

Restorative Practice

What is Restorative Practice?

Restorative Practice is a way of working with conflict that puts the focus on repairing the harm that has been done. It is an approach to conflict resolution that includes all parties involved.

Benefits of Restorative Practice

Experience and evidence at local and national levels has shown that restorative processes have a positive impact in changing school cultures when prioritised and embedded as part of a whole school approach, especially regarding attendance and behaviour.

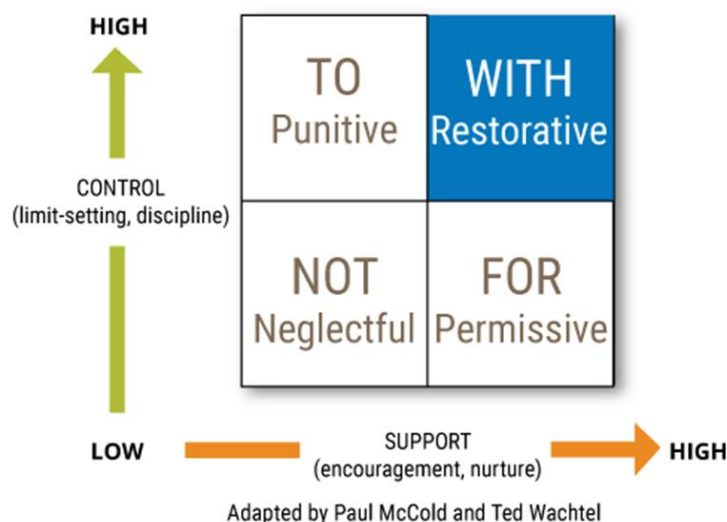
*'A **report** published by the Department for Education gave whole-school restorative approaches the highest rating of effectiveness at preventing bullying, with a survey of schools showing 97% rated restorative approaches as effective.'*

*'An independent **evaluation** of restorative justice in Bristol schools found that restorative justice improved school attendance and reduced exclusion rates.'*

Source: The Restorative Justice Council

How does it work?

Restorative Practice is a proactive way of working 'WITH' people, not doing things 'TO' them, not doing things 'FOR' them and 'NOT' being neglectful and doing nothing at all (Wachtel and McCold, 2001, p.117). It's about working 'with' people at every opportunity.



Restorative approaches enable everybody's voice to be heard. Restorative approaches enable those who have been harmed to convey the impact of the harm to those responsible, and for those responsible to acknowledge this impact and take steps to put it right.

The Six Principles of Restorative Practice are:

- 1. Restoration** - The primary aim of restorative practice is to address and repair harm.
- 2. Voluntary** - Participation in restorative processes is voluntary and based on informed choice.
- 3. Neutrality** - Restorative processes are fair and unbiased towards participants.

4. Safety - Processes and practice aim to ensure the safety of all participants and create a safe space for the expression of feelings and views about harm that has been caused.

5. Accessibility - Restorative processes are non-discriminatory and available to all those affected by conflict and harm.

6. Respect - Restorative processes are respectful to the dignity of all participants and those affected by the harm caused.

What are the '5 Steps of Restorative Practice'?

Step 1: Tell the story - What has happened? Start from the beginning...

Step 2: Thoughts and Feelings - What were/are you thinking? What were/are you feeling?

Step 3: Ripples of harm - Who has been harmed and how have they been harmed? What has been the most difficult thing for you?

Step 4: Needs - What do you need in order to find closure? What do you need to move forward?

Step 5: What next? What do you think will make things better? What needs to happen?

Restorative Practice promotes empathy and understanding and works to bring a sense of closure/repair to difficult situations. Ongoing risk assessments are undertaken by trained facilitators to ensure no further harm is caused and those who have caused harm accept responsibility for their actions before restorative work is pursued.

Becoming a Restorative School

Oxfordshire County Council is committed to supporting Oxfordshire schools in embedding Restorative Practice. Becoming a restorative school has many benefits, including increased attendance, reduced exclusions and improved achievement. Restorative Practice is also an approved approach by Children's Social Care and Thames Valley Police.

'Ofsted will be judging all settings on the extent to which:

- Relationships among learners and staff reflect a positive and respectful culture;
- Leaders, teachers and learners create an environment where bullying, peer-on-peer abuse of discrimination are not tolerated; and
- Staff deal with issues quickly and effectively, and do not allow them to spread.'

Source: Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (May 2019)

From April 2020, all Oxfordshire schools can access free training designed to support them in becoming a restorative school. For more information and to book on, visit our [Learner Engagement - School Training Offer](#) webpage.

If you wish to learn more about the rollout of Restorative Practice across Oxfordshire schools, contact the Lead for Learner Engagement: clare.pike@oxfordshire.gov.uk