

Safe School Ambassadors®

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Safe School Ambassadors is designed for students 4th - 12th grades.

Impact of the Safe School Ambassadors program:

- Reduces bullying, including cyberbullying
- Increases student reporting to adults
- Reduces put-downs, harassment and fighting
- Improves school climate
- Reduces gang involvement and activity

The Safe School Ambassadors program is:

- Research-based, field-tested, logic model
- An effective anti-bullying and violence-prevention program
- Student-centered
- Focused on social norms change
- Cost-effective

The program identifies and selects student leaders from diverse groups across the campus and forms them into a team of Safe School Ambassadors. Ambassadors are trained in the skills of nonviolent communication.

Safe School Ambassadors have these qualities:

- High social status and influence in their peer groups
- Strong communication skills and an outgoing personality
- A sense of right and wrong, valuing what is fair
- Empathy and compassion
- A history of standing up for others

Why the Safe School Ambassadors program is student-centered:

Students are in the best position to intervene because:

- 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 the incidents
- Students determine the social norms—what's OK and what's not—while adults set the rules, policies and consequences



"Every school should have this program, because one person can make a big difference."

Emily, 10th-grader, Long Beach, CA

How the Safe School Ambassadors (SSA) program empowers youth:

Few schools have fully engaged, equipped and empowered their students as peacemakers to improve school climate. As a result, students usually believe that they have only two options:

1. to turn away and thus condone the hurtful acts they see
2. to "tell" on their peers

The SSA program provides Ambassadors with the motivation, skills and support to know they have a *needed 3rd option*:

Ambassadors intervene, prevent, or stop the mistreatment they see.

"The Safe School Ambassadors program has provided us with a well-designed student-to-student initiative that has made a positive difference in over 30 of our district's schools."

Alison Adler, Ed.D., Chief, Safety & Learning Environment,
School District of Palm Beach County, Florida

"In my twenty years of education, coaching and supporting student Ambassadors have been the single-most rewarding experience in my career."

Karen Breslawski, Student Assistance Program Coordinator,
Brockport, NY

Facts:

Since 2000, Safe School Ambassadors programs have been implemented in over **700** schools, training over **25,000** students and over **4,000** adults in 26 US states and 2 Canadian provinces.

What Community Matters provides:

1) *Introductory materials and DVD to:*

- Explain program elements and steps for implementation
- Help secure administrative and staff buy-in
- Identify, recruit and select appropriate adults and students to be trained
- Prepare for the training

2) *Two days of interactive training at school site for selected students and adults, so that:*

- Students develop essential skills: observation, intervention, negotiation, reporting, and referral
- Adults learn how to facilitate ongoing small (Family) group meetings that provide Ambassadors with supervision, skill development and support

3) *Program implementation materials and coaching:*

- Program Advisor's Handbook, for the site coordinator, includes 200+ pages of timelines, strategies, guidelines, tips, activities, and resources
- Family Group Facilitators' Guidebook, for adults leading Family groups, includes meeting agendas, activities, strategies, and forms
- Student Ambassador's Guidebook includes vocabulary, definitions, skills, activities, reflection journals and intervention tips
- Electronic bulletins, newsletters, and reminders, with best practices from active programs
- Web-based resources, with downloadable forms and letters, a searchable help desk, and a data management portal (For more information go to our website)
- Individualized coaching and support via email and phone



How does the Safe School Ambassadors (SSA) program complement other school climate efforts?

The SSA program functions as a stand-alone program. It is also an excellent complement to peer helping, diversity education, conflict mediation, and other character education and safe school programs. On its own or with other programs, the SSA program improves school climate and fosters safer schools.

What the Safe School Ambassadors program costs:

For the materials, training, pre/post program support and coaching, a school site invests:

\$4,300 for program, elementary, middle or high school levels

PLUS an estimated \$500-\$1 300 travel and accommodations costs in addition to the program cost, depending on where the school is located and which trainer is assigned.

For more information and to view DVD clips of the SSA program, go to our website: www.safeschoolambassadors.org

Where can I look for funding for the Safe School Ambassadors program?

Schools have found funding: through state laws that fund school safety (such as, AB 1113 in CA); Titles I and IV; principal's discretionary fund; funds for student activities; PTA/O or PFC; district funds; site councils; state and federal grants in school safety and prevention; and other sources, such as police departments, businesses, service clubs, hospitals, local/community foundations, private donors and community fundraising.

Safe School Ambassadors save lives!

—Neil Williamson, Dean of Students
Belmont High School, Los Angeles, CA