

**RIDGEFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL IS TRAINING THEIR PUPILS
TO BE BUDDIES, WITH SUPPORT FROM RELATE CAMBRIDGE**



*Buddies teaching parachute games to younger children
with Carole Rawley (left) Young People's Counsellor at Relate Cambridge*

Relate Cambridge and Ridgefield Primary School have been working together this term to set up a scheme called 'Be a Buddy'. The material for the Be a Buddy training scheme has been written by Relate and delivered for the last three years at Girton Glebe Primary School, but this is the first time it has been run by Relate Cambridge at Ridgefield.

When asked how she felt the children in Year 5 had benefitted, their teacher - Kayleigh Timmis from Ridgefield - said: 'Be a Buddy has had a positive impact on the children in Year 5. They have learnt to be active listeners and respect children's differences and know how to be a good friend and not to hold grudges. They are really looking forward to meeting their Buddies and helping them settle in at Ridgefield.'

The overall aims of the scheme are to support pre-school and nursery children in their move to primary school. The scheme also encourages a sense of friendship and caring for others within the school and it is expected that peer mentoring/buddying will become, in the long run, second nature both in the school. It has been shown that the scheme offers the opportunity to increase improvement in relational engagement in the playground, improve academic performance and enhance and affirm life both at school and at home.

The training on how to be a buddy has been given to the current year 5 pupils at Ridgefield, with a chance to practise communication skills - such as active listening - as well as those required in befriending others. The training has been delivered over 4 one-hour sessions by Carole Rawley, a Relate Trainer and Young Person's Counsellor, with the support of Elaine Taylor, the Training Co-ordinator at Relate Cambridge. There was a special session, held last Tuesday (19th July) for the children who are moving to Ridgefield in September, to meet their 'buddies with a final follow up session being planned for the autumn term to check on progress. The real benefits will be apparent then, when the buddying process starts between the new pupils and their buddies.

Elaine Taylor, Training Co-ordinator at Relate Cambridge said 'we are absolutely thrilled to have the opportunity to be involved in this project - which offers such a major preventative component in terms of teaching children relationship skills at this early age - and it is a scheme that we are extremely proud to be associated with. It was a delight to be present at the 'meet your buddy session last Tuesday and heart warming to see how well the buddies related to the younger children'.

Elaine went on to say that 'we all believe that a great deal of reassurance will be offered – both to the children and parents – regarding the transition from the local pre-schools and nurseries to Ridgefield Primary School, as a direct result of the Be a Buddy scheme'.

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Relate Cambridge – supporting relationships at every stage of your life

Notes to editors:

- Relate is a registered charity number 207314
- Relate champions the importance of strong and healthy relationships as the basis of a thriving society.
- Relationships are under increasing pressure – breakdown costs the UK an estimated £48bn each year.
- Relate provides impartial and non-judgmental support for people of all ages, at all stages of couple, family and social relationships.
- Over a million people every year access information, support and counselling from Relate but it's clear many more would benefit from Relate services.
- Relate's couple counselling work delivers an estimated £11.40 of benefits for every £1 spent.
- Relate's services extend beyond relationship counselling to family counselling, counselling for young people, sex therapy and informal courses and workshops and are offered through a network of around 1,700 counsellors across the country.
- Relate Cambridge celebrated its 70th birthday in 2015.
- For more information and advice visit: www.relate.org.uk.