

Ways to help

If you feel your child has been harmed, you can help them to talk about their feelings and what they need to feel better, safer and happier.

If your child has caused harm, you can help by supporting them to talk through their thoughts and feelings and what has happened (we often find this is better than asking why it happened). Try to help them see other people's points of view. Try not to be judgemental about what they may have done, but encourage them to think about ways they can put the situation right and repair any harm caused.

Kent Safe Schools has a Restorative Approaches Co-ordinator who works with schools wanting to use this approach to behaviour management.

Please contact our office if you want more information about restorative approaches or other services provided by Kent Safe Schools.

If you want more information from the school, you can ask your child's headteacher to put you in touch with the senior teacher leading on restorative approaches.



Contact:

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Repairing & Rebuilding Relationships



Restorative Approaches in Kent Schools

Information for parents and carers



This leaflet will give you information about some of the ways your child's school addresses conflict and harmful situations. These processes are known as restorative approaches.

What are restorative approaches?

Restorative approaches are a way of:

- Involving all those affected by an incident to repair the harm it has caused, find ways forward that reduce resentment and prevent a problem from escalating further;
- Building support for children and young people who cause harm while allowing them to be fully accountable for their behaviour;
- Encouraging and recognising the contributions that parents/carers, school staff and young people make in building and maintaining positive relationships, which in turn help people to take responsibility for their actions.

Your child's school may already be using approaches such as restorative meetings, discussions, peer mediation and classroom circles. Schools are finding that these are effective ways of addressing incidents where harm has been caused to people and relationships.

How do restorative approaches work?

Most restorative approaches use a facilitator. This person does not take sides and does not offer advice. They listen and let everyone tell their story and help to keep everyone feeling safe. They use restorative questions to help people have their say.

If your child is involved in a situation and everyone agrees to use a restorative approach to resolve it, your child may be asked to tell the other people involved about:

- What has happened
- What they think about what happened, and how they feel about it
- Who they think has been affected, and how
- What they think needs to happen to put things right
- What they think needs to happen in the future to make sure the situation doesn't occur again

Normally people in the meeting make a spoken or written agreement; this spells out what everyone is going to do to put things right and help make the future better. Everyone has to agree on these actions and usually someone is asked to monitor the agreement in the future. If the agreement doesn't work, another meeting can be held or the school will help to find a different way forward.

If the incident is one where the school would normally involve you, then you will be asked if you would like to attend the restorative meeting. The facilitator will speak to everyone before the meeting goes ahead to ensure that everyone is there because they want to help resolve the problem. They will also explain what will happen in the meeting.

How do restorative approaches benefit my child and school?

- By recognising the harm caused, to repair the harm and to work together to make sure it doesn't happen again.
- By recognising that children and young people often have the best solutions to their own conflicts and with the right support and help they can develop the appropriate skills to solve the problem or situation.
- By helping to resolve issues that, if not worked through effectively, can cause ongoing behaviour and attendance problems.
- By encouraging all members of the school community to take care of their relationships with others and avoid harmful behaviour.
- By helping to make the school a safer and happier place.

