

Restorative Approaches

School Information Pack

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SURREY

What is in this pack?

Many schools are looking for more effective ways to manage behaviour across the school and develop a more cohesive school community. Restorative Approaches can help foster a more productive and positive learning environment, in a school that both pupils and staff are happy to attend.

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What is a Restorative Approach?

A restorative approach in schools helps develop a healthier learning environment, where children and young people take responsibility over their own behaviour and learning. The minds of those in a restorative school are focused on strengthening and repairing relationships, are inquisitive about what needs to happen and avoid attributing blame (Thorsborne & Blood, 2013). When embedded across the whole school, using restorative approaches can:

- ❖ Develop emotional literacy, responsibility and empathy
- ❖ Create a more positive learning environment with better attendance, and fewer behaviour incidents
- ❖ Raise children and young people's awareness of the impact of choices on others
- ❖ Reduce the number of exclusions

A restorative approach is based on

- ❖ Respect for one another, acknowledging that each person has an opinion that is unique but still of value
- ❖ Taking responsibility for your own actions
- ❖ Developing the skills of the whole school community to solve problems and repair harm

Through developing a school ethos based on needs and values, we can avoid assigning blame and punishment by creating an environment where children involved in conflict can reflect, repair and avoid repetition of the same behaviours.

Endeavour High school in Hull: From Spring 2007 –

July 2008

- ▶ 45.6% reduction in incidents of verbal abuse
- ▶ 59.4% reduction in incidents of physical abuse
- ▶ 43.2% reduction in incidents of disruptive behaviour
- ▶ 78.6% reduction in incidents of racist incidents
- ▶ 100% reduction in incidents of drug use
- ▶ 50% reduction in incidents of theft
- ▶ 44.5% reduction in fixed term exclusions
- ▶ 62.5% reduction in total days of staff absence *

* a saving of over £60,000 in the first 8 months!!
(Russell, 2015)

Developing a Restorative Vocabulary

Part of developing a restorative culture in your school means making sure the pupils have the vocabulary they need to express themselves.

When using a Restorative Approach, we encourage the pupils to think about what they need in order to move on from an incident, or what they need to avoid something happening again. We also encourage them to think about, and listen to, the needs of others.

Sometimes, when children don't know how to express themselves, they communicate their needs through behaviour that they have learnt will get them noticed. If we give the children the language they need, these behaviours may reduce.

"If children have the misfortune to be surrounded by negativity a lot of the time, they may not realise that there are alternative ways of speaking"

- Hopkins (2011)

The adults in the school community can help by modelling the language we hope the children will use themselves. This can mean a shift in the way we think and speak. Many people believe that to 'tell it how it is' is the only honest way to communicate; however, often this approach involves a "muddled mix of exaggeration, judgement, blame, accusation and insult" (Hopkins, 2003). The result of this type of language is often anger, defensiveness or withdrawal, and the underlying needs of those involved in the conflict are never understood, discussed or resolved.

Examples of unrestorative language:

- ▶ "He is rude"
- ▶ "She's naughty"
- ▶ "They're disruptive"
- ▶ "He spoke aggressively"
- ▶ "She stopped off"
- ▶ "They refused to do their work"
- ▶ He does it all on purpose

Language that attributes blame, judgement or criticism is unhelpful and has no benefit when trying to repair a difficult situation. The more adults are aware of their own language, the more the children will be able to mirror the restorative language you are using instead.

When faced with a difficult situation, we need to stop and tell ourselves to think in a restorative way, until it becomes more natural. The way we respond can both shape the outcome of the situation, and affect whether the same situation happens again.

Restorative vs Retributive Language	
Traditional Response	Restorative Response
What have you done? Why have you done that?	What's happened? Who's been harmed/affected?
Who is to blame?	How can we involve everyone in repairing the harm and moving forward?
What is the correct response to deter and punish the individual so they don't do it again?	How can everyone do things differently in the future?

Source: http://www.projectsalus.co.uk/assets/downloads/restorative-justice/RJ_book_updated.pdf

By adapting our response, we are letting the child know that we acknowledge that there may have been a reason behind their actions, but we are not expecting them to explain it at that time.

We need to make sure that the children have a well developed emotional vocabulary, and are aware of the needs of others. Just naming needs isn't enough; the children need to know what each 'need' means to different people and how they can help meet that need.

"If we can express our needs, we have a greater chance of them being met"
(Rosenberg, 2003)

Resource: Needs Cards

Love	Gratitude	Challenge	Understanding
Respect	Inclusion	Tolerance	Fairness
Humour	Positivity	Fun	Compassion
Clarity	Connection	Inspiration	Encouragement
Honesty	Reassurance	Friendship	Sensitivity
Listening	Hope	Warmth	Empathy
Trust	Safety	Acceptance	Consideration
Optimism	Patience	Support	Belonging
Kindness	Affirmation	Recognition	Co-operation

Using the Needs Cards

We can use the needs cards to help teach restorative language, developing vocabulary and understanding how to meet the needs of others.

The language can be complicated, particularly for younger children or for those who find learning difficult. Introduce the words one at a time, for example a “word of the week” or as a focus in a weekly PSHE session. Regularly review the words you’ve already covered, and make an effort to refer to them in your day to day teaching.

Try some of these activities with your class to start developing needs-based language:

Activity 1- Needs Circle

This activity mirrors one of the common strategies used in a restorative school; talking in circles. By using a circle, the adults and children have equal importance and we avoid the speaker feeling as though they are singled out.

Choose a need to focus on. It would be a good idea to choose a ‘simpler’ need to begin with while the children get used to the new language and approaches. In this example we have chosen the need for Encouragement.

With everyone in a circle:

1. Start with a mixer game such as the “fruit salad game” (name each child apple, orange, banana etc – when I say “apples” all apples need to switch places). This serves the purpose of mixing up the children and also relaxing them and welcoming them in to the circle
2. Introduce the need: “Today we are going to focus on the need “encouragement”. I’m going to ask you to finish the sentence and pass on the talking toy. The sentence is: “I need encouragement when/for... (E.g. I am doing something new.)” Make a note of the children’s responses.
3. Activity : Ask the children to make a blue tack/plasticine model that represents encouragement. After a few minutes, ask them to share with a partner.
4. Go round the circle again. Ask the children to complete the sentence “My model is of a ... It represents encouragement because...” (E.g. My model is of a hand because sometimes I need a bit of hand holding!)

5. Closing round – Ask the children to complete the sentence: “I feel encouraged when.... “ (E.g. I am told I did a good job). Make a note of the children’s responses.
6. End with another mixer or group game. Display the need and the responses to the sentences “I need encouragement when...” and “I feel encouraged when...”

‘Rules’ of the circle:

- ❖ One person talks at a time. We hold a talking piece so we know whose turn it is.
- ❖ I don’t have to agree with everyone’s opinion, and they don’t have to agree with mine.
- ❖ If I think of something else to say, I will wait for the talking piece to come back round. I can put up my hand to let the group know I have something more to say.
- ❖ If I don’t want to say anything, I can pass the talking piece to the next person. I will be offered another go once it has been passed around the circle.

Teaching the children to express themselves in a circle will prepare them for some of the conflict resolution work that is part of the Restorative Approach. The more the children are confident that they will be listened to, and not judged, the more they will ‘buy in’ to future strategies.

Activity 2- Needs Stories

Introduce a new need, for example “Respect”. Brainstorm with the children what think respect means and looks like, and think of a time that they have needed respect from others.

Create a story starter such as “Tommy the Tiger padded across the jungle floor. “I just need some respect from the other animals” he thought to himself. So he started to imagine how he was going to do it...”

Give the children a story map like the one below. Ask them to fill in the boxes, thinking about what might have happened before that made Tommy feel like he didn’t have respect, what Tommy might do to let the others know he needed respect, and what might happen afterwards once the other animals understood his need.

Needs Story Plan

What was the character thinking and feeling?

What does the character need?

What could the others do to meet this need?

What happened before?

What will happen now?

Activity 3- Needs Clouds

Introduce a new need, for example “Understanding”

Give the children “cloud” templates and “raindrops”. Ask the children to write the need on the cloud. On the raindrops ask them to write:

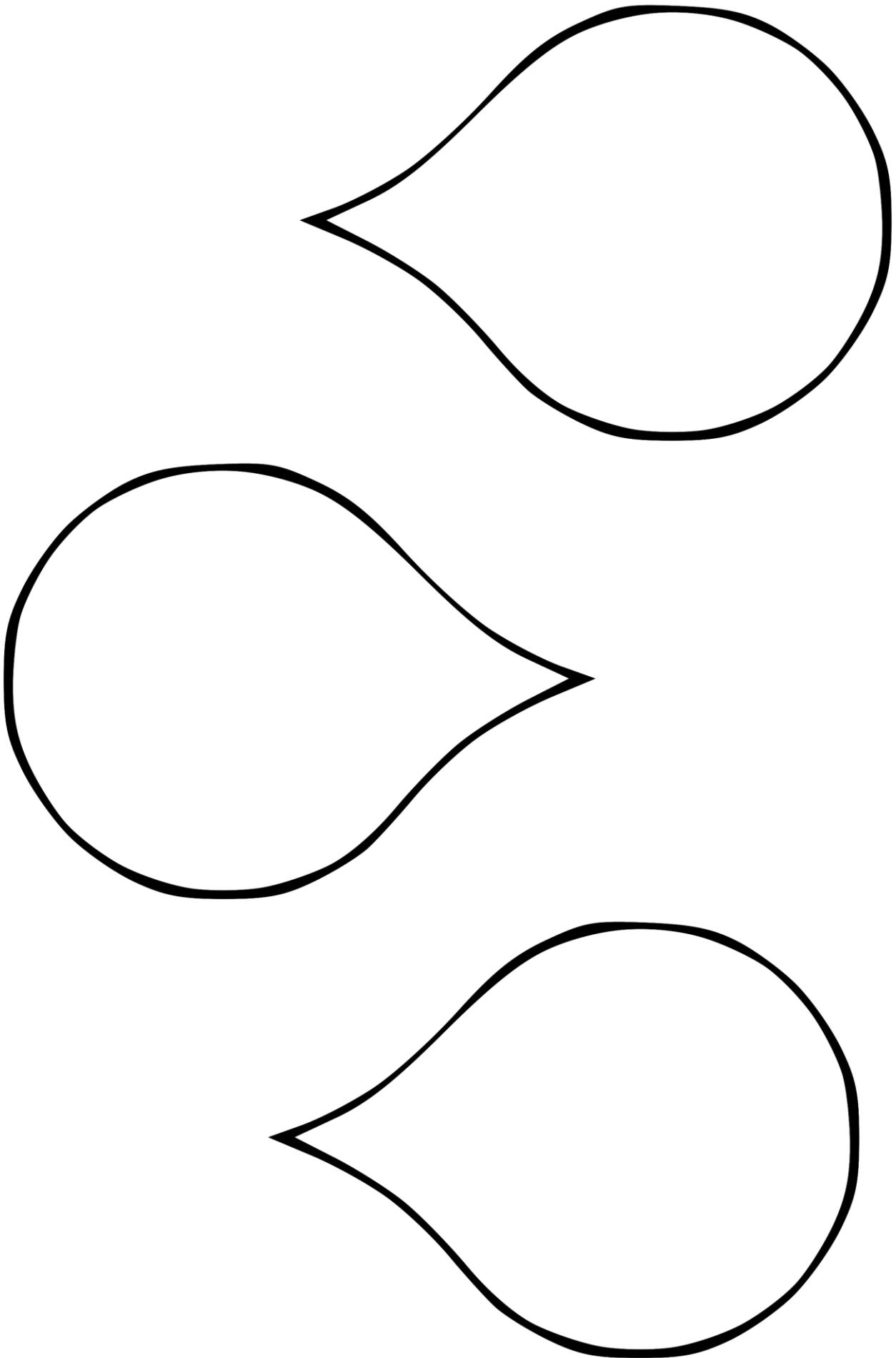
1. I need understanding when...
2. I can show understanding by...
3. When I am given understanding I feel...

You will need to brainstorm ideas first, perhaps in a circle.

When the children have finished their clouds, ask them to come back to the circle and share their ideas if they are willing.

Display the clouds in the classroom.





Responding to Conflict

It is inevitable that at some point we will have to deal with conflict in our schools, either between pupils and other pupils, between staff and pupils, or between staff and other staff.

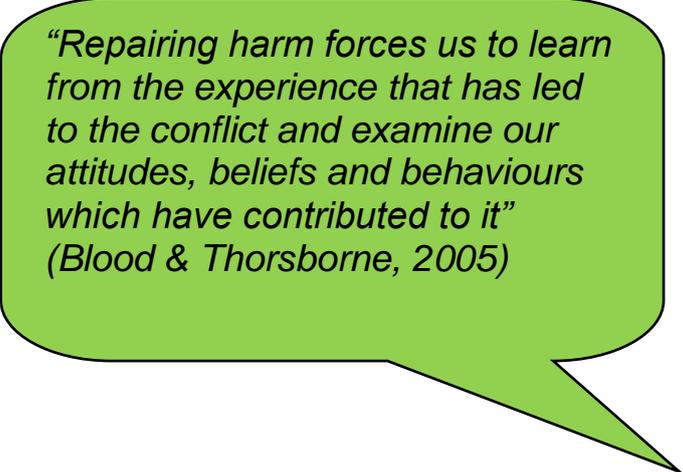
Using a restorative approach to resolving conflict not only seeks to address what has happened and reflect on the needs of those involved, but aims to avoid the same situation happening again.

How we manage incidents of conflict in school is important; the response needs to deliver useful outcomes for all those involved. When choosing how to respond we need to think about what the benefits would be and what the risks would be. We need to consider whether by choosing a punitive response such as a time out or exclusion, are we enabling the pupil to learn from their mistake? Will it prevent a repeat of the same behaviour?



“Restorative approaches aims to make it clear that the behaviour is not condoned, but at the same time as being supportive and respectful of the individual” (Morrison, 2002)

By acknowledging that the ‘offender’ may have had unmet needs, as well as meeting the needs of the ‘victim’, the likelihood of the incident reoccurring is reduced. A restorative discussion can also open our eyes to information about the child and why they might be using certain behaviours.



“Repairing harm forces us to learn from the experience that has led to the conflict and examine our attitudes, beliefs and behaviours which have contributed to it” (Blood & Thorsborne, 2005)

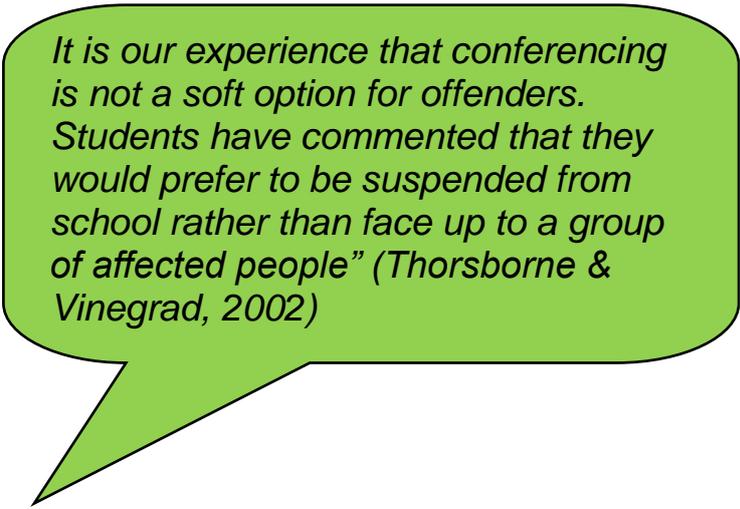
Restorative Conferencing

A restorative conference can be used to bring those involved in conflict together to listen to each other and hear how each person has been affected. They will then decide on a resolution that will help prevent a repeat of the same incident.

Restorative conferences can be used for:

- ❖ Friendship issues
- ❖ Conflict
- ❖ Bullying
- ❖ Disruptive behaviour in lessons.

Asking the child to participate in a conference can be used as an alternative to exclusion (Russell, 2015). While this may be seen as a “soft option” by some, the process is often more difficult for the child to face than avoiding confrontation through exclusion.



It is our experience that conferencing is not a soft option for offenders. Students have commented that they would prefer to be suspended from school rather than face up to a group of affected people” (Thorsborne & Vinegrad, 2002)

The process of conferencing is possible only when those involved in the incident wish to take part. There also needs to be an element of the ‘offender’ taking responsibility for their actions, although this may develop as the conference progresses.

The conference allows all involved to hear the impact that their choices have had on others, give them an opportunity to feel safe and tell the truth, accept some accountability and be able to make amends for choices that they hear have adversely impacted on others.

Holding a Restorative Conference

A restorative conference needs to follow the same pattern each time:

Part 1 – Preparation

Each person involved in the incidents needs to have individual preparation for the conference. The following questions will be asked to each person to gain their perspective and give them an opportunity to make sense of what has happened.

- ❖ What happened? – Allow the person to tell the whole story from their point of view.
- ❖ What were you thinking when...? – Go back to different points of the story and ask what they were thinking
- ❖ How were you feeling when....? After asking what the person was thinking, ask them how it made them feel. Remember that our thoughts influence how we feel, and the way we feel will affect our actions and choices.
- ❖ Who has been affected? How? – Encourage the person to think of the wider ‘ripple effect’ e.g. my teacher’s children might be affected because now she’ll be late home
- ❖ What do you need to move forward? – Encourage the person to refer to the ‘needs cards’ and think about how that need could be met

Be conscious of the language that you choose to use. When reflecting on the incident with an ‘innocent victim’, to say that they were “in conflict” with the person who harmed them could be upsetting (Hopkins, 2002). The ‘victim’ will get the chance to express how they have been harmed, and the ‘wrongdoer’ can take responsibility by what happened and what they did.

You also need to make sure that the conference is not rushed. One of the challenges of embedding this approach is that the conferencing process does take time. However, investing this time and being committed to preserving the quality of the conferencing will ensure greater long term gain from the approach.

Part 2 – Conference

The conference will follow the same pattern as the preparation stage. Once each child has had the restorative conversation with you, hold it again but with both children present. Each child gets to say the story from their unique perspective

Lay out ground rules – each person will get their chance to speak. If you don't agree with what someone says, you will have a turn to say what you think happens. You don't have to agree because this isn't about attributing blame – we are looking at how we can move on.

At the end of the conference, allow the participants to develop an agreement based around the needs they have heard and discussed. Arrange a time to review the agreement if necessary

Conference Planning – you may like to consider:

1. Arrangements – agree a venue, time and date
2. The seating plan – try to achieve a symmetrical seating arrangement where everyone will be comfortable and able to achieve eye contact
3. Script – do you have your script?
4. Order of people speaking – wrongdoer, harmed person – supporters
5. Questions – make sure all questions are asked fairly and consistently
6. The contract/agreement – role of facilitator is to scribe and ask participants what they wish to put down on the agreement – you may prompt but allow them to suggest their own ideas and solutions and remember it needs to be their agreement
7. Refreshments – a drink and biscuit to embed the new agreement of cooperation by allowing a social phase to the conference process.

(Russell, 2015)

What happened?

Allow telling of the whole story from their point of view

What were you thinking?

At each point including in the lead up to the incident

How were you feeling?

At each point including in the lead up to the incident (thoughts influence feelings, feelings influence actions)

Who has been affected? How?

What do you need to move forward?

What Next?

We hope you have found the resources and information in this pack useful as an introduction to using a Restorative Approach in your school.

Implementing and embedding a new approach will take time and commitment, but the more the language and culture becomes part of your day to day school life, the greater the impact will be. By becoming a restorative school, we can create resilient, responsible members of the community who are able to express themselves and show empathy for others.

Our training programme “An Introduction to Restorative Approaches” runs termly, details of which can be found in the SW Specialist Teaching Team Training Brochure or from sw.educationteam@surreycc.gov.uk

During this training you will have the opportunity to see some restorative conferences in action, hear from schools who have begun the journey to becoming a restorative schools and be able to experience being the facilitator of a restorative conference.

Following attendance at this training, we also offer support to senior leadership teams to begin embedding a restorative approach within their school, including developing action plans and setting up focus groups.

Please also see the references below for further reading and information about restorative approaches in schools.

References:

- Blood, P. and Thorsborne, M., 2005, March. The challenge of culture change: Embedding restorative practice in schools. In *6th International Conference on Conferencing, Circles and other Restorative Practices: Building a Global Alliance for Restorative Practices and Family Empowerment*.
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