

## Appendix 7

### Transfer Programme - Summer 2007

#### Rush National School

Three sixth class groups were involved in the programme. Each group was given a 90 minute session, and each 90 minute session followed the same plan. Time was a major factor, and parts of the programme were not carried out fully with some groups, depending on time limitations and the interests of each group.

The 90-minute sessions were broken into five categories:

**General warm-up and introductions:** this included an ice-breaker and an exercise where students are described by their classmates using a list of positive characteristics. All students get their fellow students to write on their sticker, which they then stick to their arm where it can be seen. Issues around identity and friendship are discussed briefly.

**Decision-making:** this starts by examining what decisions have already been made today. The class breaks up into five smaller groups and are given decisions worksheets. Each group agrees on some ideas, then feed back to the larger group. There follows a short discussion on what choices they have, and on what they don't get to choose.

**Drugs awareness:** this provides a brief introduction to drugs education. The students are asked if they would like to talk about drugs, and are then invited to describe what a drug is and to name the drugs they know. We then go through the different categories of drugs, legal and illegal - stimulant, depressant, hallucinogen, etc. – followed by some question and answer time. A large diagram of the human body is brought out and the students are invited to draw on the body where they think cigarettes have an effect. We work out how much a pack of cigarettes a day would cost over a year, and finish the session by bringing attention back to the decisions they can make for themselves.

**Excitement & worry:** this involves group discussion about what scares us or makes us nervous, and explores how that feels. There is a brief description of the fight / flight response, and some deep breathing exercises as a coping mechanism for anxiety.

**New school:** primary and secondary school are compared within the larger group, and example secondary timetables are looked at. Students are reminded about what happens in the body when we are nervous, and how to deal with it. Each student gets a template plan on how to make the transition easier. Possible issues that might arise with the transition to secondary school are called out, and the group then comes up with possible solutions. Each student writes down the issues that might affect them, along with the solution they think might help. The session ends with a final circle and a warm-down game.

#### Overall evaluation:

With each group only having 90 minutes, time was extremely tight. This meant that groups ran back-to-back, and by the final session, the facilitator was tiring. It also put pressure in terms of getting the students to rush the final (and maybe most important) part of the session.

The overall reaction to the topics was very positive, and would certainly provide a reason to continue and expand the transition programme.

The general feedback from the teachers was mixed, with two teachers being very happy with the process, but the third a little sceptical of the non-authoritarian approach used. However, the behaviour of the children was excellent, with few exceptions.

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