



5

days
acts
habits

Random Acts of Kindness Challenge

"When given the choice between being right or being kind, choose kind"

Dr. Wayne W. Dyer

Let us uplift the importance of kindness not being random, but an intentional act of making a districtwide commitment to choosing to do the right thing, to act with kindness and to make kindness what we are known for across the nation!

February 12 -16th is recognized as Random Acts of Kindness Week where people all over the world are encouraged to pay it forward by participating in random acts of kindness to demonstrate care and love for others.

A review of Educational Research suggests that, "schools where students feel safe, engaged, and connected to their teachers are also schools that have narrower achievement gaps between low-income and their wealthier peers." In addition, research also indicates that "fostering kindness can be a powerful solution to some of schools' biggest challenges."

This year, the GCS Character Development Team challenges everyone to identify at least one action of kindness to implement each day for five days.

After applying these 5 acts of kindness for 5 days, make a commitment to fostering 5 habits of kindness in your instructional practices throughout the year.



GCS...be kind

Staff & Students Pathway

Day 1: Stay Connected	Day 2: Stay Positive	Day 3: Stay Engaged	Day 4: Stay Motivated	Day 5: Stay Kind
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning Meetings • Attendance Questions • Power of Being Seen • Teacher/Student Surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restorative Practice • Self-Transcendent Mission Statements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindfulness • Brain Breaks • Teach & Do Now 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrinsic/Extrinsic Motivators • Daily Goals • Kindness Box 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAKTIVIST

The learning experiences listed below will encourage high level student engagement, which contributes to increasing academic achievement.

Day 1: Stay Connected by challenging individuals to be mindful of others and seek ways in which they can provide support.

Morning Meetings - Use morning meetings to tap into the social emotional needs of students before the academic day starts to set the tone for being present and learning.

Morning meetings have four key components:

- **Greeting:** Students and teachers greet and welcome each other.
- **Sharing:** Students share something about themselves or their lives, and the rest of their peers listen, then ask follow-up questions or offer comments.
- **Activity:** The group completes an activity that encourages teamwork while re-emphasizing social or academic skills.
- **Morning message:** Students read a short message from their teacher, usually describing what is to come in the day ahead.

For more information please [click here](#).

Attendance Questions - Instead of simply taking attendance by calling roll, ask students engaging questions that allow them a chance to share things about themselves and learn things about others. This creates a sense of belonging and acceptance which will help students to want to come school and be present as a team member. For more information please [click here](#).

Questions may be:

- What's your favorite food/movie/book/celebrity/season?
- What was the most beautiful/interesting thing that you saw this morning on your way to school?
- What's the taste of happiness/the shape of sadness/the smell of joy?

Power of Being Seen - Teachers/Staff go through student rosters with colored markers and make check marks under columns labeled "Name/Face," "Something Personal," "Personal/Family Story," and "Academic Standing," to note whether they know the child just by name or something more—their grades, their family story, their hobbies etc. This practice will assist Teachers/Staff in identifying students to become better familiar with the whole child as research shows, "students who don't form meaningful connections at school may be at risk for behavior problems, dropping out, and even committing suicide." The goal is to have every student connect to at least one staff member in the building every day through the school year. For more information please [click here](#).

Teacher/Student Surveys - Teacher-student relationships lie at the core of every student's educational experience. Research shows that by identifying commonalities between teacher and student can be leveraged to improve academic outcomes. For more information please [click here](#).

Day 2: Stay Positive by using optimism, sharing, and connecting with others to create a positive atmosphere.

The learning experiences listed below will encourage young people to mobilize and create change, starting with themselves.

Restorative Practice - "Restorative practices differ from punitive justice in that the goal is mediation rather than punishment." This practice provides a safe space for disagreements to be heard and resolved in a peaceful manner. "Restorative practices let schools grow as a community and give students permission to learn from failure and forgiveness rather than punishment." For more information please [click here](#).

Self-Transcendent Mission Statements - Students create mission statements for why they are committed to a class beyond the immediate gain. Research shows that by having students create self-oriented motivations for learning can improve academic outcomes through the development of self-awareness and persistence. For more information please [click here](#).

Day 3: Stay Engaged by creating opportunities to collaborate with others and by sharing strategies to overcome obstacles.

These suggested strategies will inspire students and adults to apply intentional strategies to refresh their thinking and to help their brains incubate and process new information.

Mindfulness - Make mindfulness a part of classroom learning by integrating it into curriculum-themed activities through exercises in breathing, sensory experience, guided imagery, and movement. For examples of how to incorporate mindfulness exercises in the classroom, visit please [click here](#).

Brain Breaks - A brain break is a short period of time when we change up the routine of incoming information. Use brain breaks and focused-attention practices to positively impact emotional states and learning. Brain breaks could be a quick walk-about on the playground or track before starting class, starting a lesson with a game or conversation. Brain breaks are quick ways to recharge so that one can focus their attention when the time comes to learn and recall new information. For more information please [click here](#).

Teach & Do Now - This learning experience offers a level appropriate strategies for building resilience in all youth. These strategies provide students with an opportunity to learn how to communicate effectively with a diverse group of individuals. For more information please [click here](#).

Day 4: Stay Motivated by performing positive acts to encourage and inspire others.

The following strategies will inspire students to use positive behavior to set the foundation for an enriching, optimistic, climate and culture throughout the learning community.

Intrinsic/ Extrinsic Motivators - Students feel more involved and connected to their schools when given roles in the school to create a positive environment. For example "participating in safety patrols, focusing on recycling, keeping public spaces clean,, being on school committees to solve problems" are all examples of how schools can engage their students in being contributors to a positive school culture that brings intrinsic and extrinsic gratification that increases students' sense of ability. For more information please [click here](#).

Daily Goal - By helping students to identify a brief daily goal, we are creating habits of being able to self-regulate their emotions and charging them with responsible decision making. This learning experience will allow students to take ownership as well as allow teachers to identify which students need additional coaching. For more information please [click here](#).

Kindness Box - Create a box in which individuals can place notes into the kindness box that captures a moment that they witnessed another member of the group being kind and thoughtful. This could mean recognizing someone who took on additional duties without being asked, assisting in a difficult task with others while keeping a positive attitude, etc. At the end of the day or specified period, take the notes out and read them aloud to the group. This activity of "caught being kind" is designed to create a space where acknowledgements happen and the actions of others are recognized, not for a prize but for the gift of simply being kind.

Day 5: Stay Kind by continuing to seek opportunities to respond to someone else's needs with compassion and support.

All strategies provided will aid in the creation of a caring, thoughtful environment that highlights inclusiveness and compassion for others.

Are you a RAKtivist?

RAKtivists are all over the place. If a student stops to hold the door open for someone with their hands full, that student is RAKtivist. If a person pays for someone else's lunch in the line behind them, that person is a RAKtivist too. A RAKtivist is someone "who inspires hope and generosity with their actions as much as their words." For more information please [click here](#).



Family & Community Pathway

Day 1: Stay Connected	Day 2: Stay Positive	Day 3: Stay Engaged	Day 4: Stay Motivated	Day 5: Stay Kind
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework Diners • Dinner Dilemmas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindfulness • Get the Ya-Yas Out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book Swap • Become a GCS Reading Buddy/Mentor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivational Note/Card Exchange • Kindness Box 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAKTIVIST

The learning experiences listed below will encourage high level student engagement, which contributes to increasing academic achievement.

Day 1: Stay Connected by challenging individuals to be mindful of others and seek ways in which they can provide support.

The suggested activities below enable families and community partners to get involved and let their presence be known in area schools while staying connected to students and their academic needs.

Homework Diners - This is a resource that brings families and schools together at least one evening per week to share a community meal and foster frequent communication between families and the larger school community. This is a great way to give back to the community and improve student achievement. For more information please [click here](#).

Dinner Dilemmas - Dinner dilemmas allow families, teachers, and everybody to engage in a rich dialogue around ethical issues. This discussion can take place at school, at home as well as other places. These conversations may take place during scheduled parent nights in the evening or during the school day. If possible, set up meetings over a meal to lessen anxiety and create an open environment where all guards are down. For more information please [click here](#).

Day 2: Stay Focused by using optimism, sharing, and connecting with others to create a positive atmosphere.

The learning experiences listed below will encourage students and adults to apply intentional strategies to refresh their thinking and to help their brains incubate and process new information.

Mindfulness - Make mindfulness a part of daily life through exercises in breathing, sensory experience, guided imagery, and movement. To learn more about mindfulness exercises, visit: For more information please [click here](#).

Get the Ya-Yas Out - Many young people have trouble staying focused. Here are five tips parents can use to help their youth concentrate and complete a task. For more information please [click here](#).

Day 3: Stay Engaged by creating opportunities to collaborate with others and by sharing strategies to overcome obstacles.

The suggested activities will inspire families and communities to read regularly and improve literacy skills..

Book Swap - Collect new/gently used books to donate to book deserts to provide enriching reading material to children, the elderly, and other community members to share the gift of literacy.

Become a GCS Reading Buddy/ Mentor - Volunteer your time as a reading buddy or student mentor. Your skills can help a student improve literacy and life skills through a positive mentorship. For more information on how to become a GCS Buddy/Mentor please [click here](#). For additional strategies on organizing a community guest reader experience, please [click here](#).

Day 4: Stay Motivated by performing positive acts to encourage and inspire others.

The following strategies listed will inspire students to use positive behavior to set the foundation for an enriching, optimistic, climate and culture throughout their community.

Motivational Note/Card Exchange - Create inspirational notes or cards to be distributed to school staff and youth to motivate others within the school community to stay encouraged, persevere, and acknowledge others.

Kindness Box - Create a box at home and at work in which individuals can place notes into the kindness box that captures a moment that they witnessed another member of the group being kind and thoughtful to help the group. This could mean recognizing someone who took on additional duties without being asked, assisting in a difficult task with others while keeping a positive attitude, etc. At the end of the day or specified period, take the notes out and read them aloud to the group. This activity of "caught being kind" is designed to create a space where acknowledgements happen and the actions of others are recognized, not for a prize but for the gift of simply being nice.

Day 5: Stay Kind by continuing to seek opportunities to respond to someone else's needs with compassion and support.

All strategies provided will aid in the creation of a caring, thoughtful environment that highlights inclusiveness and compassion for others.

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