

Case Study

Training Year 8 Mentors to support Year 7 students

An outstanding secondary school with a track-record for innovative projects had identified the transition from primary to secondary school as an area which they wished to improve. Having worked with CPS in the past, the school contacted CPS to develop a project.

What we did

With a positive working relationship established through previous projects, CPS were quickly able to develop a proposal in collaboration with a key contact, the Senior Team Member responsible for Behaviour and Inclusion.

Student Mentors

Working with both staff and students, CPS were tasked with establishing a team of student mentors who would have regular contact with year 7 students, and were trained to provide practical and emotional support for these students as they began their secondary school career.

In July, CPS delivered 2 days of training for the group of 10 staff who were to become the pastoral team for the following year's year 7 students. In the September, a group of 20 year 8 students were also given two days training. On both cases the training introduced nonviolence, NVC and restorative approaches to managing conflict. It was also an opportunity to establish the practicalities of how and when the year 8 student mentors would provide regular support for the year 7 students.

Supervision Sessions

What emerged from this training was a timetable of weekly sessions in which the mentors, in pairs, led games and activities during registration time for the year 7 tutor groups. CPS, working with the lead staff member, supported both the student mentors and the staff team through running regular supervision sessions and maintain records of the mentors' work.

Quickly, the mentors established relationships with the groups they were working with, and began to be approached by individual students requesting support for personal issues. In several examples the mentors played a key role in addressing friendship

and behaviour issues which otherwise may have continued and escalated.

Outcomes

The programme as a whole was judged to be a great success, and has been continued and developed.

"A very good scheme, positive for students to have an elder student to look up to and get advice from" – Head of Year 7

"Students felt comfortable to discuss problems with [the mentors]" – Year 7 Tutor

"It was a positive experience, I enjoyed working with younger students, especially talking about how they feel" – Year 8 Mentor

"It reminded me what it felt like to be a year 7... We helped a boy who found it hard to make friends" – Year 8 Mentors