

Ways to introduce Teacher Presence to your class/school

Before introducing Teacher Presence to your class/school

Explain that teacher gift giving at the end of the school year is always a choice. If you and your family choose to give a gift of thanks to your teacher/support staff member- Teacher Presence is another way you could say thank you and in the process show kindness and make a difference in the lives of others.

[Watch the video](#)

Suggestion 1

School staff and students choose a charity.

School staff and students choose a charity aligned to Teacher Presence together. By having your students part of the Teacher Presence journey they become more involved in the process. They can see that they can have an impact and make a difference in the lives of others.

Ask students to research each charity on the Teacher Presence website or alternatively explore the charities as a class. A vote can be cast for the charity they would most like to support. The teacher then signs up for the charity that received the most votes and together the school staff and students drive the Teacher Presence project.

Suggestion 2

Teacher Presence Maths.

Imagine everyone in our class gave school staff member a gift of thanks at the end of the school year.

How much money do you think that could be? How much is a box of chocolates? Coffee Mug? Candles? Bottle of wine? (Research or guess the costings) Other gifts? (Make suggestions and research or guess) Challenge the students to calculate the money that one teacher/support staff member could possibly receive in gifts. Below is an indication of how \$400 - \$500 dollars would impact the charities aligned with Teacher Presence. Eat Up \$500 could support and provide sandwiches to a school for two terms.

Eat Up

\$500 could support and provide sandwiches to a school for 2 terms.

Berry Street

Buy 30 new books for our library

Supply 3-weeks' worth of lunch to students (Berry Street School provides a healthy morning tea and lunch for student every school day)

Pay for almost six months of dog food for one of our therapy dogs

Purchase gym equipment such as basketballs, boxing gloves and fit balls to assist with self-regulation

Operation Toilets

\$1,000 buys one toilet which provides for the needs of 50 children every year for around 10 years (so you could say \$500 provides for the needs of 25 children a year for ten years)

\$500 buys a training program for five teachers giving them the skills to teach children about personal hygiene

\$500 buys soap for 400 children for one school year

Suggestion 3

Reading

Read and respond to a passage, story or section of text from a Teacher Presence aligned charity. After reading and discussions, revisit the mission of Teacher Presence and how as a class we can help.

Our mission: To create a community of educators that spread the importance of kindness, empathy and gratitude through the gift of giving. We do this by helping redirect money that would otherwise be used for the optional end of year teacher/educator gifts from families to charities aligned with Teacher Presence. This allows us as educators to lead by example and show our students and families the impact of giving to others in need.

Below are two passages from the book, Toilet Warrior. It is written by Mark Balla, who founded Operation Toilets.

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Right at the end of my tour we visited a school, and in the blink of an eye, my life was changed. We spent barely five minutes in the school and then headed back to Mahim station to say goodbye. On the way to the station, I commented to Fahim and Tauseef that I had noticed something unusual about the school. I had seen lots of primary aged boys and girls and lots of teenage boys, but I had not seen any teenage girls. They told me matter-of-factly that this was because there were no toilets in the school.

On the train back I thought about my experience in Dharavi. What an extraordinary place. I was so pleased that I had accepted the invitation the day before, and then I came back to the last part of our conversation. No toilets in the school. What the hell did that even mean? What did that have to do with no teenage girls being in the school? No toilets in the school... What the hell? I returned to my apartment feeling confused. I wanted to know more about this issue. I was so intensely consumed with it that I called the chairman of the board and asked to delay our board meeting until the next day. And then I sat down with your friend and mine, Mr Google. He opened my eyes to a world I had not imagined. I learnt of girls and women raped late at night or early in the morning as they searched for somewhere quiet and secluded to go to the toilet. I learnt that 600 million Indians were forced to defecate in the open every day because they had no alternative, that there were homes and businesses without toilets, that community toilets were often in a horrendous state of disrepair to the point of being unusable.

I learnt that in some parts of the world as many as 10% of children die before the age of five due to waterborne disease. I learnt that 90% of the surface water in India was contaminated with human faeces. I discovered that girls were dropping out of school en masse across India and the rest of the developing world in great part simply because there were no toilets in their schools. And so many others were missing school when they had their periods because there was just no way for them to deal with their personal needs at school if toilets were not provided.

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Towards the end of the third day, I received a phone call from an Indian number that I didn't recognise. It was the headmaster from the New English School where we had opened our first toilets just a few days earlier.

"Mr Mark... sir, we have a problem." I felt the hackles rise on the back of my neck. This was not what I wanted to hear. I asked him to explain. "The boys, sir. They are complaining." I could not imagine why they would be complaining. We had built toilets for the boys as well. Again, I asked him to continue.

"They are unhappy, sir because now they are waiting very much when they are going for drinking water."

I didn't understand. We had not done anything to do with drinking water. We had only built toilets and wash basins. The school already had drinking water. Once again I asked him to explain what was happening.

"You see, sir, now we are having toilets in our school, and the girls are now also going for drinking water. For this, the boys must be waiting a longer time for drinking water."

I sat in silence for a moment as I tried to digest what he had just told me. Had I understood this correctly? Was he telling me that before the toilets were put in, the boys did not have to wait long for drinking water because the girls were not drinking water themselves? Surely this was not possible! I repeated this back to him to make sure I had indeed understood.

"Yes, Mr. Mark, sir. That is correct sir."

My mind was reeling. We had known about girls missing school during their periods. We had known about girls dropping out of school for lack of toilets. But this! This was beyond anything I had imagined! The impact on the girls' health. The impact on their ability to concentrate in class. The heat of the Indian summer. How could this be?

I gathered my thoughts together and told him that this was truly a wonderful problem to have. He laughed in agreement with me telling me he knew I would be happy about this. I told him he should buy another drinking water dispenser and tell the boys to stop complaining.

Discuss what the students discovered/realised?

How does this make you feel?

[Read a story of success from Berry Street School](#)

[EAT UP website](#)

What is something that is in every student's bag when they go to school? Students could draw or list the items. Discuss why these items are important?