

Initial Activities for Staff and Students

Creating Staff Shared Agreements

Bring all staff together in a shared space, either physically or virtually, to determine their joint commitment to creating a positive culture. Processes can include the development of a vision before the actual agreement is signed.

1. Developing an agreement among teachers and all staff begins with individuals, then small groups, and finally the large group determining helpful behaviors in their work environment. The process involves individual reflection followed by group discussions of these behaviors.
2. An agreement or contract is developed including the helpful behaviors.
3. Each member of the staff signs the document and it is posted virtually or physically in a place that staff frequently visit.
4. The agreement or contract serves as a starting point during times of conflict between staff. Two examples of the process for developing a staff contract are included:
 - [Create Positive Staff Culture Agreements, found in The Compassion Resilience Toolkit for Educators](#)
 - [An example of a Healthy Culture Team Agreement](#)
 - [Creating Staff Shared Agreements, found in the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Guide to Schoolwide SEL](#)



Initial Activities for Staff and Students

Connecting with Students to Build Relationships

In the virtual world, students are not able to be truly present with their teachers. Connection is more important than ever during this time of stress, anxiety, and isolation. Here are several ideas for connecting with students.

- » As a whole school, staff create ways to connect with every student during every week of instruction. At the elementary and pre-school level, daily connection is necessary. This can be done in a variety of ways:
 - [5-minute virtual chats with individual or small groups of students.](#)
 - Daily or weekly texts to middle and high school students who have their own phone checking on wellbeing.
 - Email exchanges with students on school email accounts such as Gmail. Topics for discussion would not include academic work.
- » When students are not responsive to connection, it may be necessary to increase the communication by using the 2 x 10 strategy. An adult intentionally talks with a specific student 2 minutes a day for 10 days. The same basic approach can be used if a student and teacher are meeting in the virtual environment. In this case the teacher must be more intentional about finding a time and space for the conversation. Maybe it is in text or a personal chat in the chat box, before the other students arrive or after they leave. Teachers can call their students especially after the first several conversations have occurred and schedule video conferences. For more information see the two Edutopia videos below. A full description of this strategy is included in the article by Sarah McKibben called [“The Two-Minute Relationship Builder.”](#)
- » [Johnson, Eric L. & Eckert, Jonathan. \(2021, January 6\). “5 Ways to Take Some of the Distance Out of Distance Learning.” Edutopia.](#)
- » [Edutopia. \(2020, November 20\). “How to Strengthen Relationships with Older Students Online.”](#)

