



**Playground Activity Leaders in Schools**

# Student Leader Handbook

Student Leader's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Copyright © Peel Region, 2023  
Illustration by Rémy Simard, i2iart.com

These PALS program resources were created and approved for use only within Ontario, Canada. The resources are developed and distributed by Peel Region, Peel Public Health, Mississauga, ON [peelregion.ca/health/schools](http://peelregion.ca/health/schools)

---

## Acknowledgement

PALS was originally developed by Peel Public Health in 2003 after a review of existing playground leadership programs and consultations with other health departments.

PALS was adapted from the Recess Recreation Leaders program by Deb Cockerton, Behaviour Therapist and Child and Youth Practitioner. All content has been reproduced with permission.

Since the program's inception, many public health units in Ontario have adapted it for use in partnership with local school board partners. In 2023 a Provincial working group was formed to refresh the PALS program based on current public health evidence and standards for accessibility, equity, diversity and inclusion.

### **This program has been updated with contributions from:**

- Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit
- Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit
- Halton Region Public Health
- Hamilton Public Health Services
- KFL&A Public Health
- Lambton Public Health
- Middlesex-London Health Unit
- Niagara Region Public Health
- Niagara Region Program Specialist–Indigenous Health
- Niagara Region Youth Advisory Committee
- Niagara Region Youth Engagement Specialist
- North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit
- Northwestern Health Unit
- Peel Public Health
- Peel Public Health, Education and Curriculum Consultant
- Peterborough Public Health
- Porcupine Health Unit
- Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
- Thunder Bay District Health Unit
- Timiskaming Health Unit
- Toronto Public Health

# Congratulations!

## You are a PALS Leader in your school.

As a PALS leader you will:

- Become a more confident leader.
- Learn how to help solve problems on the playground.
- Help younger students to be more physically active, play fairly and have fun.
- Make new friends, learn new games, and have fun.
- Be part of a positive school environment where everyone feels included.

## There's always room for one more!

This is the PALS motto and it means:

- Everyone is included and everyone belongs.
- We are welcoming.
- We always make space for others to join.
- We invite all to come play with us.



# Getting to Know You BINGO

To play Bingo: The students will move around the room asking other PALS leaders questions found in the bingo squares. If the PALS leader answers “yes” to the statement then their name is written in the box. If they answer “no” they can ask another question from the Bingo card. Each PALS leader can only sign their name once in the other’s Bingo card. Bingo is achieved when a PALS leader gets a horizontal, vertical or diagonal line. The PALS leaders can yell out “Bingo” when they have finished.

B	I	N	G	O
I keep a journal	I like to tell jokes	I have the same birth month as you	I like math	I like to meet new people
I can whistle	I like to play computer or video games	I am a good listener	I like to draw	I have a pet
I am left-handed	I like to dance	<b>FREE SPACE</b>	I like winter activities	I like to spend quiet time alone
I like to read	I am wearing red	Science is one of my favourite subjects	I know how to ride a bicycle	I like to listen to music
I have a sibling	I can speak another language	I like to play board games	I play a musical instrument	I like to play outside

# Leadership skills

Put a check mark beside three skills you already have in the first column and beside the two skills you would like to work on in the second.

Skill	Three skills I have	Two skills I would like to work on
I am responsible		
I am confident		
I am open to other's ideas		
I am understanding		
I am independent		
I am organized		
I am honest		
I am a problem solver		
I am patient		
I am a good listener		
I am caring		
I can motivate others		
I can lead and follow		
I enjoy working with others		
I am helpful		

The three leadership skills my group has in common are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Adapted from: Deb Cockerton Youth Counsellor, Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB.

# Communication skills

Communication has three important parts:

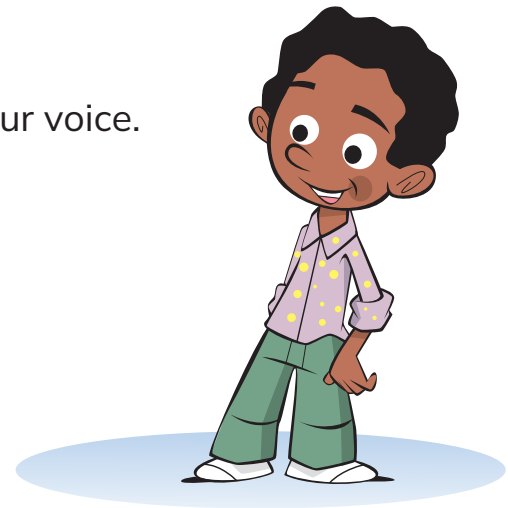
## Listening: How well I listen

- This is the most important part of communication.
- Pay attention to others' feelings.
- Give others a chance to talk.
- Let others finish speaking, don't interrupt.
- Ask questions if you don't understand.



## Speaking: What I say and how I say it

- Speak clearly.
- Use simple words.
- Pay attention to the volume and tone of your voice.
- Use your words to encourage others.



## Actions: What I do

- Face the people you are talking to.
- Be aware of your facial expressions.
- Pay attention to your body language.
- Make sure what you say is the same as what you do.

Reference: Middlesex-London Health Unit. P.L.A.Y. Peer Leadership for Active Youth.

The following section contains worksheets to help PALS Leaders build skills. More information on how to use the worksheets is in the Facilitator Handbook.

# Communicating as a PALS leader

Let's practice listening, speaking and acting like leaders!

Participants in the group say the following leader statements out loud. Once everyone has heard the statements talk about different ways to say each statement.

**Leader A:** "OK everyone, we're supposed to work together to put away the playground equipment. You put the equipment away and let me know when you're done."



**Leader B:** "Today we are going to learn a new game. First, we'll read the instructions, so we know how to play. Then we'll pick teams. Then we can practice. Does that sound good to everyone?"

**Leader C:** "I'm the leader, so you have to do what I say, or I won't let you play."



**Leader D:** You're the best runner. Do you want to be "IT"? Does anyone know a tag game we can play?"

**Leader E:** "I'm not sure what to do. Just do whatever you want."

Adapted from: Deb Cockerton Youth Counsellor, Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB.

# Conflict Resolution

There are many ways to help work through a conflict:

**Wait and work through.**

**Apologize.**

**Ask them to stop.**

**Make a deal.**

**Talk it out.**

**Ask an adult for help.**

## Follow these steps to talk it out:

1. Identify the conflict – what do we disagree about?
2. Listen to each other.
3. Speak calmly, using “I” statements to clarify.
  - Describe the problem or behaviour in a non-threatening way. “When you do this...I feel...”
  - Use eye contact.
4. See the issue from multiple perspectives – think about the disagreement from all sides.
  - How would you feel?
  - What might be important to others?
5. Try to stay calm until you have a solution where all sides feel their needs have been met.<sup>1</sup>

References: (School Mental Health Ontario and the Elementary Te, 2023).  
[smho-smsso.ca/emhc/healthy-relationship-skills/conflict-resolution/finding-solutions](https://smho-smsso.ca/emhc/healthy-relationship-skills/conflict-resolution/finding-solutions)

1 Ontario, S. M. (2023). Healthy relationship skills/Conflict resolution/Finding solutions. Retrieved from Everyday Mental Health Classroom Resource:  
[smho-smsso.ca/emhc/healthy-relationship-skills/conflict-resolution/finding-solutions](https://smho-smsso.ca/emhc/healthy-relationship-skills/conflict-resolution/finding-solutions)



# Fair play

Some games are played with partners or in teams. It is important to include everyone.

What are some fun and fair ways to find a partner or form a team?

## Choosing partners:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Making teams:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# PALS leader commitment

As a PALS leader, I will help to or I will:

- Invite all students to join in and play the games.
- Lead activities and explain the rules clearly to everyone.
- Make sure I have all the equipment needed for the activity.
- Continue to learn new games.
- Attend PALS leader meetings.
- Be responsible to show up when I am scheduled.
- Ask for help to find a back-up if I cannot be a leader on my day (except for illness).
- Role model fair play, good listening, and fun.

PALS leader signature:

---





