



Sanctuary Policy

Cardinal McCloskey Community Charter School (“CMCCS” or the “School”) creates a “whole-school” environment where children can learn and thrive by employing the principles of the Sanctuary Model®. Our goal is to ensure that every child in our school is prepared for learning—they are well rested, properly fed, physically alert, and emotionally supported. The Sanctuary Model® provides the foundation for healthy psychological, emotional, and behavioral interactions that create a safe environment for learning and foster the development of resilient, independent and academically successful children.

All of us experience trauma, adversity, and stress. The Sanctuary Model® provides a methodology to address these experiences and respond in a healthy manner. All teachers, administrators, sponsors, parents/guardians, and members of the Board of Trustees will be trained and adhere to the tenets of the Sanctuary Model.

The four foundational components of the Sanctuary Model® include (1) the Seven Commitments (the values we aspire to, the way we agree to be in relationships with each other and to treat each other); (2) S.E.L.F. (the language we use to understand problems and solve them without blaming ourselves or others); (3) trauma theory (understanding what happens to others when they are hurt, and recognizing behaviors as survival skills); and (4) the Sanctuary toolkit (the daily practices that reinforce the theory, the values and the language, and builds the School community).

The Seven Commitments

1. **Commitment to Non-Violence:** As a culture and a society, we are consistently exposed to violence which is known to be damaging to our mind, body and spirit. To create a nonviolent environment, we speak and act towards each other in a manner that is respectful. When challenging behaviors occur, we approach them with curiosity, compassion and understanding, knowing that they are rooted in deeper, more involved psychological and emotional processes (i.e. trauma, adversity and stress). For example, we ask, “What happened to you?” Not, “What is wrong with you?”
2. **Commitment to Emotional Intelligence:** Our understanding of our own emotional status and its impact on others allows us to empathize with each other in order to build a more harmonious community.
3. **Commitment to Shared Governance (Democracy):** Everyone has a voice and deserves to be heard. Open discussions, with a diverse group of people, enable all of us to appreciate each other’s value and contributions. Sometimes meetings are longer because of this, but shared decision-making leads to better decisions and shared responsibility.



4. **Commitment to Open Communication:** We will be willing to have difficult conversations about our community and its members. But we will approach these conversations with a sense of honesty and sensitivity. We will, “say what we mean, but we will not be mean when we say it.”
5. **Commitment to Social Responsibility:** Each member of the community agrees to take responsibility for their words and actions. Furthermore, as individuals and as a community, when we are faced with difficult problems, we will first look to solving the situation as opposed to placing blame. We are in this community together and we can accomplish more when we all contribute.
6. **Commitment to Social Learning:** Together we are smarter than any one of us alone. Uncovering this intelligence requires Open Communication (defined above) and recognizing that our individual experiences provide a unique and valuable viewpoint that the entire community can learn from and appreciate.
7. **Commitment to Growth and Change:** By creating a positive vision of the future for each of us, our school and our students, we nurture a fertile foundation of hope, creativity and innovation. It is through risk-taking, success and failure that we learn and grow. We anticipate that we may make mistakes, but we will use them as opportunities for growth and learning.

S.E.L.F.

S.E.L.F. is a way of organizing conversations in a non-linear, non-hierarchical, and non-blaming way, using language that is not dependent on jargon. The acronym S.E.L.F. represents the four categories that define the most significant challenges people face when exposed to adversity, and how we measure healing — Safety, Emotional Management, Loss, and Future. Using these four categories to organize our conversations, puts everyone on the same page, and allows everyone to participate and contribute to a successful outcome. For example, to promote growth and change, we need (i) to be in a “safe” place (psychologically, socially, emotionally, and physically); (ii) to be able to manage and understand our feelings; (iii) to understand that any change involves loss—the loss of what was; and (iv) to embrace the unknowns of the future.

Trauma Theory

Trauma Theory is understanding the effect that adversity and chronic stress has on the human brain, and how it can affect our students, staff, families and school. Training will be provided for all teachers, administrators, sponsors, board-members, and parents/guardians.

The Sanctuary Tool Kit

The Sanctuary Tool Kit is the practical application of Sanctuary Model® and it provides the day-to-day implementation of the Sanctuary Policy as described below.



Community Meeting

Each class or meeting (i.e. board, staff, etc.) shall commence with a Community Meeting. Classes shall also have one at the end of each day.

The use of daily community meetings will assist us in creating a strong, emotionally intelligent, and supportive environment for all members of our school community. We will use this tool to guide our daily interactions with our students and with each other. In addition, the community meeting will add to student's awareness of the importance of being reflective, and sensitive to the needs of those around us. It will illustrate to students that it is not only acceptable but desirable to ask for and offer assistance and support.

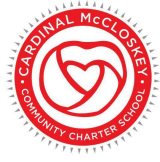
Each person in the Community Meeting is asked by other community members three questions:

- How are you feeling?
 - We often don't recognize what we are feeling, even though our feelings are driving our behavior.
 - Gives teachers, students and staff a finger on the pulse.
 - Makes others feel acknowledged and heard.
 - When stressed we often misread others' feelings — this gives us practice in identifying them.
- What are your goals?
 - Gives us an opportunity to focus on the future instead of the past.
 - Creates an attractor for new behavior.
 - Helps others to know what is important to you.
- Who will you ask for help?
 - Eliminates isolation and promotes trust.
 - Practice in being vulnerable and safe.
 - Builds a sense of social responsibility.

Once every participant has responded to these questions, the meeting may begin. For our young students, these procedures can be modified to suit the audience.

Safety Plans

A safety plan is a list of activities that a person can choose when feeling overwhelmed so that they can avoid engaging in unsafe behavior. Safety plans keep people safe by helping them to regulate their emotions. For example, when you are feeling emotionally stressed or traumatized, you might think of being in a place where you experienced joy or happiness—at a baseball game or on a tropical isle—or, you might go for a walk, say the alphabet backwards, squeeze a stress ball, pray, etc.



Each person's Safety Plan is written and worn on their person as a physical reminder of what we can do when a situation becomes emotionally charged. Using our Safety Plans, each of us can de-escalate tense situations. Each child and staff member will wear their safety plan in a highly accessible location. Staff are trained on how the safety plan works and children are taught how to create and use them.

Red Flag Warning/Meeting

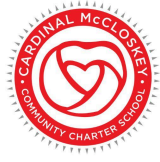
A Red Flag indicates a warning. It is not an "emergency," but it is an issue that needs to be addressed expeditiously. A Red Flag Meeting is a team meeting called to respond to a critical issue or concern. The purpose of the meeting is to respond to the Red Flag. A Red Flag can be called by anyone who feels overwhelmed, unsafe, stressed, traumatized, etc. simply by raising their hand and announcing: "Red Flag." Once the acute situation is eased, we will meet to explain what occurred to bring about the stressful situation. (A third of the meeting time should be devoted to analyzing what happened.) The balance of the meeting should be devoted to solving the problem. The Red Flag Meeting should be no more than thirty (30) minutes. Everyone related "should" attend including the counselor, parent/guardian, teacher, etc. depending on the situation. There is a check-in meeting to follow up on the Red Flag Meeting to see if the action taken rectified or improved the conditions and this should be repeated until the situation no longer occurs.

S.E.L.F. Psychoeducation

The primary goal of S.E.L.F. Psychoeducation is to connect the trauma, adversity, and stress that each of us experiences to our resultant behavior. It is not necessary to be a psychologist to do this. Anyone trained in Sanctuary Model® can help others, using the S.E.L.F. methodology and the Seven Commitments to make the connection between trauma and behavior.

As stated on Sanctuary Model's® website, "the most elementary aspect of becoming trauma-informed is education." Trauma recovery begins with psychoeducation. Educating people about the impact of overwhelming life experiences helps to get everyone "on the same page" with a shared and coherent organizing framework that does not stigmatize the injured person but instead allows a much closer and more empathetic understanding between client and caregiver.

Unlike most of the theoretical jargon that informs so much of mental health treatment, educating people about the psychobiological effects of serious, recurrent, and chronic stress "rings bells" for them. Even people with little education can easily grasp very complex concepts because the concepts are consistent with their own experience. Much of educating people about trauma is simply giving them words for what they already know and helping them see patterns where no patterns existed for them before.



In order to keep the practice of Sanctuary in our community relevant and invigorated we will host multiple boosters throughout the school year. These will involve a variety of forms and topics. Staff will all have the opportunity to plan, execute, and participate in regular booster events. This will help to deepen our understanding of, and commitment to, Sanctuary and its true meaning and purpose.

The primary task of education involves a change in the person's self-perception. We believe that increasing awareness, emphasizing safety, and teaching skills to manage feelings are crucial steps to take in creating an environment that can handle the important work of processing feelings, past trauma, grief, and loss. Changes in knowledge, values, and beliefs won't result in changes in behavior unless they are grounded in a changed perception of the self and situations.

Requirements:

- Each member of the Board of Trustees shall receive a minimum of six (6) hours of professional development per year on the Sanctuary Model.®
- Staff will be required to participate in boosters and refreshers and will have training once per month.
- Sanctuary shall be an inherent factor in all curricula and activities in which our students participate. The principles of the Sanctuary Model shall be taught, practiced, and reinforced daily in the classroom with CMCCS's Sanctuary trained teachers.
- Teachers, Teaching Assistants, and Administrators shall receive Sanctuary training three (3) full days each year.
- Indirect care (i.e. maintenance kitchen staff) shall have an initial Sanctuary training of at least ten (10) hours, and booster training as deemed necessary in the School's sole discretion.
- Parents/guardians will be provided and strongly encouraged to participate in Sanctuary training.
- Records of the above shall be kept by the Principal.

REVISED: 5/6/26