



## Safe School Buddies Parent Appeal Form

As a parent, I believe in the benefits and impact that the **Safe School Buddies Program** provides. Because we strive for a safe and inclusive campus for our children, and we do not tolerate bullying or mistreatment in any form, please consider implementation of this social-emotional learning program.

The Safe School Buddies Program prepares younger students to become Upstanders. It equips student Buddies to be positive role models in their peer groups. The program, for students in grades 1-3, is adapted from the Safe School Ambassadors® Program to meet the needs of younger students. The Safe School Ambassadors® Program is the nation's most effective student-led bullying prevention program and meets Social Emotional Learning (SEL) requirements. It has been adopted by over 2,000 schools, training 100,000 students in 39 states and 5 countries.

Please read the attached Safe School Ambassadors® Program outline and consider an introduction to the program from Community Matters through:

- Phone introduction from the Director of Outreach & Services
- In-person meeting with the CEO and Director of Outreach & Services
- Presentation to staff from the services team
- Speak to a colleague who has the SSA Program at their school

Bullying is a national epidemic and requires a multitude of approaches and collaboration to galvanize real change. Community Matters is a nationally recognized leader in bullying prevention, school safety measures and school climate improvement. They address and create programs, initiatives and best practices that are effective and proven to reduce bullying and mistreatment, with the end goal of simply putting an end to bullying.

I implore you to adopt this proven program at our school.

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Parent/Guardian

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## Safe School Ambassadors® Program

### The Safe School Ambassadors® Program is

- An evidence-based, long term prevention program
- Focused on improving school climate and safety by changing social norms
- Student-centered and led, designed for students in 4th – 12th grades
- Sustainable and cost-effective for schools

The Safe School Ambassadors® Program identifies and selects socially influential students from diverse groups across campus. Ambassadors are equipped and empowered to safely intervene when they witness bullying, cyberbullying and other forms of mistreatment and harmful behaviors.

### Impact of the Safe School Ambassadors Program

- Decreased incidents of bullying, harassment, cyberbullying, violence, exclusion and other forms of harmful behaviors and mistreatment
- Increased attendance and academic performance
- Reductions in costs and losses in both time and money related to suspensions
- Improved relationships among and between students and adults
- Increased respect for diversity and different ways of thinking and acting
- Increased feelings of connectedness to school and each other

### Core of the SSA Program – Student Voice

- Students are a powerful force to improve school climate and safety
- Students see, hear and know things that adults don't
- Students can intervene in ways adults can't
- Students are often the first to arrive on the scenes of most incidents before adults even know about it
- Students determine the social norms; what is acceptable and not

*"The SSA Program has been the single most effective program for reducing bullying and behavior incidents on our campus. It's so cost effective and it really gets the kids involved in solving problems before they escalate. It has brought our students together to create a solid sense of community. Being a Program Advisor for SSA for the past 10 years has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career – I think all schools should have the SSA Program."*

– **Dan Evans**, Counselor, Rincon Valley Middle School, Santa Rosa, CA



**The Safe School Ambassadors® Program has been implemented in 2,000 schools, training over 100,000 students in 39 U.S. States, and 5 countries.**

*"We've noticed a steady decrease of negative behaviors and an increase in positive behaviors. Students report using conflict resolution skills at home with family members, on the bus, on the playground, in class and even at the park after school."*

– **Vickie Duty**, Principal, Desert Heights Elementary, Reno, NV



# Community Matters provides

## Introductory Materials and Videos to

- Describe program elements and steps for implementation
- Help secure administrative and staff support
- Identify, recruit and select students and adults for training

## Two days of interactive training at school site for selected students and adults

- Students develop and practice communication and intervention skills essential to creating a positive and inclusive school climate
- Students are prepared, motivated and inspired to take on their new role as Ambassadors for their schools
- Adults learn how to facilitate small group meetings that provide Ambassadors with ongoing skill development and support

## Program implementation materials and support

- Comprehensive Principal and Program Advisor's Handbooks for implementing SSA with fidelity
- Family Group Facilitators' Guidebook including meeting agendas, activities, strategies, and forms
- Student Ambassadors' Guidebook including activities, reflection journals and intervention tools
- Web-based resources, newsletters, and data management tools
- Ongoing support via email and phone

## Program assessment and measurement tools

- Action "Snapshot" Campaigns, measuring Ambassadors' activity
- Discipline data measuring program impact on school climate
- Year-End Surveys for Ambassadors and program adults
- Anecdotal information gleaned from the Principal letter and other feedback

## The Safe School Ambassadors® Program complements other school climate efforts

The SSA Program functions as a stand-alone program, as well as a complement to other programs such as PBIS, Restorative Practices, peer mentoring, conflict mediation, character education and more.

## Cost

\$6,500 per year for the first three years

- Price includes supplies and materials, technical assistance and post training support, access to program tools and best practices, trainer fees and travel
- Discounts may be provided for multiple site implementation and partners
- After year three, schools can move to the Training of the Trainer (TOT) Sustainability Model. Cost varies and is determined based on number of participants
- The TOT Model enables schools to train and run the SSA Program on their own. The cost is \$350 per year, which keeps the SSA Site License current

**Community Matters also provides the Safe School Buddies Program for students in grades 1-3, School Climate Assessment, Restorative Practices, Staff Development Trainings, Assemblies, Parent Workshops and more.**

## Funding Sources for SSA

Many districts and schools have secured funding through

- State and federal grants focused on SEL and school climate improvement
- Title funding
- District and principal's discretionary funds
- PTA/O, district funds; site councils
- Service Clubs and Education Foundations

Please contact Community Matters for our Funding Guide for School Climate Improvement which includes resources and tools to secure funding for your school.