

Guide to Short Chats That Will Deepen Relationships



STAGE 1:

Take the Initiative

Let students know you will be reaching out to them and arrange a time, or allow student to sign-up for a time slot. Conversations should happen on a school and parent-approved messaging platform or app.

Say things like:

- *I'm working on connecting with everyone in this group to get a better sense of what everyone is feeling and thinking about, and how I can be supportive.*

STAGE 2:

Foster personal connections

Show that you value this time to connect

- *I'm glad we have the chance to talk.*
- *I'm excited to have you in my group this year. I can tell you're going to add a lot to our community.*

Ask inviting questions

Allow students to share as much or as little as they are comfortable sharing.

- *Your sister is back from college now, right? How has it been having her home?"*
- *I know things have been unusual lately; how have you been keeping busy lately?*
- *What is new for you since last school year?*
- *Who or what has been on your mind a lot lately?*
- *What would you say is your biggest source of stress right now?*

Show interest in student's perspective

- *What would you like to see happen this school year?*
- *What do you need most right now from me (and your other teachers)?*
- *What do you think our school/class is doing well or should be doing differently?*

Close conversations on an optimistic, forward-thinking note

- *What's the best thing you have seen today?*
- *What's keeping you going/giving you energy/making you happy right now?*

Helpful phrasing

Probe

- *Tell me more about that.*
- *I want to make sure I understand. Can you explain a little more?*

Communicate caring

- *Your teachers care a lot about your success.*
- *Your teachers all want to make sure you're getting your needs met.*

Validate emotions

- *That must be so difficult. I see you and I'm here for you.*
- *I can only imagine how much that impacts you.*

Stay solution-oriented

- *It sounds like a lot has been happening that is out of your control, and that sounds really frustrating. What are some things you do have control over – something small you can do to start to make things better?"*

Benefits for students

- Foster sense of safety and belonging
- Enhance resilience and coping
- Support individual academic, social needs
- Contribute to higher engagement for positive long-term outcomes

Icons: Getty
SOURCE: CASEL

