

# The Roseland Community School

## Substance use & Misuse – Criterion 4

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**Healthy School Validation** 2003

The Roseland Community School accepts 11 –16 year old students from farms, villages and hamlets of the Roseland peninsula as well as the surrounding urban areas. The school has approximately 590 students and is designated as a Beacon School.

The Healthy Schools questionnaire has proved to be a very useful tool in assessing the needs of the school. Even better, students from Year Seven and our Peer Mentoring Group took ownership of this by analysing some of the data and making some interesting and challenging recommendations

The chosen criterion was Substance Use and Misuse.

Key issues identified were to raise awareness of types of drugs and their affects and also to increase confidence and self esteem of students so that they would have more control over their decision making.

From these few seeds, many related activities sprung!

Towards the end of a **Year 8 Module about the use of drugs**, I asked my PSHE group to design a poster to show their understanding of what they had learnt from these lessons.

A hand shot up and a student asked if she could design a web site because she had already produced lots of posters!

“Yes, wonderful,” rather glibly I replied, little realising the impact of what had just been said.

A week later, I collected in the homework and commented on the various merits of each piece of work when I was asked to look at the new website.

Better than that, the student and a friend who had helped her, presented their work to the class.

The whole class listened attentively, no mean task, and at the end of the presentation they offered praise.

The Website at that time had been the both of the students’ views and understanding of drugs and the opening line was, “Drugs = Bad”.

This title became the means to a healthy debate and allowed me to assess fully the knowledge and understanding of drugs which the class had acquired.

What I enjoyed most was the constructive criticism given about the content and website design which both students’ accepted so stoically. “I couldn’t have done it!”

So where has this led?

Proud of their achievement, they presented their revised website ,

“Drugs = Good and Bad” to Healthy Schools on our validation visit.

Since then, they have also been invited to present their work to "Signs", mostly Year 9 and Year 10 students, as part of a training programme and they have joined the Signs group.

It is also hoped that the site will become a link to the schools website.

Please visit: <http://mysite.freemove.com/P.S.E>

### PEER SUPPORT

The school has demonstrated commitment to the Peer Support Group, initially called ACHE and now "Signs," by employing Kathy as a Peer Support and Development Trainer and she provides training after school each week.

The Signs group are given training on issues such as disability, prejudice and discrimination, sexual harassment, sex education, substance use and misuse.

A large part of the programme is developing communication and listening skills as well as learning about body language.

The group is dedicated and caring and have taken the lead with a number of initiatives:

#### Primary School Links

In July 2002, ACHE contacted and visited primary schools and talked to Year Six pupils. The aim of this was to try to dispel any worries and myths that the younger ones might have had about joining The Roseland and make the transition from Primary to Secondary school easier.

This went very well and support continued into Year Seven by assigning members Signs to each tutor group. This has allowed the Signs group to get to know Year Seven even better and to identify pupils that may require support.

ACHE (SIGNS) also applied for a grant of £500 from "Dream Reality", Cornwall Youth Forum.

The aim of this application is to develop work in primary schools on drug and substance misuse by providing workshops on assertiveness skills as well as providing information about drugs.

The application was successful, the group is becoming even more confident, so watch this space to see how its work develops.

#### SIGNS Text Messaging Service

It was thought that older students may find it uncomfortable to ask the peer support group for help in person, so they came up with the idea of using a Text Messaging Service.

A mobile phone has been purchased by the school and is held and monitored by Kathy, Signs Trainer.

The SIGN text number is posted around school and the group have provided information about this service in assembly time.

The principle of this service is to signpost students who may wish to use this service to the most appropriate support group, including Signs, thus helping to ensure that students do not feel so isolated when they have a problem.

#### Prefect Training

Fully appreciating the skills that Kathy has given members of SIGN's, the school quickly recognised that these were the same personal qualities that we would like to develop in our prefects.

A six week training programme was put together and students have had the opportunity to apply to train as a prefect.

The programme consisted of six two hour training sessions after school.

The timing of this was less than ideal and was set on Friday afternoons

**Session One:** Introducing each other, therefore building a framework for team building

**Session Two:** "The Plane Game". Decision making and identifying leadership qualities and team work, encompassing original team building from session one.

**Session Three.** Assertiveness training, Confidence building and self awareness.

Dealing with the issues related to being a prefect.

**Session Four:** Communication skills and Body Language.

**Session Five:** Personal Skills and You. This brought the training together through group work with the means of role play and discussion, by preparing a presentation for the Head Teacher about, "The Prefects Role at The Roseland"

**Session Six:** Presentation to Head teacher, feedback and evaluation of Prefect training session.

Twenty six students participated in the scheme and were given training log books to use and record their work at the end of each session.

These books proved to be an invaluable tool in assessing the students changing attitudes, growing confidence and self esteem, as well as providing the means to make prefect training even better next time around.

The job description for our new prefects is constantly evolving as they look to take on new responsibilities.

I believe that some of our students may have been initially resentful that they had to undertake training when in other years, this has not been the case.

However, at the end of the training all were upset that it had come to an end!

They have become an autonomous group who are reliable, confident and happy in their new role and all felt that they had earned the title of prefect

If you would like to know more about the training programme please contact Kathy Gibbin at The Roseland Community School.

### Cornwall Crimebeat

On the day of the Healthy School validation visit two Year Eleven students who have supported the work of Healthy Schools heard that their, "Here to Stop Bullying" leaflet has been supported by the Cornwall Crimebeat Committee.

