# Appendix 3: Restorative Approaches in Schools in the UK Article

## Restorative Approaches in Schools in the UK

If you work with, or care for, school-aged children and young people then this pamphlet is for you. It will help you answer

the following questions:
- What are Restorative Approaches?
- What is involved in a restorative response to harm or conflict?
- What is being 'restored'?
- What are the key elements of Restorative Approaches?
- Why are Restorative Approaches helpful?
- How can I find out more?

The pamphlet is not a substitute for appropriate staff development and training, which is an essential part of Restorative Approaches implementation in any setting.

### What are Restorative Approaches?

The 'unique selling point' of a restorative approach is that it offers schools an alternative way of thinking about addressing discipline and behavioural issues and offers a consistent framework for responding to these issues. However, as this pamphlet will show on pages 2 & 3, the approach is much more than a 'behaviour management tool'. In isolation, used as such, it will not be very effective.

The table below compares different ways of thinking and responding in authoritarian and restorative models of discipline.

| Authoritarian Approaches<br>*The focus is on:* | Restorative Approaches<br>*The focus is on:* |
|---|---|
| Rule-breaking | Harm done to individuals |
| Blame or guilt | Responsibility and problem-solving |
| Adversarial processes | Dialogue and negotiation |
| Punishment to deter | Repair, apology and reparation |
| Impersonal processes | Interpersonal processes |
| *and, as a result;* | *and, as a result;* |
| The needs of those affected are often ignored | The needs of those affected are addressed |
| The unmet needs behind the behaviour are ignored | The unmet needs behind the behaviour are addressed |
| Accountability = being punished | Accountability = putting things right |

Schools that work restoratively find that relationships are stronger and learning is more effective, and so there is less need to resort to sanctions and punishments to try to 'manage' behaviour. There is a shift from one model of discipline to the other, at a pace appropriate to the school.

### What is a restorative response to harm or conflict?

Those affected are invited to share:
1. What has happened.
2. What the impact has been on those involved: i.e. who has been affected and in what ways they have been affected.
3. What needs to happen to put things right or to make things better in the future.

This framework is based on sound learning theory regarding how people relate to each other and how best to meet the different needs that can arise from conflict or harm.

To facilitate such a process requires the ability to:
- establish a respectful rapport with people;
- listen and respond calmly, empathically and without interruption or judgment to all sides of an issue;
- inspire a sense of safety and trust;
- encourage people to express their thoughts, feelings and needs appropriately;
- appreciate the impact of people's thoughts, feelings, beliefs and unmet needs on their behaviours;

- encourage those involved in the problem to find their own solutions.

This learning framework can be used in a wide range of contexts:
- A one way conversation, with one person listening and asking questions and the other talking;
- A two-way conversation, with both people taking turns to ask and answer questions;
- A small meeting when one impartial person - a facilitator - poses questions to two people who have had a difficulty, or where harm has been done, and who want to repair their relationship;
- A larger, facilitated meeting involving children, parents/carers, colleagues or others who have an important role to play (sometimes called a 'Restorative Conference');
- A facilitated circle involving part or all of a class, a staff team or a group of residents.

**What is being restored?**
This depends on the context and on the needs of those involved. What is being restored is often something *between* the people involved such as:
- Effective communication;
- Relationship, and even friendship;
- Empathy and understanding for the other's perspective;
- Respect;
- Understanding the impact of one's own behaviour on others;
- Reparation for material loss or damage.

However, something may also be restored *within* an individual – for example:
- A sense of security;
- Self-confidence;
- Self-respect;
- Dignity.

Overall, the process often results in the restoration of someone's sense of belonging to a community (e.g. class, school, peer group or family).

**What are the key elements of Restorative Approaches?**

Restorative Approaches are *value–based* and *needs–led*. They can be seen as part of a broader ethos or culture that identifies strong, mutually respectful relationships and a cohesive community as the foundations on which good teaching and learning can flourish. In such a community young people are given a lot of responsibility for decision-making on issues that affect their lives, their learning and their experience of school.

Restorative Approaches build upon the basic principles and values of humanistic psychology:
- Genuineness - honesty, openness, sincerity.
- Positive regard for all individuals - valuing the person for who they are.
- Empathic understanding – being able to understand another's experience.
- Individual responsibility and shared accountability.
- Self-actualisation - the human capacity for positive growth.
- Optimistic perspectives on personal development - that people can learn and can change for the better.

Such principles and values not only underpin the more formal Restorative Approaches described above, but they can also be practised in our informal, day-to-day interaction with others. Adults who do this 'model' effective ways of building and maintaining emotionally healthy relationships, and promote helpful, pro-social attitudes. In doing so, these adults may well be providing a positive 'social learning context' not readily available to some young people in other areas of their lives.

An 'iceberg' metaphor can illustrate a whole-school restorative approach. The diagram below emphasises two points:

1. The ways in which the whole school community shares the responsibility to build, maintain and repair relationships are the more visible parts of Restorative Approaches. To be effective these processes need to be underpinned by sound knowledge, skills and shared values.

2. Schools that consciously focus the bulk of their effort on building and maintaining relationships will find that fewer things will go wrong and so there will be fewer occasions when relationships need to be repaired.

2

Repairing

Maintaining

Building

Relationships

Knowledge, Skills and
Attitudes

Values and Philosophy
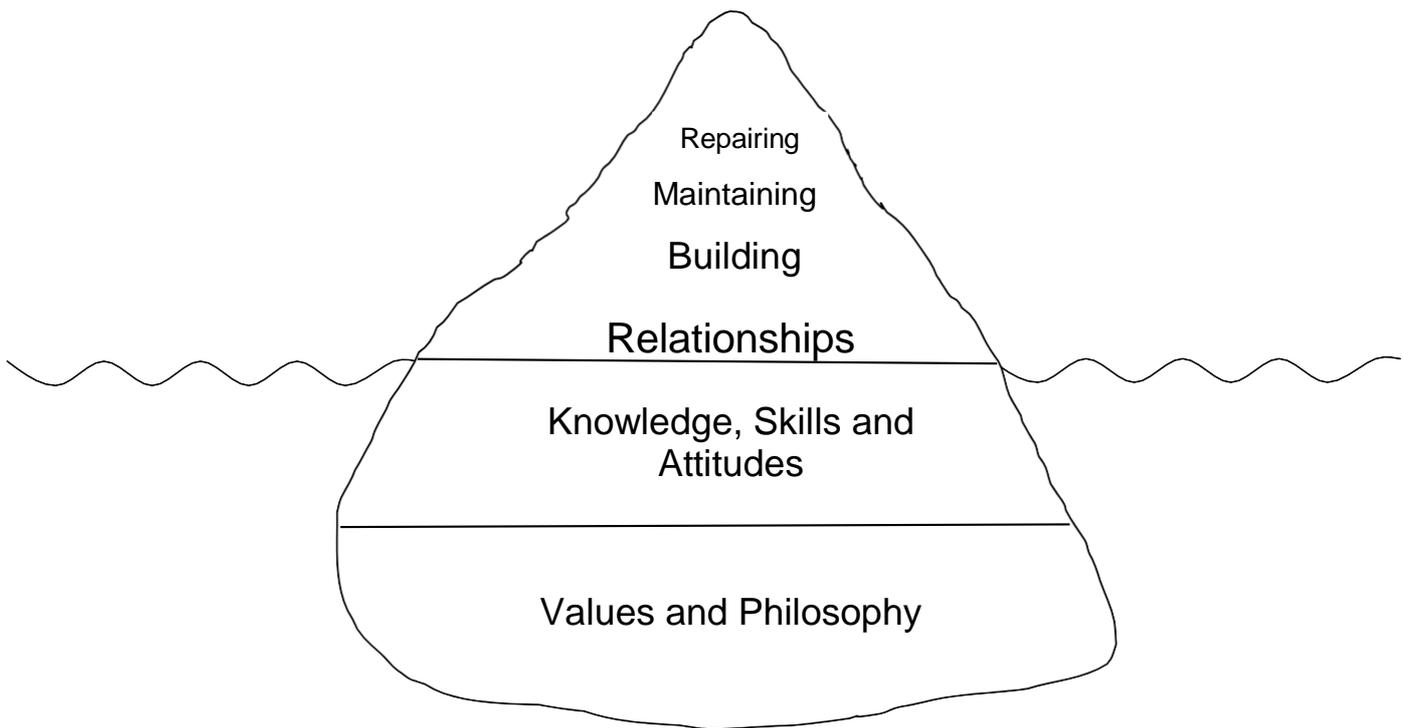
**Why are Restorative Approaches helpful?**

Staff, children and parents/carers who work restoratively report that this way of working leads to:
- ➢➢ A more respectful climate;
- ➢➢ A shift away from sanction-based responses that aim to 'manage' behaviour, toward a more relational approach;
- ➢➢ Better relationships amongst children and staff;
- ➢➢ People being more honest and willing to accept responsibility;
- ➢➢ People feeling more supported when things go wrong;
- ➢➢ A calmer, quieter and more productive learning environment.

**How can I find out more?**
Here are some UK-based resources that you should find useful.

Books:

*The Restorative Classroom: Using Restorative Approaches to Foster Effective Learning.*
Belinda Hopkins (2011). Optimus Education ISBN: 1906517290
*Building and Restoring Respectful Relationships in Schools: A Guide to Restorative Practice.*
Richard Hendry (2009). Routledge ISBN-10: 0415544270
*Mediation and Restoration in Circle Time.* Teresa Bliss (2008) Milton Keynes; Teach to Inspire:
a division of Optimus Publishing ISBN: 978-1-906517-05-2
*Restorative Solutions: Making it Work.* Colin Newton and Helen Mahaffey (2008). Inclusive
Solutions UK Limited ISBN-10: 0954635140
*Just Schools: A Whole School Approach To Restorative Justice.* (2004) Belinda Hopkins.
Jessica Kingsley Publishers. ISBN: 1843101327

Web sites:

Restorative Justice Council: http://www.restorativejustice.org.uk/
Education Scotland – Restorative Approaches:
http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/supportinglearners/positivelearningenvironments/positivebehaviour
/approaches/restorative/Index.asp
Transforming Conflict: http://www.transformingconflict.org
Sacro: http://www.sacro.org.uk/html/schools_work.html
The International Institute for Restorative Practices (UK): http://uk.iirp.edu/

These resources reflect the range of Restorative Approaches in the UK. Many excellent international resources also exist.

*ESRC logo.*