

# What Students Can Do to Create Positive and Safe Environments



The WASC advocates for all students who want to use their voice and actions to make their schools safer and more inclusive. Connected and engaged students are a necessary piece to safe schools. It is our responsibility to work with our peers, teachers, administrators and community to create a positive and safe environment where we can learn, grow and thrive together. There is no single answer, action or policy - it requires all of us coming together, listening, caring and taking a variety of steps to create change. Here are a couple ideas to get you started. This is the time to: Listen. Learn. Lead.

## Within Your School and Community:

- Plan a solid color day to promote solidarity
- Create a “We dine together” club to focus on building relationships at lunch. [www.wedinetgether.org](http://www.wedinetgether.org)
- Speak up about issues going on at your school. **See something. Say something. Do something.**
- Create a competition to see who can meet and learn the names of the most students in your school or grade.
- Start a peer counseling program at your school.
- Start a mentoring program for incoming students. Example Programs: Link Crew or WEB [www.boomerangproject.com](http://www.boomerangproject.com)
- Start an after school support program.
- Attend and contribute at school board meetings.
- Organize unity, kindness, and bullying prevention assemblies for your school and your feeder schools.
- Plan stress relief events during high stress times. *Try therapy dog teams, stress relief rooms, bubble wrap, etc.*
- Organize and Host Mental Health First Aid Training
- Walk your school, look for safety loopholes, take note and report to create change.

## In Your Home:

- Plan a night once a week with family or friends to eat, play games, and connect. Stack your phones to keep distractions out of the conversation.
- Have proactive discussions about mental health
- Do you know your neighbors? Organize a neighborhood Potluck, BBQ or mix and mingle to get to know everyone
- Check facts before you repost or spread information.

## On Your Phone/Social Media:

- Keep all posts positive and productive. Always report negative or harmful posts [www.icandelethenegativity.org](http://www.icandelethenegativity.org)
- Start a positive hashtag movement to show support for unity, safety, kindness, and student voice.
- Post pictures of positive things you’re doing at your school to change negative stereotypes.
- Create a family, neighborhood, and friends, phone tree or group text in case of emergency.
- Set personal boundaries to make sure you have balance between “real life” and “digital” connections.

Wisconsin Association of School Councils

Michelle McGrath, Executive Director (608) 886-9272

4797 Hayes Road, Madison, WI 53704

[michelle@wasc.org](mailto:michelle@wasc.org) | [www.wasc.org](http://www.wasc.org)

# What Can Students Do To Create Positive and Safe Environments?

## At the State Level:

- Volunteer for movements that you personally support.
- Register to vote: [www.myvote.wi.gov](http://www.myvote.wi.gov)
- Attend conferences and camps to network and share with other student leaders.
- **Contact your legislators**

## How to Contact Your Legislators

It is more important than ever for students to let their politicians know how they feel. It doesn't matter where you are on the political spectrum, it is important to let your elected leaders know your opinion. Please contact your legislators and explain any concerns, questions, or solutions you have.

1. Visit [www.legis.wisconsin.gov/](http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov/) to find out who your state senator and state representatives are and how you can contact them.
2. On the website type in your full address under "Find Your Legislator". Be sure to include your street name, city, state, and zip code.
3. A box will pop up with three tabs (Senate, House, and Congress), select either Senate or House to get the emails and mailing addresses of your state legislators. The "Congress" tab will give you information about your federal (national) senators and congressperson.
4. Start writing! Here are some tips:
  - Address them by their titles, Senator or Representative respectively.
  - State your name, tell them you are a student, and then express your concern or idea.
  - Speak your mind appropriately and respectfully.
  - Make sure to mention that you live in their district. They hear from thousands of people throughout the year from all over the state, but they were elected to represent you.

### Here is an optional template:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a high school student from \_\_\_\_\_. I have lived in your district for \_\_\_\_\_ years.

I am writing to urge you to \_\_\_\_\_ and/or \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you for doing what is right for the students of Wisconsin and the United States. Thank you,

Your Name



# What School Officials Can Do to Create Positive and Safe Environments



The WASC sat down with students to learn more about what they need from their educational leaders in order to make their schools safer and more inclusive. It is our responsibility to work with our students, teachers, administrators and community to create a positive and safe environment where everyone can learn, grow and thrive together. There is no single answer, action or policy - it requires all of us coming together, listening, caring and taking a variety of steps to educate our students about safe practices already in place and be catalysts of change to create safer environments together. Here are a couple ideas to get you started. This is the time to: Listen. Learn. Lead.

## Things To Do for Your School and Community:

- Utilize an application such as Remind.com or Messenger where students are signed up to receive notifications of safety concerns happening on school property.
- Work with the local police and fire department to solidify an effective response plan to keep schools safe.
- Host training sessions for teachers on the school response plan for your school community.
- Educate the students and community and let them know that this training is happening.
- Students want to know that teachers know what to do in a threatening situation. Take time out of each class to have teachers assure the students what the plan is for each classroom.
- Share with students what support is provided at school for students regarding counseling, mental health support, and confidential reporting.
- Provide advisory meetings on mental health issues during the school year.
- Revisit building security and share with students what is in place for school safety and what is being done to create a safer environment.
- Work with community organizations to provide evening workshops on mental health stigma, mindfulness, and signs of anxiety and depression.
- Praise students for seeking help to prevent harming themselves and/or harming others.
- Provide listening sessions with students to learn of their concerns and open lines of communication regarding their safety.
- Provide trainings for students on what to do to protect themselves if they are in an unprotected space in school such as a bathroom, commons, hallway, etc. if a threatening situation occurs.
- Find ways to keep connecting students to school and supporting them emotionally, physically and educationally.
- Contact WASC and invite them in to lead a day of student voice – featuring the Wows, Wonders, Why’s, and What’s Next
- Encourage attendance at WASC Student Programs