



26th Feb 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to share some of the successes we have experienced since re-introducing the Cool Schools Mediator Programme back into our kura.

Early in 2023, as Whānau Leader of our senior school, I attended the Cool Schools Coordinator's workshop led by Christina Barruel. I had experienced working in another school with student mediators in action and already knew how wonderfully the programme worked.

Soon after the workshop, I began recruiting a team of 25 very keen Year 6 students. They had to apply for a position, explaining why they would be a valuable part of the team. I ran our own 2 day comprehensive training for the children, using the resources and framework I had learnt during my own training. Following this, I ran a staff training to ensure we were all on the same page. Some of the teachers then included valuable life-lessons about active listening, making I-statements and recognising and articulating feelings into their classroom programmes. Throughout the year, the Student Mediators and I met regularly to adjust the roster, discuss what was going well or what was challenging, to organise and practise assembly items or to upskill.

The children did such an amazing job. They took their role very seriously and remained completely committed for the entirety of the year. Our playgrounds became a noticeably calmer place, where duty teachers often felt redundant and the office staff were able to use their time in other ways. Younger tamariki loved being helped by students and were always very proud when they managed to resolve a minor conflict without any help from a teacher. They learnt to trust their tuakana. Around mid-year we sought out some feedback from our school community. Here are some of the comments we received;

*"The mediators do such an amazing job. Before (they were out in the playground), we would have lots of students coming into the office and we would be very very busy, but you guys have made our lives so much easier. They have stopped coming into the office for all the little reasons, as the mediators are helping them outside and we are so very grateful for all the fabulous work you do!" Shelley- Office staff*

*"I like how mediators help us solve problems" Sienna- age 5*

*"Mediators help people when they are upset and make sure they can find a solution for the problem." Irie-May-age 8*

*"The mediators are such good listeners, they have really taken on board everything they learnt in their training, they are very responsible and mature in the way they go about guiding tamariki through the mediation process. You are all such great role models." Lance- Teacher*

*"The mediators help with all the small issues, so you don't need to get a teacher." Juan-age 8*

*"The mediators have been fantastic, because they have taken the pressure off the teachers. It's really lovely to see children helping other children to solve those problems and I think it's enabled children to work together to help make our school a better place during playtimes." Pauline- teacher*

*"Mediators make friends be happy again" Hanah- age 5*

As well as the success we've seen in the playground, we observed some real personal growth in our mediators. They became amazingly empathetic listeners and were able to quickly build rapport with people they hardly knew, and they gained such satisfaction in using the mediation process to help others. We saw the quieter children find their voice and grow immensely in confidence, while some of the more rebellious children corrected their path and became amazing role models, who we could really depend on. (They wanted to ensure they could remain part of the team!)

Late last year, when it was time to recruit a new team for 2024, we had huge interest. We also had 2 more staff join the team after seeing this programme's value. They participated in the November workshop and now are helping facilitate and support our mediators. Together, we repeated the 2 day comprehensive student training and now we are all very grateful to have another highly committed team of 33 mediators working hard to ensure our playgrounds are a peaceful, happy and safe place for our tamariki.

Ngā mihi,



Lee Bartlett  
Teacher  
Woodlands Park School

12 February 2024

To Whom It May Concern

*Did you know the Cool Schools programme makes a positive impact in our school!*

Paparangi School has had a partnership with the Peace Foundation for many years and several cohorts of Paparangi students have benefitted from our Peer Mediators programme, either as a mediator themselves or being supported by peer mediators in our playground. We value the way Cool Schools gives us a common approach and a shared language to use across our school - the consistency really helps us to strengthen our social skills development and focus on building friendships.

The two Paparangi staff members who attended the 2 day Cool Schools professional development workshop hosted at Paparangi School in February 2023 told me it was the 'best' programme they had been part of and they were very inspired to implement many of their learnings with their students, class and even in their personal lives! It's not very often that teachers are still raving about professional development they've participated in weeks or months later!

Paparangi became a PB4L School in 2019 and Cool Schools has enhanced the work we do to embed our GROW values with students, staff and our wider community. Our teachers value the suite of resources that help our school to implement the Cool Schools programme. They are comprehensive, user friendly and practical. We often use these resources to revisit key areas when inducting new staff or with whole staff on teacher only days.

Noho ora mai rā



Tracey Arthurs  
Principal  
Paparangi School



**Paparangi  
School**



# St. Peter's Catholic School

Quality Education in a Christian Community

---

St. Peter's Catholic School  
22 Anzac Street  
Cambridge  
chounsell@stpeterscatholic.school.nz

February 5th, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

Subject: Impact of the Cool Schools Programme at St. Peter's Catholic School

I am writing to express the profound impact that the Cool Schools Programme has had on our school community at St. Peter's Catholic School. Having been an integral part of our educational framework for over 15 years, the program has played a pivotal role in shaping not only the school culture but also in empowering our ākonga and enhancing the professional development of our kaiako.

One of the remarkable transformations we have witnessed is a positive shift in our school culture. The implementation of the Cool Schools Programme has significantly reduced conflict among students during playtime and lunchtime. Our teachers can now confidently rely on the Peer Mediators, a testament to the efficacy of the program in fostering conflict resolution skills among our students. As a result, teachers have experienced a reduction in the time spent dealing with conflicts, allowing for more focus on quality learning and play.

Moreover, the impact of the Cool Schools Programme extends beyond the school grounds. New students joining our school community have reported feeling a sense of safety and inclusion, attributing it to the positive school atmosphere fostered by the program. This aligns seamlessly with our Catholic school ethos and virtues, as many connections are formed between teachers and students through the shared values promoted by the Cool Schools Programme.

The benefits of the program are not confined to the present; our trained mediators continue to carry forward the skills and experiences gained into high school. Their feedback highlights how these skills have assisted them in navigating conflict issues in their new environments. The sense of empowerment instilled in our students through the program is palpable. They not only feel equipped to make a difference within the school community but also recognize their potential to contribute positively to their homes, communities, and beyond.





# St. Peter's Catholic School

Quality Education in a Christian Community

The Cool Schools Programme has been instrumental in fostering a sense of responsibility among our students for their own behavior. The use of mediation language encourages students to take ownership of their actions, promoting self-awareness and accountability. In an ever-changing global landscape, the program has made our students more aware than ever that effective communication is key to finding solutions and resolving conflicts. They see themselves as catalysts for positive change, equipped with the skills to make a difference.

The Peer Mediation programme also aligns seamlessly with the key competencies outlined in the curriculum, providing comprehensive support to our tamariki. By incorporating service leadership, the program offers students the opportunity to appreciate differences and value diversity, contributing to their overall personal and social development.

In conclusion, the Cool Schools Programme has become an integral part of our educational framework, enriching the lives of our students and fostering a positive school culture. The skills and values instilled by the program align perfectly with our Catholic school ethos, creating a nurturing environment that empowers students to become responsible and compassionate individuals.

Sincerely,

Cushla Hounsell  
Room 7 Teacher  
Cool Schools Programme Coordinator  
St. Peter's Catholic School