



## **Positive Peer Mentors**

Our Positive Peer Mentors are a group of students who volunteer to support other students through their transition into secondary school and during Key Stage 3. They mentor these students on issues such as attendance, under achievement, bullying and friendships and enable them to address their individual problems in a mature and emotionally intelligent way.

Our Positive Peer Mentors are visible around the school and can work one-to-one with vulnerable students referred by concerned teaching staff and parents. They are an early intervention strategy in an integrated inclusion system to help address minor issues before they develop into crisis situations, leaving staff with the capacity to deal with the most challenging cases.

Our Positive Peer Mentors are:

- Friends
- Challengers
- Enablers
- Empowerers
- Supporters
- Mediators

Peer Mentoring at Ripley St Thomas Academy has a positive effect on wellbeing and impact for students across different cohorts. Positive benefits can include:

- Those receiving the help of a Peer Mentor showing improved self-esteem and resilience.
- Those training as Positive Peer Mentors developing a language of empathy and a confidence in their ability to help others.
- Those working as Positive Peer Mentors showing greater maturity and understanding and a pride in their role that improves their aspirations for the future.
- Students showing the effects of being surrounded by emotionally intelligent peers who diffuse aggression and provide role models for success.

The Positive Peer Mentors also impact the whole school by:

- Creating a team ethos where students work with staff to support others through difficult times.
- Raising the school profile within the school and local community.
- Creating positive and aspirational role models.

Peer Mentoring prepares learners to be personally and socially effective. It improves both inter and intra personal intelligence and builds the capacity to empathise. In addition, it provides learning experiences in which all can develop and apply life skills, explore their personal attitudes and values and acquire a maturity to face the challenges of adult life.

Specifically, the aims of positive peer mentoring are to:

- Develop self-esteem and intra personal skills.
- Promote self-respect and respect for others.

- Equip mentors and mentees to make choices that promote safe and healthy lives.
- Empower students to participate in school and have confidence in their opinion.
- Raise aspirations by providing a non-traditional platform for success within a school environment.
- Create a supported environment to shed learning apathy, poor behaviour perceptions and recreate self-belief.

### How does it work?

There are currently 30 Positive Peer Mentors in Year 10 and 11 at Ripley. In addition to this we have a strong Year 11 Senior Student Council and a number of subject and year group mentors who all contribute to the overall impact that mentoring has throughout the school.

The initial Positive Peer Mentor training takes place just after Easter, following which their first official role takes place on the Year 6 Transition Days in July. The newly trained Positive Peer Mentors spend the day helping and supporting the younger students that they will be helping in September.

The Year 10 Positive Peer Mentors support a Year 7 form one morning a week during registration throughout the whole school year, helping and supporting in any way the form tutor or the younger students need them to. The Positive Peer Mentor also has a one-to-one session with a pupil once a week for a whole term, at which point it is reviewed.

Once the students move on to Year 8, the Positive Peer Mentors who supported them throughout Year 7 continue to help with the transition from Year 7 to Year 8. The Positive Peer Mentors stay with their form until the October half term, helping them settle into Year 8. Most of the work of a Peer Mentor is done during Year 10 and up to the October half term of Year 11. After this the main focus for Year 11 is their upcoming GCSEs, with their first mock exams before Christmas.

The Positive Peer Mentor role is ideal for those students who are thinking of applying for a role within the Senior Student Council. Their written applications are looked at and any suitable candidates are selected to attend a panel interview. From this the panel decide who they think is most suitable for which position within the leadership team.

Do Positive Peer Mentors make a difference?

We believe that the Positive Peer Mentors at Ripley really do make a difference.

When a younger student starts to work with one of our Positive Peer Mentors on a one-to-one basis, a letter is sent home to parents/ carers to inform them of this. It explains who the Positive Peer Mentors are, what they do in school and the different issues they can help and support with. Parents/carers are also able to contact me should they have any further questions or concerns.

At the end of the one-to-one Peer Mentoring, we ask both the younger student and their parent/guardian to complete an evaluation form.

March 2022

If you have any questions relation to the Positive Peer Mentors at Ripley, please contact Mr J Quarry, Assistant Principal – Behaviour and Personal Development