



peacemakers

In Focus - A Restorative Approach

Peacemakers is working with several schools to explore restorative approaches and ways of applying them to the school setting. Here we explain briefly what we mean by restorative approaches, and recommend some resources to get you started.

In Brief...

A Restorative Approach offers schools an alternative way of thinking about discipline and behaviour and offers a consistent framework for responding to the issues they can raise. It brings those harmed by conflict, and those responsible for the harm, into communication, enabling everyone affected by a particular incident to play a part in repairing the harm and finding a positive way forward.

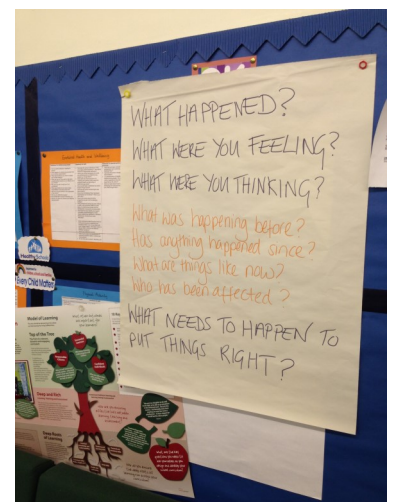
A Restorative Approach is based on:

- **Respect** – for everyone by listening to other opinions and valuing them.
- **Responsibility** – taking responsibility for our own actions.
- **Repair** – developing the skills within the school community so children and adults have the resources to identify solutions that repair wrongdoings and try to learn from behaviour over time.
- **Re-integration** – working through a structured, supportive process that aims to solve the problem and allows children to remain in mainstream education and adults to be involved in school life.
- **Relationships** – making them, not breaking them.

What does this look like in a school?

Schools do simple things to help build relationships, maintain them and repair them when things go wrong:

- **Check In/Check Out** [see overleaf]
- **Restorative Norms:** at the beginning of each term classes think about how to work best in class and make an agreement about how to work and act.
- **Restorative Language:** staff will use restorative language and encourage children to do the same. Restorative language is calm, respectful and fair.
- **Restorative Meetings:** if something goes wrong at school, the children and their parents may be asked to attend a restorative meeting. This is a way of working *with* everyone involved to sort out a conflict. At the end of the meeting people are asked to make a contract which outlines how the situation will be managed in the future.



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Check In/Check Out - give it a go!

- This activity gives everyone the chance to speak, to have their say and to learn about each other. A talking piece is passed around the circle and everyone responds to the question or statement.
- Ideally, all check ins should take place in a circle.
- Check ins should happen every Monday morning and Friday afternoon as a minimum, some schools choose to do them after lunch.
- Check in/out should last between 5 and 10 minutes **maximum**.
- Start by establishing this with your class using simple (favourite food), one word or thumbs up check-ins.
- Establish this with each class so they become part of the fabric of the school day/week.
- Check ins/outs are there to set goals and expectations together. This is part of classroom management. The more emphasis you place on these techniques, the less time you will spend fire-fighting poor behaviour.
- Adults should take part in the check in/out process.
- If you have children with SEN in your class, discuss with them how they would like to contribute to this process in advance of it happening.
- Give responsibility of 'remembering to do' the check in/out to a child. As the class get more confident – they could even lead them.



“You cannot separate behaviour from academics. When students feel good and safe and have solid relationships with teachers, their academic performance improves.” (Head teacher)

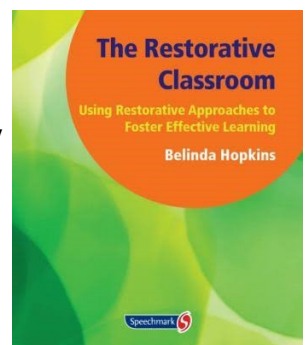
Example Check Ins: *How are you feeling?* [rate 1-5]; *Today I plan to...;* *It's good to have goals because...*

Example Check Outs: *Tell us one thing you liked about school today;* *What are you going to do straight after school today?*

Further Reading

The Restorative Classroom by Belinda Hopkins is a fantastic manual to help make classrooms more restorative. There are lots of activities to make use of via a CD ROM that comes with the resource. A 'must-have' for any school thinking seriously about implementing restorative approaches.

Short film about the use of Restorative Approaches at [St. Richards Primary School](#).



Check out website [Restorative Practice in Schools](#) from the Restorative Justice Council (RJC).

Peacemakers has been awarded Training Provider Quality Mark from the RJC. Because Peacemakers has been able to demonstrate that we meet national standards in restorative training delivery, schools and commissioners can have confidence in the training delivered by Peacemakers.