

# NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

## MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING STRATEGY 2021-2024

*“Every Ontario student deserves to have access to evidence-based mental health promotion and prevention programming. Our model in Ontario is designed to help students flourish and remain resilient as they journey through life.” - School Mental Health Ontario.*

*“We need to see each child as a gift to be welcomed, cherished and protected.” - Pope Francis*

### Goals and Priorities for 2021-2024

To achieve our collective vision, we work together with schools on five priorities for 2021-2024

- **COVID-19 Recovery:** Creating safe and accepting environments to return to, and to address the anxiety, isolation, potential trauma and impact of COVID-19
- **Equity, Inclusivity and Diversity:** Anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, anti-discrimination, 2SLGBTQ+ supporting specific populations in our community who may require more or unique mental health and well-being support and services
- **The Link Between Our Faith and Mental Health:** Being intentional in our messaging to staff and students, that our faith and mental well-being are inter-connected
- **Social-Emotional Learning:** Embedding SEL into our curriculum and learning
- **Pathways to Care:** Ensuring students receive timely and responsive, evidence-based prevention and early intervention services at school and in community

### Core Elements of the Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy

1. Active Mental Health Leadership Team
2. Standard Processes and Protocols
3. Systematic Professional Learning and Training
4. Meaningful Engagement and Collaboration
5. Supporting Specific Populations
6. Enhancing System Coordination and Access to Mental Health Services



## Strategies

For 2021-2024, we have five key strategies to achieve these goals:

- Welcoming, safe, inclusive, and culturally-responsive schools for in-person and remote learning
- Evidence-based, culturally-responsive wellness promotion and social-emotional skill development
- Early identification and early intervention for students with mild to moderate mental health and/or substance use problems
- Framework for system collaboration and service pathways, both in the schools and community
- Departmental collaboration to embed mental wellness in all areas

## OUR MISSION

The Niagara Catholic District School Board, through the charisms of faith, social justice, support and leadership, nurtures an enriching Catholic learning community for all to reach their full potential and become living witness of Christ.



## Action Plan

### SYSTEM LEVEL

- Professional development for staff (ASIST, SafeTalk, anxiety, help-seeking behaviours, suicide prevention, cannabis and vaping, anti-black and anti-indigenous racism, anti-sex trafficking, 2SLGBTQ+, and help-seeking)
- Updating community mental health protocols and pathways to care
- Creation of a board-level youth committee focussed on mental wellness
- Data collection and school climate surveys
- Embedding mental health into curriculum.

### SCHOOL LEVEL

- Wellness walls in collaboration with Pathstone Mental Health
- Embed mental wellness in all faith retreats with chaplaincy
- Evidence-based mental health programming in the classroom with the Child and Youth Workers (Roots of Empathy, Zones of Regulations, Mindup)
- Community-based skill-building groups
- School-based social workers for mental health needs
- Mindfulness Mornings - *"I am a child of God"*
- Mental Health and Catholic Education Week: Focus on faith and mental wellness

## OUR VISION

Niagara Catholic strives to build a community that understands and reinforces the importance of mental health promotion, prevention and intervention.



## OUR VALUES

The Niagara Catholic Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy is aligned with School Mental Health Ontario's Action Plan. By using resources and supports from SMH-Ontario, Niagara Catholic is dedicated to using evidence-based resources, student-centered thinking, and is aligned with Ontario's curriculum.