

Restorative Practices will promote and strengthen positive school culture and enhance pro-social relationships within the school community.

What are restorative practices?

Restorative Practices involves the building of positive relationships and establishing a supportive environment that is fair, consistent, and democratic. It involves interventions when harm has happened, as well as practices that help to prevent harm and conflict by creating a sense of belonging, safety, and social responsibility within the school community.

At the core, restorative practices are about building and restoring relationships.

The underlying principle is that relationships are important, and when an incident occurs, the focus is on the harm caused to the relationship and the subsequent repairing of that harm; rather than; what rule has been broken and therefore what consequences will be imposed.

A restorative approach to conflict and wrongdoing consists in asking key questions:

- 1. What happened, and what were you thinking at the time?**
- 2. What have you thought about since?**
- 3. Who has been affected by what happened and how?**
- 4. What about this has been the hardest for you?**
- 5. What needs to be done to make it right?**

A Restorative Approach...

- Encourages students to understand the impact of and appreciate the consequences of their actions.
- Provides an opportunity for those harmed by another's actions to share their personal experience.
- Requires students to be accountable for their actions.
- Encourages respect for all concerned and develops empathy for others.
- Views conflict as opportunities to learn through problem solving.

Benefits of Restorative Approaches in the School Setting

- A safer, more caring environment.
- A more effective teaching and learning environment.
- A greater commitment by everyone to taking the time to listen to one another.
- A reduction in bullying and other interpersonal conflicts.
- A greater awareness around the importance of connectedness among young people.
- Addresses the need to belong and feel valued by peers and significant adults.
- Greater emphasis on responses to inappropriate behavior that seek to reconnect, and not further disconnect young people.
- Reductions in suspensions and expulsions.
- A greater confidence in the staff team to deal with challenging situations.

Voice of SFUSD District Employees Reflections and Comments about Restorative Practices

“Restorative practices can be effective and should be encouraged to be used more. This is something to use in personal life as well as professional life.”

“I think this is an alternative approach to disciplining students. It can modify behavior through understanding and empathy.”

“Bringing restorative practices into our school and district community is very important in order to meet all students’ needs and ensure equitable treatment for all.”

“Student to student, teacher to student, and teacher to teacher conferences have brought about a greater understanding and made our community more understanding of each other.”

“I have used and appreciated RP at my school. It has helped to keep the suspension numbers down, but more importantly it has helped people to become more human, forgiving and understanding.”

“RP, as a way to approach learning is long overdue in SFUSD. It’s a wonderful approach that makes sense...and in the end can make all of us more effective in our work with children and families.”

“Restorative Practices allows for students to become active participants in school culture.”

For more information on restorative practices in SFUSD, please contact SFUSD Restorative Practices Coordinator, Kerri Berkowitz at berkowitzk@sfusd.edu or call (415) 695-5543.



San Francisco Unified School District

Restorative Practices

Students, teachers, and parents
working together

