

## **Case Study: Engaging boys and men in the MVP Programme**

Park Mains High School is a large, non-denominational secondary school in Erskine, Renfrewshire, serving the community of Erskine, Inchinnan, Bishopton, Langbank and Dargavel. With roughly 1,500 pupils from SIMD 4 to 10, it is currently expanding to support a 2,000-pupil capacity by summer 2027.

### **Overview**

This case study demonstrates how Park Mains High School has successfully engaged men and boys through the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) programme. By harnessing the influence of senior S5/S6 males from the school's football team, Park Mains has helped shift aspects of school culture, develop positive male role models and strengthen friendships and soft skills. Staff delivered 2 days of training to senior students - including members of the boys' football team - preparing them to become peer mentors. This case study highlights the positive impact of the MVP programme on these young male mentors, the younger pupils they worked with, and the wider school ethos.

### **Aims**

- Strengthen approaches to the prevention of gender-based violence (GBV) by embedding MVP across the school.
- To challenge gender perceptions and stereotypes within the S5/S6 football team that can inform the delivery of the programme to lower year groups.
- Increase the number of male mentors trained as MVP mentors.
- Raise awareness of the role of boys and men in the prevention of GBV.
- Empower young people to be agents of social change as leaders and active bystanders, building skills, knowledge, and confidence to challenge harmful norms.

### **What action was taken**

- MVP trained staff from Park Mains High School, co-delivered mentor training in partnership with Renfrewshire Council Youth Services and Children's Services and Women and Children First.
- Mentor training took place over 2 days with 87 young people at Park Mains High School, creating a safe space where young people could engage more openly.
- Trained MVP staff from Park Mains High School delivered specific scenarios in school with S5 and S6 pupils including Expectations and Party which explore the harms around pornography and alcohol and consent.
- The school introduced participation in the 2-day MVP training as a condition of securing a place on the football team.
- Senior mentors from the football team, delivered Core Session 1 to S1 pupils involved in the Goals for Growth programme, exploring gender stereotypes and their impact.

## **Impact**

- Members of the football team who were initially reluctant during training, quickly recognised the value of the programme, with particularly significant behavioural and attitudinal changes evident by the second day.
- Mentors developed personal confidence, empathy, and the ability to challenge harmful language or behaviour.
- Mentors became aware of the pressures created by harmful masculinity norms and helped younger pupils navigate them.
- Younger pupils found mentors relatable and more engaging because they were close in age and from the football team.
- Mentees gained a clearer understanding of gender stereotypes and recognised that everyone can participate equally regardless of gender.
- The football team experienced a more positive, less hostile atmosphere with improved communication.
- Teachers observed increased engagement from boys, especially after recruiting the football team into MVP.
- Whole-school culture shifted: MVP became more widely discussed, accepted, and valued across staff and pupils.

## **Next steps**

- Park Mains High School staff to deliver MVP sessions to more year groups.
- Continue engaging influential pupil groups, such as the football team, to maintain strong male participation and ensure each mentor group includes boys who can positively influence younger pupils.
- Expand and sustain mentor training so senior pupils can continue to build confidence, leadership skills, and the ability to challenge harmful language and behaviours.
- Increase visibility and involvement of trained staff, helping reinforce consistency across the school and strengthen whole-school commitment to MVP.
- Provide additional leadership opportunities for mentors, enabling them to further support younger pupils and develop strong role-model relationships.
- Support pupils to recognise and challenge harmful online content, building on the toolkit the programme already provides for identifying problematic messages and behaviours.
- Prepare for growing demand, ensuring structures are in place for future cohorts, as younger year groups are already expressing interest in becoming trained mentors.