

Restorative Practices

What are Restorative Practices?

Restorative Practices is a philosophy that recognizes the importance of prioritizing relationships and connections between and among all people within a school community and provides a framework for creating positive school climate and culture.

At the core, restorative practices are about building and restoring relationships.

The underlying principle is that relationships are important, and when an incident occurs, the focus is on the harm caused to the relationship and the subsequent repairing of that harm. The focus is NOT on what rule has been broken, who is guilty, and what punishment will be imposed.

Restorative Questions

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking at the time?
3. What have you thought about since?
4. Who has been affected by what happened? In what way?
5. What do you think you need to do to make things right?

Adults and students can work together to resolve conflicts and repair or prevent harm to relationships by using restorative dialogue in

- Problem-solving circles in the classroom
- Restorative conversations (informal)
- Hallway conferences/conversations
- Restorative conferences (formal)
- Peer and/or adult mediation

Positive Outcomes of using Restorative Practices in Schools:

- A safer, more caring environment
- Increased sense of belonging at school
- Improved communication
- Stronger relationships among students and between students and adults.
- Reduction in bullying and other interpersonal conflicts
- Reduction in suspensions and expulsions

Sources: Dr. Jo Ann Freiberg, Connecticut State Department of Education and International Institute for Restorative Practices (<https://www.iirp.edu/>)