



WILLOW TREE ACADEMY



# Restorative Practice at Willow Tree Academy

# An Introduction to Restorative Practice for Parents/Carers

The aim of Restorative Practices is to develop community and to manage conflict and tensions by repairing harm and building relationships. This is our priority as a restorative school, as we see ourselves at the heart of and serving our community.

For effective teaching and learning to take place, we believe that good relationships need to be at the heart of everything that happens at Willow Tree Academy

## Restorative Practices

- ❖ Allow the act (unaccepted behaviour) to be rejected, whilst acknowledging the intrinsic worth of the person and their potential contribution to society.
- ❖ Rejects the 'Act not the Actor'. Separates the 'Deed from the Doer'

It is a process that puts repairing harm done to relationships and people over and above assigning blame and dispensing punishment. It shifts the emphasis from managing behaviour to focussing on building, nurturing and repairing relationships.

We know that a whole school restorative approach can contribute to:

- ❖ Happier and safer schools
- ❖ Mutually respectful relationships

- ❖ More effective teaching and learning
- ❖ Reduced exclusions
- ❖ Raised attendance
- ❖ Addresses bullying behaviour
- ❖ Raises morale and self esteem
- ❖ Helps promote a culture of inclusion and belonging
- ❖ Increases emotional literacy

As part of the RP process, children and staff could be involved in meetings and circles that include:

### The Five RP questions

- ❖ What happened?
- ❖ What were you thinking about at the time?
- ❖ What have your thoughts been since?
- ❖ Who else has been affected by what you did?
- ❖ What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

If your child has been harmed by the actions of others, which could include both staff and students, questions could include:

- ❖ What did you think when you realised what had happened?
- ❖ What have your thoughts been since?
- ❖ How has this affected you and others?
- ❖ What has been the hardest thing for you?
- ❖ What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

At Willow Tree Academy we have written our own versions of the above questions to make them appropriate for our three phases; Foundation Unit, Key Stage One and Key Stage Two. Whilst the questions have been edited to be language appropriate for the children at different ages, the thought processes and general structure of the Restorative discussion remains the same.

Restorative Practice is NOT just about the questions. It is about a process that is seen as fair: allows free expression of emotions and significantly is about offering high levels of support, whilst challenging inappropriate behaviour through high levels of

control, encouraging acceptance of responsibility and the setting of clear boundaries.

Please note that all school staff, teaching and non-teaching have had (as a minimum) basic training about Restorative Practices whilst many have also attended enhanced training to try and ensure that our intentions translate into actions.

All our children understand and use circles in their everyday school life. As part of our commitment to RP, you as parents/carers may also on occasion be asked to contribute to a restorative meeting if this is felt to be the right course of action.

You may want to introduce the question when you are dealing with conflict that may occur at home; maybe between siblings or parent-child. Please let us know how it goes, we would welcome your feedback.

Listed below are some examples of affective statements and questions which all staff can use with pupils:

### Statements

I am sorry that I misunderstood the situation .....

I feel really proud of you when I heard .....

I feel really pleased and encouraged that you made the right choice.

I respected your honesty and thank you.

I was very disappointed when you did that to....

I am upset and angry by what has just happened.

I feel that (describe action) was very disrespectful.

## Questions

What happened? – followed by:

What were you thinking about when you did that?

How did your actions affect .....?

How do you think ..... felt about what you did?

How do you feel about what you did?

How do you feel about what you did and the affect it had on me?

## Scaling

As part of our RP practice in school we are using scaling at both registration times to gauge how the children are feeling so that we can offer early support if it is needed. Staff also use the same scaling process to help the children understand that things that happen during any given day can move us up and down the scale depending on many factors. This is proving very positive throughout all year groups.

### How do you feel right now?

5	<b>Amazing</b> - all my needs are met	
4	<b>Happy</b> - things are going well	
3	<b>Ok</b> - I am managing but things could be better	
2	<b>Anxious</b> - I'm worried about something	
1	<b>Sad</b> - I need to talk to someone now	

We hope that you will continue to support us as we strive to make restorative practice a part of every day in our schools.