

Middle School Kindness Challenge

<https://kindnesschallenge.com>

Grades and setting: grades 4-8, activities take place in school

Summary: The Middle School Kindness Challenge is an easy way to make kindness commonplace and improve school climate and student learning in the critical middle school years. The Challenge offers kindness activities to teach and foster kindness over a four-week period of the school's choosing. (For 2018, schools can choose any 30 day window between Aug. 1 and Dec. 14.)

The challenge is offered through an online platform and can be successfully completed in three steps: 1) Accept the Challenge and sign-up teachers and staff to participate, 2) Teachers and staff complete a kindness reflection exercise and then teach four kindness building lessons, and 3) Create a Kindness Ritual to make kindness routine at your school.

The Challenge includes 33 expertly-crafted kindness activities from leading content providers for teachers and school staff to select from and teach. The activities, ranging from 5-minute to whole class period lessons, fall into four categories:

- 1 Developing Positive Mindsets: These activities focus on self-management and self-care strategies that equip students with ways to monitor their own feelings, setting them up to be kind to others. Activities include practicing gratitude, goal setting, and positive framing of situations.
- 2 Strengthening Peer Relationships: These activities focus on building constructive interactions among students for a positive classroom and school culture. It includes activities that help students develop empathy for their classmates, listen actively, and resolve conflicts with each other.
- 3 Fostering Empathy: These activities go beyond individual student relationships to tackle larger issues and trends such as stereotypes and bullying based on identity. It includes activities such as shared identity and fostering civic discourse.
- 4 Promoting Cyber-Kindness: These activities focus on getting students to develop a more positive social media presence and the habits of heart and mind to be kind online. Students will learn practical skills to help them engage with social media and online applications, including video games, responsibly.

In order to successfully meet the Challenge, at least 50% of the school's teachers, administrators, and specialized support staff participate in the Challenge. All participating staff:

- Sign-up and create a Challenge dashboard account
- Take the Reflection Exercise
- Teach and rate at least four Kindness Activities (out of 33 available)
- Help launch an enduring Kindness Ritual at school

Once a school successfully meets the Challenge, the Middle School Kindness Challenge Team at Stand for Children will review and validate the school's eligibility for:

- Kind Schools Badge on GreatSchools.org
- Kind Schools Plaque
- Entry into a \$5,000 DonorsChoose.org drawing

Context: The Middle School Challenge is a project of Stand for Children.

Effectiveness/Outcomes: According to the Middle School Challenge website, “By teaching kids how to practice kindness, be more empathetic, and manage their emotions and actions, they become better equipped to navigate our complex world, at school, at home, and online... Middle schools where teachers and school staff intentionally and systematically teach and foster kindness are more effective at helping students succeed, both in school and in life. Because we know this, the Middle School Kindness Challenge offers an engaging, exciting, and readily doable opportunity to:

- Improve school climate
- Reduce suspensions
- Foster Social & Emotional development”

Cost: free

Contact information and useful links: email: program@kindnesschallenge.com