



# The TOOLBOX

TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE WITH THEIR EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL NEEDS



## PROMOTING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG STUDENTS

**TOOL:** Prevention | Intervention

**TARGET AUDIENCE:** Preschool | Elementary school | Secondary school

**TARGET AUDIENCE:** Professionals

# PROMOTING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG STUDENTS

**TOOL:** Prevention | Intervention

**TOOL INTENDED FOR:** Professionals

– Details: E.g. Any school professional or worker

**TARGET AUDIENCE:** Preschool | Elementary school | Secondary school

## NEEDS AND BEHAVIOURAL MANIFESTATIONS

– Socialize

## SPECIFIC GOALS

- To provide opportunities for students to develop and maintain positive and enjoyable contact with their school peers while complying with public health guidelines.
- To provide tools for students so they can develop healthy relationships inside and outside school.

## DESIGN

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During confinement, many young people found themselves socially isolated. This situation may have a significant impact on their psychological well-being and educational success. Socialization, which is part of Quebec schools' mission, is therefore more important than ever.

It is essential to **PROMOTE SOCIALIZATION AT SCHOOL** in order to:

- Allow students to reconnect with their social support network
- Strengthen students' sense of belonging to their school
- Encourage school engagement and retention
- Improve students' psychological health (self-esteem, life satisfaction)
- Reduce stress and cope with difficulties
- Support identity development
- Promote a better school climate



## KEY PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES

Many students were cut off from their network of friends during the confinement and summertime. An adaptation and transition period is necessary. At the beginning of the school year and during the school year, there will be a great deal of pressure to catch up on their studies due to the school closures. However, at the beginning and for an indefinite period, students will not be optimally prepared for learning and will need to re-establish their social ties.

HOW?

- Arrange the schedule to allow for informal interactions among students and fun time. These moments can become opportunities to allow students to do creative activities or personal projects in sub-groups, for example.
- In elementary school, start the day with a 15-minute walk around the school. The teacher allows students to talk with each other and move from one group to another to greet and chat informally with students. In addition to fostering an excellent connection between teachers and their students, this method significantly reduces disciplinary intervention in the classroom (particularly with regard to chatting).





**The classroom is an ideal context for promoting and structuring relationships in elementary and secondary school. An educational approach based on cooperative teamwork and active student participation promotes the development of positive relationships among students.**

HOW?

- Have students work in teams while complying with current social distancing rules (e.g., include measures to restrict movements on the premises, limit exchange of materials, etc.)
- Use approaches that encourage students to work together to achieve a collective goal. There are many configurations for teamwork:
  - **Puzzle teaching:** The team of students works on a theme and each team member is responsible for a sub-theme. Students work separately and then convey to other members in their group what they learned about the sub-theme assigned to them;
  - **Learning together:** The team has to make a collective production. Team building and discussion are encouraged;
  - **Student team-achievement divisions:** The team gets together after the lessons and works on the concepts learned. The learning acquired by the team is noted and rewarded at the end of the sequence (academic success and teamwork quality);
  - **Teams-games-tournament:** Weekly tournaments and student rotation within teams. This method works well in mathematics and science;
- Winning conditions to promote cooperative team learning:
  - Complex tasks promote cooperation
  - Activities must be planned
  - The size of teams should not be too large (2-4 students)
  - Teams are formed at random
  - Students are reminded of the common goal/objective several times during the activity
  - Different roles are assigned to each team member
  - One student per team is designated as a messenger responsible for communications with the teacher (also reduces movement within the premises)
  - The teacher observes the functioning of the group and pays attention to the discussion among students during the activity. The teacher intervenes to support the division of work and decision-making
  - After the activity, the teacher makes comments in a group discussion
  - Over time, the teacher decreases the level of supervision in order to encourage students to take charge and develop their autonomy



**In addition to promoting teamwork, the creation of a positive relationship climate in the classroom promotes cohesion and communication among students.**

HOW?

- Encourage active participation of each student;
- Explicitly teach and promote the values of cooperation (example: mutual help, solidarity, sharing, pleasure) in the classroom by displaying and integrating them into class rules;
- Develop a sense of pride in belonging to the group (example: display students' work, give a name to the class, invite students to highlight positive behaviours, express satisfaction with improving behaviour rather than just results);
- Use teaching strategies that promote dialogue among students (example: dialogue and discussion in class, role playing, debates, summaries of previous knowledge);
- In elementary school, the cooperation council teaches students cooperative and social skills and involves them in classroom management, improves classroom life by solving interpersonal problems among students while discussing group projects (see resources below). It is a structured meeting bringing together the teacher and students to discuss various topics concerning the classroom in general and its management. It is a forum for discussion that allows students to constructively express their feelings and ideas.

**In the event of a new confinement, we can also promote socialization and dialogue among students in distance education.**

HOW?

- At the beginning of the week, plan a time during the virtual meeting for informal dialogue among students;
- Assign teamwork and teach students how to use technologies that allow them to do so (e.g. shared document, tool for videoconferencing and screen sharing);
- Schedule a supervised period during the week when students chat together about an assignment, project or committee;
- Increase students' awareness about the language they use in their online communications with their peers, determine with them appropriate behaviour and a code of conduct for this purpose.





## Provide students with tools to develop positive relationships outside school hours.

HOW?

- **Encourage participation in extracurricular activities.** They allow students to develop and be familiar with their interests, develop friendships and a sense of belonging to the school, in addition to promoting school success and retention:
  - **In elementary school**, we can offer activities that take place during lunchtime, ideally outside and in small groups.
  - **In secondary school**, extracurricular activities that comply with physical distancing and that can be done in small groups are possible. It is a good idea to survey students to find out their interests and involve them in the organization of these groups.
  
- The teaching of social skills is part of the school's socialization mission and is essential to help certain students who were weakened during confinement to rebuild a social network. Social skills are knowledge and attitudes that help manage emotions, show empathy for others and maintain relationships.
  - Several intervention programs for elementary school students (example: Fluppy, Conseil de coopération, Vers le pacifique, A social-emotional skills development program (PACTE)) and secondary school programs (example: Jeunes en santé, PACTE, Vers le pacifique) are available for this purpose (see resources below);
  
- Some students in elementary and secondary school need to learn how to make friends. They can be taught five behaviours to make friends:
  - Be aware of your own interests
  - Get involved in a project, committee or activity
  - Have the courage to take the first steps
  - Take an interest in others (listen, ask questions)
  - Nurture your relationships (be honest and trustworthy)
  
- To promote the development and maintenance of positive relationships among elementary and secondary students, it is a good idea to teach them to recognize the characteristics of a healthy friendship:
  - Trust and respect
  - Communication
  - Confidences and intimacy
  - Having common interests and spending quality time together
  - Encouraging rather than competing with each other
  - Giving and receiving
  - Making efforts to resolve problems and conflicts



## USEFUL RESOURCES

Find out more about different cooperative learning approaches: un dossier d'Édupass  
<https://edupass.hypotheses.org/1080>

Examples of cooperative activities that can be done in the classroom (elementary and secondary school)  
[http://atelier.on.ca/edu/pdf/Mod20\\_C\\_activ\\_coop.pdf](http://atelier.on.ca/edu/pdf/Mod20_C_activ_coop.pdf)

100 contactless game cards for all ages produced by Formation Saveur to liven up lunchtime and promote social contacts  
<http://banquedejeux.formationsaveur.com/fiche>

Resources for teaching social skills in elementary and secondary school  
<http://www.preventionscolaire.ca/doc/implantation.pdf>

Find out more about the in-class Conseil de coopération  
<https://www.polymtl.ca/vignettes/le-conseil-de-cooperation>

Resources on friendship and conflict: Tel-Jeunes  
<https://www.teljeunes.com/Tel-jeunes/Tous-les-themes/Amis-et-famille/Amitie>

