



What is restorative justice?

Restorative justice can be defined by its fundamental principle, namely that when one person has harmed another, the most useful response is to try to repair the harm done. The restorative justice approach redefines crime primarily as harm or injury rather than law-breaking. At Newsome High School, we are dedicated to adhering to our core values and it is important to have these in mind when conducting restorative approaches. These should be highlighted in any meeting involving this approach.

At Newsome High School we all live by our values:			
Respect Recognise, understand and celebrate differences.	Integrity Truth & honesty in all we do in and out of the school.	Teamwork Work together effectively and efficiently.	Aspiration Be the best you can be.

Why use restorative justice in schools?

Restorative justice in schools aims to reduce bullying and victimisation, manage conflict and improve attendance in schools; research evidence supports restorative justice in schools as a particularly promising approach to improving behaviour and attendance.

Both perpetrators and victims have their say

Restorative justice enables school students affected by bullying, or other serious behavioural incidents, to communicate and agree on how the harm caused by their actions or done to them is to be repaired. When well-implemented, perpetrators learn to understand the consequences of their behaviour and take responsibility for repairing the harm. When this happens victims usually experience the perpetrator’s commitment to reparation which means their fear of re-victimisation is reduced and they are more readily able to put the incident behind them.

What is involved?

Restorative justice in schools can involve holding meetings between the perpetrator and the victim with a mediator, peer mediation by trained school students and informal restorative approaches by staff. Meetings can be used for the most serious incidents of bullying or victimisation to reduce the use of exclusions or, when exclusions cannot be avoided, to support the successful reintegration of the excluded student. Peer mediation involves trained school students assisting in resolving less serious incidents of conflict among students. School staff can also use restorative approaches more informally in dealing with behaviour problems.

Sometimes there can be a tendency to punish a perpetrator and leave it at that. This can lead to a continued breakdown in relationships and lead to grudges being held against both parties. A meeting that promotes deeper thought into the actions carried out and how this made each party feel, gives an opportunity to reflect. This can help to build the relationship and modify future behaviours.



Holding a Restorative Meeting

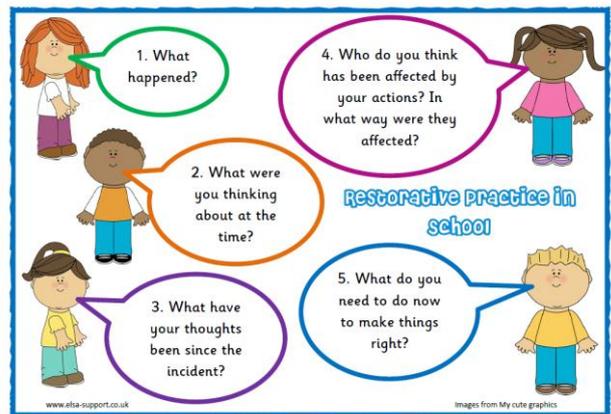
Meetings should be calm and both parties should be informed that the meeting is taking place and what is involved. It is vital that all parties understand that this meeting is not a punishment and that the aim is to understand and reflect upon any actions or behaviours leading up to this meeting.

The meeting should include the following members:

- Chair (Mediator)
- Victim
- Perpetrator

The diagrams below show examples of questions that could be asked in a restorative meeting – these can be adapted depending on the situation.

I Statements	Restorative Questions
"It makes me uncomfortable when I hear you tease others."	What happened?
"I am frustrated that you are not listening to me."	What were you thinking about at the time?
"I get upset when you talk and joke when I am teaching."	Who is being affected by your behavior?
"I was shocked to see you act like that."	What impact has this incident had on you?
"I think you should apologize!"	What do you think you need to do to make things right?



Staff conducting meetings could use the framework below. They may also want to ask both parties to complete the *Pre-Restorative Sheet* included at the end of this document before the meeting to ensure a structured and productive meeting.



Pre-Restorative Reflection Sheet (Victim)

What did you think when you realised what happened?

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What impact has this incident had on you and others?

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What has been the hardest thing for you?

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What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

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Pre-Restorative Reflection Sheet (Perpetrator)

What happened?

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What were you thinking at the time?

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What have you thought about since?

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Who has been affected by what you have done and in what way?

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What do you think you need to do to make things right?

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