

# Restorative Approaches

## North Ayrshire Council Educational Psychology Service

Research  
Snapshot

January  
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### Definitions

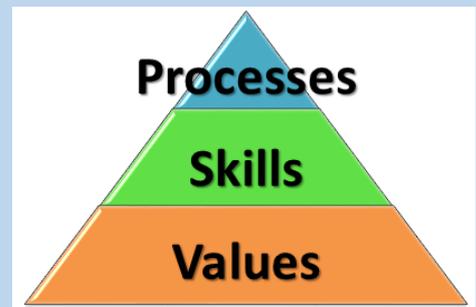
“Restorative Practice is an approach to offending and inappropriate behaviour which puts repairing harm done to relationships and people over and above the need for assigning blame and dispensing punishment.” *Restoring Respect for Justice, Wright (1999)*

“The Restorative Approach is a philosophy, not a model and ought to guide the way we act in our dealings with others.”  
B Hopkins

### What are restorative approaches?

North Ayrshire Council are committed to being a Nurturing Authority and are using restorative approaches as a key part of the Positive relationships strategy which is being rolled out to all schools.

Founded upon values of positive regard, optimism and accountability it takes a pro-social/relational approach. Restorative approaches put this philosophy into practice through relational problem solving for the repair of harm. These values are the strong foundation for a process that can be used to deal with inappropriate behaviour. Here repairing harm done to relationships and people are considered over and above the need for assigning blame and dispensing punishment.



### Underpinning values



### Background

- Originated in New Zealand as part of the Children Youth & Families Act of 1989
- Legislation was based on the Maori tradition of Family Group Conferences- with the bringing together the extended family of a young and person who committed wrongdoing to repair the harm caused
- Adapted by Terry O'Connell in Australia for community policing where the victim was given much greater role and the number of juvenile re-offenders was halved compared with those sent through the courts. (Charles Stuart University study)
- Ted and Susan Wachtel (Philadelphia, USA) then implemented Real Justice in Community Service Foundation
- Belinda Hopkins (UK) developed model for educational contexts and can be read in her book 'Just Schools'
- Margs Thorsborne and David Vinegrad (Australia) continue to be forefront in applying restorative justice approaches in schools and providing practical resources to support implementation

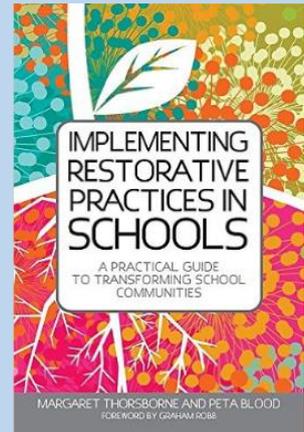
*'The classroom/school is a community. A community is healthy when its connections between members are sound.'*

*Thorsborne*

**What can restorative approaches do for my school?**

Restorative approaches are not new. Many schools throughout the world have used it for over 20 years and has resulted in:

- Happier and safer school
- Mutually respectful relationships
- More effective teaching and learning
- Reducing exclusions
- Raising attainment
- Raising attendance
- Developing emotional literacy
- Addressing bullying behaviours
- Raising morale by culture of inclusion and belonging



Although restorative approaches is about an ethos, sometimes disputes can happen. At these times young people, parents and school staff might be invited to take part in a restorative discussion. This is:

- A process for resolving conflict
- Has a common language to resolve conflict
- Focuses on the needs of all
- Allows the person who has done the harm to understand the impact of their actions
- Encourages person who did the harm to take responsibility for their actions
- Therefore creates accountability
- Likely to change behavior and build



	Key questions
Person responsible	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What happened? (...and then what happened?)</li> <li>2. What were you thinking at the time?</li> <li>3. What have your thoughts been since?</li> <li>4. Who has been affected by this? How have they been affected?</li> <li>5. What do you think needs to happen now?</li> </ol>
Person harmed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What happened? (...and then what happened?)</li> <li>2. What were your thoughts at the time?</li> <li>3. What have been your thoughts since?</li> <li>4. How have you/anyone else been affected by this?</li> <li>5. What's been the hardest thing for you?</li> <li>6. What would you like to see happen?</li> </ol>



**Further reading**

Hopkins, B. (2003). *Just schools: A whole school approach to restorative justice*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

McCluskey, G., Lloyd, G., Kane, J., Riddell, S., Stead, J., & Weedon, E. (2008). Can restorative practices in schools make a difference?. *Educational Review*, 60(4), 405-417.

Thorsborne, M. (2013). *Implementing restorative approaches in schools: A practical guide to transforming school communities*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers