



**Board/Authority Authorized Course
Vernon Secondary School
Peer Assisted Learning 11**

School District/Independent School Authority Name: Vernon School District	School District/Independent School Authority Number (e.g. SD43, Authority #432): SD#22
Developed by: Andrea Schiiler	Date Developed: March 31, 2016
Superintendent Approval Date (for School Districts only): June 19, 2019	Superintendent Signature (for School Districts only): On course form
Board/Authority Approval Date: June 19, 2019	Board/Authority Chair Signature: On course form
Course Name: Peer Assisted Learning (PALS) 11	Grade Level of Course: 11
Number of Course Credits: 4	Number of Hours of Instruction: 120

Board/Authority Prerequisite(s): None

Special Training, Facilities or Equipment Required: None

Course Synopsis: Peer Assisted Learning (PALs) 11 is grounded in the evidence-based practice of Peer Mediation Instruction & Intervention (PMII) and equips senior students with the skills and knowledge needed to successfully include peers with autism and other disabilities in their schools and communities. Students will develop communication, coaching, peer-mediation strategies, leadership, role-modeling, conflict management and ecologically valid social skills. They will gain an awareness and improved understanding of the diversity of students with special needs (e.g. autism, intellectual disability, ADHD), along with specific strategies for supporting successful social interactions with these students.

Goals and Rationale:**Goals:**

Develop an understanding and awareness of the diverse needs of peers with social challenges.

Develop effective interpersonal and social communication skills.

Apply interpersonal skills in a real-world environment and problem-solve for mutual success and enjoyment.

Gain a sense of purpose and evaluate career-life options around supporting individuals with special needs.

Rationale:

Given the increased diversity found in academic classrooms today, further specialized training and support will ensure typical peers are successful and feel supported in their journey of including students with diverse needs in their communities. Research supports equipping peers with Peer Mediation, Intervention & Instruction (PMII) strategies to interact with and support students with ASD, in terms of positive outcomes for both typical peers and those with disabilities. Benefits for typical students may include "higher grades, improved academic performance, enhanced personal growth, increased awareness of disability issues, development of new friendships and interest in pursuing careers in special education," (Hughes & Carter, 2008, p. 9) health, and social work. Other benefits include lasting friendships, a sense of accomplishment and personal growth, appreciation for diversity and individual differences, increased self-confidence and responsibility, and additional attention and feedback from adults (Carter, Cushing & Kennedy, 2009).

"Merely increasing proximity to peers without disabilities does not lead to increased social interactions for students with ASD. Instead, research suggests planned intervention efforts are needed to ensure the opportunities and supports are in place that set the occasion for peer interaction and shared learning (Hochman, Carter, Bottema-Beutel, Harvey & Gustafson, 2015, p. 96). Benefits for students with disabilities include enhanced social perception, increased acceptance into peer groups, and increased opportunities to practice skills in natural, real-life settings (Thiemann & Kamps, 2008). Not only are typical peers more plentiful than adults in our schools, but they are also better positioned to use and practice ecologically valid social skills, conversation skills, and increase reciprocal social interactions overall (Cole, 2015).

Successful delivery of PMII requires training and follow-up support time with students supporting target peers. Also central to the outlined PALs model is that peers help to set goals for the number and type of interactions, rather than rely on teacher or para-professional prompts to interact, meaning the interventions are well-planned and systematic. Engaging peers to be actively involved in the process increases the number of overall interactions both in class and during unstructured times, and it also increases the "likelihood that such behavior will generalize across people, settings and time (Hughes et al., 2013, p. 2).

First Peoples Principles of Learning:

As a PALs leader/ student, learning is reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place). Learning involves patience and time (e.g. PALs students must get to know their peers before setting goals, progress may be slow, but it will better meet student needs) Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions (e.g. PALs students will understand their role in the bigger picture of including students with ASD and other social challenges in the school community). Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities (e.g. PALs students may be paired with younger peers or those who are more vulnerable or socially delayed). Becoming a PALs leader/ student involves recognizing that some learning is sensitive and should only be shared with permission and in certain situations (e.g. diagnoses, confidential information).

Indigenous Worldviews and Perspectives:

A Positive, Learner-Centered Approach (both PALs students and their peers' needs inform the goals, strategies, content)

Flexibility (scheduling, program/ course configuration, grouping); PALs can be offered within the timetable or outside of the timetable depending on student needs/ preference, groupings will be varied and diverse

Community Engagement (PALs asks students to reflect on their communities and how to better engage and include students with diverse social challenges)

Experiential Learning (while the training portion of the content is teacher driven, the learning takes place in large part as PALs students apply their learning to real contexts with their peers, for example examining how to more effectively include a target peer in a Science 10 class)

BIG IDEAS

Individuals with ASD experience the world in unique ways	Individuals with ASD benefit from successful social interactions with peers.	Positive social interactions are the foundation of a safe, respectful, and caring community	Increased mental health awareness can positively impact social and emotional health and wellness.
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Learning Standards

Curricular Competencies	Content
<i>Students are expected to do the following:</i> Demonstrate and identify behaviors needed for active listening Ask for adult support when faced with difficulties in supporting target peer Consult and plan with sponsor teacher and target peer a plan to support learning evaluate and evolve as needed, using a template. Role model the correct application of ecologically valid social skills Describe/ express personal attributes, characteristics, and skills in relation to role a PALs student. Identify criteria to help target peer reflect on their learning and achievement Recognize the influence of communication skills and ability to interact with a variety of individuals in work and community settings Identify challenges and opportunities around supporting individuals with diverse needs, and generate and apply strategies Practice effective strategies for healthy school/work-life balance Use person first language in class discussions Demonstrate inclusive, respectful and safe interactions while supporting students with diverse needs Use self-assessment and reflection to develop awareness of personal strengths, preferences and skills. Try new experiences and take reasonable challenges Help Create an atmosphere of respect within the class and school as a whole Develop a strong working relationship with the sponsor teacher and peer Demonstrate growing confidence in taking initiative	<i>Students are expected to know the following:</i> Characteristics, Strengths, and needs of students with autism (ASD) and others with social difficulties Myths and misconceptions about autism Signs to watch for in peers who are struggling socially. Basic Communication skills and conversation strategies which help build relationships with students with diverse needs Signs and symptoms of adolescent wellness and mental illness Resources for supporting adolescent mental health in the community Ecologically valid social skills as related to teens with ASD Career life options related supporting individuals with diverse needs Procedures and expectations around confidential handling of sensitive information. Principles rationale behind first language

Big Ideas – Elaborations

Individuals with ASD experience the world in unique ways: strengths and challenges related to ASD fall on a spectrum and can be discussed from a strengths-based model.

Sample Questions to support inquiry-based learning:

What are some similarities and some differences between myself and those I am learning about?

How can I describe or share my new knowledge with peers or family members?

Are there examples where I can think of where I have felt uncomfortable socially or when I don't know what to do?

How does your experience of school compare to your target peer?

How do Stereotypes influence how we look at and understand the world?

In what ways have people with disabilities changed our world?

Successful and social interactions: e.g. students with ASD learn social skills best from direct instruction and contextual practice with peers; having one or two close friends predicts later adjustment in life, can buffer the impact of stressful life events, correlates positively with self-esteem, independence; correlates negatively with depression and anxiety.

Sample questions to support inquiry-based learning:

What are some of the social struggles we see in our peers?

What can I do to support the social success of my peers?

What is my role in reciprocal conversations? What does it mean to listen?

How can we increase opportunities for students with ASD to practice social skills, social communication?

Social and emotional health and wellness: e.g. coping skills, healthy relationships, self-care, risk assessment and decision making

Sample questions to support inquiry-based learning:

How do we capitalize on our strengths and interests to help us stay mentally well?

How can I take care of my mental health?

How can we create more inclusive communities?

What does it mean to be emotionally well?

How do our communications and interactions represent who and how we want to be in the world?

During Career-life transitions, what personal tools and strategies can help us achieve and maintain a positive orientation toward the future?

Curricular Competencies – Elaborations

Active listening: Listening is one of the most important skills you can have. How well you listen has a major impact on your job effectiveness, and on the quality of your relationships with others. Components include paying attention, showing that you are listening, providing feedback, deferring judgment, responding appropriately.

Ecologically valid social skills: as described in the PEERS curriculum, which teaches adolescents the concrete rules and steps of social behavior, as demonstrated by socially successful teens in real-life contexts. For example, rather than just going up to people and saying "Hi", research suggests that teens typically meet one another by entering group conversations focused on common interests, if they find an unobtrusive and appropriate time to enter.

Person first Language: The language we use to refer to persons with disabilities shapes our beliefs and ideas about them. Words are powerful; old, inaccurate, and inappropriate descriptors perpetuate negative stereotypes and attitudinal barriers. When we describe people by their labels of medical diagnosis, we devalue and disrespect them as individuals. In contrast, using thoughtful terminology can foster positive attitudes about persons with disabilities.

New experiences and take challenges: for many neuro typical peers, this course will be the first time they have explicitly discussed and/or worked with peers with ASD and it can be little daunting yet, can expand their comfort zone and be very rewarding.

Content – Elaborations

Characteristics of student with Autism (ASD) and others with social difficulties: e.g. acceptance and understanding; cognitive processing differences, executive functioning skills, rigidity, inflexibility, common sensory issues, the spectrum of ASD

Myths and misconceptions, e.g. causes of Autism, vaccines, depictions in popular culture, social isolation as a choice, eccentricity

Signs to watch for in peers who are struggling socially: e.g. fitting in, literal/concrete thinking, perspective taking, theory of mind, reciprocal interactions, topics of interest, social filters, anxiety, frustration, bullying, voice prosody

Basic communicating skills and conversation strategies: e.g. trading information, two-way conversations, showing interest, keeping the conversation going, help your friend respond, redirect the conversation

Signs and symptoms of adolescent wellness and mental illness: e.g. drugs and alcohol, peer pressure, depression, suicide, mental illness such as bipolar disorder, anxiety and dual diagnosis

Ecologically valid social skills as related to teens with ASD: e.g. reciprocal conversations electronic conversations, real world friends, appropriate use of humor, choosing appropriate friends, starting and joining conversations

Person first language: e.g. history, self-evaluation, understanding the person comes before disability

Career life options: e.g. education, child and youth care, nursing behavioral intervention, personal training, support work, social work

Recommended Instructional Components:

Typical Week:

After school Training/ Direct Instruction: includes time for sharing new strategies, topics for conversation, data collection review (4-5 weeks)

Monday Support Block/ Lunch Period: Individual time to check in with sponsor teacher and complete reflections, goal setting and other assignments during assigned PALS block or lunch hour

Throughout the Week:

Support target peer with strategies, record progress

Instructional methods:

Direct instruction (didactic)

Role play demonstrations/ Scenarios/ Interactive instruction

Guided reading of articles relevant to peer mediated support

Ecologically valid social skills training (e.g. participate in PEERS Curriculum)

Role play demonstrations/ Scenarios/ Interactive instruction/ Modelling

Coaching with Performance Feedback

Online module(s) - AFIRM modules for PMII

Experiential learning

Reflective writing

Teacher facilitated discussion

Recommended Assessment Components: Ensure alignment with the Principles of Quality Assessment

Post-Assessment:

is fair, transparent, meaningful and responsive to all learners

focuses on all three components of the curriculum model - knowing, doing, understanding

provides ongoing descriptive feedback to students

is ongoing, timely, specific, and embedded in day-to-day instruction

provides varied and multiple opportunities for learners to demonstrate their learning

involves student in their learning

promotes development of student self-assessment and goal setting for next steps in learning

allows for a collection of student work to be gathered over time to provide a full profile of the learner and learning

communicates clearly to the learner and parents where the student is, what they are working towards and the ways that learning can be supported

Examples of Assessment:

Pre and post assessment rating scales (PEERS Curriculum)

Teacher observations

Logbook/ journaling

Peer and self-assessment

Exit interview

Social validation criteria - has there been a benefit to what students have learned in the course?

Has target peer demonstrated improvement in social literacy or successful social interactions?

Learning Resources:

AFIRM (Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules) Retrieved from: <http://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/node/137>

Mental Health Clinician guest speaker to learn about teens issues including drugs and alcohol, peer pressure, depression and suicide.

Appropriate community referral processes and emergency services are discussed, and information shared with students, via bulletin boards, classroom visitations, and individual contact. Time is spent learning about mental illnesses such as bipolar, generalized anxiety disorder, and schizophrenia to reduce the stigma attached to some of these illnesses.

Social Scripts/ Written Cues/ Visual Supports for initiating and sustaining Conversations (AFIRM)

Progress monitoring and self-monitoring forms adapted from AFIRM

Weekly peer reflection form adapted from VSS Peer Tutoring program

Access to internet, videos, articles regarding ASD, mental health resources (e.g. Keltty Mental Health Resource Centre, CYMH)

The PEERS curriculum for school-based professionals: Social skills training for adolescents with autism spectrum disorder

Peer buddy programs for successful secondary school inclusion

References:

Carter, E.W., Cushing, L.S., & Kennedy, C. H. (2009). Peer support strategies for improving all students' social lives and learning. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

Cole, C. L. (2015). Peer-mediated intervention for social communication difficulties in adolescents with autism: Literature review and research recommendations. *International Journal of Medical, Health, Biomedical, Bioengineering and Pharmaceutical Engineering*, 9(4), 347-350.

Hochman, J. M., Carter, E.W., Bottema-Beutel, K., Harvey, M. N., & Gustafson, J. R. (2015). Efficacy of peer networks to increase social connections among high school students with and without autism spectrum disorder. *Exceptional Children*, 82(1), 96-116. doi:

10.1177 /0014402915585482

Hughes, C., & Carter, E.W. (2008). Peer buddy programs for successful secondary school inclusion. Baltimore, MD: Paul H Brookes.

Hughes, C., Harvey, M., Cosgriff, J., Reilly, C, Heilingoetter, J., Brigham, N., Kaplan, L., & Bernstein, R. (2013). A peer delivered social interaction intervention for high school students with autism. *Research & Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 38(1), 1-16.

Laugeson, E. (2014). The PEERS curriculum for school-based professionals: Social skills training for adolescents with autism spectrum disorder. New York, NY: Routledge.

Thiemann, K., & Kamps, D. (2008). Promoting social-communicative competence of children with autism in integrated environments. In R. L.



Ministry of
Education

BOARD/AUTHORITY AUTHORIZED (BAA) COURSE FORM

PART A: BAA COURSE VERIFICATION STATEMENT - To be completed by District Superintendent, Independent School or Offshore School Principal

Prior to submitting the attached BAA Course Framework to the Board/Authority for approval, I Joe Rogers, Superintendent verify that I have reviewed the BAA Course to ensure that it is fully compliant with the *School Act* (if offered by a Board or Offshore School), the *Independent School Act* (if offered by an Independent School Authority), the *Board Authorized Course Order*, policy document *Board/Authority Authorized Courses: Requirements and Procedures*, and for ELL courses the ELL Guidelines: *Template for BAA Language Acquisition/Culture Courses*.

By signing below, I verify that the BAA Course:

- is not preparatory, remedial, or modified
- does not significantly overlap with current provincial curriculum
- name reflects the subject area and includes the grade level
- assigned grade level reflects the appropriate level of instruction
- credit value appropriately reflects the length and scope of the course
- synopsis clearly outlines what a student has gained when the course is completed
- rationale outlines the reasons for wanting to offer opportunities to study the course
- organizational structure outlines the specific topics, units or modules which include the learning outcomes, instruction and assessment components, and time allotments
- learning outcomes are assessable and observable and can be understood by students and parents
- instructional component clarifies learning outcomes and provides a range of pedagogical opportunities
- assessment component provides formative and summative opportunities to assess student achievement
- learning resources are age appropriate, support learning outcomes and diversity of learning rates and styles.

Course Name Peer Assisted Learning (PALs) Grade 11 Course Code _____

School District Name and Number 22 (Vernon)

Independent School Name and School Number _____

Name of District Superintendent/Independent or Offshore School Principal Joe Rogers, Superintendent of

Signature [Signature] Date 06/19/2019

PART B: BAA COURSE AUTHORIZATION STATEMENT - To be completed by Board/Authority Chair or Designate

A signed copy of this document must be submitted to the Student Certification Branch. The original document and accompanying BAA Course Framework must be retained by the district/school for submission to the Ministry upon request.
(Board Authorized Course Order, M285/04, s. 3; Educational Standards Order, M41/91, s. 5 (2)(c))

Name of Board/Authority Chair or Designate Robert Lee, Board Chair

Signature [Signature] Date 06/19/2019

I declare that this BAA course is approved by the Board/Authority

PART C: FOR INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS ONLY BAA INSPECTOR CONFIRMATION

To be completed by Inspector of Independent Schools or Designate during regular inspection/monitoring visit

A signed copy of this document (Parts A and C) must be retained for submission to the Ministry upon request.

The BAA course noted above is fully compliant with the *Independent School Act* and the BC Ministry of Education requirements outlined in the policy document *Board/Authority Authorized Courses: Requirements and Procedures*. (Educational Standards Order, M41/91, s. 5(2)(c))

Name Inspector of Independent Schools or Designate _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Send Completed Form to Student Certification Branch
Email student.certification@gov.bc.ca

Revised October 26, 2016