



Restorative Conversations: Lesson Guidance

Introduction and Context

Restorative practice is a set of principles and practice that encourages children to take responsibility for their behaviour by thinking through the causes and consequences. Historically, children's behaviour has more often been managed by a system of rules which, when a child breaks them, leads to them being reprimanded and given a consequence. Very often with this system, the child does not have the opportunity to reflect on the impact of their choice of action on other people nor the chance to consider their responsibility for the action; they are simply told they have done wrong and are 'punished'.

Restorative practice, however, involves helping the child think through their behaviour, its consequences and what they can do to make it better.

The Benefits for Children of the Restorative Approach

A restorative approach equips children with the skills, values, and attitudes to develop, maintain and strengthen relationships, within both their immediate environment and the wider community. By not having the finger of blame pointed at them, children are less likely to get defensive and upset, but instead manage conflict and take responsibility as they develop empathy along with emotional literacy. Teaching children to have restorative conversations will enable them to communicate positively and effectively.

How Can the Restorative Approach be Applied in Schools?

Restorative practice centres around a set of key questions that help children think about their behaviour and understand how they can correct it:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking and feeling at the time?
- What have you thought about it since?
- Who has been affected and in what way?
- How could things have been done differently?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Safe Learning Environment

When delivering the content of this resource, it should be ensured that a safe learning environment is established by following the Ground Rules which are already applied within the setting, and which should include:

We will:

- all have a voice and the chance to be listened to
- have the right to pass
- always be respectful
- comment on what is said, not on who says it
- not ask personal questions
- not judge others
- use the correct term for body parts
- keep things shared within the group (unless it is a safeguarding concern – see disclosures)
- know where to go for further advice and support

It is good practice to have a question box/ask it basket in the classroom, which is accessible to children beyond the period of the lesson, for them to post any questions they may want answered.



Children can post anonymously or be invited to write their names on the questions if they would like an adult to speak to them privately.

Disclosures

The sensitive nature of discussing conflict within relationships may lead to disclosures being made. Children cannot be promised confidentiality. If a disclosure is made and there is a fear the child or young person may be at risk, the information must be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the setting's safeguarding policy must be followed.

Before the Lesson

It is recommended that adults delivering the lesson have a clear understanding of the restorative approach and the benefits of establishing the practice within their setting. Further information, along with examples, can be found at [Restorative Gloucestershire](#).

Assessing Understanding and Learning

Included in this resource is a brief question for the children to respond to at the beginning and end of the session. This will enable the teacher to assess the level of understanding of relationships prior to delivery of the lesson and can further inform the focus of the teaching. By asking the same questions again once the material has been delivered, the teacher can measure the impact of the learning on the pupils' understanding of relationships in terms of how they can be managed when conflict is involved.

Further Resources and Support

The school's Relationships Policy and PSHE Policy: these will include guidance on creating safe spaces, setting ground rules and managing tricky questions

GHLL: [Peer Mediation](#)

Restorative Practice in Gloucestershire: [Guidance and Resources](#)

Restorative Gloucestershire: [Restorative Mediation and Restorative Justice](#)

NSPCC: [Talk Relationships](#)

PHE: [Classroom Connections](#)

