

## Sacramento - Student Empathy Interview Themes 2024

### **Tell me about a time when you or a friend got into trouble at school?**

#### **These themes were identified**

From the responses, it's clear that instances of getting into trouble at school vary widely, ranging from minor infractions like talking too much in class to more serious issues like involvement in fights or disrespectful behavior towards teachers. Here are some key observations and patterns from the responses:

1. **Behavioral infractions:** Many instances involve students engaging in behaviors that disrupt the learning environment or violate school rules, such as talking too much in class, goofing around, or being off-task during instructional time.
2. **Social conflicts:** Several responses mention getting into trouble due to conflicts with peers, such as fights, disagreements, or instances where students were blamed for others' actions.
3. **Misunderstandings and accidents:** Some students found themselves in trouble due to misunderstandings or accidents, like being mistakenly accused of hitting someone, being blamed for incidents they didn't initiate, or accidentally causing harm while playing.
4. **Disrespectful behavior towards authority:** Instances where students showed disrespect towards teachers or other authority figures resulted in disciplinary action, such as talking back, ignoring instructions, or making rude gestures.
5. **Peer influence:** In some cases, students got into trouble due to peer pressure or influence, like participating in misbehavior initiated by friends or getting involved in conflicts to support peers.
6. **Consequences and disciplinary actions:** Responses varied in terms of the consequences faced, including warnings, visits to the principal's office, suspension, or other disciplinary measures depending on the severity of the infraction.
7. **Remorse and reflection:** A few responses highlighted instances where students recognized their mistakes and expressed regret or acknowledgment of wrongdoing, indicating a level of self-awareness and understanding of the consequences of their actions.

Overall, these responses reflect the diverse nature of disciplinary incidents that occur in school settings and underscore the importance of effective behavior management strategies, clear communication of expectations, and fostering positive relationships between students and staff to minimize such occurrences and promote a conducive learning environment.

### **Question #2: Tell me about a time where an adult helped you solve a problem?**

1. **Academic support:** Many instances involve adults, such as teachers or parents, helping students with academic challenges, particularly in subjects like math and English. Teachers provide explanations, examples, and additional guidance to help students understand concepts and solve problems.
2. **Conflict resolution:** Adults, including teachers and counselors, play a crucial role in resolving conflicts between students. They mediate disputes, facilitate conversations, and help students navigate interpersonal issues to promote understanding and reconciliation.
3. **Emotional support:** Some students receive emotional support from adults during difficult situations, such as disagreements with friends, bullying incidents, or personal struggles. Adults offer comfort, reassurance, and guidance to help students cope with their emotions and navigate challenges effectively.
4. **Behavioral guidance:** Teachers and school staff assist students in addressing behavioral issues or mistakes by providing guidance, setting boundaries, and offering constructive feedback. They help students reflect on their actions, understand consequences, and make positive choices moving forward.
5. **Practical assistance:** Adults offer practical assistance to students in various ways, such as helping them find lost items, assisting with schoolwork or projects, providing resources, and offering general support and encouragement.
6. **Accessibility and approachability:** Students value adults who are accessible, approachable, and willing to listen to their concerns. They feel connected to adults who demonstrate empathy, understanding, and patience in addressing their needs and challenges.
7. **Parental involvement:** Parents are actively involved in supporting their children's education by helping them with homework, providing academic assistance, and offering guidance and encouragement.

Overall, the responses highlight the significant role that adults play in supporting students' academic, social, and emotional development at school. Their guidance,

assistance, and support contribute to creating a positive and nurturing learning environment where students feel valued, understood, and empowered to succeed.

**Question #3: What do you think should happen when students make mistakes at school?**

From the responses, several key themes emerge regarding how students believe mistakes should be handled at school:

1. **Guidance and Support:** Many students emphasize the importance of receiving guidance and support from teachers or adults when they make mistakes. They suggest that teachers should help them understand what went wrong and how to correct it, rather than simply punishing them.
2. **Second Chances:** A common sentiment among students is the idea of giving second chances. They believe that students should have the opportunity to learn from their mistakes and improve, rather than facing immediate punishment.
3. **Communication and Understanding:** Students stress the importance of open communication and understanding from teachers or adults. They suggest talking to the student about the mistake, listening to their perspective, and offering constructive feedback.
4. **Warnings and Consequences:** Some students mention the use of warnings or consequences for repeated mistakes, indicating that there should be a progressive approach to addressing behavior.
5. **Empathy and Forgiveness:** Several students advocate for empathy, forgiveness, and not being too harsh on students when they make mistakes. They believe that mistakes are a natural part of learning and that students should be treated with kindness and understanding.
6. **Parental Involvement:** Some students mention involving parents or calling home as a way to address more serious mistakes or to ensure that parents are aware of the situation.

Overall, the responses reflect a desire for a supportive and constructive approach to handling mistakes at school, emphasizing learning, growth, and positive reinforcement rather than strict punishment.

## **Question #4: Tell me a time when an adult at school caused a problem for you at school.**

From the responses, it's evident that while some students haven't experienced situations where adults caused problems for them at school, others have encountered various challenges:

1. **Misunderstandings and Unfair Treatment:** Several students mentioned instances where they felt misunderstood or unfairly treated by adults. This includes being blamed for something they didn't do, being singled out or picked on, or facing consequences for actions they perceived as unjust.
2. **Lack of Support or Empathy:** Some students described situations where they felt that adults didn't provide them with the support or empathy they needed. This could involve adults not comforting them during difficult times, not understanding their needs, or not acknowledging their perspective.
3. **Communication Issues:** A few students mentioned communication problems with adults, such as unclear instructions or adults not listening to their explanations. This lack of effective communication can lead to misunderstandings and frustration.
4. **Inconsistencies in Discipline:** There were instances where students felt that adults applied discipline inconsistently or unfairly. This could involve being punished for minor infractions while others were not, or feeling that adults were overly strict in their enforcement of rules.
5. **Negative Interactions with Adults:** Some students described negative interactions with specific adults, such as teachers or staff members who were rude or unhelpful. These interactions may have contributed to a negative perception of authority figures at school.
6. **Family Dynamics Impacting School:** A few responses mentioned family members, such as parents or step-parents, causing problems or misunderstandings at school. This suggests that family dynamics can sometimes spill over into the school environment, impacting students' experiences.

Overall, these responses highlight the importance of effective communication, empathy, and fairness in adult-student interactions at school. They also underscore

the need for adults to be supportive and understanding, particularly when addressing disciplinary issues or conflicts.

### **Question #5: Can you tell me about an adult that you feel connected to at school? What makes them special?**

From the responses, it's clear that students form connections with various adults at school for a multitude of reasons:

1. **Emotional Support and Understanding:** Many students mentioned feeling connected to adults who provide emotional support and understanding. These adults are often described as caring, kind, and attentive to students' needs. They listen to students, offer comfort when they're sad or upset, and create a safe and welcoming environment.
2. **Academic Assistance:** Several students feel connected to adults who help them academically. This could involve teachers who assist with math problems, make learning fun and engaging, or provide extra support when needed. Students appreciate adults who make learning easier and more enjoyable.
3. **Friendship and Companionship:** Some students feel connected to adults who treat them as friends and companions. These adults engage with students on a personal level, play games, have fun activities, and make school an enjoyable place to be. Students appreciate adults who are approachable, friendly, and create a sense of camaraderie.
4. **Special Relationships:** A few students mentioned adults with whom they have special relationships, such as family members who work at the school or adults who speak the same language or share similar cultural backgrounds. These relationships foster a sense of familiarity and comfort for students.
5. **Gratitude for Assistance:** Many students expressed gratitude for adults who have helped them in various ways, whether it's solving math problems, making friends, or providing academic support. These adults are seen as instrumental in students' success and well-being at school.

Overall, students form connections with adults at school based on a combination of emotional support, academic assistance, friendship, and gratitude for the help they

receive. These connections play a crucial role in students' overall school experience and contribute to their sense of belonging and well-being in the school community.