

Healthy School Climate Facts, Insights and Tips!

FACTS:

- Only 37% of young people report that they have caring neighbors.
- Nearly 30% of Marysville students feel they don't have a trusted adult in their community.

RESEARCH: Friendships and trust only develop when people take risks by acknowledging their neighbors, getting to know them, and taking time to form relationships.

TIPS:

- ✓ Begin by greeting your neighbors when you see them outside. With a little effort, you'll get to know the young people you live near and they'll get to know you.
- ✓ In your home and family: Encourage your child to get to know the people in your neighborhood by being a role model. Walk through the neighborhood as a family. Organize a potluck, cookout, or block party with your neighbors.
- ✓ In your neighborhood and community: Meet with a neighborhood group or start a small group if one doesn't exist. Do activities together, such as creating a community garden or forming a "welcome wagon" of youth and adults to greet new residents.
- ✓ In your school or youth program: Create a magazine or book about local history. To do so, ask students or participants to interview some of the older neighbors and collect their stories.

FACT: Only 29 percent of young people say their school provides a caring, encouraging environment, according to Search Institute surveys.

RESEARCH: Young people who go to school where the environment feels caring and encouraging get better grades, have healthier relationships, get into less trouble, and are interested in and better able to reach their dreams.

TIPS:

- ✓ In your home and family: Talk with your child about the “feel” of his or her school. Advocate through the PTA or school leadership for caring relationships, as well as high academic expectations. Both are important!
- ✓ In your neighborhood and community: Volunteer at your local school. If students or faculty express negative or ambivalent mindsets, ask them why. Do your part to improve the climate by keeping a positive, sunny attitude.
- ✓ In your school or youth program: On the board or on a large piece of paper, sketch a map of your school. Have students or participants mark the places where the climate feels warm and caring. Brainstorm ways to move a “warm front” into “cold” places.

FACT: Only 29 percent of young people say their school provides a caring, encouraging environment, according to Search Institute surveys

RESEARCH: Young people come in contact with a lot of different adults during the day. One person’s attitude—good or bad—can significantly impact how students feel about themselves and interact with others at school. For young people, the day may start with a greeting from the bus driver. When school secretaries, counselors, teachers, coaches, custodians, parent volunteers, and others take time to relate to young people in a positive, caring, and supportive way, school is a great place to be.

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FACT: 48 percent of young people, ages 11–18, serve in the community one hour or more a week, according to Search Institute surveys.

RESEARCH: Research shows that young people who serve others in the community for one or more hours a week are more apt to be respectful of others, helpful and kind, and patient. The best way to teach young people the value of helping others is to be a role model.

TIPS:

- ✓ In your home and family: Together, think of 10 ways your family can serve others. Choose one idea. Pick a date to do the activity. Afterward, talk about your experience.
- ✓ In your neighborhood and community: Join or support an organization that teaches (and provides opportunities for) serving others. Some possibilities to consider: Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Habitat for Humanity, United Way, YMCA/YWCA, and Youth Service America.
- ✓ In your school or youth program: Seek learning opportunities for students and group members to engage in community service projects. Also bring community resources into the classroom or program setting.

FACT: Only 27 percent of young people, ages 11–18, say their parents and other adults model positive, responsible behavior, according to Search Institute surveys.

RESEARCH: Research shows that young people are more likely to exhibit positive, responsible behavior when they have parents and other adults in their lives who model positive, responsible behavior. Having good role models is one of the greatest desires of most young people.

TIPS:

- ✓ In your home and family: Do your best to model appropriate behavior at all times. When you make mistakes, admit them. Apologize for missteps.
- ✓ In your neighborhood and community group: Don't be afraid to start a conversation with a young person in your neighborhood. Begin by asking: How did you meet your best friend? What is your favorite family tradition?
- ✓ In your school or youth program: As a group, list questions young people can ask their adult role models to learn more about choices they made. Then, have students or participants interview that person. Discuss their findings.

FACT: About 47 percent of young people, ages 11–18, say they have neighbors who take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior, according to Search Institute surveys.

RESEARCH: Research shows that young people will focus more of their energy on positive activities than on negative ones if they live in a neighborhood in which neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.

TIPS:

- ✓ In your home and family: Talk with your child about the importance of following rules in your neighborhood and community: What are the boundaries of our neighborhood? How do you know? Which neighbors seem to notice what you do? How do you feel about that?
- ✓ In your neighborhood and community: Get together with other adult neighbors—parents and nonparents. Discuss neighborhood boundaries. Identify three boundaries everyone agrees on, such as no alcohol at teen parties. Agree to help enforce the boundaries. And when you see young people making a positive contribution and setting a good example, be sure to thank them.
- ✓ In your school or youth program: Talk to the young people in your class or group about their neighborhoods. Do they know what the boundaries are? Do they feel safe in their neighborhood? Do they care about their neighborhood?

and how other young people behave there? If they feel they don't know their neighbors or their neighborhood boundaries, brainstorm ways they could make positive changes in their neighborhood.