

An audit and discussion tool for SEL in your school

Improving social and emotional learning in primary schools



This tool accompanies Evidence for Learning's Guidance Report '*Improving social and emotional learning in primary schools*', which sets out six recommendations for teachers and school leaders to support primary school students' social and emotional development. The Guidance Report draws on a recent review of the evidence funded by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF).

The self-audit review and discussion questions below aim to prompt a 'dialogic' approach to development, providing starting points for useful conversations. The conversations will shape your view on where your school is on the path to providing all your children with the social and emotional skills that underpin personal and academic development – from early stages to developed practice.

The tool represents a different way of thinking about an audit – it is not another 'tick box' process. The aim is to get you talking about your practice in ways that genuinely support you to understand what you are doing that is working, as well as promoting some new thinking and ideas.

This tool is for: teachers, leaders and others who support schools.

Use it: in a staff meeting, professional learning team (PLT) meeting, peer review with external colleagues, or in a conversation between school leaders and, for example, school council representatives or school improvement partners.

This tool was developed by the Education Endowment Foundation. It has been updated for Australian educators by Susannah Schoeffel (Evidence for Learning).

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info@evidenceforlearning.org.au | evidenceforlearning.org.au | [@E4Ltweets](https://twitter.com/E4Ltweets) | [f EvidenceforLearning](https://www.facebook.com/EvidenceforLearning)

Leadership self audit

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Big questions for discussion

- What do we want our SEL provision to achieve?
- What relative importance do we as a school place on SEL? How do we communicate this through our vision, values and practice?
- To what extent do we model and live the values underpinning our SEL approach as the adults in the organisation? Where is this strong or less strong? How can we develop this further?

Early stages



The school is interested in SEL development as a way of improving student's behaviour, or their mental health and wellbeing.

Any work on SEL sits within pastoral leadership structures.

Staff working with targeted individuals or groups have had some training on SEL.

The school vision refers to the importance of personal/SEL development alongside academic achievement.

There is a clear management structure, locating responsibility for SEL development.

Professional learning opportunities are provided to some staff to develop, sustain and enhance SEL work.

Leaders monitor the quality of SEL teaching and learning.



Developed practice



The school's vision clearly integrates personal/SEL and academic development. Students, parents and staff have been involved in developing and renewing the vision.

Leaders consciously model SEL competencies.

A team has been established with responsibility for SEL development and all school staff contribute to planning how SEL will be taught and promoted in school.

Regular professional learning opportunities are provided to all staff to sustain and enhance SEL work, including opportunities for staff collaboration, mentoring and peer learning.

Staff reflect on the quality of their SEL teaching and strive to enhance it, with support from leaders.

Leaders evaluate the impact of SEL opportunities on student behaviour and attendance, personal and academic development. They use impact data to refine and enhance the school's approach to SEL.

Leaders plan for sustainability through for example curriculum reviews which build in opportunities for developing SEL across subjects, and through recruitment and induction arrangements for new staff.



Curriculum self-audit

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Big questions for discussion

- How are we ensuring a basic entitlement to social and emotional learning for all students in all classes over time?
- To what extent do we understand the progression and cycle of SEL learning through the school?
- How are teachers making decisions about what to teach, and when?

Early stages

Social and emotional competencies are taught to targeted students in 1-1 or small group work delivered by staff such as learning mentors or teaching assistants.



Social and emotional competencies are taught in response to actions to classes as and when needed.



Some teachers allocate dedicated curriculum time to teach one or more of the core SEL competencies (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision making) to their class.



Most teachers allocate dedicated curriculum time to teach several of the core SEL competencies (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision making) to their class.

Developed practice

SEL core competencies are regularly and explicitly taught by all teachers in all classrooms, all year round. All the core SEL competencies are taught.

Appropriately chosen, effective learning methods are used and there is a clear, coordinated sequence/ progression in student learning from Foundation through Year 6.



Everyday teaching self-audit

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Big questions for discussion

- Where do staff use everyday situations well to teach SEL skills? Who is great at it and what can we learn from them?
- How do we balance the needs of the academic curriculum with being able to respond to situations as they arise? How are we supporting and empowering teachers to use their professional judgement in this area?
- To what extent are all staff able to manage their own emotions in order to provide learning within crisis moments?



Early stages



Crisis moments are used to teach students to be aware of their emotions and those of others, and to manage their emotions.

Real-life classroom and playground situations are used outside of the context of the immediate event to teach students SEL skills.

Most teachers model the SEL skills they want students to adopt.



Developed practice



All staff consistently and explicitly model the SEL skills they want students to adopt – such as articulating and regulating their emotions, and using a structured problem-solving approach when approaching decisions or conflicts.

SEL is embedded across the curriculum and opportunities for collaborative learning are frequent in every class.



Whole-school ethos and activities self-audit

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Big questions for discussion

- To what extent do we have a shared language for SEL learning?
 - How does this connect with our behaviour and anti-bullying policies?
 - How do we ensure that referring to SEL is a normal part of many routines and practices?
- How can we make it the easy and automatic thing to do?
- To what extent are we clear that SEL is something we need to learn and that, just like every subject, there are things we all find easier and harder?

Early stages

Students are praised for using SEL skills such as being aware of and managing their feelings, or showing empathy to others.

Assemblies and whole school events promote some SEL skills.

Systems for noticing and celebrating student successes are used by most staff to promote SEL.

Assemblies and whole school events are often planned to promote SEL.

Adults generally use SEL skills in their interaction with each other and with students.

School behaviour and anti-bullying policies are mostly consistent with SEL principles.



Developed practice

Students and families have helped shape SEL-based schoolwide norms/rules.

School behaviour and anti-bullying policies are based on the principle that poor behaviour indicates a need for extra help with SEL, in the same way that children struggling with academic learning receive extra help with reading, writing or maths.

Systems for noticing and celebrating student successes have been planned to support SEL development and are used by all staff.

Assemblies and whole school events regularly and explicitly link a whole-school SEL focus with student classroom work on SEL.

Families and the wider community understand how the school approaches SEL, and are supported in reinforcing SEL development at home.

The school physical environment has been carefully planned to support SEL development, for example through calm-down corners/worry boxes/playground friendship stops.

Schoolwide norms/rules are based on agreement about how everyone will use SEL skills in the way they behave and treat one another.

Systems for noticing and celebrating students successes have been planned to support SEL development and are used by most staff.

Assemblies and whole school events regularly and explicitly support student SEL development.

Some work has been done to engage families with the school's approach to SEL.

Students are given opportunities to apply SEL skills to contribute to the local community.

