

## OVERVIEW

Back to school is a hectic time for teachers and pupils. With so many stories to catch up on and so many schedules to coordinate, new students can often feel lost and left out.

This lesson plan helps create a welcoming atmosphere in the school for new students through the collaborative efforts of staff and students. Newcomers won't ever feel lost again with maps, important names and numbers, and other useful resources to help them find their feet and make new friends.

## MATERIALS

- Art material, paper as needed

**W**hy do people show consideration, kindness, compassion, and generosity to others? Some help others because it helps them feel good. Some show concern because everybody else seems to. Some show kindness to avoid embarrassment, to earn recognition, to relieve guilt, or because it hurts them to see other people suffering.

Genuine, selfless concern for others is a sign of ethical maturity. A big part of maturity is the ability to think and care about someone besides oneself.

- The Golden Rule

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” translates the general principle of caring and concern into an operational standard that encourages people to maximize the good and minimize the harm done to others.

- Stakeholders

Stakeholders are the people, groups, or institutions likely to be affected by a decision, word, or action. A person who wants to be ethical has a moral obligation to think seriously about every possible effect his or her decisions will have on all stakeholders. The too-common, self-centered “It’s my life and I’ll do what I want!” mantra fails to recognize that every person, group, or institution has a moral claim on the decision-maker.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this lesson, students will learn caring by:

- Identifying needs of new students by putting themselves in their shoes
- Creating Welcome Packs for newcomers and visitors to the school
- Participating in a Buddy program to create a caring school environment

## ACTIVITY

1. Starting a new year with new classmates can be a challenge for some students. If your class has a lot of new students who have joined this year, pair them up or group them with “old-timers.” If there are no new students in your class, consider this as a preparation activity for when there are newcomers.
2. Begin by asking the class what they can remember about their first few weeks of school. Probably it was overwhelming. Brainstorm the different things that are new and hard to remember. Make a list on the board.
3. When you finish, tell the class to think of ways they can help new students feel less overwhelmed by all the information they need to learn about the school. Tell them they are going to make a Welcome Kit to help new students feel at home in the school and class.
4. Start by having the class map the school areas. For younger students make a big map that can be displayed in the classroom. Make small cut-out figures representing the students. Move them about the map so the little ones can see the different places they need to go to. Older students can have smaller maps put into a Welcome Pack that they receive on the first day.
5. Collect and make a list of important names the students will need to learn, such as the office staff, the bus driver, other teachers they will meet, and the names of people they can go to for help in an emergency.
6. Do you have students with English as their second language? Perhaps you could make a list of common words used in the classroom or the school. If you have many different languages spoken in your class, make it into a geography activity by learning a little about the different countries as you create a vocabulary list.
7. From the brainstormed list, make a few welcoming activities for the newcomers to help them feel at home. It may be taking them on a tour of the school or recognizing the newcomers at a sports or other fun event.
8. Designate secret buddies. Have each “old timer” be the secret buddy of a newcomer. They should write encouraging notes or offer support before games or tests without letting the newcomer know who they are. Make sure all the newcomers are involved in receiving the support in the beginning and have the secret buddies hand their letters or notes in to the teacher. Do this the first few times to ensure the letters aren’t offensive, then let them introduce each other if they choose. Encourage them to make more spontaneous contact.
9. Keep in mind each class will be different. Make all your students feel welcome in the class, not just the newcomers. Do what you can to create a caring community to last the entire year and beyond.