

## 3.12 Restorative Discipline Policy

### Background

Reconciliation is at the heart of God's redemptive activity. It's about God "making peace" with and between human beings. Reconciliation is the work of God's grace whereby estranged relationships are mended. Christians have been entrusted with the message of reconciliation and humans are bearers of the message. Shalom is another theme in Scripture. It describes a state of goodness where all is right, just, truthful, whole, complete and harmonious.

#### The Biblical Signposts

- I am my brother's keeper
- Love God and your neighbour
  - Being a neighbour knows no boundaries – everyone is your neighbour
- Lay down the sword and take up the cross
  - God's vision for shalom came through the suffering servant – it begins at the cross
- Walking in his way
  - Reconcile with the brother or sister
  - Have integrity in your relationships
  - Overcome evil with good- the whole adage of an eye for an eye isn't the biblical directive for shalom

#### Reconciliation is about:

- Truth
  - Honesty, revelation, acknowledgement, clarity
- Mercy
  - Acceptance, grace, support, compassion, healing
- Peace
  - Harmony, unity, wellbeing, security, respect
- Justice
  - Equality, right relationships, making things right, restitution, inclusivity (we speak of justice as inherent rights rather than right order)

The Bible gives us the vision for how society should operate in a post-fall world. It seems to describe the world where reconciliation, community building, and shalom are the norm.

### Policy

Discipline means to teach or to train. The goal is to have students become responsible for their own behaviour. Restorative practices encompass a spectrum of restorative approaches that provide the framework for dialogues that are designed to build community, put right what has been made wrong, and honour the worth of all human beings, regardless of who they are or what they do. Restorative practices encourage accountability, but accountability that emphasizes empathy and repair of harm. Restorative discipline encourages accountability through a collaborative, community owned process. Restorative practice promotes values and principles that use inclusive, collaborative approaches for being in community. These approaches validate the experiences and needs of everyone within the community, particularly those who have been marginalized, oppressed, or harmed. These

approaches allow us to act and respond in ways that are healing rather than alienating or coercive.

Restorative practice respects each other's humanness. It isn't about social control (controlling behaviour) it is about social engagement (relationships). There are high expectations for being human as well as plenty of support for being human.

To that end, discipline at ECS shall be restorative by nature, and therefore about repairing relationships. Discord is not only a breaking of the school rules but also seen as a violation of people. Justice identifies needs and obligations so that things can be made right, through a process that encourages dialogue and involves both the harmed and harmer. So we ask the questions:

- Who has been hurt?
- What are their needs?
- Whose obligations are they?
- What are the causes?
- Who has a stake in this?
- What can be done to make things right and whose responsibility is it?
- restorative discipline hold students accountable
  - Things are done with students and not to them
- In restorative discipline:
  - An understanding is fostered by asking questions
  - The student is required to do the work
  - Most of the time people are brought together
- Work is focussed on repairing the harm
- Apologies and consequences are often a part of it
- The needs of the victim are attended to
- The disciplinarian takes on the role of facilitator rather than imposer of rules or problem solver.
- Consequences are imposed, not punishment – there is a difference – a consequence is usually a natural or related result and puts the responsibility on the offender

Goals of restorative discipline

- To understand the harm and develop empathy for both the harmed and the harmer
- To listen and respond to the needs of the person harmed and the person who harmed
- To encourage accountability and responsibility through personal reflection within a collaborative planning process
- To re-integrate the harmer (and, if necessary, the harmed) into the community as valuable, contributing members.
- To create caring climates to support healthy communities.
- To change the system when it contributes to the harm

## Guidelines

To make sure that restorative practices become the norm of at ECS we will have to:

- communicate the vision
- remove the obstacles and empower action (it will take financial resources)
- provide proper training

- help staff to understand the processes available that make up the continuum of Restorative Practices
  - Affective statements
    - Statements where you share your feelings for example – “how the bad behaviour makes you feel”
    - Can be negative or positive
    - examples
    - It makes me uncomfortable when I hear Sandy being teased
    - I am frustrated when I am not listened to
    - I feel sad when I hear comments like that being made to John
    - I get angry when there is talking and joking during the time I’m talking
    - I was shocked when I saw Pete hurt that way
  - Affective questions
    - Restorative questions
      - When we face challenging behaviour
        - What happened?
        - What were you thinking of at the time?
        - What have you thought about since?
        - Who has been affected by what you have done – in what way have they been affected?
        - What do you think you need to do to make things right?
      - To help those who have been affected
        - What did you think when you realized what had happened?
        - What impact has this incident had on you and others?
        - What is been the hardest thing for you?
        - What do you think needs to happen to make things right?
  - Small impromptu conferences
    - A small impromptu conference in the hall or playground using the affective questions
  - Circles that may or may not be used, both proactive or responsive
    - Proactive circles may include
      - Classroom circles
        - Checking in
        - Checking out
        - Setting class norms
          - Asking students to suggest the norms
        - Class content
        - Academic goal setting
        - Community building, relationship building
      - Responsive Circles
        - Behaviour issues (bullying, fighting, theft)
        - Solving problems
  - Formal conferences – (again that may or may not be used) 2 types
    - Restorative conferences
      - Formal responses to wrongdoing
      - Everyone involved comes together

- Having a trained facilitator who follows a script of questions that are asked in a specific order to those in attendance
- Good for things like major offenses – e.g. fighting, drugs

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Formerly: [4.7 Restorative Discipline Policy](#)