

An Overview of Restorative Principles in Practice

Principles

1. Relationships are a central focus of this approach. A key principle is that respectful and collaborative relationships have to be made and maintained by the interactions and communications that take place between and among people.
2. Everyone is part of a web of inter-connecting relationships - we are all both informed and formed by the words and actions of others.
3. Communication is the practice of relationships: if we want individuals to develop respectful and collaborative relationships they have to experience respectful and collaborative communication.
4. An important principle is unconditional regard for all individuals and a commitment to ensure that social learning (rather than social control) enables individuals to experience a sense of responsibility for their words and actions.

Practices

1. Community-building

Informally, this involves all communication and interaction between people that contributes to a sense of connection and belonging. This could be as simple as a smile or it could be involvement in a shared activity.

Formally, the practice of regular circle 'go-arounds' gives a voice to all individuals helping to create a relationship climate of mutual respect, personal agency and social inclusion.

2. Restorative Dialogue

Informally, this involves the practice of reflective dialogue through which individuals may reflect on the consequences of their actions. The aim is to provide reassuring connection and an opportunity for individuals to learn from feedback provided within a supportive relationship context.

Formally, the practice of holding restorative conversations and meetings creates a context in which individuals may learn about others and reflect on their own actions – providing opportunities to restore and strengthen their relationships.

3. Family Partnership

Informally, a sense of partnership will be created over time through all of the communication and interactions that takes place between school and home. This will involve staff making positive connections that value and appreciate the contribution of families, and it will involve families becoming receptive to the idea of working in partnership with school staff.

Formally, this involves creating opportunities for families to actively engage in learning about the practice of community-building and restorative dialogue. This may involve a variety of activities such as: observation, individual conversation, written information, participation in circles and meetings, and small-group workshops.