

Kindness MATTERS

Student Toolkit 2026



COMMUNITY
MATTERS

Safe School
Ambassadors®



FOR MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOLS

Kindness MATTERS

WHO WE ARE

Community Matters is an internationally recognized, innovative, and thought-leading organization committed to improving the social-emotional climate of our nation's schools and communities. Founded in 1996, CM has evolved from its earliest focus on youth development and bullying prevention to become a widely respected consulting, training, and presenting organization. We collaborate with schools and community partners to improve school climate and culture so that all students and adults on campus feel connected, empowered, and engaged, working toward a future where school safety, positive climates, and freedom from bullying and violence empower every community to thrive.

Kindness Matters®

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ABOUT THE KINDNESS MATTERS CAMPAIGN

The Kindness Matters campaign is a nationwide, student-led initiative that empowers students to build safer, more inclusive school communities. Through a two-week, student-run campaign, participants learn to notice and interrupt mistreatment by embracing three core values: being kind, being curious, and being courageous.

Students bring the campaign to life through social media outreach, morning announcements, schoolwide activities like Chalk Walks and the Wall of Courage, and by taking the Kindness Matters Pledge. The campaign gives young people the tools, language, and confidence to speak up when they witness hate or unkindness — whether in the hallways or online — and to support their peers in creating a culture where everyone feels like they belong.

By joining the Kindness Matters campaign, students become part of a larger movement working to prevent bullying, exclusion, and hate, one act of kindness at a time.



Learn more
[here.](#)

EXAMPLES OF MISTREATMENT

NOTICE



A student shoved a smaller classmate into the lockers as he walked by, laughing with his friends.



“No one likes you!”



A group chat was created just to post embarrassing photos of one classmate with cruel captions.



One of your friends asked you to look into the backpack and you see a firearm. They laugh about it but it makes you nervous.

ACT



Step in when your peers say or do something hateful



Support people who have experienced hate



Learn what hate looks like offline & online



Talk to a trusted adult

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

RUN YOUR OWN KINDNESS MATTERS CAMPAIGN

It's time to launch your campaign! This section offers guidance on organizing, promoting, and growing your campaign through social media and on-campus activities.

Use this section to make an impact, build a following, and create a safer, more inclusive school environment.



Image 5: A group of smiling teenagers links arms.

Campaign Launch Steps:

- 1. Create Your Campaign Blueprint:** Follow step-by-step instructions to get your campaign off the ground. Learn how to set a timeline, pick your in-person activities, announce your initiative, build excitement, and promote consistent engagement.
- 2. Build Your Team:** Learn how to assemble a group of passionate peers who will work together to organize and run the campaign effectively.
- 3. Create a Social Media Plan:** Discover how to establish an engaging and impactful online presence for your campaign.
- 4. Host Schoolwide Activities:** Engage your school community through interactive in-person activities designed to bring the campaign to life. Organize Chalk Walks with inspiring messages in busy areas, set up a Wall of Courage where students can pledge, or run Hand Cutouts and Paper Chain Activities for everyone to share.
- 5. Grow Your Movement:** Find strategies for increasing your campaign's reach. This section will help you expand your impact and encourage others to join the cause.



STEP 1: CAMPAIGN BLUEPRINT

It's time to create your campaign blueprint! This blueprint will be your structure for running the campaign. Following the blueprint will enable you to build a culture of courage, curiosity, and kindness.

A. Set a Campaign Date

Campaigns should be 2 weeks in duration.

Start Date: _____

End Date: _____



B. Create your social media posts and timeline

Social Media team follows the Kindness Matters Campaign Social Media Checklist on **Step 3**.

C. Morning Announcements

Content Creators team up to review scripted morning announcements and make any changes needed. Create a schedule for sharing the morning announcements throughout the two-week campaign.

D. Pick Locations for Posters and Stickers

There are posters for the campaign. Choose key spots in the school to hang your poster. Decide when/where/who will distribute campaign stickers.

Poster locations: _____

E. Select the Schoolwide Activity

Pick one of the 4 activities in **Step 4** to include your whole school in the Kindness Matters campaign. Detailed instructions for each activity are included at the end of the toolkit.

Next, pick the dates for the activity.

☐

Kindness Pledge

☐

Wall of Courage

☐

Chalk Walk

☐

Paper/Hand Chains

Start Date: _____

End Date: _____



STEP 2: CAMPAIGN TEAM

Identify Roles: Identify who will be responsible for each role. Refer to the definitions and responsibilities at the bottom of this page for each role so that everyone understands their role as a campaign team member!

Campaign Lead(s)

Social Media Team

Content Creator(s)

Outreach Coordinator(s)

Campaign Lead(s):

The person in charge of the entire campaign. They make big decisions, keep everyone on track, and make sure the campaign runs smoothly. Think of them as the team's captain!



Social Media Team:

The people who handle the campaign's social media posts. They post content, reply to messages, and make sure the campaign looks professional and active online.



Content Creators:

The creative team! These are the people who post flyers, make videos, share morning announcements, and create all the visuals and materials that get shared at events.



Outreach Coordinators:

The connectors. They build relationships with other students, clubs, and organizations, helping to spread the word and get more people involved in the campaign.





STEP 3: SOCIAL MEDIA PLAN

Kindness Matters Campaign Social Media Checklist

This checklist is the foundation of your campaign's digital identity. By following it, you'll build an engaging online presence that reflects the Kindness Matters campaign pledge. Use the checklist to ensure consistency and make a meaningful, sustained impact online and on your campus!

1. Talk to your administration

- ☐ Ask your school if you can "take over" the social media platforms for the campaign period.
- ☐ Identify the point person to send graphics and text for them to post.
- ☐ Follow Community Matters on social media:

2. Set a Posting Schedule

- ☐ Weekly Goal: Post 2–3 times per week.
- ☐ Campaign Goal: Ensure at least 6 posts.
- ☐ Timing: Post during high-engagement times (lunchtime, club meetings, early evening).

3. Prepare Campaign Messaging

- ☐ Use pre-made graphics and captions from the Kindness Matters social media kit.
- ☐ Update to include your school's name and/or mascot.
- ☐ Send all posts and a posting timeline to your school's social media point person.

4. Plan Extra Content Ideas (Optional)

Storytelling:

Share student and community leader stories about kindness, inclusion, or overcoming hate.

Example: "Meet [Name], a committed student of [School/Community Organization Name]."

Spotlight Community Members:

Highlight teachers, staff, or students contributing to inclusivity.

Promote Events:

Post reminders and highlights of schoolwide activities. Include engaging photos or videos.

Share Campus Resources:

Highlight mental health services and organizations helping youth.

Inspirational Content:

Post quotes aligned with the campaign: "Be kind. Be curious. Be courageous."

Share stats or facts about hate prevention and its importance in your school community

Interactive Content:

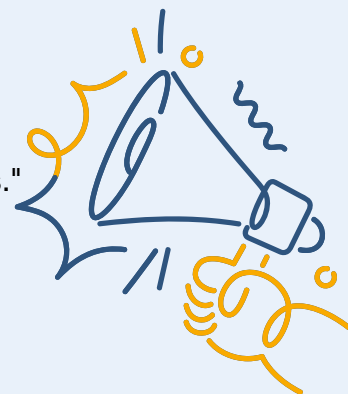
Polls or Q&A: "What does kindness mean to you?"

Challenges: "Tag a friend who spreads kindness and love!"

5. Follow Community Matters on Social Media

 @safe_school_ambassadors

 Community Matters - Safe School Ambassadors



SOCIAL MEDIA TEMPLATES



[SCHOOL NAME] is joining a nationwide Kindness Matters campaign to create safer more inclusive school communities! We are committed to empowering our school community to prevent mistreatment by being kind, curious, and courageous. Follow us for the next 2 weeks to learn how you can be kind, curious, and courageous, too! Learn more at www.community-matters.org. @safe_school_ambassadors #KindnessMatters #Upstander #CommunityMatters #SafeSchoolAmbassadors



Be Kind! It's simple and starts with you. Reach out to new people. Say hello to the first 10 people you see in the hallways. Include someone new in an activity or check-in on a friend. How can you be kind today? Learn more at www.community-matters.org. @safe_school_ambassadors #KindnessMatters #Upstander #CommunityMatters #SafeSchoolAmbassadors



Be Curious! Words have power - use them wisely. Think first, post second. Remember, there are real people behind the screens, and your actions online are just as meaningful as those in real life. Learn more at www.community-matters.org. @safe_school_ambassadors #KindnessMatters #Upstander #CommunityMatters #SafeSchoolAmbassadors



Be Courageous! Courage starts with you. When you notice hurtful words or actions, don't stay silent - speak up. Whether online or in person, your voice can interrupt mistreatment and make a difference. Learn more at www.community-matters.org. @safe_school_ambassadors #KindnessMatters #Upstander #CommunityMatters #SafeSchoolAmbassadors



Online is IRL! Remember that the things you say online have real life consequences. If you see a comment or concerning post - speak up. You can reach out to that person in a direct message, or report the comment. Learn more at www.community-matters.org. @safe_school_ambassadors #KindnessMatters #Upstander #CommunityMatters #SafeSchoolAmbassadors



Spread kindness! It starts with you. When you notice hurtful words or actions, don't stay silent - speak up. Whether online or in person, your voice can interrupt mistreatment and make a difference. Learn more at www.community-matters.org. @safe_school_ambassadors #KindnessMatters #Upstander #CommunityMatters #SafeSchoolAmbassadors

All images and captions are available for download here.

MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Morning announcements are a great time to share information with the entire school. We've written a script for two weeks of announcements for you! Feel free to repurpose the scripts to create more of your own social media posts.

Day 1: Over the next two weeks, we are going to be talking about ways we can prevent mistreatment by using our voices to spread kindness. The Kindness Matters campaign is a national campaign for students that gives us the tools to create safer, more inclusive schools. We each have the power to stand up to mistreatment when we see it, whether that's in the school hallways or online. Each day, we'll be sharing one thing you can do to spread kindness. Today we can start by being kind. Today, say 'hello' to the first ten people you see. That can include saying hi to teachers, staff, and maybe even students you don't know. Just wave, smile, and say 'good morning!' It's that simple. You just might end up making someone's day! Visit www.community-matters.org to learn more.

Day 2: Welcome back to Kindness Week 1! Today's tip on how to spread kindness focuses again on being kind. Today, check in on a friend and ask them how they are doing. Like, how are they *really* doing? And then, most importantly, listen carefully and actively to their answer. When you ask someone how they are doing, don't automatically accept their answer if they say, "good," or "fine." They might really be fine! But if they don't seem ok, let the person know that it's ok to not always be ok! And if someone doesn't want to talk about how they are feeling, don't force them to. However someone is feeling today, accept and honor their feelings. It's likely that person will feel seen and appreciated. Visit www.community-matters.org to learn more.

Day 3: We're here with more Kindness tips as part of Kindness Week 1! To prevent mistreatment, you not only need to be kind, but you also need to be curious. Here's today's tip for how to be curious. Mistreatment can be sneaky. It often hides in plain sight, like in jokes and "funny" memes. When you hear a joke or see something online that makes fun of someone's identity, stop and ask yourself, is this actually a joke? Or is it a mean comment *disguised* as a joke? To stand up to mistreatment, you have to first notice it. And when it comes to stuff online, you definitely want to avoid passing on hurtful messages. Always think first, post second. Visit www.community-matters.org to learn more.

Day 4: Happy Thursday! Today's Kindness tip is about being curious, this time in online spaces. Today, when you are on your phone or your laptop and you see a post, ask yourself - who is behind the screen? It's easier to say hurtful things to someone when you don't see them face-to-face. It's extra easy if your identity is anonymous online. But remember there are real people behind those screens and the posts that you see. Remember, online is IRL. We'll be back tomorrow for our final Kindness tip of the week. Visit www.community-matters.org to learn more.

MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Day 5: Welcome back to Kindness Week 1! We're coming at you with another Kindness tip of the day. Today, we're focusing again on being curious by learning how to notice when a classmate might need some extra support. Ask yourself, Has this person been acting differently lately? Do they seem lonely? Being curious means paying attention to changes in words and behavior. If these changes are unusual or concerning, they could be a sign that your classmate needs help. Stay tuned next week for more Kindness tips. Visit www.community-matters.org to learn more.

Day 6: It's Week 2 of the Kindness Matters campaign! We're starting off this week where we left off last week - on being curious. To help prevent mistreatment, you need to learn the signs for when to seek help for your peers. One sign a peer may need help is when someone believes that unfairness can be fixed with violence. This is extra true for violence against a specific group of people. It's perfectly normal to be annoyed or angry when you feel you've been treated unfairly. After all, the world isn't always fair! But it's *not* ok to channel those feelings into acts of aggression towards one person or an entire group. That's how hate becomes violent. Join us tomorrow for our next Kindness tip. Visit www.community-matters.org to learn more.

Day 7: Good morning! We're back with another Kindness tip. So far we've learned that to prevent mistreatment, we have to be kind and we have to be curious. Last but not least, we have to be courageous. Mistreatment is a hard subject to talk about. It's even harder to stand up to our friends when they say, share, or post something unkind. But being an UPstander means having the courage to start tough conversations. Today, if you hear a classmate say something mean, have the courage to say, "Hey, that's not cool!" or "We don't say things like that around here." For more tips on how to start the conversation, visit www.community-matters.org.

Day 8: Our Kindness tip of the day focuses again on being courageous. Did you know that 82% of planned attacks on schools were prevented because someone spoke up when they heard or saw something concerning? Ordinary students saved lives by being brave enough to speak up. Today's tip — think of one trusted adult that you could go to if you ever needed to get help for yourself or a classmate. This could be a teacher, a coach, a janitor. It doesn't even have to be an adult at this school. Don't say it aloud, but say it in your head. If you're ever worried about a classmate, go to this trusted adult. You're getting help, not getting someone in trouble! Visit www.community-matters.org to learn more.

MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Day 9: Hi everyone! Today we have one more Kindness tip about being courageous. If you're ever flown on an airplane, the flight attendants always tell you before take off that, in the event of an emergency, put on your own oxygen mask before you assist others. People who are generous and empathetic often end up putting others' needs before their own. Their intentions are good, but eventually they often burn out and their mental health suffers. It takes courage to know when to step back and take care of yourself first. Today's tip of the day is to pick one thing you can do to take care of yourself. Maybe that's going to bed an hour earlier so your body gets more rest. Maybe that's spending 10 minutes outside in nature. Maybe it's choosing something healthy to eat for lunch to fuel your body. It can be super small and simple! Taking care of yourself will help you to take better care of those around you.

Day 10: Happy Friday! We've made it to the final day of our Kindness Matters school campaign! Every morning over the last two weeks, we've shared tips for how to stand up and speak up to prevent mistreatment. Remember, to be an UPstander you must be kind, be curious, and be courageous. We each have the power to make a difference in our school and community by spreading kindness. Together, we can make sure our school is a safe, inclusive place where everyone feels like they belong. Thanks for joining us these past two weeks! To keep learning more about ways to spread kindness, visit www.community-matters.org.



STEP 4: SCHOOLWIDE ACTIVITIES

These activities are designed to spark conversation, inspire action, and build a culture of kindness, curiosity, and courage. **Pick at least 1** schoolwide activity for your campaign. By engaging your peers, you'll inspire your school to join the movement and build a culture of kindness.

A. The Kindness Matters Pledge

Pledge Statement: "I will spread kindness and prevent cruelty in my community by being kind, curious, and courageous!"



B. Chalk Walk

Use chalk to write uplifting messages around campus

C. Wall of Courage

Create a wall where students can sign pledges or post messages about Kindness.

D. Interactive Activities

Hand Cutouts: Write messages of kindness on cutouts to display.

Paper Chains: Create chains with written commitments to kindness and inclusivity.

E. Plan a School Assembly

Invite a speaker from your community who embodies Kindness!



TIPS FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

1. Visibility Matters:

- Set up event stations in high-traffic areas like hallways, lunchrooms, or entrances to maximize participation.

2. Timing is Key:

- Plan events to coincide with school assemblies, sports games, or other gatherings to reach a larger audience.

3. Seek Permissions:

- Work with school administrators to ensure all activities align with school policies and are scheduled in approved locations.

4. Plan and Prepare:

- Using the detailed checklist for in-person activities.

5. Engage and Celebrate:

- Share updates and photos of the event planning process. Be sure to post pictures of the event, especially of the finished product!



TAKE THE PLEDGE

Take the Kindness Matters Pledge. Download and print the pre-made banner and ask students to sign it, or create your own signable banner. Either way, hang the banner in a frequently visited space at your school, such as the cafeteria, the gym, or the school entryway. That way, people are reminded every day of the pledge they took.



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Pledge Banner: Available for download here.

Alternative options:

- Make a Google form for students to take the pledge.
- Post the pledge on social media to reach as many students as you can.

STICKERS AND SWAG

Everybody loves stickers and swag! You can download the pre-made sticker templates and print them out on sticker paper. These templates can also be used to create popular swag items to hand out, like pens, water bottles, and t-shirts. These are great to include at an all-school assembly or if you set up an information table. Need money to order the swag? Try asking your school or PTA if there are funds available for a student-led project. Local businesses often love to sponsor students' projects, too.

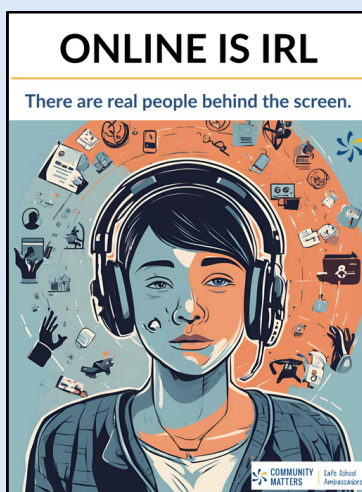


Sticker Templates: Available for download here.

POSTERS AND FLYERS

Posters are a vital component of your Kindness Matters campaign! Hang these in places where people are likely to see them, for example, bulletin boards, main doors, at the lunch line, and even in bathroom stalls. There are 6 campaign posters.

Download and print our pre-made posters, or make your own!



[Posters & Flyers: Available for download here.](#)

HOST A CHALK WALK

A Chalk Walk is an impactful and creative way to spread positive messages across your school campus. By using chalk to write inspiring words and campaign slogans, you can engage your peers and draw attention to the movement.

Chalk marketing—a low-cost, eco-friendly strategy. This strategy works because it is unexpected, creative, and encourages curiosity.

1. Plan Your Chalk Walk

- Choose a High-Traffic Area: Select spots where students pass by frequently, such as walkways, entrances, or near the cafeteria. By placing messages in high-traffic areas, you can naturally draw attention to the campaign and engage more people.
- Obtain Permission: Check with school administrators to ensure chalking is allowed in your chosen locations.

2. Gather Your Materials:

- Sidewalk chalk in multiple colors
- Stencils (optional, for more precise designs)
- Cleaning tools for mistakes or adjustments (e.g., wet cloths)

3. Write Your Messages

- Focus on short, impactful phrases related to the Kindness Matters campaign:
 - “Kindness Matters.”
 - “Be Kind. Be Curious. Be Courageous.”
 - “Say hello”
 - **Pro Tip:** Keep your messages short, bright, and legible so they’re easy to read as people walk by.
- Add visual elements like hearts, stars, or the school logo to make the messages eye-catching and positive.

4. Promote on Social Media

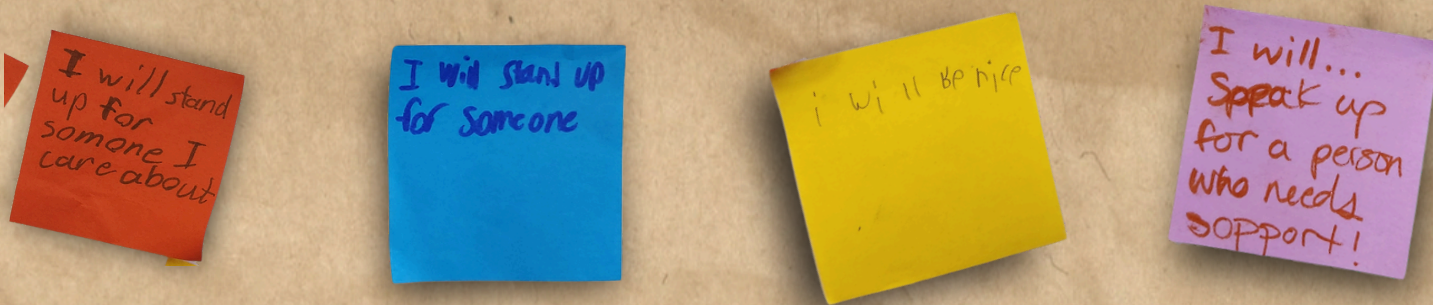
- Take Photos or Videos:
 - Capture students writing messages or walking through the chalk art.
- Post Content:
 - Share visuals on Instagram, TikTok, or Twitter with captions like:
 - “Spreading kindness and positivity one step at a time! 🌟 #KindnessMatters #ChalkWalk”

5. Clean-Up Plan

- Don’t forget to plan for clean-up after the campaign period!



CREATE A WALL OF COURAGE



A Wall of Courage is a way for each student in your school to make a personal pledge to be kind, curious, and courageous. The wall should be posted in a public space and students encouraged to make their personal pledges during an assembly or during morning announcements.

Materials:

- Large piece of butcher paper with “Wall of Courage” written or painted on it.
- Post-it notes (multi-colored) or colored markers for students to write their pledges.

Creating the Wall:

- Students are encouraged to write down one thing they will do from now on to stand up and speak up to prevent and/or stop hate and spread kindness. Ask students to share how they will be kind, curious, and/or courageous.

Managing the Wall:

- Throughout the campaign period, have student volunteers **remove** any Post-Its that may be **inappropriate or unfriendly** during high-volume times (school breaks, lunch, and immediately after-school).
- If you have created multiple stations at your school for students to write on Post-Its, collect them up at the end of the each day. Assemble all of the sheets into one or two big “Walls of Courage” that can be displayed in a visible spot in the school.

Share and tag Community Matters on Social Media:

 @safe_school_ambassadors

 Community Matters - Safe School Ambassadors



HAND CUTOUTS & PAPER CHAINS

Hand cutouts and paper chains are an engaging and visually striking way to promote the Kindness Matters message. Through student collaboration, you can inspire a sense of community and shared responsibility for kindness, curiosity, and courage. Follow these steps to bring this idea to life:

1. Gather Your Materials

- Colored construction paper (variety of colors).
- Scissors.
- Markers, pens, or crayons.
- Tape, glue, or stapler for assembling the chains.
- Optional: Stickers, glitter, or other decorative items.

2. Create the Hand Cutouts

• Trace and Cut Out Hands

- Provide students with paper to trace their hand outlines. Cut out the traced hands as neatly as possible.

• Write a Message

- On each hand cutout, students can write the pledge, one way they will be an UPstander today, or words of encouragement. Encourage students to personalize their handprints with drawings, doodles, or meaningful designs.
- **Example phrases:** “I pledge to spread kindness.” “Be Kind. Be Curious. Be Courageous.” “Together, we can spread kindness.”

3. Assemble: You can either link the hands together or create a separate paper chain.

- **Paper Chain:** connect different color paper strips by stapling, taping, or gluing them together
- **Hand Chain:** connect the hand cutouts by stapling, taping, or gluing them together

4. Display: Hang the paper chain or hands in a prominent location, such as the school entrance, hallway, or gymnasium.

5. Promote Engagement

- **Host a Creation Station:** Set up a table during lunch or after school with all required materials for students to participate.
- **Incorporate in Events:** Consider using the chain as part of a Wall of Courage or school assembly.
- **Encourage Collaboration:** Aim for participation from as many students as you can!

6. Promote on Social Media

- **Take Photos or Videos:** Capture moments of students creating hand cutouts, assembling the chain, and collaborating.
- **Post Content:**
 - **Share visuals with captions like:** “Hands together for kindness! 🖐️ Join our #KindnessMatters movement. #SpreadKindness”



STEP 5: KEEP IT GOING

SAFE SCHOOL AMBASSADORS PROGRAM



Image 6: A group of girls smiles for the camera.

The Kindness Matters campaign doesn't have to end when the toolkit does. To create lasting change on your campus, bring the Safe School Ambassadors Program to your school. SSA trains a diverse group of student leaders to safely and effectively intervene when they see bullying, exclusion, or conflict, turning the momentum from your campaign into an ongoing culture of kindness and connection.

Start by talking with a trusted staff member, counselor, or administrator about bringing SSA to your school. Share what you learned through the Kindness Matters campaign and how a trained team of student Ambassadors could build on that foundation year after year. Community Matters can connect you with the resources and support to get started.

Every action you take as an upstander contributes to building safer, more inclusive communities where everyone feels valued. This Kindness Matters Campaign Toolkit is just the beginning, a resource to help you learn, act, and inspire change. When you choose to stand up and speak up, you empower others to do the same, and you become part of a nationwide movement driven by kindness, curiosity, and courage.

Now it's your turn: take what you've learned, use the tools provided in this Toolkit, and start creating a positive impact in your school, online, and beyond. Let's spread kindness together, because Kindness Matters!



FOLLOW US ON IG



Stay up to date on the latest news and research. Learn more tips for being an UPstander. Tag [@safe_school_ambassadors](#) in your school awareness campaign posts and use #KindnessMatters to link to a national movement.



Image 7: A screenshot of social media posts on the Community Matters Instagram account.

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www.community-matters.org