

Suggested Language for Including Restorative Practices Into the Discipline Code and Student Code of Conduct

Introduction

Our school incorporates restorative practices into our Discipline Code and Student Code of Conduct as the primary process by which we respond to misbehavior and conflict and use suspensions and administrative hearings as the secondary process. At times, we use a combination of a restorative intervention and suspension in order to address the underlying cause of the misbehavior or conflict and provide accountability for all those involved.

Defining Terms

Restorative discipline is a theory of discipline that emphasizes repairing the harm caused or revealed by misconduct rather than punishment. It does so by:

- a. Identifying the misconduct and attempting to repair the damage;
- b. Including all people impacted by a conflict in the process of responding to conflict; and
- c. Creating a process that promotes healing, reconciliation and the rebuilding of relationships to build mutual responsibility and constructive responses to wrongdoing within our schools.

Restorative practices is a framework for a broad range of restorative discipline approaches that proactively build a school community based on cooperation, mutual understanding, trust and respect, and respond to conflict by including all people impacted by a conflict in finding solutions that restore relationships and repair the harm done to the school community. These practices can be used to implement positive behavior in classrooms and on school campuses consistent with the framework set forth in this code when some flexibility is given to implementing restorative practices as a first step—before suspension is used.

Preventative Measures and Practices

Our school actively creates a positive school climate for all members of the school community through the regular and ongoing use of classroom and school-wide restorative practices that build community, strengthen relationships, promote inclusiveness, and enhance communication and problem solving skills.

School-wide restorative practices include but are not limited to:

1. Discussions in the classroom and school-wide forums about how members of the school community should treat one another;
2. Time to share the highs and lows of the day in advisory classes or forums;
3. Creating a welcoming environment where parents or guardians and community members are invited to volunteer and participate in the school community, including creating a parent room on campus; and

4. Creating mechanisms for students to check-in when they enter school each day to share concerns and/or request a meeting with a counselor to discuss problems they are facing.

Teachers are encouraged to use restorative circles as a classroom teaching method to work collaboratively with students to set academic goals, explore the curriculum and set classroom norms for behavior, including:

- a. Morning "Check-in" Circles for teachers and students to share what is going on in their lives, center themselves and focus on the day ahead; and
- b. Discussion Circles to talk about a topic they are currently studying and delve into more depth on the subject.

Teachers, administrators, counselors, support staff and students themselves shall use restorative problem solving techniques that increase communication and provoke student reflection on how their actions impact others.

Responding to Specific Incidents

In response to disciplinary infractions or conflict, our school shall use a continuum of strategies that are restorative rather than punitive. We shall use restorative and other positive responses except for the most serious and dangerous offenses when exclusion from school is absolutely necessary to protect the safety of the school community.

1. All individuals who are impacted by a behavior conflict shall collectively identify the harm done, develop solutions for how the harm will be addressed, and identify the needs and obligations of all involved in order to heal and repair the situation as fully as possible.
2. If appropriate, the students or staff who committed the behavior or were involved in the conflict may participate in a restorative process to hear from all stakeholders and determine actions that meet restorative practice principles. Restorative processes should be conducted in a student-friendly space with both students and staff trained to mediate the discussion.
3. The continuum of strategies include but are not limited to:
 - a. Restorative Conversations- One-on-one informal conversations that are held as an immediate response or follow up to an action that has somehow caused harm to help the student correct the behavior in the present and future.
 - b. Connection Circles & Restorative Circles- Spaces in which participants take turns speaking to a topic, guided by at least one circle keeper, using a talking piece and going around to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to speak. There are many different types of circles that can be used to promote a positive learning environment and deal with issues as they arise. Some of the main circles that schools can utilize for discipline include:

- i. Discipline Circles to address what occurred, repair the harm and develop solutions to prevent reoccurrence, involving relevant parties and support people if helpful;
 - ii. Proactive Behavior Management circles used to role-play and work with students to develop positive behavioral models.
- b. Restorative Group Conferencing- A facilitator leads those who were involved in an incident, whether they were harmed or did the harm, as well as their supporters in a face-to-face process. This process aims to address the harm, make things right and prevent reoccurrence, and is based on the ideas of restorative practices and mutual accountability.
- c. Restorative Mediation- A process that provides those harmed by an incident an opportunity to meet the person who caused the harm, in a safe and structured setting, and engage in a mediated discussion of the offense. With the assistance of a trained mediator, those who were harmed are able to tell the person who caused the harm about the incident's physical, emotional and other impacts; to receive answers to lingering questions about the incident; and to be directly involved in developing a plan for the harm to be repaired.
- d. Restorative Reintegration Meetings- A process that helps a student reintegrate back into the school community and classroom after being gone on suspension or expulsion by dealing with the issues behind the incident and the return to school for all parties in the process—the student, teacher/staff member, parent (if appropriate), and other affected or interested community members.

Integrating Restorative Practices with the Discipline Matrix

In an effort to reduce the amount of time students are out of school while maintaining the importance of students and staff taking responsibility for their behavior and collaboratively working together for positive outcomes, our school will consider reducing the suspension requirement if the student successfully participates in a restorative process, either before or after the suspension.

We will consider the following matrix as a guideline when a restorative process or intervention is agreed to and has been completed:

- 3 day suspension reduced to 1 day (or thereabouts)
- 5 day suspension reduced to 3 days (or thereabouts)
- 10 day suspension reduced to 5 (or thereabouts)
- Administrative hearing to include a restorative process and restorative agreement that works in conjunction with the hearing officer

Restorative processes are not meant to be "double punishments" for students. Rather, they are meant to be a proportional, just, and mutually beneficial means for repairing harm that seeks to meet the needs of the student, staff members, and the community and reintegrate them in a way that builds wholeness and trust.

Student and Family Rights

1. Information about the use of restorative practices at schools shall be provided to all students and parents or guardians.
2. The student who has committed the behavior shall have the right to participate in restorative responses instead of more traditional forms of discipline such as suspension and expulsion.
3. The student who has committed the behavior has the right to participate actively in identifying the solutions and responses to repair the harm done.
4. The student(s) who were impacted by the behavior shall have the option, but are not required to participate in restorative practices and identifying the solution to repair the harm done.
5. Families and friends of the student who committed the behavior and the students impacted by the behavior have the right to participate in the restorative process.