



VALLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Care
Learn Together
Aim high
Be honest
Look after what we have**

A Restorative Approach to Behaviour and Learning



At Valley we use a Restorative Approach to manage and improve behaviour and learning. The aim of this leaflet is to explain the process and how it is used in the school. It could also be a useful tool for you to use at home.

What is the Restorative approach and how will it affect my child?

A Restorative Approach focuses on developing positive relationships within the school, both pupil to pupil and staff to pupil. It creates a safe, secure environment which enables children to develop both academically and socially. On a day-to-day level this involves talking to the children about their thoughts and feelings. In response to conflict, it focuses on the harm that has been caused and ways to repair the harm and restore the relationship.

Although the Restorative Approach is just developing in our school, it has been used worldwide by many schools and it has been proven to have many benefits.

By Reducing:

- Exclusions
- Disruptive behaviour
- Conflict
- Bullying

By Improving:

- Behaviour
- Learning
- Attendance

By Developing:

- Truth Telling
- Responsibility
- Accountability
- Empathy
- Emotional Literacy
- Conflict Resolution Skills
- Positive Relationships

The teachers and support staff are using restorative language around the school and will be holding restorative conversations in response to incidents.

How do restorative approaches benefit my child and school?

Restorative approaches help develop a happier school where the focus is on learning not conflict. We hope that you child will enjoy coming to school because they feel safe and respected and they know that when things go wrong we will do everything we can to help put it right.

Restorative approaches encourage pupils to think about how their behaviour has affected others both pupils and staff. It helps children to develop **respect, responsibility, truthfulness** and, **build relationships** in line with our core values.

What is Restorative Language?

Restorative Language is a calm, fair and respectful way of communicating which allows individuals to express their thoughts and feelings. A Restorative Approach to conflict creates positive outcomes from negative behaviour.

What are the Restorative Questions?

The Restorative Questions are used in response to specific incidents. A member of staff will talk to all the children involved and ask them a set of questions giving each child the opportunity to tell their side of the story without being judged or blamed. It is about focusing on the actions NOT the character of the person.

The questions are:

- ***What happened?***
- ***How did you feel/what were you thinking at the time? How are you feeling now?***
- ***Who else has been affected? How?***
- ***What needs to be done to repair the harm?***
- ***What could you do differently next time to prevent this happening again?***

We might also say to our pupils:

- ***What would you think if this happened to you?***
- ***How can we put this right?***
- ***What other choice could you have made?***
- ***What were you hoping/expecting would happen when you did this?***

The approach requires all involved to be able to listen to each other respectfully, express their feelings and take responsibility for their part. This is underpinned by our PHSCCE curriculum and regular circle times in classes; where such skills are taught and modelled.

Where necessary, adults will help children to calm down before starting a restorative conversation or arrange to have it later in the day.

Peer Mediators have also been trained by *Behaviour Matters Ltd.* to work restoratively to help their peers resolve issues.

These pupils have been selected from Years 5 and 6 after an application and interview process. They help pupils resolve minor problems by following a set of questions and paraphrasing to ensure they gain clarity of the situation. They work with the children to resolve the problem and come to 'win-win' resolution. They have been trained to refer more serious problems to the adults. Both sides of the dispute need to want to have help from mediators before it can start and to agree to the rules of the session.

OUR PROMISE:

- We won't gossip
- We won't take sides
- We won't tell you what to do

RULES FOR MEDIATION:

- You will be able to talk without being interrupted
- You will all get the chance to tell your story
- You must be respectful at all times to each other and use each other's names

Restorative Meetings

A pupil may be asked to attend a more formal Restorative Meeting if they are having a conflict at school. This is a meeting with everyone involved to:

- Discuss what is happening
- Look at who has been affected or upset
- Decide how it can be put right
- Find a way forward in a way that is fair to everyone

To make sure that those who have been using poor behaviour can be held accountable they will be expected to take responsibility for their actions *before* the meeting starts.

This allows the school to:

- Help pupils who have been upset by poor behaviour by expecting wrong doers to put right the upset they have caused.
- Help pupils involved in poor behaviour so they are able to change their behaviour in a way that also holds them fully responsible.

During a conference a contract is made, this will list of actions or promises that they need to agree to carry out so the conflict can be put right and doesn't happen again. Someone within school will make sure that everyone is keeping to the contract.

