

Difficulties with fellow students: loneliness / lack of friendships

Here is list of measures to address the problems of loneliness, isolation and lack of friendships among high school students.

1. Organize Social and Extracurricular Activities

- **Clubs and Interest Groups:** offer activities that cater to diverse interests – create opportunities for students to bond over shared interests and passions. These can be clubs covering a wide range of interests - such as chess clubs, drama clubs, various sports activities, etc.
- **Inclusive Group Activities:** teachers are asked to include more group activities: cooperative projects, team-based competitions, field trips
- **School-Wide Events:** events such as talent shows, sports days. Organization of “Buddy lunches” where students are paired with peers they haven’t met before
- **Informal Gatherings:** students are invited to join regular social gatherings (e.g. once a week) during school hours, organized by a teacher or social worker, where students get to eat together, play cards, etc. – a meeting point without obligations

2. Create a Peer Support System

- **Peer Mentorship / Buddy Programs:** older students mentor younger ones
- **Student Ambassadors:** student ambassadors can keep an eye out for students who seem isolated or lonely, introducing shy students to their social circles or encouraging them to join activities. Student ambassadors can be encouraged in their role by awarding them “social credit points” or a certificate showing their contribution to a good school climate

3. Teach Social Skills and Emotional Intelligence

- **Social Skills Training:** offer workshops or programs that help students develop social skills and emotional intelligence, such as active listening, empathy, conflict resolution
- **Mental Health Education:** include mental health education in the curriculum, focusing on emotional well-being, the importance of friendships, and strategies for building and maintaining healthy relationships

4. Foster Teacher-Student Relationships

- **Assign Classroom Partners:** teachers can assign rotating partners for group projects or activities, helping students interact with different classmates

5 . Encourage Peer-Led Initiatives

- **Peer-Led Clubs or Events:** students are asked to create or lead their own clubs or social initiatives based on their interests
- **Community Service Projects:** organize peer-led community service or volunteering projects – e.g. focusing on environmental or social topics – e.g. cleaning a beach, etc.

6. Address Social Media and Digital Communication

- **Teach Healthy Digital Habits:** teach students how to use social media and digital platforms in positive ways that support socialization rather than fostering isolation
- **No Cell Phones During the School Day:** during breaks, students often isolate themselves by using headphones or checking their phones, limiting social interaction. To promote more engagement, a school-wide policy can restrict cell phone use during the school day. Phones will be stored in a designated "Cell Phone Hotel," allowing students to connect with peers without distractions