

## Peer Mediation Program

### What is Peer Mediation?

Learning how to settle problems in a non-violent way is an important part of growing up in a world where violence is prevalent, especially in music and on television. Children need to have the opportunity to resolve differences without the input of adults. Students understand their peers and therefore make the mediation process age-appropriate, framing the problem in a developmentally appropriate way. Students who participate in mediation feel more empowered and in control, they learn that it is okay to talk out problems. Key components of peer mediation include:

- Peer mediation generally solves disagreements between children that may be caused by name-calling, rumors, or misunderstandings.
- Participation in mediation is voluntary.
- Students appreciate mediation because it is confidential.
- Peer mediation does not replace the school disciplinary system.
- Peer mediation is a key component in the continuing effort to keep our schools safe for all students.

Just as reading and writing are essential skills for leading a productive life, so too are conflict resolution skills. Young people need to be able to communicate effectively, appreciate the consequences of their actions, generate and evaluate alternative solutions to problems and coexist with people with whom they disagree. Peer mediation teaches these fundamental skills and attitudes to both student mediators and students who participate in mediation sessions. Teaching students skills to resolve their own conflicts not only improves their lives, but improves the schools in which they learn.

### How do I make a referral?

Referrals to the Peer Mediation program can be made by students, teachers, administrators and parents. Any conflicts in which both parties feel they are more or less equally powerful in the relationship are appropriate for mediation. For example, bullying and situations involving harassment are not appropriate, because one party typically feels inferior and afraid of the other party. Referrals can be made for:

- \*Friendship misunderstandings
- \*Changing friendships
- \*Fighting
- \*Rumors
- \*Misunderstandings

Referrals can be made by contacting Peer Mediation Coordinators:

**Newburyport High School:** Lindsay Goff ([lgoff@newburyport.k12.ma.us](mailto:lgoff@newburyport.k12.ma.us));

**Nock Middle School:** Eriko Antos ([eamtos@newburyport.k12.ma.us](mailto:eamtos@newburyport.k12.ma.us)), Amy Flemming ([aflemming@newburyport.k12.ma.us](mailto:aflemming@newburyport.k12.ma.us)); and Carolyn Wilson ([cwilson@newburyport.k12.ma.us](mailto:cwilson@newburyport.k12.ma.us))

**Molin Upper Elementary:** Patricia Bernheart ([pbernheart@newburyport.k12.ma.us](mailto:pbernheart@newburyport.k12.ma.us)).

Students may refer themselves or each other by filling out a referral form located centrally in each school and on line, by notifying a peer mediator or by contacting a coordinator.

**Does peer mediation relate to the curriculum frameworks?**

Peer mediation teaches and reinforces concepts students are learning at school, which align with the curriculum frameworks in Health, History and Social Science.

Students learn to:

Learning Strand #1, Health. Describe effective communication skills for resolving potentially violent conflicts.

Learning Strand #7, Health. Identify and demonstrate strategies for resolving conflict and building positive relationships.

Learning Strand #9, Health. Identify and initiate improvements in the school social environment.

Learning Strand 33, History and Social Science. Students explain differences in points of view.

Learning Strand #4, History and Social Science. Students learn the nature of stereotyping, commonly from racial, ethnic, religious identifications.

Learning Strand #11, History and Social Science. Students understand that there is often more than one way to accomplish a goal, and that people can compare the ways and choose the one that provides the greatest benefit.

## Peer Mediation Referral Form

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Referred by \_\_\_\_\_

1. Name of Students in conflict:

Student #1 \_\_\_\_\_ Grade/Team \_\_\_\_\_

Student #2 \_\_\_\_\_ Grade/Team \_\_\_\_\_

Other students involved:

2. What is the conflict about? (Circle as many as you need)

Rumors Name Calling Boyfriend/Girlfriend Stealing

Friendship Teasing Prejudice Threats

Other \_\_\_\_\_

3. When/where did the conflict occur?

4. Do the students know you are referring them to mediation?

Yes No

4. When should this conflict be mediated? (Circle One)

Whenever you get the chance

As soon as possible

Today/Urgent

**Please return this form to Mrs. Antos, Mrs. Bernheart (Molin School), Ms. Goff (High School), Mrs. Flemming or Mrs. Wilson**

**Thank you for using the Peer Mediation Program!**