



## RESTORATIVE PRACTICES Research Document 3

The Catholic Education Office Melbourne Student Wellbeing Unit has portfolio responsibility for the implementation of Restorative Practices in Catholic primary and secondary schools across the Archdiocese of Melbourne. Through an Expression of Interest process schools are selected to engage in a phased approach to introducing Restorative Practices in the context of a whole school approach to student wellbeing. Participation includes Professional Learning, resource provision and guidance and support from Education Officers who assist schools to embed and sustain the strategy using the School Improvement Framework and the Annual Action Plan as key structural supports. Schools are encouraged to collect data related to student management and classroom organisation and in particular to monitor the impact of the use of Restorative Practices strategies on student behaviours. The participation of the whole school community including parents is an important dimension of the successful implementation of the strategy at the school level.

'It is not small people who ask for forgiveness. It is large hearted, magnanimous, courageous people who are ready to say what are some of the most difficult words in any language: "I am sorry". But once uttered, they open the way to a new opportunity, the possibility of a new beginning, the chance to start again, having learnt a lesson from the past'.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1998)

### Definition

*Restorative*: to give back; to repair the harm and rebuild; to reintegrate the person(s) who did the harm; restore a sense of wellbeing and connection.

The philosophy and practice of restorative justice in schools is to promote resilience in both the one who is harmed and the one who causes harm. It is about helping young people become aware of the impact of their behaviour on others through personal accountability and being open to learning from conflict situations *Marist Youth Care, Sydney* (2004).

### Rationale

Education in schools is largely about relationships, which can often develop into conflicts which require resolution, forgiveness and healing. Restorative practices help students learn from their mistakes and reconcile and resolve problems with others.

The aim of this initiative is for schools to develop an understanding of restorative justice and learn skills and practices for use in the classroom. It is acknowledged that these prevention measures may lead to and / or require the use of interventions for more serious offences.

It is hoped that consistent use of restorative practices in a school setting will change attitudes and represent a philosophical shift in thinking about students and problem behaviours away from the use of punishment, to the management of situations using a restorative approach.

## Restorative Practices

Restorative Practices is a whole school approach to promoting resilience and aims to contribute to the building of positive relationships in school communities. It is focused on helping young people become aware of the impact of their behaviour on others through personal accountability and learning from a conflict situation. An important component of restorative practices is the focus on restoring relationships after harm has been done.

Since 2002 Catholic schools across the Archdiocese have been supported through professional learning opportunities and the CEOM has provided training to implement, embed and sustain restorative practices within and across schools. In addition, many presentations have been made to leadership teams in schools as part of the initial phase of introducing restorative practices. Support from the CEOM is seen as a critical factor in maintaining restorative practices in Catholic schools.

## Social Discipline Window

Ted Wachtel has been influential in developing a framework for restorative justice in schools in the United States, using what he calls the 'social discipline window.' This is a way of explaining the shift in thinking required to move along a continuum from the punitive through to the permissive and finally to the restorative.

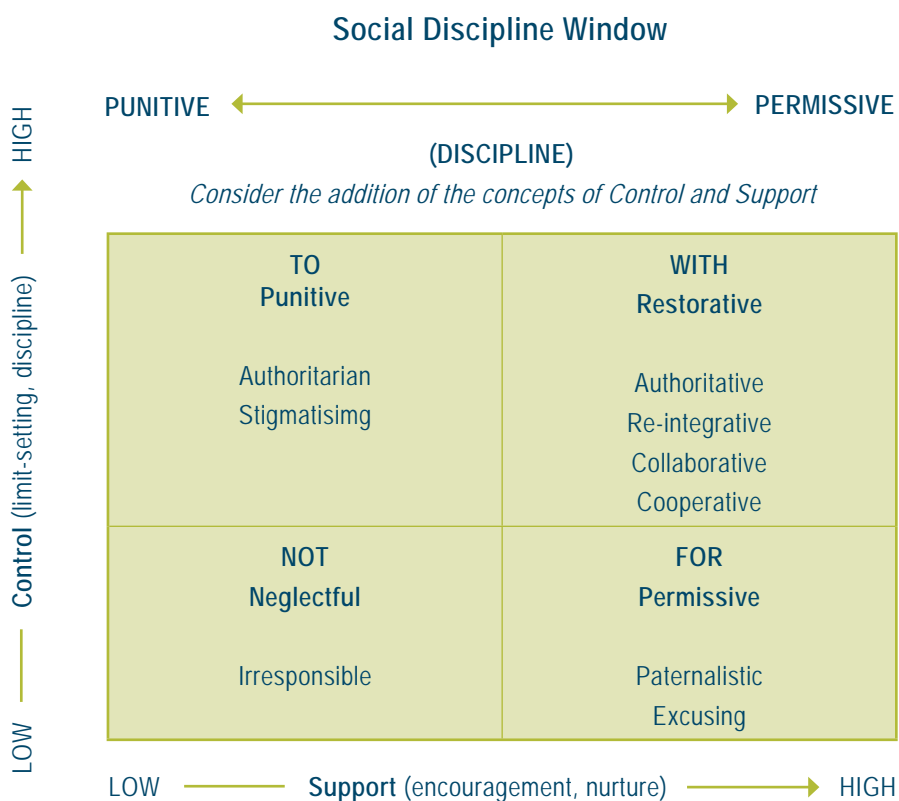
Wachtel (1999) cites four windows of possibility in responding to wrongdoing:

The permissive approach which is characterised by low control and high support, a scarcity of limit-setting and an abundance of nurturing. This is **(doing For)** a student.

The punishment, or retributive approach, which is high in control and low in support. This is **(doing To)** a student.

The neglectful approach when there is an absence of both limit setting and nurturing. This is **(NOT doing)** for a student.

The restorative approach which employs both high control and high support, confronts and disapproves of the wrongdoing while supporting the intrinsic worth of the wrongdoer. This is **(doing WITH)** a student.



Ted Wachtel, 1999  
Used with permission

## The Principles of Restorative Practice

*Foster awareness in the student* of how others have been affected.

*Avoid scolding or lecturing.* This often results in the student reacting defensively. It distracts from noticing other people's feelings.

*Involve the student actively.* Instead of simply doling out punishment, which the student is expected to accept passively, a restorative intervention encourages the student to speak. They face and listen to those who have been affected by their inappropriate behaviour. They help decide how to repair the harm and make a commitment to this. The student is held accountable.

*Accept ambiguity.* Often fault is unclear and people can agree to accept the ambiguous situation.

*Separate the deed from the doer.* We can recognise a student's worth, their virtues and accomplishments while disapproving of their wrongdoing.

*See every serious instance of wrongdoing and conflict as an opportunity for learning.* Negative incidents can be used constructively to build empathy and a sense of community in the hope that there is a reduction of negative incidents in the future.

*Restorative practices must be systemic, not situational.* Every attempt on an individual level to use these principles needs to be well supported by the broader system. How can the system be transformed in ways to minimise the chance of further harm? Marist Youth Care, Sydney (2004).

### Affective Questions

These questions are provided to school staff to assist in managing conflicts or potential conflict situations and working towards resolution. Many schools who are adopting the use of restorative practices strategies produce these questions and focus areas on small palm cards and on lanyards for easy accessibility, particularly while on yard duty.

Affective Questions	Focus Areas
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What happened?</li> <li>2. How did it happen?</li> <li>3. How did you act in this situation?</li> <li>4. Who do you think was affected?</li> <li>5. How were they affected?</li> <li>6. How were you affected?</li> <li>7. What needs to happen to make things right?</li> <li>8. If you find yourself in the same situation again how could you behave differently?</li> </ol>	<p>Focus on the specific behaviour or incident without blaming.</p> <p>Draw out who was affected and how they were affected.</p> <p>Direct questions toward problem solving what needs to happen to 'make things right'.</p>

### Affective Statements

- Reflect on the impact that the behaviour or incident has had on you and others
- This may include you as a teacher, Assistant Principal or Principal
- Consider the effect on other students, the class, the year, other teachers, parents or the school community as a whole.

# Student Wellbeing: Central to Learning and School Improvement

## Audit Tools

The CEOM Student Wellbeing Unit has developed Audit Tools for use by the core leadership team and staff in the school. The purpose of the tools is to provide the school and the facilitators with both quantitative and qualitative data regarding the implementation of restorative practices strategies at the school level. The audit tools are also designed to provide accountability and measurement data for the CEOM which may be used to inform and guide School Improvement measures.

The following is a list of Audit Tools provided by the CEOM:

1. Readiness Checklist – (see below)
2. Action Plan Example
3. An Action Plan for project development and monitoring
4. A Data Collection sheet (see page 5) – to record classroom organisation and student behaviour
5. Current Strategies and Approaches – to assist teachers to record strategies used and their link with Restorative Practices
6. School Measurement Tool (see page 6) – to assist schools to track progress across the 3 key spheres of the Health Promoting Schools Framework
7. Survey for Teachers – to enable teachers to identify the most effective strategies, most challenging issues and any changes in individual/group classroom behaviours that they have observed
8. Progress Report Proforma
9. Project Management Tool
10. Student Reflection Sheet

## Readiness Checklist

The following factors should be considered and discussed when deciding if your school is ready to enter the Restorative Practices program.

Where is the school up to in the sequence of review cycle?	
Are Restorative Practices part of the recommendations for the Annual Action Plan for School Improvement?	
What are the current needs of the school community in relation to Restorative Practices?	
How can Restorative Practices respond to these needs?	
Is there a commitment from the Principal and leadership team to Restorative Practices?	
Is the Principal and leadership team prepared to attend all training?	
Does the leadership of the school have a collaborative style?	
Is the SWB core team operating effectively in the school?	
What does the school already know about Restorative Practices?	
What resistance to Restorative Practices may exist in the school?	
In the review cycle when would be the best time to introduce Restorative Practices to the school community?	
Has the SWB core team discussed the implementation of Restorative Practices with anyone from the Student Wellbeing Team and /or the regional Principal Consultants?	
What other major initiative / programs exist in the school ?	
Are other programs / initiatives compatible with Restorative Practices?	

AUDIT TOOL

Grade	Year Level
No. of students at	
Grade/Year Level:	

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT APPROACHES	End Term 1		End Term 2		End Term 3		End Term 4		Sub Total	Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Non Attendance:										
Truancy/Without Permission										
Time-Out Room										
Detention/s										
Sending to Principal Class/Year Level Coordinator/SWC										
Contact with Parents										
Suspension – Off Campus										
Suspension – In-house										
Expulsion/Negotiated Transfer										
Other										

\* Please indicate No. of incidents under (I) M = Male F = Female  
 \* Please indicate No. of repeat person/s under (P)

SCHOOL MEASUREMENT TOOL

AUDIT TOOL

	1 Emerging	2 Consolidating	3 Established	4 Well Established
<b>School Organisation, Ethos &amp; Environment</b>				
There is a shared understanding of and commitment to the Restorative Practices Strategy across the whole school community.				
Promotion of Restorative Practices is a priority of the Annual Action Plan and the <b>Implementation Checklist for Schools</b> is part of an on-going review process in the context of School Improvement initiatives.				
There is a Core Team established.				
A Core Team has responsibility for disseminating information and professional learnings about Restorative Practices in the context of the school's broader wellbeing approach.				
The school is involved in systematic and strategic planning through the development of a school-based Action Plan strategy for Restorative Practices.				
<b>Partnerships with Parents</b>				
The school is committed to a regular exchange of information with and the participation of parents within the school in relation to the Restorative Practices strategy.				
The school maintains an up to date database of parent and community participation for the Restorative Practices initiative.				
<b>Curriculum, Teaching &amp; Learning</b>				
School assessment and reporting policy and practices incorporate and reflect understandings of Restorative Practices and student wellbeing.				
The school has developed an integrated approach to Restorative Practices in the context of student wellbeing through the provision of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a supportive classroom climate</li> <li>• caring relationships</li> <li>• Social Emotional Learning (SEL).</li> </ul>				

## What the schools say

Since the introduction of the Restorative Practices strategy in 2002 the CEOM has collected and analysed both quantitative and qualitative data from schools to inform future planning.

The following Key Learnings are examples of feedback received from teachers implementing restorative practices in schools.

## Key Learnings

### *School ethos and culture*

- Restorative practices validated already existing policies and frameworks (e.g. NSSF, a Whole-School Approach to Student Wellbeing).
- Restorative practices strategies for implementation were easily incorporated into existing organisational structures and processes.
- Restorative practices contributed to a school ethos and culture which acknowledged the role of all staff in building relationships across the school community.
- Restorative practices initiatives were effective because core leadership teams were established to coordinate the initiative.
- Related professional learning activities, e.g. conflict resolution / mediation, supported the implementation of restorative practices.
- Whole staff professional learning was critical to the introduction and understanding of restorative practices across the school.
- An audit of current practices conducted by schools in the early stages of the project provided critical information related to student discipline and management and enabled staff to differentiate between a restorative approach and a punitive approach.
- Using an audit tool to collate data regarding detentions, suspensions etc over the course of the year informed the progress and success of the restorative practice strategies in the school.
- The role of leadership was critical to supporting the implementation of the strategy in all schools.

### *Behaviour management*

- Fewer incidences of serious conflict were reported because situations were handled effectively in the initial stages and consequently did not become full scale conflict scenarios.
- Restorative practices strategies were effective in reintegrating students back to class / school.
- Restorative practices allowed for a more consistent and effective approach to student management.
- A reduced number of students were sent out of the classroom for discipline related issues.
- Angry and emotive issues were more easily diffused and staff were therefore not dealing with as much confrontational anger.
- Participating in the processes of restorative practices was more rewarding for all participants than conventional punitive measures.

### *Staff*

- Restorative practices strategies encouraged staff to assume greater responsibility for student behaviour management and classroom organisation issues.
- The 'affective' language of restorative practices empowered staff to effectively manage conflict situations that maintained the dignity of all individuals involved.
- Teachers effectively used restorative practices when dealing with friendship group/peer conflicts.

### *Students*

- Students realised that they needed to deal with their own problems and that teachers may have a role in supporting and assisting them work out solutions.
- Students were encouraged to accommodate other points of view.
- Restorative practices actively encouraged students to speak about their actions, consider the effect on others and help decide the best way of repairing harm.

## Restorative Practices in Catholic School Communities

Number of participating schools 2002–2008

Region	2002–2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
North	4	4	10	6	24
South	1	3	4	1	9
East	1	6	11	7	25
West	3	2	5		10
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>68</b>



The table and graph outline the number of primary and secondary schools in each region that are involved in the restorative practices initiative. The number of schools interested in becoming involved in this initiative is evidence of a strong interest in and commitment to the philosophy of restorative justice and its emphasis on harm reparation.

Articles about restorative practices and this project have appeared in the following publications:

1. *At the Cross*, Vol. 4. Issue 2. Winter 2004.
2. *Restorative Justice Newsletter*, Ed. 6, November 2004.
3. *Teacher Learning Network Journal*, 'Creating a Positive School Culture', Vol. 11 No. 3, Summer 2004.

The CEOM Student Wellbeing Unit presented at the 'Building A Global Alliance Restorative Practices and Family Empowerment' International Institute for Restorative Practices Conference, Sydney, March 2005.

A presentation will be given at the 'Improving Citizenship and Restoring Community' 10th International Institute for Restorative Practices World Conference, Budapest, November 2007.

## References

- Harrison, L 2004, *Restorative Practices in the School Setting*, Facilitator's Training Course, Marist Youth Care © Marist Youth Care, 2004, Sydney, NSW.
- Tutu, D 1998, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report*, 21 March 2003.
- Wachtel, T 1999, *Restorative Justice in Everyday Life: Beyond the Formal Ritual*, Reshaping Australian Institutions Conference: Restorative Justice and Civil Society, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.
- Wachtel, T 1999, *Safer Safer Schools: Restoring Community in a Disconnected World*, Adapted from 'Restorative Justice in Everyday Life: Beyond the Formal Ritual', Reshaping Australian Institutions Conference: Restorative Justice and Civil Society, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.
- World Health Organisation 1996, *Health Promoting Schools Framework*, WHO, Geneva.