Luxuries ditched to walk in the shoes of refugees

Food, a warm bed and freedom; Parade College students gave them all up to spend 24 hours in the shoes of an asylum seeker.

Twenty students in years 9-12 locked themselves inside a large makeshift cage, some boys even choosing to fast the entire 24 hours. Bread, soup, barley sugar and water was provided for the other students and supervising teachers. They all slept outdoors, in temperatures as low as 8°C and had nothing but conversation, books and board games to entertain them.

Year 10 student Lucas said he aimed to raise awareness among his peers about social injustice and poverty. "There are a lot of myths about asylum seekers," he said. "I think the media has made a big issue about them coming by boat, but most of them come in by air. The boats just make them look bad."

Year 11 student Will, who tutored Sudanese children last year, said his going without food for 24 hours was "no big deal". "It's only a day, and it's raising awareness of how it is to be an asylum seeker," he said. "The violence and state of conditions that they have to put up with is alarming."

Students slept under a veranda.