



Kinross Primary School
Peer Mediation Program
2018

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What is mediation?

Mediation can be defined as:

“The process by which the participants, together with the assistance of a neutral person or persons, systematically isolate disputed issues in order to develop options, consider alternatives, and reach a consensual settlement that will accommodate their needs. Mediation is a process that emphasises the participants’ own responsibility for making decisions that affect their lives”.

Peer mediation involves two trained student mediators assisting two disputants through a structured process to reach resolution of a conflict.

How does peer mediation work?

Peer mediation offers a dispute resolution process by which students are actively involved in resolving their own disputes. It is a strategy which many schools find to be very effective. This program involves two trained students assisting other students through a structured process to reach a resolution of a dispute.

A peer mediation program is coordinated by a staff member and provides ongoing supervision and support to student mediators.

Where does it fit?

It is important that peer mediation sits within the implementation of school policies and programs which support a safe and supportive school environment. Schools should, for example, have clearly articulated student wellbeing policies and guidelines developed consistent with Department of Education policies and guidelines.

How does peer mediation benefit a school?

The program is an early intervention strategy which, if implemented effectively, can offer an effective and suitable method for helping to reduce anti-social behaviour in the wider school community.

Benefits for primary students

Students assume greater responsibility for solving their own problems

May help reduce bullying in schools

Students gain life time skills including communication, listening and problem solving skills.

Benefits for student mediators

Develops social, language and leadership skills

Role of mediator increases self-esteem and confidence

Benefits for staff

Less time spent dealing with minor issues

More focus on supervision during duty times

Fewer conflicts flowing into classrooms

Benefits for whole school

A safer and more harmonious school environment

Reduced incidents of bullying

Improves overall school climate through better student relationships.

Disputes suitable for mediation in primary schools

• Name calling • Friendship problems • Teasing • Loss of property • Exclusion • Game conflicts

What types of disputes are not suitable for peer mediation?

• Ongoing bullying • Sexual abuse • Physical violence • Racism • Weapons/drugs

Peer mediation should be used for minor disputes only. Major issues, including assault and serious bullying, are not suitable for this process. Any serious disputes should be reported to a teacher immediately.

Implementation within Kinross Primary School

Who?

There will be 20 Year 6 peer mediators who will work in designated pairs throughout the semester. They will be chosen online by completing an online entrance test which determines previous knowledge and understanding of dealing with social issues. The program co-ordinator will be Sam Carlisle, a Year 6 teacher, and he may be assisted by other teachers throughout the implementation of the program.

When?

Student training will occur in first term on Tuesday the 27th of February from 9:00am until 11:30am. From then on, the students and program co-ordinator will meet once a fortnight to monitor the progress of the program and maintain performance and effectiveness.

How?

Training is structured and will involve discussions, viewing videos, performing role-plays and completing a student guide. Peer mediators will rotate through a weekly roster and be designated a particular day and area of the school within which they have jurisdiction. 6 blue, embroidered vests will be purchased which the mediators will wear whilst they are on duty. Strategies and techniques employed by peer mediators will include active listening, choice-suggestions, compromise and logic modelling. Students will also do one-off liaison activities with the students such as dance and music competitions at recess.

What?

All issues that will be resolved with the peer mediators will be recorded and the program co-ordinator notified. As the peer mediation process is voluntary, students who wish to have their minor dispute resolved by a teacher may request to do so. The peer mediators are instructed to refer students to a duty teacher should such a situation occur. Teachers may also refer issues to the peer mediators should they be deemed of a minor nature.

Why?

Pastoral care and positive relationships are a major focus of Kinross Primary School. The school business plan outlines goals to achieve high levels of social and emotional wellbeing of students, and this program further strives to ensure students are empowered with strategies to deal with such issues. This program is designed to augment and assist with the existing behaviour management policies which already function effectively and efficiently within the school.

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