

# Peer Mediators

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## Mediation Works

Edition Two 2011

We are really privileged to have 40 trained peer mediators at Cockle Bay School. These children provide a valuable service to the school helping to improve the school climate and atmosphere. They are able to use their life skills in conflict resolution, to encourage other children to handle conflict in positive, non-violent and constructive ways. They provide opportunities for children to solve many of their own conflicts and have had a substantial impact on the reduction of the incidence of conflict in the playground.

The Peer Mediators are committed volunteers from Year 6. They have received extensive training at early morning meetings during Term 1. This training included sessions on Active Listening, using "I-Statements" and affirmations, recognising responses to conflict, open and closed questions and the role of the mediator.

They meet once a week with the Peer Mediator Facilitator. They are a wonderfully enthusiastic group who have shown great dedication and commitment in carrying out their duties. The Peer Mediators are easily recognisable in the playground as they wear distinctive, bright yellow, Peer Mediator jackets.

As part of their duties, the Peer Mediators also "spot" children displaying the 4 Cockle Bay "Cs", as well as those who are using "The Wheel of Choice" wisely. From Term 2 the names of these children will be recorded and the children will be celebrated at the end of term Celebration Assemblies.

We are very proud of our Peer Mediator team.

## Cool Schools Peer Mediation Programme

The Cool Schools peer Mediation programme was developed by the Foundation for The Peace Studies Aotearoa/New Zealand (The Peace Foundation) in conjunction with Students and Teachers Educating For Peace (STEP) and the Mobile Peace Van

(MPV) to help teachers initiate peer mediation programmes in schools.

## What Is Peer Mediation?

In mediation people who are in conflict (disputants) agree to seek the help of a mediating third party. In school

mediations there are two mediators, one to support the other. The mediators help the disputants reach an agreement. The mediators do not solve the conflict for the disputants.

The basic format for a mediation session is as follows:

- The mediators set the scene by finding an appropriate place for the mediation, calming disputants and explaining the process and setting the ground rules.
- Each disputant tells his/her story. While each person is talking there is to be no interruption from the other person.
- The mediator summarises what each person is saying, and checks with them that this is an accurate assessment of their perspective.
- The mediator may also wish to ask how each person feels about the situation.
- The mediator asks each person to suggest possible solutions.
- The mediator helps disputants to find areas of agreement in the suggested solutions, and then to find a solution that will suit both.

### Mediation Improves the School Learning Environment

What benefits do schools using peer mediation report?

- Teachers have less conflicts to deal with and more time for quality teaching.
- Students develop an appreciation of conflict as something that can be handled positively and learnt from.
- In many schools disputes between students are permanently settled in most cases.
- Students become equipped with valuable skills for handling conflicts both within the school and outside of school.
- A much improved and more co-operative school atmosphere develops.
- There are fewer incidents of students involved in "troublesome" behaviour beyond the school gates and a general increase in students' self-esteem.
- Students are provided with an excellent resource for dealing with future conflicts in life.

Resource:

Cool Schools Peer Mediation Programme

Yvonne Duncan and Alyn Ware

