

## Responsible Decision-Making

**Responsible Decision-Making:** The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others.

It's important for students to develop good interpersonal skills that allow them to both collaborate with their peers and communicate effectively with adults. It's also vital that students learn how to make good decisions autonomously. There are many ways to help students develop good decision-making skills. In the classroom, the best way to foster this skill is to present students with choices in a variety of contexts. It's important to create a student-centered atmosphere where students feel their thoughts and opinions can be expressed and are valued.

Ideally, educators integrate evidence-based Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) practices across all subject areas to help students develop their social emotional skills or competencies. For the Responsible Decision-Making competency, we've developed two learning goals, set measurable grade band benchmarks, identified sample activities for each grade band and identified where select Minnesota Academic Standards connect to the benchmarks. The sample activities are suggestions that educators can use to teach the benchmarks – the activities are not meant to be complete lessons. The intent is for students to reach S mastery of each benchmark by the end of the grade range; however, teachers may want to revisit the earlier skills periodically.

### Responsible Decision-Making Learning Goals

1. Considers ethical standards, social and community norms and safety concerns in making decisions.
2. Applies and evaluates decision-making skills to engage in a variety of situations.

## Learning Goal 1

Considers ethical standards, social and community norms and safety concerns in making decisions.

### *Benchmarks, Sample Activities and Related Academic Standards by Grade Band*

<b>Grade Band</b>	<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Sample Activities</b>	<b>Related Academic Standards</b>
Kindergarten–Grade 3	Identify and follow shared bus, classroom and school norms.	As a class, develop simple, positively stated rules. Create a visual reminder for students, e.g., walk don't run in the hall; raise your hand to speak; one person speaks at a time. Post the rules in high-traffic areas in school.	
Kindergarten–Grade 3	Identify and illustrate safe and unsafe behaviors.	Teach “safe” and “unsafe” as vocabulary words. Ask students to work together as a class to decide if a list of behaviors are “safe” or “unsafe” (e.g., riding on a bike path while wearing a helmet; riding in a car without wearing a seatbelt; walking close to the edge of a cliff; crossing the street at a crosswalk while holding an adult’s hand).	ELA, SLVML 3.7.d, Recognize safe practices in personal media communications.

Grade Band	Benchmarks	Sample Activities	Related Academic Standards
Kindergarten–Grade 3	Understand that decisions can have positive and negative effects on themselves and others.	<p>Play a game of night at the museum, where students pretend to be statues in a museum. They don't want to be "caught" moving by the janitor's flashlight. Debrief with questions regarding decisions made by players so they were not "caught."</p> <p>Use story time to discuss how characters made decisions, and how their decisions effected themselves and others.</p> <p>In social studies, read biographies of leaders, and discuss their decisions and the effects of the decisions on others.</p>	Social Studies, 2.2.3.3.1, Describe the trade-offs of a decision; describe the opportunity cost of a choice as the next best alternative which was not chosen.
Grades 4–5	Contribute to school safety by supporting classroom, lunchroom, and playground shared norms and rules.	Work with students to create and enforce simple, positively stated, shared classroom and school community norms.	

Grade Band	Benchmarks	Sample Activities	Related Academic Standards
Grades 4–5	Identify ways certain decisions or choices effect short- and long-term goals.	Use a decision-making formula (e.g., stop and calm down, identify the decision to be made, identify the options, research the consequences of each option, choose what’s best for you, try it out, and reflect on how well the decision worked).	Science, 5.3.4.1.3, Compare the impact of individual decisions on natural systems.
Grades 4–5	Identify positive and negative consequences of decisions for oneself and others.	<p>Consider the prompt “If I (the student) were the co-author of the rules/codes of conduct, what, if anything, would I change in the rules?”</p> <p>Ask students to write a response to a journal prompt, or create an art project that shows a decision and the positive and negative consequences for self and others. Have students share in small groups.</p>	Science, 5.3.4.1.3, Compare the impact of individual decisions on natural systems.
Grades 6–8	Analyze the reasons for school rules and local laws and identify the ethical values and social norms they support.	<p>Use teachable moments, including discipline, to talk about the reasons for school rules and local laws.</p> <p>In response to a journal prompt, ask students to reflect on the reasons for school rules or local laws.</p>	

Grade Band	Benchmarks	Sample Activities	Related Academic Standards
Grades 6–8	Monitor how decision-making affects progress toward achieving a goal, through reflection on past choices, and social and community norms.	Routinely ask students to reflect on how decision-making affects progress toward their goals (e.g., if you decide to go to a sleepover tonight, how will that affect your goal of getting a good grade on the test tomorrow?). Ask how and why they might do things differently, if given the chance.	Science, 6.1.2.1.1, Identify a common engineered system and evaluate its impact on the daily life of humans.
Grades 6–8	Recognize the effect of peer pressure on decision-making.	Ask students to write in response to a journal prompt about how peer pressure, including perceptions about what peers are thinking, affects decision-making.  Use examples in literature to discuss how peer pressure, including perceptions about what peers are thinking, may have influenced a character’s decision.	

Grade Band	Benchmarks	Sample Activities	Related Academic Standards
Grades 9–12	Demonstrate ability to consider personal responsibility, social norms, safety concerns and ethical standards in making decisions.	<p>As part of vocabulary in ELA, or in social studies, discuss (and/or possibly do reports or respond to journal prompts about) the meaning of “personal responsibility,” “ethics” and “norms.”</p> <p>Assign reports that ask students to learn about a figure in history who showed personal responsibility and ethics. Ask how their sense of responsibility and ethics affected their decisions.</p> <p>Ask students to write essays, in language arts or social studies, about how they behave responsibly and ethically.</p> <p>When developing shared classroom rules in any class, discuss personal responsibility, ethics and norms, and how they shape our behavior toward one another.</p>	<p>ELA, SLVML 9.7.d, Recognize ethical standards and safe practices in social and personal media communications, and understand the consequences of personal choices.</p> <p>Science, 9.1.3.3.1, Describe how values and constraints affect science and engineering.</p> <p>Science, 9.1.1.1.5, Identify sources of bias and explain how bias might influence the direction of research and the interpretation of data.</p> <p>Science, 9.1.1.1.4, Explain how societal and scientific ethics impact research practices.</p>
Grades 9–12	Assess lessons learned from past experiences and mistakes when making decisions.	Ask students to create a visual map of a decision they made, describe the outcome, and identify potential areas for improvement.	

Table 1 – Responsible Decision-Making Skills, Learning Goal 1 – benchmarks, sample activities and related academic standards by grade band.

## Learning Goal 2

Applies and evaluates decision-making skills to engage in a variety of situations.

### *Benchmarks, Sample Activities and Related Academic Standards by Grade Band*

<b>Grade Band</b>	<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Sample Activities</b>	<b>Related Academic Standards</b>
Kindergarten–Grade 3	Implement "Stop, Think and Act" strategy when making decisions.	<p>Show students a stop sign, explain what the stop sign means and discuss how the stop sign can be used in the classroom—it can be used as a prompt to stop and think about their behaviors before taking action.</p> <p>Routinely encourage students to use “stop, think and act” anytime they face a choice or decision.</p> <p>Provide authentic feedback when you observe students making good decisions.</p>	

Grade Band	Benchmarks	Sample Activities	Related Academic Standards
Kindergarten–Grade 3	Demonstrate cooperation with social and classroom norms and procedures.	Create simple, positively shared expectations or rules as a class to show students have a voice in the development and implementation of norms and procedures.	<p>Social Studies, 1.1.1.1.1, Demonstrate ways good citizens participate in the civic life of their community; explain why participation is important.</p> <p>Social Studies, 3.1.1.1.1, Identify ways people make a difference in the civic life of their communities, state, nation or world by working as individuals or groups to address a specific problem or need.</p> <p>ELA, SVLML 0.1, 1.1, 2.1, 3.1, Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade-level topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.</p>
Kindergarten–Grade 3	Explain the consequences and rewards of actions on self, other, or group.	Teach a vocabulary lesson on “consequences.” During story time, routinely ask students what the consequences of a character’s decision were.	Social Studies, 2.2.3.3.1, Describe the trade-offs of a decision; describe the opportunity cost of a choice as the next best alternative which was not chosen.



Grade Band	Benchmarks	Sample Activities	Related Academic Standards
Grades 4–5	Identify a variety of decisions/problems that students have at school.	Ask students to write in response to a journal prompt, or work together in pairs or small groups, to identify decisions and problems students face at school, and effective ways they might handle them (i.e., options).	
Grades 4–5	Generate alternative solutions to their identified problems.	<p>Ask students to brainstorm in small groups alternative solutions to problems they face, individually, and as a class.</p> <p>Use examples from literature to ask students to generate alternative solutions and/or alternative choices a character could have made.</p> <p>Use examples from history to ask students to generate alternative solutions and/or alternative choices a historical figure could have made, and how it might have affected events.</p>	ELA, SVLML 4.1.e, 5.1.e, Cooperate and problem solve, as appropriate, for productive group discussion.

Grade Band	Benchmarks	Sample Activities	Related Academic Standards
Grades 4–5	Assess consequences of possible solutions for the identified problems and demonstrate methods for reaching consensus or a decision.	<p>Establish a decision-making formula for the class (stop and calm down, identify the problem or choice, consider the alternatives, choose, try it out).</p> <p>Routinely encourage students to practice their decision-making formula, anytime they face a decision.</p> <p>Routinely ask students about the options and consequences of each, anytime they face a choice or decision.</p> <p>Provide students with authentic feedback anytime they are working through a decision.</p>	Science, 4.1.2.1.1, Describe the positive and negative impacts that the designed world has on the natural world as more and more engineered products and services are created and used.
Grades 4–5	Evaluate the results of their actions after making a decision.	Give students authentic feedback that helps connect their good decisions to positive consequences for their learning, the classroom community, etc.	Science, 5.3.4.1.3, Compare the impact of individual decisions on natural systems.

Grade Band	Benchmarks	Sample Activities	Related Academic Standards
Grades 6–8	Identify and apply the steps of systematic decision-making, using creativity and innovation.	<p>Ask students to use creative art expression to identify an area of decision-making.</p> <p>Ask students to respond to journal prompt that asks them to identify a time they have applied the decision-making formula and how it worked.</p>	<p>Social Studies, 4.1.1.1.1, Describe how people take action to influence a decision on a specific issue; explain how local, state, national or tribal governments have addressed that issue.</p> <p>Social Studies, 4.2.1.1.1, Apply a reasoned decision-making process to make a choice.</p> <p>Social Studies, 5.2.1.1.1, Apply a decision-making process to identify an alternative choice that could have been made for a historical event; explain the probable impact of that choice.</p> <p>Social Studies, 7.2.1.1.1, Apply reasoned decision-making techniques in making choices; explain why different households or groups faced with the same alternatives might make different choices.</p> <p>Social Studies, 8.2.1.1.1, Apply reasoned decision-making techniques in making choices; explain why different governments faced with the same alternatives might make different choices.</p>

Grade Band	Benchmarks	Sample Activities	Related Academic Standards
Grades 6–8	Gather additional information from multiple sources to generate alternative solutions.	<p>Students complete a project where they actively seek outside sources of information to inform decision-making.</p> <p>Routinely encourage students to explore and research the likely outcomes of any choice, anytime they face a choice or decision.</p>	<p>Science, 7.1.1.2.4, Evaluate explanations proposed by others by examining and comparing evidence, identifying faulty reasoning, and suggesting alternative explanations.</p> <p>ELA, W 6.7, 7.7, 8.7, Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.</p>
Grades 6–8	Discuss alternatives in relation to multiple contextual factors.	<p>Routinely encourage students to explore and research the likely outcomes of any choice, anytime they face a choice or decision.</p> <p>Give students authentic feedback that helps connect their good decisions to positive consequences for their learning, the classroom community, etc.</p>	

Grade Band	Benchmarks	Sample Activities	Related Academic Standards
Grades 6–8	Analyze how decision-making skills affect study habits and academic performance.	<p>Create, agree to, and help students understand logical consequences, discussing them frequently.</p> <p>Routinely encourage students to think about and discuss how decision-making affects their academic performance and study habits.</p>	
Grades 9–12	Regularly demonstrate use of systematic decision-making, by identifying a decision, gathering information, and assessing alternative resolutions.	Read current events and discuss how a decisions was made and evaluate the quality of the decision against a clearly defined criteria (e.g., did the individual appear to follow a good decision-making strategy?).	Science, 9.1.1.2.1, Formulate a testable hypothesis, design and conduct an experiment to test the hypothesis, analyze the data, consider alternative explanations, and draw conclusions supported by evidence from the investigation.

Grade Band	Benchmarks	Sample Activities	Related Academic Standards
Grades 9–12	Identify and ask systematic questions that clarify various points of view and lead to the best solution.	<p>Routinely encourage students to seek additional information, anytime they face a decision.</p> <p>Provide authentic feedback about the process they use to arrive at the best solution, anytime they face a decision.</p>	<p>Science, 9.1.1.2.2, Evaluate the explanations proposed by others by examining and comparing evidence, identifying faulty reasoning, pointing out statements that go beyond the scientifically acceptable evidence, and suggesting alternative scientific evidence.</p> <p>ELA, SVLML 9.1 and 11.1, Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade-level topics, texts, and issues, including those by and about Minnesota American Indians, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</p> <p>ELA, W 9.7 and 11.7, Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.</p>

Grade Band	Benchmarks	Sample Activities	Related Academic Standards
Grades 9–12	Analyze and evaluate evidence, arguments, claims, and beliefs to inform effective decisions.	<p>Ask students to connect their academic progression with future life goals.</p> <p>Routinely encourage students to seek additional information and evaluate all options, anytime they face a decision.</p> <p>Provide authentic feedback about the process they use to arrive at the best solution, anytime they face a decision.</p>	<p>Science, 9.1.1.2.3, Identify the critical assumptions and logic used in a line of reasoning to judge the validity of a claim.</p> <p>ELA, W 9.7, and 11.7, Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.</p> <p>ELA, RI 9.8, Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.</p>
Grades 9–12	Analyze how their present decision-making affects college and career choices.	<p>Provide planners for students to list their goals and set deadlines for accomplishing those goals and completing projects.</p> <p>Ask students to write essays or respond to journal prompts about their college and career goals. Ask students to analyze how their current decision-making affects their progress toward achieving those goals.</p>	Science, 9.1.3.2.2, Analyze possible careers in science and engineering in terms of education requirements, working practices and rewards.

Table 2 – Responsible Decision-making Skills, Learning Goal 2 – benchmarks, sample activities and related academic standards by grade band.