

GUIDING PRINCIPLES: RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Student discipline, policies and practices must be implemented in ways that are accountable and restorative. Students and families need to know that the school will provide interventions inside and outside the classroom that support a restorative, rather than punitive, response. Students have the option to accept assigned consequences and fully participate in the interventions designed to address specific behaviors. **These interventions require students to own the problem, reflect on the impact of their behavior on themselves and others and understand why the behavior was unacceptable or inappropriate.** It does not mean there are no other consequences to the behavior, but we know that administering consequences without re-teaching and reflection does little to change behavior in the long run.

We need to be aware that the person whose actions we are attempting to correct, must be in a place where they admit they were wrong, and they want to make amends or alter their behavior.

As an administrative team we are trying to use the common language developed by the *International Institute for Restorative Practices* when discussing discipline referrals with students:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking about at the time?
- What have you been thinking about since?
- Who has been affected by what you have done?
- In what way have they been affected?
- What do I need to do to make things right with this teacher, student or other person, so I can participate and access my education?



Restorative practices and the use of affective statements are practices on the continuum that can lead to restorative justice for larger offenses usually involving long-term suspension or involvement with law enforcement.

Examples of Restorative Practices:

Affective Statements refer to the tone in which we speak to students to help us build relationships and show that we care about the student. For example, “I liked the way you worked the whole class period today,” is more effective than, “good job.”

Classroom Circles can be used as a response to wrongdoing and as a vehicle for discussion when creating respect and classroom norms. This should be used from the beginning of the school year so that students understand how they work before significant issues need to be discussed.

Restorative Conference is a formal response to wrongdoing where the facilitator helps both parties explore what happened and who was affected. This can be done with a facilitator, teacher and a student after a disruption to the learning environment has occurred.

Restorative Reflections is an exercise in which students complete a writing assignment and go through the restorative questions and steps as they try to reflect on their actions and make a better plan for the future.

Restorative Justice Circles are full-scale circles involving parents, advocates and those affected. This is appropriate with students who acknowledge they have done harm and want to repair the relationship.