**TOOL: Reflecting on School Discipline and SEL Alignment**

Directions: First, use the columns on the left on p.1-3 to identify current discipline policies and procedures; practices; and staff mindsets and attitudes. Next, use the column on the right to reflect on how well current approaches to discipline align with the school’s vision for SEL. A non-exhaustive list of probing questions to consider are provided. On page 4, you’ll find a list of suggested next steps.

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| **Disciplinary Policies and Procedures** | **How well do our disciplinary policies and procedures align to our SEL vision?** |
| Definition**:** Established steps that staff should take to prevent or respond to behavior incidents, or lack of defined steps.  Example: A school tardiness policy states that students who are tardy three times are sent to in school suspension, and students who fail to attend in school suspension are suspended out-of-school. | *Consider:*   * Are school disciplinary policies and procedures clearly defined and consistent? * Do discipline policies and procedures take into account students’ developmental stages, cultural backgrounds, and individual differences? * Do discipline procedures provide an opportunity for all involved students to share their perspective and reflect on the impact of their actions? * Does our school have defined strategies for conflict resolution and collaborative problem solving? * When students are removed from the classroom or school community, does the school develop a plan to welcome students back and rebuild relationships? |

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| **Disciplinary Practices** | **How well do our disciplinary practices align to our SEL vision?** |
| Definition: Actions taken to prevent misbehaviors, carry out discipline, examine discipline trends, and support staff in effective disciplinary strategies.  Example: Teachers have built supportive relationships with students and are often able to resolve behavior incidents quickly with one-on-one conversations that promote student reflection. | *Consider:*   * Does our school team regularly examine and problem solve around discipline/climate data, including by prioritized student subgroups (i.e. by race, disability, gender, etc.)? * Do school staff have ongoing, scaffolded professional learning around building supportive relationships with students, effective discipline strategies, cultural responsiveness, etc.? * Do school staff regularly model social and emotional competencies when interacting with students and addressing behavior incidents, including actively listening and empathizing with students? * Do school staff regularly promote social and emotional competencies when addressing behavior incidents, including providing developmentally-appropriate opportunities for students to reflect on their decisions, collaboratively resolve problems or conflicts, and build or rebuild relationships? |

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| **Staff Attitudes and Beliefs about Discipline** | **How well do our attitudes and beliefs align to our SEL vision?** |
| Definition: Attitudes can include biases—explicit and implicit—and personal or cultural beliefs about how discipline should be carried out.  Example: Adults believe that the only way to improve student behavior is to use punitive and exclusionary techniques to teach students a “lesson” by sending them to the office more or excluding them from instructional opportunities that other students receive. | *Consider:*   * What data do we have about staff attitudes and beliefs? * How have we cultivated attitudes and beliefs that support SEL? * Are school staff equipped to recognize behavior manifestations of trauma, and the role of bias in disciplinary practices? * Are staff aware of the harmful consequences of exclusionary discipline? * Does leadership prioritize and communicate the importance of integrating discipline with SEL? |

**Planning Next Steps:**

After reviewing your current disciplinary approach and alignment, below are some steps you may want to take to ensure your school discipline supports SEL. You may want to add additional steps based on your context and needs.

**Review and update policies and procedures:**

* Establish clear disciplinary procedures that include opportunities for students to reflect, problem-solve, and build positive relationships.
* Establish procedures for adults to reflect on the root causes of behaviors and take into account students’ developmental stages, cultural backgrounds, and individual differences.
* Eliminate subjective or unclear rules and policies where implicit biases can arise.
* Eliminate rules or policies that disproportionately impact specific groups of students; for example, dress code policies that limit clothing commonly worn by students of one gender, race, religion, or culture.
* Establish clear policies for using suspensions and expulsions only as a last resort, and re-examine demerit systems or progressive discipline policies that allow for a student to potentially receive harsh punishment (e.g., suspension) for minor behaviors (e.g., 1 tardy = a warning, 2 tardies = a detention, 3 tardies = one-day suspension, etc.).
* Ensure that students who are suspended or expelled have opportunities to rebuild the relationship and make academic progress.
* Other:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Support disciplinary practices that promote SEL:**

* Regularly collect and analyze data to understand trends and uncover any inconsistencies in disciplinary practices and disparities between student subgroups.
* Engage students and families in designing school climate practices, discipline policies, and community agreements.
* Provide strategies and tools for staff to support students in reflecting on their emotions and the impact of their behavior and collaborative problem-solving.
* Other:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultivate mindsets around discipline and SEL:**

* Provide opportunities for staff to reflect on and unpack their beliefs, mindsets, and attitudes around discipline, and connect these to their practices and SEL goals.
* Other:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_