

# Stowe School Case Study

## *Empowering Peer Support Through the Student Wellbeing Ambassador Programme*

### Introduction

Stowe School, a secondary school with an established peer mentoring programme, had long valued the benefits of older students supporting younger peers.

Year 11 students were traditionally recruited to become mentors for new students entering the school the following academic year, providing informal guidance and support during a critical transition period.

While this system yielded visible relational benefits, school leaders identified a need to strengthen the mentors' ability to offer informed, evidence-based wellbeing advice.

Recognising this gap, the school introduced the Student Wellbeing Ambassador Programme (SWAP) - a structured, flexible course developed by BounceTogether in partnership with wellbeing author Aidan Harvey-Craig.

SWAP provided student mentors with training grounded in practical, evidence-based techniques designed to improve emotional regulation, self-awareness, and peer support.

### Implementation

Students were enrolled in the course and completed the training independently over the summer. In September, the school hosted a half-day session to consolidate learning, encourage reflection, and role-play real-life mentoring scenarios.

This hybrid approach - autonomous learning followed by structured discussion - allowed students to engage with the material in their own time while also building shared understanding and confidence in their new roles.

The training content covered a range of accessible wellbeing strategies, from breathing techniques and sleep hygiene to emotional literacy and reframing negative thoughts.

Students not only gained new skills but also deepened their understanding of their own emotional experiences.

The pupil voice data collected showed a positive response to these sessions, particularly among children who had previously been reluctant attenders.



### Giving Students the Language and Tools for Peer Support

SWAP gave students a structured framework for understanding and discussing wellbeing in a way that felt approachable and grounded in evidence.

By training students to use specific techniques and offering them a shared language around mental health, the programme shifted the nature of peer conversations from casual advice to informed, thoughtful dialogue.

Through the course, students reflected not just on how to support others but on their own mental health.

This dual benefit—building self-awareness alongside peer leadership - was a powerful outcome of the programme.

What we have found particularly powerful about the SWAP programme is that it puts students in the driving seat and really gives them agency.



## Laying the Groundwork for Cultural Change

Although formal evaluation of mentee outcomes is planned for the future, early feedback from mentors has been strongly positive.

When asked to rate the programme, participants gave it an average score of 4.21 out of 5, reflecting both its relevance and perceived effectiveness.

Beyond the individual experience of taking the course, the wider impact is cultural: pupils are now better equipped to hold meaningful conversations about wellbeing, fostering a more open and supportive school environment.

By embedding wellbeing training into the existing mentoring structure, Stowe School has created a sustainable peer-led model that aligns with the school's pastoral priorities.

As staff noted, one of the most powerful aspects of SWAP was that it placed students in the driving seat.

Students feel like they're doing something meaningful - not just ticking a box, but actually making a difference.

## What Stowe School Achieved

Stowe School's use of the Student Wellbeing Ambassador Programme demonstrates how structured, evidence-based training can enhance existing pastoral systems and empower students to take a more active role in supporting mental health.

By giving student mentors the tools to lead informed discussions, the school has embedded wellbeing education into its peer culture - building capacity from within and laying a foundation for deeper student agency and emotional literacy.



## Ready to Get Started?

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