

PEER MEDIATION SERVICE REPORT

The latest news and updates from Calm Mediation.



NATIONAL MEDIATION AWARDS SUCCESS

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

**ANNUAL SERVICE
2021-22 FIGURES**

**PEER MEDIATOR
TESTIMONIAL**

It is beautiful to see our long-standing restorative Peer Mediation project at Bacon's College receive a joint award for Best Peer Mediation Scheme of 2022. It is a real testament to the school's willingness to integrate restorative principles throughout the school and the maturity the project has gained over these 17 short years. Because this school has been willing to nurture and cultivate the project, they have been rewarded by a robust service which has done a lot to decrease head of year's workload.

At the ceremony, Dave Walker and I were joined by Samantha who has been a dependable Yr13 mediator, even delivering a presentation at the recruitment assembly this year. Yaheetah, who graduated from Bacon's College 4 years ago, and this October has returned to help me train a new cohort of students.

Bode (Community Mediator of 2020), is another past student from Bacon's College, now a trustee of Calm Mediation and Sarah O'Connor who was there to accept her award as Community Mediator of 2022.

Annual Service Figures For the 2021-22 Academic Year

Returning to school post Covid has been tricky, increased absences and fewer cases across both school where we work. These figures combine figures across schools.

45

New Peer Mediators Trained

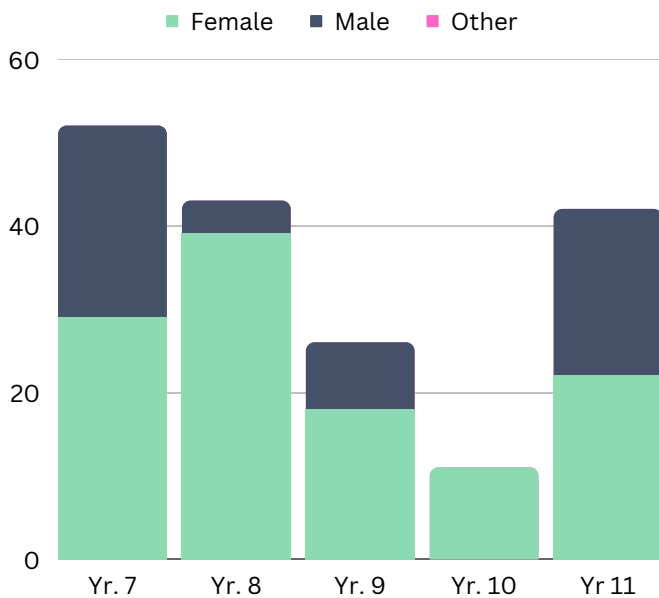
48

Peer Mediators Supported with regular group supervision

+21

Complex Cases Assisted by an Adult Mediator

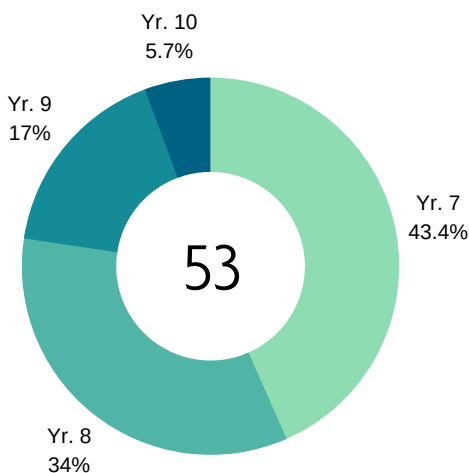
Students Involved in Disputes



143

Students Mediated by their Peers

Number of Cases



Dispute reasons

- Physical fight
- Social media
- Bullying
- Racial
- Confrontation
- Threats
- RJ conversation
- Rumours
- Arguments
- Reintegration after exclusion
- Body shaming
- Unkind comments
- Attitude to Learning

First-hand account of benefits of our Peer Mediation Programs in Schools

by Titilayo E, former peer mediator, Calm Mediation (formerly Southwark Mediation Centre) during the years: October 2014 – September 2017. Intro by Mel Bruce.

Since 1995 we have trained at least 600 peer mediators. We would like to see this number grow with involvement of more schools.

We believe there is another skill to be added to a school's core subjects, life skills of conflict resolution are measurable from the clients/students that use the service, to the mediators that are highly trained to facilitate the service. Coupled with restorative justice, mediation is flagging the way forward for our young people to better understand the impact of conflict on themselves and others. We believe we are doing an injustice to our young people for not allowing the next generation of peacekeepers to prosper by setting up their own Peer Mediation service within their school. It really is a revelation. Who is better to deal with conflict between young people? Young people.

Our involvement does not stop once the students are trained, we continue to provide group supervision sessions throughout the academic year to support and guide good practice.

We would like to share with you a heartfelt testimonial we have received from one of the students who we initially trained in 2014 and supported her as a mediation practitioner until 2017. We were honoured to receive this testimonial in 2022 and hear about the success she has gone on to have in her legal career and the TEDx stage. Huge thank you to Titilayo who took the time to write about her experience.

It would be impossible for me to describe my years at Bacons' without mention of Calm Mediation.

Speaking to the need and effectiveness of the Calm Mediation service at Bacons' College

Although I became a peer mediator in Year 12, my first encounter with Calm Mediation occurred years before. Towards the end of Year 7, I had a petty disagreement with a classmate, it soon escalated to become a messy fallout, which spread to affect others, including mutual friends. After much ineffective intervention from staff, mediation was suggested to us when we returned to school in the beginning of Year 8.

For the first time in months, I was listened to. I was not forced by frustrated teachers to 'make up' and threatened with detentions or exclusion if I did not. These mediators who calmly spoke with me outside of the classroom listened and were invested in helping ensure that I had a positive experience in mediation despite whatever the outcome of the relationship may be. After a few sessions, the cracks in the relationship began to heal – for the first time in months, things were amicable.

When my now friend and I ponder on how our relationship grew, developed, and deepened, we have the mediation service to thank. Our friendship has spanned over most of our lives as we met when we were children at the age of eleven. This friendship probably would have never come to be, if we were not given the relationship building tools and resolution skills taught to us in mediation. Since Year 7, we have seen each other through the closing stages of childhood, GCSEs, A-Levels, University graduations, life moments and our first jobs post university.

Being a peer mediator was important to me, as it provided me with an opportunity to 'give back' in a tangible and practical way. As a peer mediator and student, I witnessed first-hand the silent power that Mediation had within the inner workings of Bacons' College. I regularly received feedback from

contented staff who stated that lessons were easier to teach when students 'got along'. Ultimately, better relationships between the student body and also with their teachers led to more harmonious and conducive learning environments.

Now, it is important to note that mediation does not create a utopian state of existence, which instantly makes everything perfect. Mediation is a process where trained individuals provide a neutral and impartial space for communication to foster an improved, not perfect working relationship between them – and this is what so many students desperately need.

The skills I learnt and developed put me in advantageous positions later in life. In every interview being a mediator always sparked much interest and conversation. The competitive nature of Corporate Law internships meant that simply having a strong academic record was not enough. In the midst of fierce competition being a mediator helped me stand out amongst my peers and other qualified and competent applicants.

I believe that having a mediation service in Bacons' College has been a silent, necessary, and powerful tool in fostering the harmonious innerworkings of the school and developing in students' crucial life skills.

Being a mediator and training with Calm Mediation equipped me with the essential skills of conflict resolution and effective communication – skills necessary not just as a legal intern, but skills everyone needs, skills necessary for life. Additionally, balancing student life and being a mediator meant that I had to have strong time management skills. This has helped me in the workplace as at work I frequently managed multiple projects and programs simultaneously whilst needing to manage and prioritise my workloads to meet conflicting demands.

Although I had been a confident public speaker, being a peer mediator helped me to develop this skill,

I successfully secured multiple prestigious Law placements during my Sixth Form years and while studying Law in University.

and mediation gave me the platform. My first ever speaking engagement in a workplace setting was provided to me through Calm Mediation as I was invited by the Director to be one of the speakers at a networking event in which I spoke of my role as a peer mediator. Since then, my public speaking opportunities have grown. From speaking in Bacons' College assemblies, I have held keynote speaker roles for different organisations which my trainers Mel Bruce and Dave Walker have supported me and attended. I have also been able to speak on global platforms including TEDx.

Recently, I landed a coveted role in a management position where I will be working with esteemed global brands and with people from different backgrounds. Included in the essential criteria for this role was excellent communication skills and the ability to work with clients from different cultures. Again, just as in previous applications, being a peer mediator and speaking of this unique experience helped me to stand out and land this role.

It is my belief that Bacons' College has hugely benefitted from having an internal mediation service, in ways the school may never fully understand or realise. There have been years of dedication, training and support that Calm Mediation has provided. The mediation trainers Mel Bruce and Dave Walker have signed this necessary, difficult, and emotionally taxing work with a marked signature of excellence in all that they do and have done.

No matter where one finds themselves, or what role or job they are in, being equipped to work with people and manage conflict effectively is a skill every human being needs. The conflict resolution strategies I learnt whilst both utilising and later providing mediation, are skills I still use to this day thanks to the mediation service. Bacons' College as a school could see the vision and has been made better through and thanks to the work of Calm Mediation.