

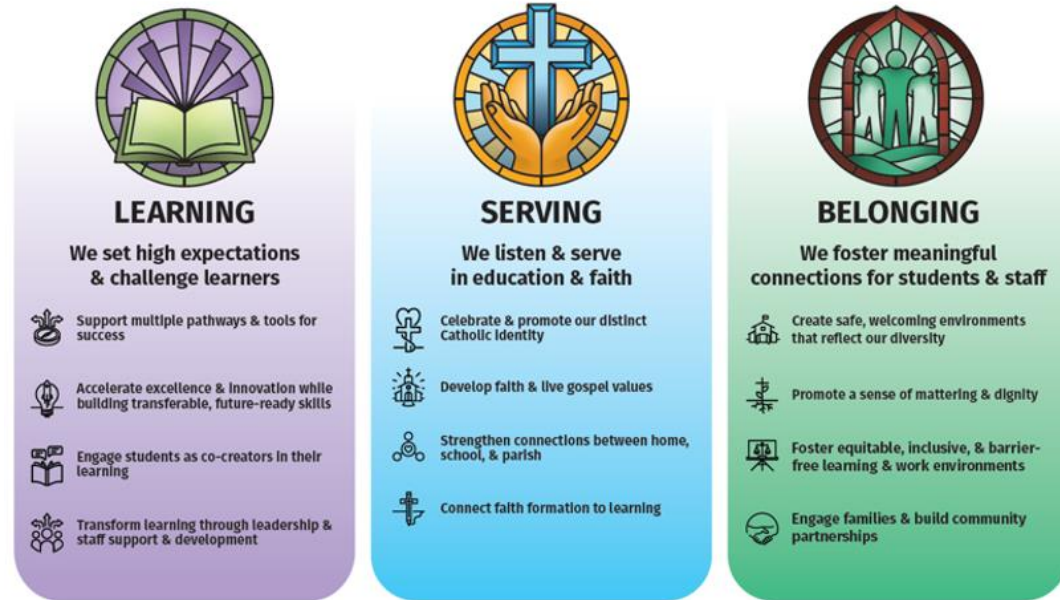


Waterloo Catholic District School Board

Mental Health and Addictions Strategy (2025–2028)

Annual Action Plan (2026–2027)

Alignment with the WCDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP)



The 2026–2027 Annual Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan aligns with the WCDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan by advancing the pillars of Learning, Serving, and Belonging.

Learning is supported by strengthening staff and leadership capacity through professional learning that informs classroom and school practices.

Serving is reflected in our commitment to responsive, coordinated supports that meet students where they are and connect them to care.

Belonging is at the heart of this work; through safe, inclusive, and identity-affirming environments that promote student wellbeing, dignity, and mattering.

Across all priorities, this plan strengthens a coherent multi-tiered system of support (Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3), ensuring students experience consistent mental health promotion, prevention, and access to care throughout the system

About this Plan

WCDSB's Mental Health and Addictions Strategy is grounded in our belief that every student deserves to feel safe, supported, and experience a strong sense of belonging.

This work continues to be shaped by student voice, caregiver perspectives, staff expertise, and community collaboration; alongside evidence-informed practices that promote mental health and wellbeing in schools.

The 3-Year Strategy (2025–2028) remains our roadmap. This year's Action Plan (2026–2027) builds on our first year of implementation with a strengthened focus on:

- Consistent Tier 1 mental health promotion that fosters connection, calm, and belonging
- Clear Tier 2 supports for students needing additional help
- Strong Tier 3 pathways to care, including bridging supports to community services

Together, this plan reflects our shared commitment to creating safe, inclusive, and identity-affirming school communities.

2026–2027 Annual Mental Health & Addictions Action Plan

This year's plan outlines a number of ways that we will put the 3-year strategy into action.

Priority 1: Students

Student voice, leadership, and access to support

- Students will continue to co-lead mental health initiatives through leadership groups such as Safe School Ambassadors, with a stronger focus on using #HearNowON reflections and MDI data to guide planning.
- Student use of school-level data will deepen; supporting reflection, wellbeing awareness, and meaningful advocacy.
- Schools will strengthen feedback opportunities, ensuring student voice informs ongoing mental health promotion and stigma reduction efforts.
- Mental health literacy and social-emotional learning (SEL) will be supported through:
 - Expanded use of Wayfinder (K–8 rollout) and aligned classroom resources
 - Continued implementation of SMHO Mental Health Modules (Grades 6–8)
 - Increased collaboration across portfolios (e.g., Faith, Indigenous Services, Healthy Active Living)
- Classroom and school approaches will place greater emphasis on strong adult-student relationships and identity-affirming practices.
- Access to support will be strengthened by:
 - Improving early identification and consistency of responses across schools
 - Streamlining student-facing communication about pathways to care (e.g., D2L, campaigns, school messaging)
 - Clarifying roles across the continuum of supports
 - Continuing Tier 2 and 3 services through school-based mental health professionals, including assessment, brief intervention, and connections to community services
 - Expanding the use of measurement-based care in more intensive supports

Priority 2: Parents & Caregivers

Mental health literacy, family voice, and connection to care

- Families will have increased access to brief, accessible, and multilingual learning resources on topics such as mental health, substance use, and digital wellbeing.
- Outreach will be guided by MDI insights, helping families support healthy routines and wellbeing at home.
- The Mental Health & Wellbeing website will be enhanced to provide:
 - Clearer navigation
 - Improved understanding of pathways to care
 - Stronger support for help-seeking and confidence in accessing services
- Caregiver voice will be strengthened through:
 - Ongoing feedback from system groups (e.g., CPIC, SEAC, CSAC)
 - Surveys and digital feedback opportunities
 - Improved synthesis of family perspectives to inform planning and refinement

Priority 3: Educators & School Staff

Trauma-informed practice and identity-affirming SEL

- Staff will be supported through a consolidated monthly release of practical, trauma-informed strategies aligned with PPM 169.
- The “Start Here” resource hub will continue to serve as a central access point for classroom tools, templates, and supports.
- System focus will include:
 - Strengthening use of SMHO trauma-informed leadership resources
 - Differentiating support for secondary schools
 - Embedding co-regulation and staff wellbeing into everyday practice
- SEL and mental health literacy will be reinforced through:
 - Wayfinder and Faith & Wellness strategies
 - SMHO SEL Toolkit and mental health modules
 - Use of school-level MDI data to guide classroom planning
 - Continued partnership with the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council to deliver *Sources of Strength* programming to Grade 7 students
- All approaches will prioritize identity-affirming, culturally responsive practices that build both student skills and supportive environments.

Priority 4: System Leaders & Administrators

Aligned leadership and sustainable planning

- Leaders will be supported through the rollout of Mental Health in Action (MH LIT) learning for administrators.
- Cross-portfolio collaboration (e.g., Faith, Equity, Safe Schools) will continue to strengthen coherent messaging and shared approaches.
- Ongoing supports will include:
 - Coaching leaders to embed mental health and wellbeing goals into school and board improvement planning
 - Monthly leadership-aligned mental health strategies
 - Stronger alignment with Student Services and system-wide practices
- Continued connection to provincial direction (e.g., PPM 169)

Priority 5: Community & Partnerships

Coordinated care and stronger pathways

- WCDSB will continue to review and strengthen partnerships, protocols, and agreements with community mental health and addictions agencies.
- Cross-sector collaboration will advance through:
 - Planning aligned with a Right Time, Right Care approach
 - Ongoing work with coterminous boards and the local lead mental health agency
 - Identification of gaps in services and opportunities to improve access
 - Inclusion of culturally responsive and faith-based supports within care pathways

Together, we continue to build safe, inclusive, and mentally healthy Catholic school communities—grounded in connection, guided by evidence, and strengthened through collaboration.