

Dear Parents,

At the start of this year, the staff received training in 'Restorative Practices'; this is an approach to managing conflict and behaviour. Restorative Practices give children who have been harmed the opportunity to explain the impact to those responsible, and for those responsible to acknowledge this impact and take steps to put it right.

Research has shown that becoming a restorative school has many benefits, including increased attendance, reduced exclusions and improved achievement. It can also alleviate problems such as bullying, classroom disruption, truancy and poor attendance, antisocial behaviour, and disputes between pupils, their families, and members of staff.

Restorative approaches include a range of methods and strategies which can be used both to prevent relationship-damaging incidents from happening and to resolve them if they do happen. There are specific questions to ask the children involved:

The Wrongdoer(s)	The Harmed Person(s)
1. What happened?	1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking?	2. What did you think / feel?
3. How were you feeling?	3. Who else has been affected / how?
4. Who has been affected by this?	4. What has been the hardest thing for you?
5. What do you need to do to make things right?	5. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

These questions create a very structured conversation between the children involved and helps the wrongdoer to see how their actions have a 'ripple effect' that can impact on people. It also helps to ensure that children can see that poor behaviour has been discussed and addressed appropriately. We also hope that by having adults regularly model this process, children will be better equipped to manage conflict themselves before significant problems occur.

Over the course of this year the staff have been exploring different ways of using Restorative Practices to help the children resolve conflict on the playground and within class. We have had several assemblies on the subject – particularly on the concept of the 'ripple effect' and how their actions impact on others. Some of the Playground Buddies have also been trained in restorative practices as 'Peace Ambassadors' and will soon be asked to help manage minor disagreements between pupils in the lower school – we hope this will help pupils resolve conflict independently but staff will always be available to support them in this role and will continue to manage any persistent or significant behaviour issues.

We have also been trialling the introduction of a new behaviour card as part of our system for managing behaviour – 'White Cards' have been issued to children where we feel a formal restorative meeting should take place that require a written record. These cards help us to see if any children frequently require help in managing relationships with their peers. However, they do not replace the Yellow, Orange and Red cards which continue to be used to help manage more significant behaviour issues.

Comments from children:

"I like that the person that did the wrong thing has to think about how to make things better!"

"Thinking about the ripple effect is good because what we do can make people sad or upset, but we can also make people happy if we make good choices!"

"It's help me know how to sort out arguments on the playground – I like that I can go to the Peace Ambassadors if I need help with an argument."

We will be raising money for the Teach Peach charity that helped to introduce these ideas to our school on Superhero Day on Tuesday 22nd May.