

Orientation Invitation Letter to Students

Dear _____,

If you are getting this letter, congratulations are in order. You have been nominated for a new program we are starting at school called Safe School Ambassadors®. This letter will answer some of the questions you might have about this nomination and what being a Safe School Ambassador is all about.

What is the Safe School Ambassadors® Program? What are its goals?

Safe School Ambassadors® is a national program that we are starting at our school. The program was created because schools have recognized that students are the most important group that influences how people feel at school. We believe that a small group of positive, out-going students, working together, can make major improvements in the emotional climate of our school.

Why was I nominated?

You were nominated because of your personality, skills, and leadership qualities. Safe School Ambassadors typically have a number of common attributes. They are socially influential within their peer group. That means that the people they spend the most time with look up to them and generally heed their social cues. Ambassadors are also typically outspoken, within their group(s) of friends; they don't need to be comfortable speaking to a large crowd. Ambassadors also have a strong sense of social justice; in other words, they "watch out" for their friends. They are social leaders, even if they are not involved in formal leadership roles, and play a large role in shaping the social norms that govern the behavior of students at our school.

What do Safe School Ambassadors do?

First, it is important to understand that Ambassadors are not Safe School Police who break up fights. Nor are they highly visible conflict mediators with vests, badges, clipboards, or office hours. Instead, Ambassadors interact primarily with their friends and acquaintances, and help them "treat people right." To do that, Ambassadors are trained to notice the many ways students mistreat each other: exclusion; rumors, gossip, teasing, insults and other put-downs; bullying and intimidation; and unwanted physical contact. Then, they are trained to take action *with their peers, in the moment* if other students are being left out, or if somebody is emotionally upset, or if they see trouble starting between people. They will quietly connect students in need with channels of help. They will not be responsible for solving the problems of others, but will simply offer helpful guidance, support, care and information. They will be great observers of what's going on, and will try to get help to people before situations escalate. Sometimes, some or all of the Ambassadors at a school have also taken a more visible role, leading campaigns like Random Acts of Kindness, Brotherhood Week, and the like, but that is not their primary focus.

Can I find out more before I make up my mind?

Will I be trained to do this? Will we be supported as a group after we are trained?

Yes, yes, and yes. We will have an orientation session to explain more about the program on

_____ at _____ in room_____.
(Date) (Time) (Place)

If you are still interested after that, we will have a two-day training on _____. After training, Ambassadors will continue to meet regularly in groups of 7-9 with an adult facilitator who will be your support person and primary contact. There will also be periodic meetings with the whole group of Ambassadors.

What do I need to do next?

All you need to do at this point is to attend the orientation session. At that meeting, you can make up your mind about the program. If you decide the Ambassadors program is for you, you'll receive a permission slip to have signed by your parents and you'll be notified about the details of the training. While you are responsible for completing the work you'll miss during the training, we have asked teachers to grant extensions where possible.

We really hope you decide to join us! This group will have a powerful presence on our campus!