

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

A Guide for Belmont Public School Educators

What is Social Emotional Learning?

[CASEL](#) defines Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) 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
- ★ make responsible decisions

Research shows that it's important for students to see and hear **consistent messages**, both from all the adults they encounter at school and **beyond the school day**.

What is CASEL?

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is the framework being used by [Belmont Public Schools](#).

- ★ An evidence-based framework used in schools to promote Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in grades k-12 through various modalities
- ★ Intention to bolster student skills in communication, cooperation, conflict resolution, resiliency, decision making, compassion, and social responsibility through classroom and home community building exercises
- ★ CASEL's data-driven approach demonstrates a relationship between SEL and an increase in students' abilities to manage themselves and relationships as well as a decrease in behavioral problems.

CASEL Pedagogical Strategy

- ★ Teaching practices that emphasize cooperative learning and project-based learning
- ★ Making sure classroom lessons reflect overall school culture
- ★ Teaching children through modeling, coaching, and reflective listening how to respond compassionately and empathetically

→ Link to learn more about [SEL in School](#) with CASEL

Five Competencies in SEL

1. **Self-Awareness:** the ability to recognize your emotions, values, strengths, and limitations
2. **Self-Management:** the ability to manage emotions and behaviors to achieve your goals
3. **Social Awareness:** the ability to show understanding and empathy for others
4. **Responsible Decision Making:** the ability to make personal and social choices that are ethical and constructive
5. **Relationship Skills:** the ability to form positive relationships, work as part of a team, and effectively deal with conflict

(Rachel Poliner, [Leaders & Learners Consulting](#), 2015)

→ Learn more about [Core Competencies](#) with CASEL

Classroom Practices Based on the Five CASEL Competencies

1. Self-Awareness

Check-ins at the start of class or beginning of the day

- ★ What color are you today?
- ★ What weather pattern are you today?

Powerful SEL Activities:

- ★ [Mindfulness](#): sensory practice to become more present
- ★ Name the emotion: have each student share how they are feeling at the beginning of class

2. Self-Management

Strategies for Self-Awareness and Self-Management: Use this tool to search for activities based on students' age and the amount of time you have available to find activities

- ★ Dual Drawings
- ★ Dual Story Writing
- ★ Brain Scavenger Hunt

Guided Meditation: This can be facilitated in person or over Zoom by reading a guided meditation or playing a meditation video you like from YouTube. Add mindfulness to the conversation, and [learn more here](#).

Powerful SEL Activities: Growth mindset vs. fixed mindset share-out: students share moments when they have demonstrated each

3. Social Awareness

Powerful SEL Activities:

- ★ Quote of the day: introduce a quote relevant to what students are learning and break them into pairs to discuss together
- ★ Where we came from: have students share a picture of themselves as a baby as well as a story from their childhood
- ★ Starting positive: have students share the positive qualities of their classmates
- ★ Motivational moment: have each student present on a topic they are passionate about, allowing classmates to learn more about each other's interests and perspectives
- ★ Circle sharing: have small groups work together to share their perspectives to allow students to build and practice empathy
- ★ Write a poem from someone else's perspective
- ★ Have a conversation with someone you don't know
- ★ Play interest and identity-related bingo

4. Responsible Decision Making

Give Students Choices: Allow students to choose how they complete a project (e.g., paper, presentation, video, website) to allow them to practice making their own decisions based on what is best for them

Class Activities for Responsible Decision Making:

1. Make a class contract
2. Elect a student council
3. “What would you do?” activity

Teach Problem-Solving:

1. Identify the problem
2. Analyze the situation
3. Solve the problem
4. Consider ethical responsibility
5. Evaluate and reflect

5. Relationship Skills

Appreciate, Apology, Aha Closing Activity: Have students share something they appreciated, an apology, or an aha moment from the lesson as a closing activity to build community

Link to [10 Powerful Community Building Ideas](#)

Building Relationships Through Writing Notes: Write notes to your students to strengthen your relationship, show them they have a trusted adult at their school, and demonstrate SEL skills

Building a More Equitable Classroom

Belmont Public Schools DEI Website: BPS-specific resources for supporting students in building a better inclusive and equitable environment in the classroom

DEI and SEL: Use these Guiding Questions to build a more inclusive and Equitable Classroom

[Gender Neutral Pronouns Video](#): A video giving the history of gender-neutral pronouns and resources for LGBTQ+ students

[MA District of Education Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ+](#): Resources for supporting LGBTQ+ students

[MTSS and SEL Resources](#): Activities that integrate SEL and MTSS in the classroom

Additional Resources

[Belmont Public Schools](#): Learn how Belmont Public Schools is implementing Social Emotional Learning. See below two programs for K-5 students that Belmont utilizes.

- ★ [Open Circle](#)
- ★ [Second Step](#)

[Book List](#): 25 Books that illustrate different SEL competencies

[CASEL](#): Learn more about CASEL and SEL and how to implement it in school and at home

[Edutopia](#): Find resources for Social and Emotional Learning topics and activities at home and in school

[Grow Kinder Podcast](#): Podcast exploring SEL competencies for parents and educators

[Harvard's Center for the Developing Child](#): Science-driven resources for building SEL skills and relationships

[Harvard's EASEL SEL Frameworks](#): Framework Maps for different SEL programs

[SEL4MA Events](#): Events and training opportunities within SEL

[SEL Passport Challenge](#): Help your kids practice their SEL skills with this Passport Challenge for kids K-5

[SEL Podcasts from the Wallace Foundation](#): Three podcast series giving a general to specific overview of SEL and best practices

[SEL and Mental Health Resources for COVID-19](#): archive of webinars, research, and articles about supporting children of various ages

[SEL Kernels](#): A comprehensive research based and flexible SEL toolkit for educators

