

Restorative Practices Policy

This policy has been formulated by St. Mary's National School to promote a positive atmosphere throughout the school by focusing on the positive aspects of behavior and developing skills, rather than on punishments or sanctions. We promote the notion of a school community where everything we do is based on mutual respect.

'We sail our ship together'.

Rationale for using Restorative Practices

The Restorative Practice approach is about early intervention and prevention work that strengthens relationships and provides people with skills for the constructive resolution of conflict and a better understanding of how to avoid conflict in the future. It is a whole school approach, which will support any situation where negative behaviour occurs, and in the long term should help reduce the incidents of challenging behaviour. It involves the use of a set of prompts/questions in a safe environment and goes hand in hand with the regular use of circle time.

When harm has been caused by inappropriate, sometimes thoughtless, negative behaviour then all sides need and restorative practice gives:

- A chance to tell their side of the story and feel heard
- To understand better how the situation happened
- To understand how it can be avoided another time
- To feel understood by the others involved
- To find a way to move on and feel better about themselves

Therefore it:

- Creates an ethos of respect, inclusion, accountability and taking responsibility
- Creates a commitment to relationships, impartiality, being non-judgemental
- Encourages collaboration, empowerment and emotional articulacy

By implementing this policy we are empowering the children to talk through any conflict, with regard to their thoughts, how they might have acted differently and to suggest a solution to put things right. This process gives a voice to every child and the teacher acts as a facilitator. Children take responsibility for their actions. An important element of all this is that the intervention is voluntary. The success of the process depends largely on the willingness of people to take part and engage in the process.

Key Skills of Restorative Discipline are:

- Active listening
- Facilitating dialogue and problem-solving
- Listening to and expressing emotion
- Supporting others in taking ownership of problems

What is involved for us?

- Use of **Restorative language** when dealing with issues on a day to day basis
- Regular use of **circle time** to encourage children to talk about feelings , actions and the consequences of our actions on others, and how we can move forward when we are involved in wrongdoing on either side.
- **Check in, check out** to see how children are feeling and to give every child a voice.
- **Restorative Conversations: A set of questions/prompts** will be given to each member of staff to use when dealing with any incident where harm has been caused by inappropriate, thoughtless, negative behaviour. By concentrating on the speaker's key points, we are able to help him/her shift towards a constructive focus
- **Restorative Conferences/ Meetings:** Conferencing/Meeting using restorative structure to deal with serious issues

An important element in Restorative Practice is Fair Process:

Expectations - everyone knows what is expected of them

Engagement - involves individuals in decisions/listens to views

Explanation - clarify how decisions are reached

Roles and responsibilities

Responsibility for the implementation of this policy rests, in varying ways as outlined below, with all the partners in our school's education task, i.e. the Board of Management, Principal and Teaching Staff, Pupils and their Parents or Guardians, Parents Association.

Board of Management

Ratify the Code

Support the Principal and Staff in implementing Restorative Practice

Principal

Ensure that the Code of Restorative Practices is implemented in a fair and consistent manner

Provide support for colleagues

Encourage/support training for teacher where necessary in restorative practices

Promote a positive climate in the school

Arrange for review of the Code, as required

Teaching staff

Support and implement the school's Code of Restorative Practices

The promotion of positive behaviour through effective teaching, an inclusive and engaging curriculum and well managed classrooms

The use of positive classroom management techniques, such as circle time, to sustain pupil participation and motivation, and to maximise restorative behaviour.

St. Mary's National School

Be courteous, consistent and fair and model same

Deal appropriately with misbehavior using the restorative script and appropriate circles.

Provide support for colleagues

Communicate with parents when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern

Engaging with in-school reviews of restorative practices

Pupils are encouraged to:

Participate with the class circles

Adopt a restorative approach when dealing with conflict

Listen to teachers and act on instructions / advice

Show respect for all members of the school community

Respect all school property and the property of other pupils

Be courteous and mannered

Parents and Guardians are encouraged to:

Be familiar with the Code of Restorative Practices and support its implementation

Be interested in, support and encourage their children's ethos

Cooperate with teachers if their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others

Communicate with the school regarding any problems that may affect their child's progress or behaviour

Timeframe for Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier if deemed necessary.

Ratification and Review of Policy

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____