

Teacher's Guide

Supporting the wellbeing of primary school children

Peer interventions



To create a positive, supportive environment for all students and increase social behaviour in the classroom, support students to understand their peers by promoting 'normalisation' and 'positive attitudes' towards behaviour that may be displayed by others.

Educating a student's peers

Contribute to the reduction of teasing, bullying and avoidance by classmates and increase appropriate social behaviour of all students in the classroom by educating peers about being supportive and caring. Students may be more tolerant and accepting as well as ignore possible disturbances from a student if they are educated about the student's triggers and / or subsequent behaviour, within a supportive context.

Pay attention

Notice reactions and experiences of other students when they interact with the student in question. Protect details of the student's personal situation from peer's curiosity. Through advice and your own actions, demonstrate to all students how to develop safe, stable, and nurturing relationships to build a supportive classroom environment.

Model a positive outlook

Choose to be optimistic, let students know when they are doing something well, such as demonstrating kindness or honesty. Express empathy and support verbally and physically. Discuss with students ways of supporting each other. Be consistent and patient.

Explore emotional intelligence

To help students understand their own feelings but also to understand and accept the behaviours and feelings of their classmates. Recognising different emotions and labelling them appropriately, will give students useful information to guide their own thinking and behaviour.

Buddy systems or peer tutoring

Involves a student being partnered with a pro-social, achieving student who models appropriate behaviour and good work ethic to promote learning, remind them to stay on track and complete activities. Students who find it difficult to stay on task and complete activities often rely on friendships for normalisation, to avoid social stigma and decrease isolation. Buddy systems encourage social learning on the part of both students.

With students working in pairs a teacher is more able to listen to the interactions of individual students and monitor what is happening for those students and can provide additional support as required.

Make use of the School Counsellor

The school counsellor can assist with information and discussions on how to appropriately educate a student's peers and explore emotional literacy with students.

If the behaviour persists despite trying a number of interventions, discuss the student's situation with a supervisor or member of the learning and wellbeing support staff at your school.

<https://www.islhd.health.nsw.gov.au/services-clinics/school-link-teachers-guide>