The TOOLBOX

TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE WITH THEIR EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL NEEDS

PROMOTING A POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

TOOL: Prevention | Intervention

TARGET AUDIENCE: Preschool | Elementary | Secondary

TOOL INTENDED FOR: Professionals

DESIGN

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Véronique Dupéré

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TOOL: Prevention | Intervention

TOOL INTENDED FOR: Professionals

– Details: Any school professional or worker.

TARGET AUDIENCE: Preschool | Elementary | Secondary

NEEDS AND BEHAVIOURAL MANIFESTATIONS

– Live and learn in a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment
– Develop and maintain a sense of belonging to their school environment
– Establish and maintain harmonious relationships at school

SPECIFIC GOALS

– To influence the prevailing school climate in order to prevent difficulties (behaviour, violence, school disengagement) and promote a sense of belonging and well-being in the school community.

DESIGN

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PROMOTING A POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

The pandemic led to an interruption in children's and teens' education and they have been cut off from one of their main living environments for several months. After this interruption, we can imagine that these students may be experiencing all kinds of emotions and anxiety about their return to community life in their school or new school.

To promote students' success, commitment, motivation and perseverance, it's important that this return take place in a healthy school climate. A healthy school climate also promotes social learning and conveys values. This unique start to the school year is an ideal opportunity to rethink school organization and thereby influence the prevailing climate.
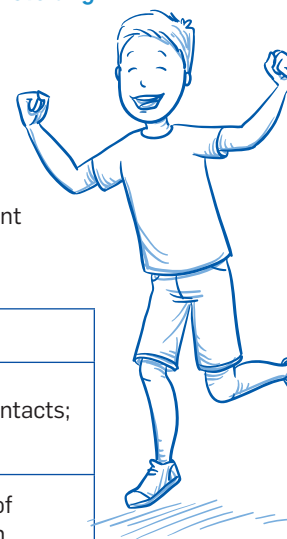
WHAT'S SCHOOL CLIMATE?

In general, school climate is reflected in the dominant values, attitudes and feelings in a given school environment (Janosz et al., 1998). More specifically, there are different types of school climates:

CLIMATE TYPE	DEFINITION	INDICATORS
Social	Prevailing relationship climate among individuals (between students; between students and adults; between adults)	• Warmth and respect in interpersonal contacts; • Support from others.
Educational	Value placed on education	• School is perceived as a genuine place of learning (conveys the value of education, gives meaning to learning).
Safety	Orderly and calm school environment	• Perception of a low risk of victimization; • Predictable and consistent environment.
Justice	Adults' attitudes, assessments or disciplinary responses to students	• Recognition of the legitimacy and fairness of rules; • Fair school assessments; • Feeling that consequences are based on behaviour (rather than on the individuals themselves).

School climate directly influences the quality of students' school experience and well-being at school. By influencing the school climate, we can prevent various problems and reach a larger number of students than if we limit ourselves to individual interventions. Given the extraordinary circumstances they have experienced, students need to have a harmonious and safe return to their school environment.

KEY PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES

BEFORE TAKING ACTION, IT'S IMPORTANT TO OBSERVE THE PREVAILING SCHOOL CLIMATE AND IDENTIFY ITS STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES.

HOW?

– The Questionnaire sur l'environnement socioéducatif de l'école (QES) developed by Michel Janosz and his team is a computerized tool to carry out a precise analysis of the school climate in elementary and secondary schools (for more information, see resources)

– Identify school stakeholders' needs (met and unmet)

SCHOOL CLIMATE IS A COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY. TO INFLUENCE SCHOOL CLIMATE, IT'S ESSENTIAL TO HAVE AN ACTION PLAN TO CONSULT WITH AND MOBILIZE THE ENTIRE SCHOOL, INCLUDING:

– Specific aspects of the school climate
– Priority level
– Priority courses of action
– Stakeholders involved
– Follow-up mechanisms and those responsible for this follow-up
– Specific timeline
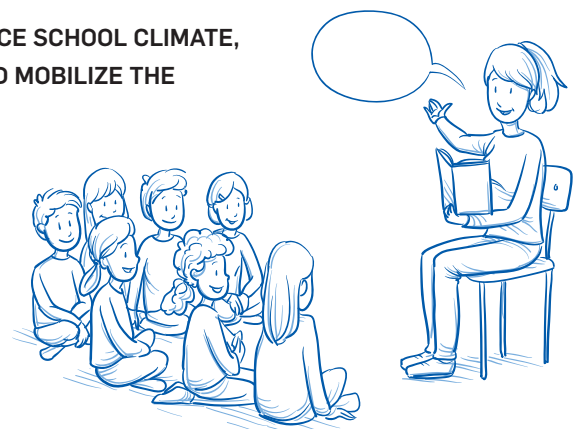
(See an example of an action plan for updating the school climate in the USEFUL RESOURCES section. This plan has already proven its worth and was implemented in June 2020 during the return to school in the Lanaudière and Laurentides regions).

SEVERAL PRACTICES AND PRINCIPLES ARE KNOWN TO BE EFFECTIVE IN PROMOTING A HEALTHY SCHOOL CLIMATE.

– **A quality physical environment**. The physical environment has an impact on the morale and engagement of students and staff. Although there are financial and organizational constraints that limit changes to the physical environment, it's possible and desirable to provide a clean, well-organized environment that contributes to students' well-being. For example, while meeting health guidelines, we could ensure that the school is welcoming by displaying kind and welcoming messages for students and staff.

– **An effective set of rules**. To ensure that rules are followed, everyone must be familiar with them and they must be strictly and consistently enforced. For example, it's important to take the time to properly introduce new social distancing and health guidelines to students by demonstrating the expected behaviours, explaining the reasons for them and ensuring that they are clearly displayed in key locations.

– **A system that recognizes good behaviour**. To reduce the emergence of behaviour problems, implement a regular positive reinforcement and encouragement system. For example, form a team of students to give tokens to students who adopt social distancing behaviours; they can later redeem these tokens for rewards.

– **Focus on student success**. It's essential that teachers have a positive perception of their students' abilities and have high but realistic expectations for them. This will be all the more important given the interruption in schooling that students have experienced and the feeling of worthlessness that many have experienced regarding their academic skills.

– **Quality education**. To adapt to different contexts and student needs, it's important to be flexible in teaching. This can be achieved by using cooperative teaching or considering strategies used by students. For example, since students will have a lot of material to catch up on but may not be fully available for learning at the start of the school year, teachers could prioritize certain knowledge in order to avoid overwhelming students.

– **Provide opportunities to get involved**. It's advisable to offer students activities that allow them to discover their interests and skills as well as promote their social and personal development. These activities can take the form of extracurricular or study activities outside school hours. These activities will be all the more important when school starts again, since students had to stop all their leisure and sports activities. In the classroom, you can set up a cooperation council or plan time for personal projects.

– **Supportive, unifying administration**. When the administration considers the staff's views, provides supervision that takes into account teachers' strengths and vulnerabilities, and fairly distributes tasks and resources, it has a positive impact on the entire school climate. For example, the administration could set up a daily communication process, which creates a climate of cooperation and makes it easier to recognize the staff's successes.

> For specific suggestions during the pandemic, see "Recréer ensemble un climat scolaire optimal pour garantir des conditions de bien-être" (CVI regional team - Laval, Laurentides and Lanaudière regions) in the USEFUL RESOURCES section.

USEFUL RESOURCES

Questionnaire sur l'environnement socioéducatif de l'école (QES-Web)
https://webdemo2.grics.qc.ca/QES_2015/asp/qes.aspx

Plan d'action pour l'actualisation du climat scolaire
(developed by Mylène Audet, Psychoeducator in the Laurentides school board)

« Recréer ensemble un climat scolaire optimal pour garantir des conditions de bien-être »
(tool developed by regional CVI teams in the Laval, Laurentides and Lanaudière regions)

Debarbieux et ses collègues : Le « climat scolaire » : définition, effets et conditions d'amélioration
http://www.cndp.fr/crdp-nancy-metz/fileadmin/Stockage2/selections_thematiques/climat-scolaire_Rapport2012.pdf

Janosz, M., Georges, P., & Parent, S. (1998). *L'environnement socioéducatif à l'école secondaire : un modèle théorique pour guider l'évaluation du milieu.* Revue canadienne de Psycho-éducation, 27(2), 285-306.

Action plan to update the school climate – weeks from May 4 to May 23, 2020 (school example)

School climate aspect	Priority level	Priority courses of action	Stakeholders involved	Follow-up mechanisms	Those responsible for follow-up	Timeline	Comments
Safe and orderly environment							
Intervention rules and procedures	R	● Explicitly teach social distancing ● Explicitly teach hand washing ● Explicitly teach how to move around in various living areas ● Explicitly teach classroom rules ● Explicitly teach new schoolyard rules ● Inform students about new bus rules ● Review how to respond to crisis situations ● Inform staff, students and parents about the management of misbehaviour and educational consequences, if applicable	□ Administration □ Teachers □ Special education technicians □ Daycare	* Weekly meeting with the deconfinement committee * Explicit teaching calendar	□ Administration and staff □ Deconfinement committee □ Daycare managers □ Lesson plan support staff	No later than May 16	Preparation of lesson plans on various living areas and new behavioural expectations.

Priority level legend:

G → Low-priority

Y → Important priority

R → Priority

School climate aspects	Priority level	Priority courses of action	Stakeholders involved	Follow-up mechanisms	Those responsible for follow-up	Timeline	Comments
Sense of justice	**R**	● Draw a portrait of staff present in the school and daycare ● Assess the fairness of new rules ● Address possible reasons for the absence of staff members ● Discuss the sense of justice with different team members and students	□ Administration □ Teachers □ Special education technicians □ Daycare	* Depending on the type of meeting determined by the school	□ Administration and staff □ Daycare manager	May 4	Plan a staff meeting to discuss various topics.
Sense of physical security	**R**	● Inform staff members of new health rules to be enforced in the school by staff ● Inform staff about physical signs to recognize Covid-19 ● Organize the school taking into account the new health measures	□ Administration and all school staff	* Depending on the type of meeting determined by the school	□ Administration and staff □ Deconfinement committee □ Daycare manager	Week of May 4	
Sense of emotional security *(student /adult)*	**Y**	● Accept staff members' emotions when returning to work or confinement ● Accept students' emotions when returning to school or confinement ● Set an example of attitudes and acts of kindness among staff members ● Organize individual and group meeting times	□ Administration □ All school staff □ Teachers □ Special education technicians / daycare	* Schedule individual meetings with staff members	Administration and staff Daycare manager School professionals	Week of May 4 Week of May 11	

Priority level legend:

G → **Low priority**
Y → **Important priority**
R → **Priority**

School climate aspects	Priority level	Priority courses of action	Stakeholders involved	Follow-up mechanisms	Those responsible for follow-up	Timeline	Comments
			Teaching and learning				
Support for learning	R	· Plan the educational activities as a team (by cycle) for the first 2 weeks · Consult the documents provided by educational services to support the planning of educational activities · Register for distance education training courses	□ Administration □ Teachers □ Educational services	* Presentation of planning * Training follow-up	□ Administration and staff □ Professionals □ School boards	Week of May 19	
Social and civic learning	R	· Focus on and teach lesson plans on expected behaviours (citizenship, social and emotional learning, social skills and in connection with the extraordinary circumstances) · Make it a morning routine to discuss students' emotions and needs	□ Administration □ Teachers □ Special education technicians □ Daycare	* Weekly meeting with the deconfinement committee * Explicit teaching calendar	□ Administration and staff □ Deconfinement committee □ Daycare manager	No later than May 16	When teaching explicitly, include good and bad examples of citizenship.

Priority level legend:

V → Low priority

Y → Important priority

R → Priority

School climate aspects	Priority level	Priority courses of action	Stakeholders involved	Follow-up mechanisms	Those responsible for follow-up	Timeline	Comments
Interpersonal relationships							
Respect for diversity	**G**	· Consider seeing things differently.	□ Administration and school staff	*	□ Administration and staff		
Social support for adults	**Y**	· Ensure statutory meetings for staff · Take time during the day to support our colleagues	□ Administration □ Teachers □ Special education technicians □ Daycare	* Planning of a statutory meeting schedule	□ School administration and staff □ School professionals □ Daycare manager	Daily for 2 weeks and then reassess	Take stock of the situation with staff.
Social support for students	**Y**	· Prepare the welcome activity for students in a caring manner (ensure their well-being) · Discuss their confinement experiences	□ Administration □ Teachers □ Special education technicians □ Daycare	* Planning within educational periods	□ Administration and staff □ Daycare manager	No later than May 16	

Priority level legend:

G → Low priority

Y → Important priority

R → Priority

School climate aspects	Priority level	Priority courses of action	Stakeholders involved	Follow-up mechanisms	Those responsible for follow-up	Timeline	Comments
Environment							
Sense of belonging, commitment and attachment to school	**Y**	· Display students' work in the school · Find a unifying slogan for students (e.g. It's going to be OK)	□ Administration □ Teachers □ Special education technicians □ Daycare	* Discussion on a common slogan with the school team	□ Administration and staff □ Daycare manager	Week of May 4	
Physical environment	**R**	· Reposition the classroom desks · Reorganize the daycare premises · Show the location of various sanitary products to students (Purell, soap, etc.)	□ Administration □ Teachers □ Special education technicians □ Concierge □ Daycare	*	□ Administration and staff □ Daycare manager	Week of May 4	
Digital environment	**Y**	· Create an ICT committee to help the school update digital skills · Participate in distance education training	✓✓ Administration ✓✓ Teachers	* Discussion on the organization of in-person and distance teaching	□ Administration and staff	Week of May 4	

Priority level legend: G → Low priority
  Y → Important priority
  R → Priority

School climate aspects	Priority level	Priority courses of action	Stakeholders involved	Follow-up mechanisms	Those responsible for follow-up	Timeline	Comments
Collaborative team							
Shared leadership	**Y**	· Allow staff members to exercise their power to influence decisions · Implement a daily communication process	□ Administration □ Special education technicians □ Teachers □ School professionals □ Daycare	* Planning of statutory meetings	□ Administration and staff □ Daycare manager	Week of May 4	
Professional relationships	**Y**	· Work towards a solution when dealing with problems · Respect each other's viewpoints and ideas	· Administration · Teachers · Special education technicians · School professionals · Daycare	* During the "briefing" and "debriefing"	□ Administration and staff □ Daycare manager	Week of May 4	

Priority level legend:

G → Low priority

Y → Important priority

R → Priority

Action plan to update the school climate – Extraordinary circumstances (template)

School climate aspects	Priority level	Priority courses of action	Stakeholders involved	Follow-up mechanisms	Those responsible for follow-up	Timeline	Comments
Safe and orderly environment							
Intervention rules and procedures	**Colour code by priority**	●	□	*	□		
Sense of justice	**Colour code by priority**	●	□	*	□		
Sense of physical security	**Colour code by priority**	●	□	*	□		
Sense of emotional security *(student /adult)*	**Colour code by priority**	.	□	*	□		

Priority level legend:　　　　G → Worthwhile priority

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　J → Important priority

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　R → Essential priority

School climate aspects	Priority level	Priority courses of action	Stakeholders involved	Follow-up mechanisms	Those responsible for follow-up	Timeline	Comments
Teaching and learning							
Support for learning	**Colour code by priority**	·	□	*	□		
Social and civil learning	**Colour code by priority**	·	□	*	□		

Priority level legend: G → **Worthwhile priority**

J → **Important priority**

R → **Essential priority**

School climate aspects	Priority level	Priority courses of action	Stakeholders involved	Follow-up mechanisms	Those responsible for follow-up	Timeline	Comments
Interpersonal relationships							
Respect for diversity	**Colour code by priority**	•	☐	*	☐		
Social support for adults	**Colour code by priority**	•	☐	*	☐		
Social support for students	**Colour code by priority**	•	☐	*	☐		

Priority level legend: G → Worthwhile priority

J → Important priority

R → Essential priority

Document developed by Mylène Audet, Psychoeducator, Laurentides school board, adapted by the CVI regional team in the LLL region – May 2020

School climate aspects	Priority level	Priority courses of action	Stakeholders involved	Follow-up mechanisms	Those responsible for follow-up	Timeline	Comments
Environment							
Sense of belonging, commitment and attachment to school	**Colour code by priority**	.	☐	*	☐		
Physical environment	**Colour code by priority**	.	☐	*	☐		
Digital environment	**Colour code by priority**	.	☐	*	☐		

Priority level legend: G → Worthwhile priority

J → Important priority

R → Essential priority

School climate aspects	Priority level	Priority courses of action	Stakeholders involved	Follow-up mechanisms	Those responsible for follow-up	Timeline	Comments
Collaborative team							
Shared leadership	Colour code by priority	·	□	*	□		
Professional relationships	Colour code by priority	·	✓✓	*	□		

Priority level legend: G → **Worthwhile priority**

J → **Important priority**

R → **Essential priority**

Document developed by Mylène Audet, Psychoeducator, Laurentides school board, adapted by the CVI regional team in the LLL region – May 2020

SCHOOL CLIMATE COMPONENTS AND SUB-COMPONENTS

(MODEL BASED ON THE WORK BY JONATHAN COHEN)

A TOOL TO FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS AND PRACTICES USED TO UPDATE THE SCHOOL CLIMATE ACTION PLAN UNDER EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

SAFE AND ORDERLY ENVIRONMENT
Intervention rules and procedures

Definition:
The set of behavioral expectations and the educational management of behaviour in all contexts of life at school, including the code of conduct.

Practices:
- Teach new behaviours regarding health guidelines
- Explicitly teach behaviours using lesson plans
- Write down and display new procedures
- Adjust behavioural expectations along the way and according to new demands
- Discuss educational intervention taking into account the new context

SAFE AND ORDERLY ENVIRONMENT
Sense of justice

Definition:

Recognition of the legitimacy and fairness of rules.
Respect for rights.

Practices:
- Verify the legitimacy and fairness of rules
- Consistently and strictly enforce rules
- Discuss the sense of justice with members of various education teams and students

SAFE AND ORDERLY ENVIRONMENT
Sense of physical security

Definition:

Confident and calm state of mind in the absence of real danger or not.

Practices:
- Consult and follow public health procedures
- Explain the procedures developed for the pandemic to students and staff
- Inform staff of Covid-19 symptoms in order to recognize their occurrence
- Find creative and playful strategies to help implement public health guidelines

SAFE AND ORDERLY ENVIRONMENT
Sense of emotional security

Definition:
Confidence in oneself, in others and in the expression of emotions.
Ability to seek comfort from a significant other.

Practices:
- Share with students possible reactions to the return to school and the pandemic's impact
- Help students identify trusted adults they can talk to
- Greet staff by being optimistic and reassuring them
- Schedule individual and group meeting time with adults

"VISION WITHOUT ACTION IS MERELY A DREAM. ACTION WITHOUT VISION JUST PASSES THE TIME. VISION WITH ACTION CAN CHANGE THE WORLD."

JOËL BARKER

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Support for learning

Definition:
Educational practices that help students properly manage their learning process.
Practices that help students during difficulties.

Practices:
- Use the current context to teach and learn
- Prioritize what is most important in terms of knowledge
- Focus on students' strengths and challenges in order to plan learning
- Have realistic expectations
- Work with my colleagues on designing interesting and varied learning tasks

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Social and civic learning

Definition:

Teaching related to citizenship, social skills, and social and emotional learning.

Practices:
- Use opportunities to discuss emotions and needs on a daily basis
- Teach new social norms
- Make it a morning routine to discuss students' emotions and needs
- Reflect as a team on how to work on socialization in a systemic way

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Respect for diversity

Definition:

Mutual respect and openness to diversity in all its forms.

Practices:
- Accept to see things differently
- Pay particular attention to discrimination in connection with the pandemic
- Become aware of and take into account different family situations as a result of the pandemic

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Social support for adults

Definition:

Concern for the well-being of others.
Interest in knowing others.
Paying attention to other's feelings and needs.

Practices:
- Welcome adults (how are you?)
- Take time during the day to support our colleagues
- Welcome and reassure parents regarding what they are going through
- Have fun and enjoyable time with colleagues
- Identify and share the names of people who can support adults

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Support for students

Definition:
Development of friendships, supportive connections and cooperation.
Integration of new individuals.

Practices:
- Create a cooperation council or discussion group
- Greet students in a caring manner
- Create support groups among students
- Plan time for creative activities and personal projects in order to have fun

"SUCCESS BELONGS TO EVERYONE; IT'S TEAMWORK THAT DESERVES IT."

FRANCK PICCARD

LET'S RECREATE AN OPTIMAL SCHOOL CLIMATE TO PROVIDE THE CONDITIONS FOR WELL-BEING

ENVIRONMENT
Sense of belonging, commitment and attachment to school

Definition:

Sense of pride in attending school.

Importance of the environment (school).

Adherence to school values.

Practices:
- Prepare a welcome activity for our students
- Involve students in decorating the classroom and school
- Do enjoyable activities and provide positive reinforcement for students
- Find a unifying symbol such as a song, slogan, etc.

ENVIRONMENT
Physical environment

Definition:

Welcoming, attractive and clean places where everyone in the school feels good.

Practices:
- Display markers to indicate where sanitary products are located
- Display welcoming messages in the school
- Post clear, explicit guidelines

ENVIRONMENT
Digital environment

Definition:

Using ICTs ethically to search, create, communicate, and solve problems.

Practices:
- Provide distance training for the school
- Set up an ICT committee to help the school update digital skills
- Adapt my practice taking into account new digital teaching practices
- Teach the concepts of citizenship in the digital age

COLLABORATIVE TEAM
Shared leadership

Definition:

A process that allows everyone to fully participate in their work and personal life.

Practices:
- Set an example of caring and empathetic behaviour
- Implement a daily communication process
- Highlight everyone's skills to increase the sense of collective competence
- Provide daily feedback and/or reinforcement (students and staff)
- Exercise leadership that promotes cooperation and a positive organizational climate

COLLABORATIVE TEAM
Professional relationships

Definition:

The attitudes and relationships that enable collaboration, efficiency and professional development.

Practices:
- Develop a school climate action plan (extraordinary circumstances)
- Create a follow-up committee to implement and monitor actions
- Develop a problem-solving mechanism focused on solutions
- Set up a co-development team to effectively organize the school by considering new measures (innovation)

TOOL CREATED BY THE CVI REGIONAL TEAM IN THE LAVAL, LAURENTIDES AND LANAUDIÈRE REGIONS