stimuli, despite negative consequences. This can lead to physical and/or psychological dependence. Addictions can be either substance related (i.e. problematic use of alcohol or drugs) or process-related, also known as behavioural addictions (i.e. gambling or internet addiction).

### **Differentiated**

Differentiated school mental health approaches and practices adapt support and services to every student's unique needs, strengths, circumstances, and preferences while validating and respecting their identities and background. This includes considering students intersecting social and cultural identities, as well as their lived experiences. Differentiation reinforces that one size does not fit all.

### **Mental health**

The state of an individual's psychological and emotional well-being. It is a necessary resource for living a healthy life and a main factor in overall health. It is not the same thing as mental illness.

### **Mental illness**

Defined as alterations in thinking, mood or behaviour associated with significant distress and impaired functioning in one or more areas such as school, work, social or family interactions or the ability to live independently.

### **Tier 1: Mental Health Promotion**

This is the foundational everyday work that educators and school staff do within and beyond the curriculum to welcome and include students, to understand them, to build knowledge of mental health, to promote mentally healthy habits and to partner with families, students and other staff to create a supportive environment.

### **Tier 2: Prevention and Early Intervention**

For students who may need additional support, educators and school staff assist by reinforcing specific, targeted skills and working to remove barriers to learning. Child and youth workers (CYW) and regulated school mental health workers (MHW) provide intervention services to classes, in small group settings, and in one-on-one sessions.

### **Tier 3: Intervention and Pathway to Care**

School mental health professionals work to help students, with the support of their families, to access appropriate community or health services for more intensive and sustained interventions. School staff will continue to provide needed ongoing care while students are at school.

## **POLICY REGULATIONS**

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- 1.0 Fulfill the planning and reporting requirements of PPM 169 through the development and public sharing of a three-year NCDSB mental health and addictions strategy, along with a one-year action plan to guide work annually.
- 2.0 Actively engage with community-based child and youth mental health service providers to collaboratively plan to respond to student mental health, addictions, and well-being needs.
- 3.0 Ensure consistency in the delivery of differentiated mental health support services in schools, using the multi-tiered model. All NCDSB school staff are required to actively engage in mental health promotion (Tier 1), under the direction of the school principal, and in accordance with the NCDSB mental health and addictions strategy. Select school staff will also be required to engage in prevention and early intervention (Tier 2) and pathways to care (Tier 3) activities in alignment with their job descriptions.
- 4.0 Comply with all appropriate legislation pertaining to personal health information management, and student mental health care services, including virtual care delivery.
- 5.0 Maintain an updated NCDSB suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention protocol, and ensure school administrators and educators understand local procedures and how to seek immediate help on behalf of students.
- 6.0 Promote the mental health literacy of NCDSB staff and students through the sharing of evidence-informed resources on mental health and addictions, and through the routine offering of student and staff learning activities.
- 7.0 Maintain administrative procedures and protocols to support the effective implementation of student mental health support services and engage in annual reviews to ensure standards of practice are established in all matters relating to the provision of student mental health support services in schools.