

# RESTORATIVE PRACTICE - 'BUILDING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS'

Restorative Practice has been developed with one specific goal in mind; to support and facilitate the building of healthy relationships. It has been proven beyond doubt that when individuals live in healthy and life giving relationships with significant others, there is abundant personal growth, capacity for character building and a high level achievement in all areas of endeavour.

Restorative Practice was formulated by Real Justice, an international non-profit organisation. This development which began in Wagga Wagga in 1990, was influenced by its Australian director, Terry O'Connell OAM.

Basic to the Restorative Practice processes are the Restorative Questions.



## ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE GEELONG ANTI BULLYING HARASSMENT POLICY & RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

### RESTORATIVE QUESTIONS 1

**What happened?**

**What were you thinking of at the time?**

**What have you thought about since?**

**Who has been affected by what you have done?**

**In what way?**

**What do you think you need to do to make things right?**

These questions are about challenge, story, reflection and reparation and are designed to build a strong basis upon which to foster healthier relationship. The structure of the questions focus on the past (*what happened?*), present (*reflection on who has been affected and in what way*) and future (*what needs to be done to make things right?*)

The questions therefore emphasise the importance of harm and its impact on relationships. They are:

- open ended
- respectful and not value-laden
- objective, meaning it is not about the questioner but rather about leveraging responsibility onto another to tell their story
- thinking questions rather than feeling ones which ironically tend to evoke stronger emotional responses
- have the potential to develop empathy.

Using these questions allows the questioner to be practical and direct. For example, when you ask the question, *'What happened?'* you get the response, *'I don't know.'* You simply draw on your experience and explore the question in other ways. For example, *'Tell what your part was in the incident?'* If you maintain the basis sequence of questions, they will work in most situations. Another consideration is to view the questions as a 'way of engaging' others.

At all times avoid asking the WHY (why did you do that) question.

### RESTORATIVE QUESTIONS 2

**What did you think when you realised what had happened?**

**What impact has this incident had on you and others?**

**What has been the hardest thing for you?**

**What do you think needs to happen to make things right?**

The Supplementary questions create a space for people who have been harmed by the actions of others by helping them gain a sense of justice (validation and understanding). The questions ask for a factual and non-judgemental response.

The Supplementary questions are sequence from the past (*what happened?*); to the effect the action (*what has been the impact?*); followed by a grounded question that gets to the core of the real emotional and personal impact (*what has been the hardest thing?*)

This question has the capacity to get to the heart of the matter and offers an avenue to express what has been most difficult. This question will serve you well in situations where someone is experiencing personal difficulties, eg. a young person struggling with his/her relationships:

*"what is really hard about what is happening for you at this time?"*



**If you have any queries or for further information contact:  
Homeroom Teachers, Year Level Coordinators, Counsellors, Deputy Principal.**



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COMPASSION INNOVATION INTEGRITY

## FROM THE COLLEGE VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT

### OUR SHARED VISION

*We, the St Joseph's College Community, are committed to continue education in the Catholic tradition, through the example of Jesus Christ, our beginning and end. Moved by the story of Edmund Rice and inspired by the gospel values of love and justice, we encourage one another "to strive for the highest", to develop and use our talents and abilities, and to respect and show compassion towards others. Through the development of partnerships, we show that we value the contribution of students, staff and families, past and present. In our service to the wider community, we see our school as being a place of help and encouragement in our world today.*

St Joseph's College is a community, which values all members and seeks to promote positive relationships. Bullying behaviour is a feature of social relationships. It usually occurs in group settings and therefore it requires a group effort to intervene effectively. Bullying has a negative impact on relationships and the learning environment. At St Joseph's College we are committed to reducing bullying and providing a safe and supportive environment for students and staff.

### WHAT IS HARASSMENT/BULLYING?

Harassment is verbal, physical, psychological or sexual conduct which is unwanted and uninvited. Bullying is repeated intimidation of a physical, verbal or psychological nature of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons.

### TYPES OF BULLYING:

#### PHYSICAL

Involves any harmful actions against a person's body including hitting, kicking, pushing and choking. It also involves interfering with another person's property such as stealing or damaging. Physical bullying is easy to see and identify.

#### VERBAL

Involves speaking to a person or about a person in a way that is hurtful and disrespectful to that person. Eg. Name calling, spreading rumours.

#### EMOTIONAL

Includes behaviours that upset, exclude or embarrass another person. Eg. leaving another person out on purpose, rude gestures, writing hate notes, unpleasant looks - "greasies". This is usually less obvious to others.

#### CYBER

Involves the misuse of mobile phones, text messaging services, social networking sites, email and internet systems to communicate aggressive or degrading information about someone or start rumours. It is often very difficult to identify the instigator of such material.

### SIGNS WHICH MAY INDICATE A STUDENT IS BEING BULLIED

- Change in attendance at school
- Change in achievement levels
- Unexplained injuries
- Change in sleep patterns
- Change in eating patterns
- Withdrawal from activities or groups
- Neglect of physical appearance
- Long lasting mood changes

“TACKLING BULLYING IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY”

### WHAT IF YOU ARE BULLIED:

- Tell the person who is bullying or harassing you to stop, if you feel confident to do so
- Discuss the situation with someone you trust eg. parent, friend, relative, Pastoral Care Teacher, Counsellor, Year Level Coordinator, Student Leader. This is not "dobbing". Everyone has the right to feel safe.
- Continue to raise the issue until the problem is resolved. Be persistent!

### WHAT OTHER STUDENTS CAN DO:

If you witness bullying:

- Support the student who is being bullied, if possible
- Don't join in
- Talk to someone you trust who can help
- Remember always to report bullying
- If you feel confident to do so, tell the persons responsible for bullying to stop

### THE PERSON CAUSING THE BULLYING SHOULD:

- Stop the bullying behaviour immediately
- Try to understand how words and/or actions chosen have been harmful and learn from the experience
- Make a commitment to address the issue. Follow strategies and advice given

### WHAT PARENTS CAN DO:

- Communicate regularly with your son, listen carefully encourage him to talk about his feelings openly
- If you recognise some signs of bullying make sure your son knows you believe him and care for him

- Don't attempt to 'sort out' the bullying yourself, this usually results in escalation
- Don't assume that the teachers know - bullying usually occurs out of sight of adults
- Ensure, as far as possible, that your son knows what action you are proposing to take and agrees with it. Be guided by his response
- Contact the school and discuss your concerns. The student's Homeroom teacher should be the first point of contact
- If your son is being bullied or involved in bullying others, work cooperatively with school

### WHAT THE COLLEGE WILL DO:

- Take all allegations of bullying seriously
- Refuse to accept that bullying is inevitable. Many programs at the school seek to increase our capacity to care for others and ourselves and to develop an awareness of the impact of bullying on others
- Provide support for all parties involved
- Seek to restore damaged relationships through use of restorative practices. This could include a meeting involving all those affected.
- Provide suitable assistance and support for the bully and victim
- Implement the school discipline system - points, detention, suspension, provisional enrolment contract

### COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES FOR STAFF IN THE CASE OF HARASSMENT BY A STUDENT OR A PARENT

- Tell the alleged offender that you object to the behaviour and want it to stop
- Report the incident to the Deputy Principal
- Keep a record of the incident
- Similar procedures outlined for students will then be implemented
- In the case of harassment of a staff member by a parent, the Principal is to be informed

“TOGETHER, WORKING TO CREATE A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT”  
*(National Safe Schools Framework)*

