



Bonython Brief: The Peer Mentor Program

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At Bonython, we believe that everyone should have a friend or someone to play with. Bonython wants all children to feel welcomed and have a sense of belonging. We want everyone to have fun and express themselves through play. So we introduced Peer Mentors, a program where students in years 5 and 6 join junior break times to engage with their younger peers.

What is the Peer Mentor Program?

Peer Mentors is a program where students in years 5 and 6 wear bright orange vests and play with students in years Kindergarten, 1 and 2 at their break times. Peer mentors are great role models for younger students. It is a program that helps younger children to interact with senior children. Peer Mentors encourage younger peers to play with each other in friendly, kind and respectful ways. There are a variety of senior students in the program which is great as it suits many personalities.

Peer Mentors is all about new social opportunities and friendship. Peer mentors need to demonstrate skills as communicators, collaborators, self - managers, and thinkers. Peer mentors demonstrate the GIDES, our school values, to be great role models for the younger peers. They are motivated and open minded and are willing to help anyone who needs it.

Peer mentors try to include the interests of younger students first and try to be fair with their decisions. The Peer Mentor program includes structured games based on the feedback that educators have given us. Peer mentors consider the interests of their younger peers. To decide which structured games to play there will be a vote between different games to participate in with the majority vote winning. The aim is for all younger students to be left feeling excited for the next session.

How do you become a peer mentor?

Peer mentors are students in years 5 and 6 who want to help younger peers. To be a peer mentor you need to have an interest and passion in helping others. First, to become a peer mentor you need to complete an application form with questions for reflection. These questions include:

- Why do you want to be a peer mentor?
- What skills will you use when being a peer mentor?
- How will you model the Bonython GIDES?

All the applications are read carefully and the lead peer mentors with a support educator decide which applications are the most suitable to become a peer mentor. If chosen, peer mentors will have a training program to learn about all of the things they should do and not do in their role. We teach everyone the values of being a peer mentor and suggest games to play with younger students.

Why do we need peer mentors?

The Peer Mentor program is not just a personal inquiry, it is something that the school needs. The Peer Mentor program isn't just in our school, it is developed at other schools, not only in Australia, but all around the world. Creating friendships and belonging is all we are about! Everytime the peer mentors go out to play with the younger peers, new opportunities to socialise with each other and make new friends appear for everyone.