

New London Public Schools Wellness Manual



NEW LONDON
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Introduction

The New London Public Schools- Wellness and Restorative Practices Manual seeks to provide an overview of the wellness services that are available to all students and families. This includes but is not limited to, social emotional development, restorative practices, and connections to outside resources for students and families. This manual is to be considered in conjunction with other district policies and manuals, in particular the New London Public Schools SRBI, PBIS and Bully Regulation Safe School Climate Plan. NLPS employs Wellness Interventionists, Behavior Interventionists and Behavior Motivators, who all make up the wellness team and are distributed throughout our districts' schools. This team contributes to the emotional wellbeing of our students.

What is Social Emotional Wellness?

Social emotional wellness relies on the **ability to understand and manage our emotions and to form social connections and relationships with the world around us**. Strong social emotional health enables an individual to integrate their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in a way that supports greater health and well-being in school and in life. Additionally, students who can express empathy towards others, regulate strong emotions, and solve conflicts in healthy ways, are more likely to be successful in class as well as in their personal lives. (Thriving Schools, 2022).

Being socially and emotionally well means being able to **realize your abilities**, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and contribute to your community.

- Emotional wellness includes **your thoughts, emotions, and ability to deal with life's challenges**.
- Social wellness involves **building healthy, nurturing, and supportive relationships as well as fostering a genuine connection with those around you**.

Curriculum such as Second Step and School Connect, coupled with the restorative mindset help our students to reach their full potential.

What are Restorative Practices?

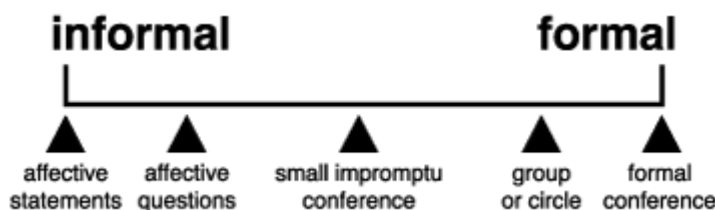
The fundamental hypothesis of restorative practices is that **“people are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things with them, rather than to them or for them.”**

(www.iirp.edu). Restorative Practices is not a curriculum but rather a mindset and the culture of our schools. Restorative Practices is not a “instead of...”, or letting students get away with everything, instead it is the focus on working “WITH” the student to identify how to support while also holding the student accountable for their actions.

Working WITH our students, we aim to be able to support in addressing their needs as well as help to resolve conflict with peers and/ or teachers to promote healthy communication among each other. In addition, we strive offer tools to address conflict and restore the relationship when harm is done.

To promote social emotional well-being, we utilize the Restorative continuum which embraces the tools of affective statements and questions, circles, small impromptu conversations, and restorative conferences.

On a restorative practice’s continuum, the informal practices include affective statements that communicate people’s feelings, as well as affective questions that cause people to reflect on how their behavior has affected others. Impromptu restorative conferences, groups and circles are somewhat more structured but do not require the elaborate preparation needed for formal conferences. Moving from left to right on the continuum, as restorative practices become more formal, they involve more people, require more planning and time, and are more structured and complete. Although a formal restorative process might have dramatic impact, informal practices have a cumulative impact because they are part of everyday life (McCold & Wachtel, 2001).



Structure of NLPS Wellness Team

Utilizing restorative practices, Wellness Interventionists, in each building, work with student support services, teachers, and building administrators to address behavior needs as they arise. Responsibilities include but are not limited to; small group facilitation, Restorative Conferencing, social emotional support, facilitation of classroom circles, and parent support as needed. Additionally, Wellness Interventionists are part of Attendance teams, PBIS teams, and SRBI teams.

Social Emotional and Restorative Education

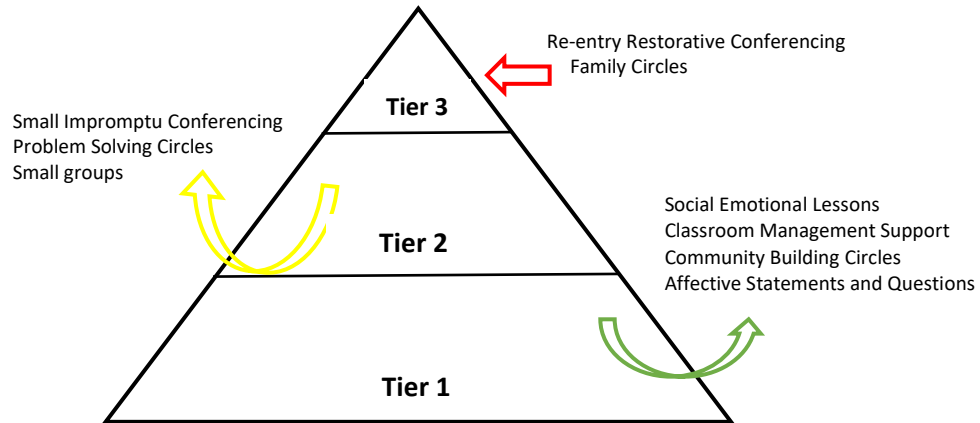
Coupled with Restorative Practices, Social Emotional Skill building is essential in our student's capacity to resolve conflict in healthy ways, to be mindful of how they are feeling, and to understand how others are feeling with the intention to respond in thoughtful ways.

The Wellness Team collaborates with NLPS to provide teachers and school staff with ongoing training in Restorative Practices, interventions/supports, and the implementation of Social Emotional Curriculum. In addition, they also parent/guardian engagement and learning events held throughout each school year to encourage parents/guardians as partners in this work to support their students.

Restorative Practices and Multi-tiered Systems of Support

Comprehensive wellness systems focus on addressing the needs and areas of support for all students, understanding that some students need more support than others. NLPS Wellness Team, along with our school's Student Support Services, aim to provide a wide range of support to help students reach the goal of being socially and emotionally well. Providing a continuum of school mental and behavioral health services is critical to effectively addressing the breadth of students' needs as well as promoting a positive school climate where our students feel safe and healthy.

By incorporating strong restorative practices into the NLPS Multi Level System of Supports, enables us to ensure our student are learning the skills to help manage their emotions, resolve conflict, and build and maintain healthy relationships in their lives.



Tier One Supports:

Wellness Interventionists contribute to Tier 1 interventions through supporting the Social Emotional Curriculum, offering classroom management support, as well as the facilitation of restorative practices.

The teaching of classroom circles is introduced to build relationships in the classroom, create shared values and guidelines, and facilitate restorative conversations needed within the classroom environment. The use of proactive circles within the classroom, builds trust, promotes a healthy learning environment, and allows for students to feel safe to address problem behaviors when they surface both individually and as a community. The goal is to build a caring and equitable community with conditions conducive to student learning and thriving.

Tier Two Supports

Tier 2 is characterized by a more individualized approach. Restorative practices such as restorative conferencing, small impromptu conferencing, and problem-solving circles, with a more targeted approach. In addition, the team works with each school's Student Support Team to identify students for small group participation focused on social emotional development.

Tier Three Supports:

Tier 3 supports are characterized by the use of more explicit restorative conferencing, family/guardian direct engagement, and the collaboration with, and connection to outside resources. The wellness team is an integral part of the wrap around services needed at this level of support, and thus, work closely with building administration, and student support services to ensure a comprehensive plan is put in place.

Community Partners

The Wellness Team actively seeks out and learns about different community partnerships which is essential to establishing relationships with our community agencies and organization. Working with our community partners, the wellness team aims to address the needs of our families. This can range from housing and food security to youth programming referrals to mental health/ emotional health support. Some of our community partners include, but are not limited to:

United Way
Child and Family
Safe Futures
STEPS
New London Youth Affairs
New London Community and Campus Coalition

Important Links

211: Connecticut hub for connecting families to mental health and wellness supports
<https://www.211ct.org/>

Calm Classroom: Mindfulness program used in grades Prek-8 <https://calmclassroom.com/>

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning: SEL framework endorsed by NLPS
<https://casel.org/>

International Institute of Restorative Practices <https://www.iirp.edu/restorative-practices/what-is-restorative-practices>

NLPS Social Emotional Supports <https://www.newlondon.org/sel>

School Connect: SEL Curriculum for grades 9-12 <https://school-connect.net/>

Second Step: SEL Curriculum for grades Prek-8 <https://www.secondstep.org/>

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- National Center for School Mental Health

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