Who Is It For?

Students Targeted by the Nurturing Support Center

The implementation of a Nurturing Support Center is intended to respond to the needs of all students within a school community. By promoting universal practices that foster a safe, supportive school climate and positive adult–student relationships, its benefits extend throughout the entire school environment.

More specifically, students referred to the NSC experience significant and persistent difficulties that affect their behaviour and learning, despite the universal and targeted support measures already implemented in the classroom.

Some students express their distress through disruptive, inappropriate, or challenging behaviours, while others demonstrate more internalized responses, expressing their discomfort or insecurity in less visible ways.

All of these students can benefit from the NSC by strengthening their sense of safety and gradually developing greater awareness of their emotions and bodily sensations (interoception). This increased self-awareness supports their ability to understand themselves, develop self-regulation skills, and become more available for learning and social engagement.

The Nurturing Support Center therefore complements universal classroom and school-wide practices by providing additional support to (*these examples include, but are not limited to*):

- Students who experience difficulty managing transitions, particularly at the beginning of the school day, during breaks, at lunchtime, or at the end of the day.
- Students experiencing significant anxiety or stress that substantially interferes with their ability to function effectively at school.
- Students who have experienced adverse life circumstances and whose distress may manifest through aggression, disruptive behaviour, inappropriate conduct, or other externalizing behaviours. Behind these behaviours often lie the same underlying needs for safety, comfort, and connection, although they may be expressed differently.
- Students requiring more intensive support following challenging personal circumstances, such as placement in foster care, a serious illness, the death of a parent, or experiences of bullying.
- Students who, for various reasons (e.g. emotional, social, sensory, etc.), experience significant difficulty remaining in the classroom for the expected duration and who require an adapted schedule. In these situations, access to the NSC is planned intentionally and preventively, rather than being used as a reactive response to behavioural difficulties.
- Students, who are receiving from targeted to individualized support, who are also encountering specific school situations for which they may not yet possess the necessary skills or emotional capacity to cope independently, requiring the environment to provide additional support. Examples include having a substitute teacher in the classroom or participating in an activity that exceeds the student's

zone of proximal development when appropriate support measures cannot be implemented.
- In exceptional circumstances, students who have significant difficulty tolerating the social environment of the classroom. For these students, the NSC may serve as a secure base or primary point of support. However, the ultimate objective remains their full reintegration into the regular classroom through a gradual process that respects both the student's capacities and the school's ability to provide appropriate support.

Access to the NSC is Based on Student Needs

It is important to emphasize that a student's access to the NSC is determined by their individual needs and not by:

- The type of behavioural manifestations they exhibit. The NSC can respond to needs expressed through both internalizing and externalizing behaviours.
- Their official special education identification or classification code.
- The presence of a diagnosis or suspected diagnosis.
- Their grade level. All students, from Secondary 1 through Secondary 5, may be referred.
- Their educational placement, whether in a regular classroom or a specialized education setting.

Considerations Before Referring a Student to the NSC

Before considering the NSC as an additional support measure, the following factors should be carefully assessed:

- The extent to which the student's functioning is affected, physically, emotionally, socially, and academically. Considerations include the frequency, intensity, and persistence of the difficulties, the nature of behavioural manifestations, and their impact on the student's overall functioning.
- The presence of associated psychological distress. Considerations include the student's level of emotional suffering, anxiety, degree of social isolation, quality of relationships, and availability of a supportive network.
- The universal Tier 1 and targeted Tier 2 interventions and services already implemented, including the student's response to these interventions.
- The availability of an up-to-date Student Action Plan or Individualized Education Plan (IEP), ensuring that interventions are documented, coordinated, and aligned with the student's needs.
- Communication with the student and/or their parents, ensuring they understand the purpose and role of the NSC, as well as the interventions and supports that will be offered.

The school's capacity to respond to student needs will also be influenced by the size of the school, the size of the physical space and the number of staff available in the NSC, and the number of students experiencing significant difficulties within the school.