

## What is Peer Mediation?

Learning how to resolve 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.



## The Mediation Process

Mediation sessions generally last about 30 minutes and then both mediators and disputants are given passes back to class. Most mediation sessions are conducted during Lunch, recess, or one of their electives; but occasionally more volatile situations require pulling them from a core class.

## Mediator Training

Orange County Dispute Settle Center's, Will Dudenhauser, trains selected members twice per year, once in the Fall and again in the Spring. Watch for our school news letter for training dates. If your child is interested in becoming a mediator please refer them to Mr. Wagoner our Peer Mediation Advisor.

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