



Creating a “be kind” Code



Discussion Guide

Clear expectations can support an environment where kindness can thrive. We used to think that asking students to participate in developing rules would undermine a teacher’s authority. Now evidence shows that setting limits in ways that support student autonomy supports more intrinsic motivation to learn.

Methodology

This process can be used to develop your “be kind” Code. The process may be completed in one day or stretched over a week or two. The point is to dedicate time to exploring these ideas as a class or group so that the resulting “be kind” Code will be meaningful for everyone involved.

Ground Rules

- Everyone participates
- All ideas are valid
- Everything is written on a sticky note (one idea per note) or board
- Listen, ask, and be curious

Discussion Guide Situations

Imagining a Kind Place

1. Ask the students the following question (have the question written on the board as well) and write their responses on post it notes- one response per note- and stick them on the board:
“Let’s pretend that you visited another class for a day and you were trying to decide if that class was a kind place or not. What things might you see, hear, or notice that would help you know whether or not the class is a kind place?”
2. Continue brainstorming for as long as students are engaged and contributing.
3. Ask students if they see any ideas that could be grouped together (common themes, etc.). Move the sticky notes so that ideas that students see as having something in common are gathered in groups.
4. Ask students to come up with a name or title for each of the groups.

Imagining Possibilities for a Kind Future

1. Ask students the following question and write their responses on post it notes- one response per note- and stick them on the board:

“Imagine that it is the very end of the school year and this class has been working exactly as you hoped to become the most successful and kindest class you could dream up. What has made your ideal class so successful and kind?”

2. Continue brainstorming for as long as students are engaged and contributing.
3. Ask students if they see any ideas that could be grouped together (common themes, etc.). Move the sticky notes so that ideas that students see as having something in common are gathered in groups.
4. Ask students to come up with a name or title for each of the groupings.

Kindness in Action

1. Ask students to look over all of the names or titles of the groupings from the previous two exercises and then ask the following question and write their responses on post it notes- one response per note- and stick them on the board:

“What can each of us do to make our classroom a kind place?”

2. Continue brainstorming for as long as students are engaged and contributing.
3. Ask students if they see any ideas that could be grouped together (common themes, etc.). Move the sticky notes so that ideas that students see as having something in common are in groups.
4. Ask students to come up with a name or title for each of the groupings.

Building Kindness Skills

1. Explain to students that as much as we all try, people sometimes make mistakes. Ask students the following question and write their responses on post it notes- one response per note- and stick them on the board:

“How do we make things right when we make a mistake or are unkind to someone?”

2. Continue brainstorming for as long as students are engaged and contributing.
Ask students if they see any ideas that could be grouped together (common themes, etc.). Move the sticky notes so that ideas that students see as having something in common are in groups.
3. Ask students to come up with a name or title for each of the groupings.

Creating the "be kind" Code

1. Ask students to look over all of the names or titles of the groupings from the previous exercises. Ask if there is anything else they would like to include in their “be kind” Code.
2. Use the ideas that were generated to write down the “be kind” Code for your class.
3. Post your “be kind” Code for all to see and revisit it often.