

STARS – NGA WHETU



OVERVIEW

Stars uses the teina/tuakana mentoring model and achieves positive and measurable results, including increased academic engagement and achievement for junior and senior students. Stars makes the transition into high school a more positive experience for Year 9 students.

The programme also provides leadership and citizenship development opportunities for senior students. It helps them build confidence, improve communication and relationship building skills and strengthen their time management and planning skills. This together supports increased social and academic outcomes.

Stars involves matching trained Year 12 and 13 students as mentors to their Year 9 counterparts and has four components (adventure camp, peer mentoring, community adventure and a community project).

The Graeme Dingle Foundation has been successfully partnering with schools and communities for over 20 years.

THE PROGRAMME

The Stars programme includes the following four components:

1. Adventure Camp
Professional outdoor facilitators take students through a series of outdoor and indoor activities to develop positive relationships and teamwork. Camps can last up to five days.
2. Peer Mentoring
Year 12 and 13 students are trained to be Peer Mentors and follow a structured programme that addresses key life skills such as goal setting, time management, good communication skills and building positive relationships.
3. Community Adventure
Students spend a fun day exploring their local area, achieving certain challenges, while learning about what is available to them within their community.
4. Community Project
Students plan, organise and spend a day giving something back to their community.

PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

- To support Year 9 students to successfully transition to secondary school.
- To provide challenging and fun experiences in a supportive environment that develops teamwork, self-confidence and resilience.
- To provide mentoring opportunities and leadership skills for senior students.
- To facilitate caring relationships between students and between students and teachers.
- To develop a sense of responsibility and connectedness to the school and wider community.

Stars is underpinned by this whakatauki (proverb):

Tukua kia tu takitahi nga whetu o te rangi
Let each star in the sky share its own light.

Transforming young lives forever – Oranga Taihi, Oranga Ake

“Because of Stars, as a Deputy Principal, I spend significantly less time managing incidents and bad behaviour and more time strengthening our curriculum delivery and developing our teachers.”

Deputy Principal High School

“I learnt about how to work together with other people this has affected me because I use to be shy to meet other people but now I ain't. I will use this in the future to help other kids to become more confident.”

Stars Student

“I have witnessed first-hand the physically challenging and mentally stimulating opportunities the Stars programme offers. Values such as team work, co-operation, accountability and ownership are inherent and offer the opportunity for students to learn to become more responsible and independent.”

Principal High School

“We learnt that if we work as a team and trust each other we can achieve anything. We got our whole team over the massive wall which we thought was impossible.”

Stars Student



LINKS TO NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM

Stars challenges students to use and develop each of the five learning competencies of the New Zealand Curriculum. Stars supports students to:

Managing Self	Relating to Others	Participating & Contributing	Thinking	Using language, symbols & texts
Set and monitor goals, manage timeframes, arrange activities and reflect on and respond to ideas.	Interact, share ideas and negotiate with a range of people.	Access community resources for information/support and use that information as a basis for action.	Analyse and consider a variety of possible approaches to problem solve and decide on a course of action.	Use language appropriate to recording and communicating ideas.

Stars also aligns to other learning areas of the New Zealand curriculum at Year 9 (Level 4-5) and Year 12-13 (Level 7-8).

MAXIMISING PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

Stars incorporates best practice indicators into delivery when it comes to maximising programme effectiveness.

The Stars programme:

- is grounded in a youth development framework.
- provides intensive training to Group Leaders and Peer Mentors and this is supplemented with on-going skill development and support.
- offers a variety of engaging and developmental experiential activities for Peer Mentors to deliver to Year 9 students.
- has developed clear roles and responsibilities for personnel (Stars Coordinator, School Principal, Group Leaders and Peer Mentors).
- requires diligent monitoring of programme content, delivery and student behaviour.
- provides an evaluation component that captures programme success and identifies opportunities for programme development.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Stars includes a community adventure and a community project. The Community Adventure helps students to get to know and connect to their community, giving them the opportunity to explore resources and support. This component provides an opportunity for students to transfer the learning gained from the adventure camp to the community context.

The Community Project helps students to think about how they can contribute to the community and the wellbeing of others. Research has shown that contributing through a volunteer project can increase social connectedness, improve a sense of self and develop positive attitudinal change.



THE EVIDENCE

Students that go through Stars rate the programme highly.

Research shows:

- Stars has been found to contribute to the well-being of Year 9 students by helping them to gain practical and life skills such as: working with others, connecting to their communities, achieving their goals, improving relationships with friends, and developing relationships with older students.
- Pasifika students and those from low decile schools have been found to be particularly highly engaged in Stars.
- During Stars, Peer Mentors report significant increases in their social competence and character.
- Stars continues to positively influence the lives of the Peer Mentors one year after the programme due to increases in social competence, character, levels of maturity and sense of responsibility. Peer Mentors also report significant increases in self-confidence, task leadership, and intellectual flexibility.
- Being a Stars Peer Mentor has a positive impact on the life skills and character of a young person. The time invested in their peers does not affect their own academic achievements.

