



Good Practice Guidelines for Peer Mediation Training in Schools

These guidelines have been devised by the Education Initiative Group of the Scottish Mediation Network (SMN) in 2006. They are designed to support schools in identifying good practice when implementing peer mediation. The Network's key aim is to put mediation into the mainstream, widely available and clearly understood as a first option for resolving disputes of all kinds in Scotland. SMN, whilst not a standard setting agency recognises the importance of developing and supporting good practice in relation to mediation provision and training. All contributions to improve the guidelines are welcome.

What is Peer Mediation?

Peer mediation involves two trained mediators assisting pupils in conflict through a series of steps so that they can find their own way of resolving their problems. Difficulties and disagreement are faced and brought out into the open. Through acknowledgement and careful exploration comes shared understanding which usually leads to a negotiated, constructive, non-violent way of managing the conflict. It builds important life and social skills.

Contact Beforehand

Good practice suggests that mediation trainers, before mediation training is delivered will:

- Arrange a meeting with Senior Management/Head Teacher.
- Ensure appropriate staff understands the peer mediation process.
- Make relevant information available for distribution to the whole school community.
- Provide information on recruiting and selecting pupils to participate in peer mediation training.
- Be satisfied about the suitability of the training venue.
- Have a clear contract with the school which specifies costs, the contributions of trainers and school staff; this should include any follow up involvement.
- Be satisfied that the trainer to pupil ratio is appropriate with an absolute maximum of 8 pupils to 1 trainer. For some parts of the

Enabling Conflict Resolution

Contact Beforehand (continued)

- training e.g. role play, a higher adult to pupil ratio will be necessary.
- Comply with the requirements of Disclosure Scotland and will have an enhanced disclosure.
- Satisfy themselves that the school has identified staff that will organise the training and provide leadership and support for the programme.
- Advise the school that at least one member of staff should participate in the training sessions. This member of staff should attend and participate throughout the training sessions.

Key Components of Training

Good practice suggests that training covers the following key components:

1. Ground rules for the training and for mediation.
2. Understanding how mediation fits into the school's values and ethos.
3. Overview of school policies e.g. Child protection and anti-bullying.
4. Conflict: understanding conflict, responding to conflict, identifying feelings and needs.
5. Mediation principles: impartiality, boundaries of confidentiality, voluntary participation, mediators don't solve the problem the disputants do, when to mediate and when not to.
6. Skills and qualities of a mediator.
7. Communication skills, active listening, asking open questions, body language.
8. Recognising and responding appropriately to feelings and emotions.
9. Understanding of the mediation process.
10. Mediation practice.
11. Negotiation skills, including patience and open-mindedness.
12. How the service will function.
13. Cooperation: team work, working with a co-mediator.
14. What to do when problems occur, e.g. dealing with difficult behaviour in mediation

peer mediation

Duration of Training

Basic peer mediation training should take a minimum of two days, unless pupils have already participated in substantial training in conflict resolution skills.

Numbers of Pupils Trained

This will depend on the size of the school and other factors, e.g. level of conflict, other peer support programmes, and make-up of the school community.

- One trainer to 8 pupils as a maximum ratio.
- In selecting the number of mediators to train, schools should bear in mind the demands placed on individual mediators. Trainers will be able to advise on this issue.

Evaluation

- Trainers will give and receive feedback from the children and adults.
- Trainers will advise staff on the suitability of the individual trainees at the end of the training

Resources

- Course length will be sufficient for the stated learning outcomes or course objectives to be delivered.
- The Scottish Mediation Network's resource list (through the Peer Mediation Network) will be made available to the schools.

For more information

Email: admin@scottishmediation.org.uk
or the **Peer Mediation Network Coordinator** at
roxan@scottishmediation.org.uk

Visit: www.scottishmediation.org.uk

Call: 0131 556 1221