

Appendix 4: Restorative Practice

Implementing the principles of Restorative Practice helps us to focus on building better relationships with each other, taking the time to ensure that every member of our school community feels listened to, valued and respected. It supports pupils to understand how their behaviour affects and impacts on others, enabling them to develop the skills necessary to maintain positive relationships and to resolve disagreements and problems themselves.

The approach used encourages individuals to think about how their behaviour and interactions have affected others and find positive ways of repairing any harm caused. This prevents the focus being solely on punishing poor behaviour or individuals avoiding taking responsibility for their actions for fear of punishment. Children and adults are encouraged to put things right together.

This creates a community that is supportive, accountable and respectful. We believe that every individual is responsible for their own behaviour.

All members of staff are trained in the key principles of Restorative Practice and understand the importance of modelling positive language and behaviour. Staff take time to develop positive and meaningful relationships with colleagues and pupils. When positive relationships are developed and connections are made, individuals are less likely to cause harm to others or choose to damage relationships. Children also develop deeper appreciation of the values of respect, responsibility, peace, thoughtfulness, friendship, empathy, hope, fairness and love.

The restorative approach - Dealing with inappropriate behaviour

Incidences of negative behaviour are dealt with in a fair, respectful and appropriate way, with the key focus on individuals taking responsibility for their behaviour, repairing any harm done, rebuilding and restoring relationships. The key principle when dealing with issues is to give all involved a chance to have their say and become actively involved in the process of resolution. All members of staff and children know that issues will be dealt with fairly with a 'no blame' approach.

When there have been incidences between children, key questions will be asked to find out what has happened and how the individuals involved can make things right again or repair the harm caused. Our aim is not necessarily to ask 'Why?' something has happened but to determine what has led to an issue and how it can be resolved positively. Everyone involved in an incident is taken through a Restorative dialogue (see below) and is therefore supported to understand the harm that has been caused to all parties. A brief overview of this dialogue will be recorded using the prompts detailed below.

The Restorative Questions:

What happened? Drawing out each person's story one at a time, starting with the person who has caused the harm. The aim is not necessarily to come to a definitive conclusion on what has happened, but for each person to have their point of view listened to.

What do you think and feel about that? Identify what each person was thinking and feeling at the time, before and since.

Who has been affected and how? Older children are encouraged to think about the wider implications of who has been affected e.g., the school community and families.

What do you think would make x feel better? Identify what those affected need to feel better, move on, repair harm and rebuild relationships.

What do you think needs to happen next/to make things right with each other and with the school community? Agree and negotiate how the needs identified above will be met and what support might they need to do this? Staff support pupils in this process but try to ensure the pupils form their own agreement where possible. All involved will review it afterwards.

This approach encourages those involved to identify ways in which a relationship can be repaired or how they can move forward. By giving pupils this responsibility, we are supporting them to develop their own strategies to avoid and resolve conflict. We also believe that if pupils reach their own agreement on how to move forward after a conflict, they are more likely to abide by it than if it is suggested by an adult or imposed upon them. Involving pupils in the design of the agreement gives them ownership and helps them to resolve the situation and make amends in their own way.

All staff working within our school use active listening skills when dealing with a conflict. This enables them to draw out more from those involved.

When consequences are imposed without meaningful discussion, the child is likely to see themselves as the victims of punishment, rather than take responsibility for their original actions. Therefore, children are involved in a Restorative conversation to actively decide upon any consequences, ensuring they are constructive and allow the child to learn from what has happened.