

# The State of Kindness in America's Schools

Kind Campaign surveyed educators and school administrators across its national network to assess the current state of student friendships, peer conflict, and kindness in schools. The findings reveal a troubling decline in social-emotional skills and a clear desire for programs that spark change.

The survey was distributed to schools and contacts in Kind Campaign's network. Results reflect the perspectives of educators working directly with students.

## ABOUT KIND CAMPAIGN

Kind Campaign is an internationally recognized nonprofit that brings awareness and healing to the effects of girl-against-girl bullying through its global movement, award-winning documentary *Finding Kind*, in-school assemblies, and educational curricula.

[www.kindcampaign.com](http://www.kindcampaign.com)

## KEY STATISTICS

# 52%

of educators say student friendships are more fragile and conflict-prone than 2–3 years ago

# 62%

of educators have noticed an increase in student loneliness or social isolation in the past year

# 59%

of educators say students do not have the skills to navigate friendship conflict in healthy ways

# 79%

of educators have witnessed a small act of kindness with a meaningful impact in the past year

## WHAT EDUCATORS ARE SEEING

### CONFLICT IS MOVING ONLINE

41% of educators say peer conflict most often originates on social media. Only 28% say conflict starts primarily in-person at school. Group chats and texting account for an additional 17%.

### LONELINESS IS RISING

Nearly two-thirds of educators (62%) report noticing a significant or moderate increase in student loneliness and social isolation over the past year.

### FRIENDSHIPS ARE MORE FRAGILE

More than half of respondents (51.7%) describe student friendship dynamics as more fragile and conflict-prone than 2–3 years ago, compared to just 17% who say they're healthier.

### A SKILLS GAP IS GROWING

59% say students lack the skills to handle friendship conflict — and another 38% say only somewhat. Just a fraction said yes outright.

## BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN EDUCATORS' OWN WORDS



- Social media and group chats as a breeding ground for conflict and cruelty
- Students cutting off friendships rather than working through disagreements
- Lack of empathy, especially among older male students
- Poor conflict resolution skills and inability to handle minor setbacks
- Preference for online relationships over face-to-face interaction
- External stressors — immigration fears, financial anxiety — spilling into peer dynamics
- Lingering post-COVID social isolation affecting students' ability to connect
- Impulsive behavior and attempts to mimic viral online content at others' expense



## KINDNESS IN ACTION: REAL STORIES FROM SCHOOLS

“ A new Farsi-speaking student arrived feeling uncomfortable. Another Farsi-speaking student noticed, introduced herself, showed her around and they are still friends to this day. ”

“ One of our students returned after his grandmother's death. A classmate walked up silently and gave him a hug. A few others followed — no words, just support. It made my day. ”

“ An 8th grader saw a nervous new 6th grade student in my office and introduced herself, then went and got her own 6th grade sister to befriend her too. ”

## PROGRAMS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

### SEL CURRICULA

Social-emotional learning lessons taught by counselors, focused on empathy and managing mental health

### PEER MENTORING

Older students supporting younger ones, creating cross-grade connection and belonging

### KINDNESS RECOGNITION

Weekly announcements and reward systems celebrating students caught being kind

### KIND CLUBS

Student-led kindness initiatives, including Kind Campaign-aligned clubs and kindness assemblies

### POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS

Daily rituals that start the school day with a culture of encouragement and community

### KIND CAMPAIGN RESOURCES

Screening of Finding Kind documentary, mix-it-up lunch days, and monthly counselor led lessons

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### MEDIA CONTACT

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