

St Gerard's Primary

2009



Relationships

Policy

(updated 2015)

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Introduction

This policy reflects the school's decision to adopt Restorative Approaches as a basis for managing relationships within the school. It has been drafted through the following consultation:

- CNHS cluster initiative
- Staff via in-service training and questionnaires
- Pupils via questionnaires and class workshops
- Parents via questionnaires and workshops
- NLC Inclusion Base
- NLC - Bullying: It's Never Acceptable Policy (Respect Me)

It has been developed through the schools School Improvement Plan 2008/09.

It has been updated through the schools dedication to a Rights Respecting Ethos 2015.

The school's Relationship Policy should have an impact on all aspects of school life in promoting a positive ethos.

Aim of Policy

The policy reflects the needs of St Gerard's Primary and is the result of consultation with staff, pupils, parents and the wider community.

The Policy aims:

1. To support the ethos of the school in promoting positive relationships, fostering equal opportunities and raising attainment for all.
2. To enable pupils to become effective contributors, responsible citizens, confident individuals and successful learners in line with the Curriculum for Excellence.
3. To establish Restorative Practice Vision through Approaches and Methodologies
4. To support staff by providing a clear and consistent framework for promoting positive behaviour.
5. To encourage an ethos of respect through our Rights Respecting Schools agenda.
6. To support pupils in developing emotional intelligence in resolving difficulties.
7. To support pupils by communicating expectations in a clear way.
8. To ensure there is regular review by senior management and staff.
9. To be accessible to all members of St Gerard's community.

A Brief Introduction to Rights Respecting Schools Ethos

UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools programme helps a school to use the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to help develop a clear set of values that are actively upheld by pupils. These rights are set out to help children develop to their full potential knowing that all children have the same rights no matter what their background or where they live.

In total there are 42 rights, which are called articles. For example,

Article 12 - Every child has the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.

Article 28 - Every child has the right to an education.

Article 31 - Every child has the right to relax and play.

At St Gerard's Primary we want everyone to understand the importance of rights are and what responsibilities they have. Our goal is that we respect our own rights and do our best to always respect other people's rights.

At the beginning of each new school year each class will create a class charter. This is an agreement that highlights adult and child responsibilities, e.g. I will put up my hand to ask a question I will respect others' personal space, I finish my work on time. It is an agreement between pupils and adults of how to have a positive, fair and conducive learning environment.

When we fulfil these responsibilities it helps to maintain a conducive learning environment where everyone feels safe, happy and respected.

There will be a Rights Steering Group for every school session. Children in the group will decide ways of promoting rights within the school and community. They will create homework and prepare targets for Children's Champion.

Children's Champion is a weekly reward title. It comes from an article focus with a joining responsibility e.g. Article 28 - I bring all my

resources to school. Those who adhere to their class charter each term will be rewarded with an invitation to a special party, two pupils per class.

Supporting Positive Behaviour

Each class will run a support system in class for managing behaviour.

All classes will create a programme that has 3 stages, e.g. traffic lights, clouds (sunny, rainy, stormy) appropriate to their age and stage. The children will have ownership of how this is designed.

All the children will begin at the first stage e.g. green, the sunny cloud, etc.

If the children display inappropriate actions, which do not reflect the class charter, they will be given a verbal instruction to stop and a short discussion with the teacher of what went wrong, why this is and how to fix it.

If inappropriate action continues, the child will be given a chance card and again the action will be discussed.

If there is no modification in the child's response and this repeats the child will move onto the next stage in the class chart, e.g. amber traffic light or rainy cloud. It is a visual representation of the teacher's disapproval.

This process will repeat. A verbal chance and discussion, a chance card and discussion then a move onto last stage, e.g. red traffic.

The child will lose 10 minutes of their golden time and an informal note will be written into the child's homework diary.

If a child loses over ten minutes this will be discussed with SMT.

All classes will receive 30 minutes Golden Time per week. This will consist of four planned learning experiences. The children will request to join one of the four experiences at the beginning of the school week.

A Brief Introduction to Restorative Approaches

Restorative approaches are based on the principle of restorative justices (RJ), which is a way of repairing harm that has its roots in a number of ancient cultures including Native American, Maori, Aboriginal and Anglo-Saxon. In the school context there is growing recognition of the importance of building and maintaining positive relationships in order that effective learning can take place.

A key restorative principle is that where an event causes harm to any member of a community, a way needs to be found to repair that harm; in order to do so, those affected need an opportunity to express their needs, and those who perpetrated the harm need an opportunity to make amends. Cameron and Torsborne (2001) explain this well in relation to education:

Restorative justice in the school setting views misconduct not as school-rule-breaking and therefore a violation of the institution, but as a violation against people and relationships in the school and wider school community. Restorative justice means that the harm done to people and relationships need to be explored and that harm needs to be repaired.

Incidents in schools that are dealt with restoratively provide opportunities for harm to be repaired. The process takes place when all parties are in agreement that they want to address the harm this way and, in particular, it is important that the person causing harm accepts that s/he has done so, is ready to be held accountable and wants to repair the wrongdoing. This is a different perspective to the simple application of sanctions, but it does not preclude their use as part of an overall restorative behaviour management system.

Where possible, restorative approaches bring together those harmed and those who cause harm who, through the restorative process, are faced with the impact of their actions. The judgement of staff involved as to the readiness of the person causing harm and the sensitive and supportive management of the resulting shame are important elements of the process, which can bring genuine changes in the attitude and future behaviour. At the same time those who have been harmed have an opportunity to express themselves and to have a say in how the matter is

resolved - part of their healing process. An agreement is formed by all parties, with the commitment of all present and includes a shared understanding of the consequences of any breach of this agreement.

If it is not possible to bring together the harmed and the harmer, restorative processes can also enable the harm, and ways of repairing it, to be explored. Many processes are based on a simple series of questions which can be used in a variety of settings, from small-scaled conversations in corridors or classrooms to large conferences involving families and community members, or with whole classes.

- What has happened?
- What were you thinking/feeling at the time? And now?
- Who has been affected by what has happened? How have they been affected?
- What is needed to make this right?
- How can we make sure this doesn't happen again?

Whilst the questions are not difficult in themselves, much depends on the style of delivery and skilled handling of the emerging information. The bigger the group involved, the more skilful the facilitator needs to be, both in terms of handling the group dynamics as well as sensitively managing the information that is likely to emerge. Experience both internationally and in the UK also suggest that restorative approaches will be most effective used within a school culture where emotional health, wellbeing and literacy are developed on an ongoing basis.

(Adapted from)

Lewisham Restorative Approaches Partnership - Evaluative Review,
September, 2005

Restorative Practice in St Gerard's

The school has a commitment to the use of positive behaviour management through Restorative Approaches. The starting point for all work to resolve problems should be to enable those involved to understand the harm that has been done and to support them in restoring relationships.

Good behaviour should not be taken for granted and will need to be taught as well as modelled by all adult members of the community. Staff will therefore need to share with pupils clear expectations of behaviour for learning. All adults should take an active role in modelling and encouraging positive relationships in and outside of the classroom.

The potential advantages of restorative approaches in the school setting include:

- A safer, more caring environment and a more effective teaching and learning environment
- A greater commitment by everyone to taking the time to listen to one another
- A reduction in bullying and other interpersonal conflicts
- A greater awareness of the importance of connectedness to young people. The need to belong and feel valued by peers and significant adults
- Greater emphasis on responses to inappropriate behaviour that seek to reconnect, and not further disconnect, young people
- Reductions in fixed term and permanent exclusions
- A greater confidence in the staff team to deal with challenging situations
- An increased belief in the ability of young people to take responsibility for their choices, and more people giving them opportunities to do so.

School Support Structures

1. New members of staff will be issued with an induction pack which includes reading materials on restorative approaches.
2. All staff will be issued with a badge which highlights a restorative approach i.e. the 5 magic questions.
3. Further reading and resources should be centrally located, for access by all staff.
4. An identified area set up to facilitate peer mediation.
5. Minor altercations within the class or yard should be dealt with by staff using a restorative approach. Children may be referred for "friendship building".
6. A consistent system of rewards and sanctions used throughout the whole school.
7. A member of staff should be identified as coordinator for our Relationships Practices throughout the school. Mrs McIloney.
8. Peer Mediators trained in P6

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is the hurting of one person by another or a group of others. It can be physical, emotional or psychological and often can be persistent, although one off incidents can have a serious, ongoing and harmful effect on the person being bullied. It can be direct or indirect. Direct bullying takes place between the person experiencing bullying and the person displaying the bullying behaviour. Indirect bullying is typified by rejection of a peer group, for example, through social networks or mobile technology. (NLC anti-bullying strategy bullying: it's never acceptable)

Bullying can include,

- Physical
- Verbal
- Material - stealing or damaging property
- Emotional/Mental - intimidation, making people think less of themselves, scaring people, blackmailing
- Social - embarrassing someone, isolation, peer pressure
- Cyber - technology used to threaten, offend etc
- Prejudice - gender, race, sex, beliefs, asylum seekers
- Homophobic prejudice

What do we do at St Gerard's to prevent bullying?

- Class Charters / Rights and Responsibilities
- Children allocated to House Groups
- Staff Training and awareness raising
- Celebrate difference and recognise vulnerability groups
- Investigating incidents promptly, fairly with sensitivity
- Positive and Motivational Displays
- Children's Champion Weekly Reward
- Termly good behaviour rewards
- Certificates, house points and stickers
- Peer Mediation
- Reflections in PAtHs, dealing with moral dilemmas, Circle Time
- This is Our Faith
- Assembly activities - focus throughout year and Anti-Bullying Week
- Communication with parents
- You can tell me boxes within classrooms and school foyer
- Curricular approaches to bullying

In dealing with bullying we aim to:

- Raise awareness about bullying
- Increase understanding for all involved
- Teach pupils about their relationships with others through the curriculum and school ethos

What happens at our school if bullying is discovered?

It is important to tell someone so that the school can help.

- Report bullying incidents to staff
- Peer Mediators may be used to deal with minor cases, but if they feel the situation is too serious for them, they must hand the case over to staff.
- Pupils will be able to write down what has happened on a Reflection Sheet
- Monitoring by staff regarding children involved

Dealing with bullying incidents

In dealing with bullying incidents:

- We will not ignore bullying
- Staff should not make premature assumptions
- All accounts of the incidents should be listened to fairly
- We will make every effort to adopt a restorative approach which encourages pupils to find solutions rather than simply justify themselves.
- We will follow up to check bullying has not resumed

Praise and rewards are an effective encouragement of effort and achievement and should be a starting point in classroom management within the school.

In achieving positive relationships within St Gerard's the following systems will be implemented;

- A whole school House System
- Peer Mediation (friendship building) facilities
- P.A.Th.S
- School Ambassador Programme
- Individual class systems to promote positive behaviour

- Recognition of achievements through assemblies
- Certificates and display of achievements related to the Curriculum for Excellence
- Out of School Hours Learning opportunities
- Display
- Frequent positive verbal praise from all staff
- Roles of responsibilities for pupils within the school through class charter and lunchtime charter
- Clear communication with parents

Sanctions may be necessary where a pupil's actions are seen to be causing harm to others. The school employs a system of reflection sheets. The pupil causing harm is asked to complete a sheet which asks them to reflect on the incident, they may need support in completing the sheet. This sheet is then taken home to be completed and signed by the parents/carers. Comments are welcomed from home as communication is vital in affecting change in behaviours.

"Parents, carers and families are by far the most important influences in a child's life. Parents who take on a supportive role in their child's learning make a difference in improving achievement and behaviour. Their support can play a vital role at all stages in education." (Learning & Teaching Scotland)

Intervals are important to the Health & Wellbeing of the children of St Gerard's and withdrawal of this time is not routinely used as a sanction against pupils unless there is a concern for the safety of the child or other pupils. Alternatives may include employing the child in another area of the school yard to help with younger pupils or to play with older pupils.

St Gerard's House System

The four Houses are Kelvin, Baird, Bell and Fleming. These names are associated with famous inventors/discoverers with a Scottish connection. They are also used as local street names surrounding the school.

- every pupil will be allocated a House when starting P1
- consideration will be given to family groups
- captains and vice captains will be chosen by the pupils, for each House, from primary sevens who wish to be considered
- all staff members will be allocated points on a weekly basis
- points will be awarded by staff for good behaviour, manners, class lines, sportsmanship etc
- points will be placed in House Box in foyer of school
- points will be announced at assemblies monthly
- the school House display should be updated on a weekly basis
- a monthly reward will be given each month to the winning house and this reward will be decided through consultation with house captains
- there will be an annual Sports Day where pupils will be involved in a range of activities to gain House Points whilst promoting Health and Wellbeing.

Statement on Peer-Mediation (Friendship Building)

All Primary seven pupils will be trained as peer-mediators and will volunteer to carry out consultations. All consultations will be in the strictest confidence, unless there is a danger of a pupil harming them or another pupil. In which case, the information will be forwarded to the Head Teacher.

In the event of two or more children having an altercation somewhere in the school or playground, any member of staff can refer the pupils for a "friendship building" consultation. Consultations are arranged by the P7 teacher. A diary of consultation appointments will be kept. The Primary 7 teacher will check to see which two primary seven peer-mediators are next on the rota to carry out a friendship building consultation.

The pupils will then go to the friendship building area at the time allocated for the consultation to take place. During the consultation, peer-mediators will be supported by a trained volunteer observer from primary seven. They will use appropriate materials e.g. five question cards. Posters with the five questions will also be displayed in the peer-mediation area.

Parental Involvement

The Scottish Parliament has passed the **Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006** to encourage and support more parents to become involved.

Because parents have such a vital role to play in their children's education, the Act aims to make it easier for parents to become involved in their own child's education and in their child's school more generally.

What does the law say?

The main aims of the Parental Involvement Act (the new law) are to:

- help parents become more involved with their child's education and learning
- welcome parents as active participants in the life of the school
- provide easier ways for parents to express their views and wishes.

To help achieve these aims, **all** parents will automatically be members of the Parent Forum at their child's school and will be entitled to have a say in what happens at the school.

What does being a member of the Parent Forum mean?

As a member parents can expect to:

- get information about what their child is learning
- get information about events and activities at the school
- get advice/help on how they can support your child's learning
- be told about opportunities to be involved in the school
- have a say in selecting a Parent Council to work on behalf of all parents at the school.

What is a Parent Council?

The role of a Parent Council is to:

- support the school in its work with pupils
- represent the views of all parents
- encourage links between the school, parents, pupils, pre-school groups and the wider community
- report back to the Parent Forum .

The school and the local authority must listen to what the Parent Council says and give it a proper response. The school's Parent Council will decide such things as:

- how their Council will be set up
- what it should be called

- what size it should be - e.g. in a very small primary school, all parents could be involved
- who should be a member of the Parent Council
- how they should be appointed
- when the most convenient time is to hold meetings
- what will be discussed at meetings - these might be topics such as school uniform, parking near the school, the school's anti-bullying policy, etc.

More information about parents as partners in children's learning, or any aspect of Scottish education, can be found on Parentzone.

What does the Act mean for St Gerard's?

St Gerard's already has a range of ways to ensure that parents are involved in the life of the school.

Existing methods and new ideas for involving parents will be included in the school development plan. We will continue to seek better ways of involving parents and will:

- welcome and encourage partnership with parents
- provide responses to requests from parents for advice or information
- tell parents about school events and how they can be involved in the life of the school
- tell parents about what their child is learning and meetings/events involving their child
- setting up and running a Parent Council
- an active PTA
- have a clear complaints procedure and also guidance on how parents can contact the education authority if they want to.

Communication with Parents

St Gerard's keeps parents informed of their child's learning, meetings and school events in a variety of ways including:

- Two formal parents evenings involving their child
- Formal written reports
- curriculum afternoons and evenings
- Notice of the intended learning and teaching each term
- appointments with staff or the management team on request
- monthly newsletters
- school website
- school displays
- regular homework related to classroom work
- children will receive rewards and merit certificates which will then be sent home
- invitations to parents to help in events and outings
- PTA and School board updates
- contact of serious concerns about children will be communicated by the SMT after consultation by the class teacher
- Pupil reflection sheets
- notes may be written in homework diaries
- children's work being sent home on a regular basis, inviting comments from parents

Parents are encouraged to communicate their concerns to the school via the schools complaints procedure.

St Gerard's values its positive, constructive relationships with parents and the wider community.

Reflection Sheet

Infants



Name:

Class:

Date:

1. This happened today...

2. How did you feel?
(sad? upset? angry? hurt? jealous? sorry?)

3. Next time I will...



Pupil signature -

Parent/Guardian signature/comment

Reflection Sheet

Juniors



Name:

Class:

Date:

4. What happened that I have to think about?

5. How did I feel?

(sad? upset? angry? hurt? jealous? sorry?)



6. Was anyone else affected?

7. What could I have done differently?

Pupil signature -

Parent/Guardian signature/comment

Reflection Sheet

Seniors



Name:

Class:

Date:

8. What happened that I have to think about?

9. What were you thinking at the time?

10. How were you feeling?
(sad? upset? angry? hurt? jealous? sorry?)

11. Was anyone else affected?

12. What could I have done differently?

Pupil signature -

Parent/Guardian signature/comment