

Model 2: Restorative Practices

Recommended Language:

A. Definitions

1. **School community** – Includes students, teachers, administrators, counselors, social workers and other school staff, families and the surrounding neighborhood/community.
2. **Restorative justice** – A theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused or revealed by misconduct rather than punishment by:
 - a. Identifying the misconduct and attempting to repair the damage;
 - b. Including all people impacted by a conflict in the process of responding to conflict; and
 - c. Creating a process that promotes healing, reconciliation and the rebuilding of relationships to build mutual responsibility and constructive responses to wrongdoing within our schools.⁸⁸
3. **Restorative practices** – A framework for a broad range of restorative justice approaches that proactively build a school community based on cooperation, mutual understanding, trust and respect, and respond to conflict by including all people impacted by a conflict in finding solutions that restore relationships and repair the harm done to the school community.⁸⁹ These practices can be used to implement positive behavior in classrooms and on school campuses consistent with the framework set forth in this Code as Model 1, SWPBIS.

B. School districts shall provide the resources, training and technical assistance for schools to implement restorative practices district-wide.

1. School districts shall incorporate restorative practices into their Discipline Codes or Student Codes of Conduct as the primary process by which schools respond to behavior and conflict.
2. School districts shall create a School Climate and Behavior Committee at the central district level that includes individuals who have engaged in restorative practices in school settings. The Committee shall provide ongoing training, evaluation and technical assistance to schools in implementing restorative practices. The Committee shall create the mechanisms to collect and evaluate data on school climate, discipline and safety, as well as mechanisms to intervene to ensure that schools with higher suspension, expulsion and arrest rates receive the resources and technical assistance they need to implement restorative practices.
3. School districts shall fund, designate and train a Restorative Coordinator in each school that shall oversee development and implementation of a school-wide plan, and provide ongoing support and coordination for teachers and students. The Restorative Coordinator should be someone with whom students can build positive relationships.

C. Schools shall establish a School Climate and Behavior Leadership Team that is responsible for developing and implementing a plan to integrate restorative practices into school policies, practices and culture.

1. The Leadership Team shall include representatives of all stakeholders in the school community, including administrators, teachers, counselors and other support staff, students, parents or guardians, and other relevant community members who receive training in restorative practices. The Team shall periodically recruit new members from the school community so that the knowledge and leadership on restorative practices is shared and perpetuated.
2. The Leadership Team is responsible for disseminating information about restorative practices and engaging all members of the school community in supporting its implementation on campus. The Team is responsible for gathering input from the broader school community and developing a plan for what restorative practices trainings shall be provided to staff, students and parents or guardians and what structures, policies and practices shall be created.

3. The Leadership Team is responsible for presenting monthly reports on school climate, discipline, safety and implementation of restorative practices.
 4. The Leadership Team shall also reach out to community-based organizations and other actors in the community to build support for restorative practices inside and outside of the school.
- D. Schools shall actively create a positive school climate for all members of the school community through the regular and ongoing use of classroom and school-wide restorative practices** that build community, strengthen relationships, promote inclusiveness, and enhance communication and problem solving skills.
1. School-wide restorative practices include but are not limited to:
 - a. Discussions in the classroom and school-wide forums about how members of the school community should treat one another;
 - b. Time to share the highs and lows of the day in advisory classes or forums;
 - c. Creating a welcoming environment where parents or guardians and community members are invited to volunteer and participate in the school community, including creating a parent room on campus; and
 - d. Creating mechanisms for students to check-in when they enter school each day to share concerns and/or request a meeting with a counselor to discuss problems they are facing.
 2. Teachers shall use restorative circles as a classroom teaching method to work collaboratively with students to set academic goals, explore the curriculum and set classroom norms for behavior, including:
 - a. Morning “Check-in” Circles for teachers and students to share what is going on in their lives, center themselves and focus on the day ahead; and
 - b. Discussion Circles to talk about a topic they are currently studying and delve into more depth on the subject.
 3. Teachers, administrators, counselors, support staff and students themselves shall use restorative problem solving techniques that increase communication and provoke student reflection on how their actions impact others.
- E. In response to disciplinary infractions or conflict, schools shall use a continuum of strategies that are restorative rather than punitive.**⁹⁰ Schools shall use restorative and other positive responses except for the most serious and dangerous offenses when exclusion from school is absolutely necessary to protect the safety of the school community (see 3.1.c).
1. All individuals who are impacted by a behavior conflict shall collectively identify the harm done, develop solutions for how the harm will be addressed, and identify the needs and obligations of all involved in order to heal and repair the situation as fully as possible.⁹¹
 2. If appropriate, the students or staff who committed the behavior or were involved in the conflict may participate in a restorative process to hear from all stakeholders and determine actions that meet restorative practice principles. Restorative processes should be conducted in a student-friendly space with both students and staff trained to mediate the discussion.
 3. The continuum of strategies include but are not limited to:
 - a. Restorative Chat – One-on-one informal conversations that are held as an immediate response or follow up to an action that has somehow caused harm to help the student correct the behavior in the present and future.⁹²
 - b. Restorative Circles – Spaces in which participants take turns speaking to a topic, guided by at least one circle keeper, using a talking piece and going around to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to speak. There are many different types of circles that can be used to promote a positive learning environment and deal with issues as they arise (for circles used in classroom teaching see D.2 above). Some of the main circles that schools can utilize for discipline include:
 - i. Discipline Circles to address what occurred, repair the harm and develop solutions to prevent reoccurrence, involving relevant parties and support people if helpful; and

- ii. Proactive Behavior Management circles used to role-play and work with students to develop positive behavioral models.
- c. Fairness Committees – A Fairness Committee is made up of students, teachers and other school staff who have been trained in restorative practices to work with students or staff who have violated core community norms and values to create appropriate consequences through dialogue and by consensus. The committee takes referrals from staff or students to 1) inspire empathic and critical self-reflections by confronting a member of the community with his or her actions and how they have affected others; 2) collectively determine how best to restore and mend the community in the wake of actions inconsistent with its values; and 3) determine how to reintegrate the member of the community who has violated the shared values back into the fabric and culture of the school.⁹³
- d. Restorative Group Conferencing – A facilitator leads those who were involved in an incident, whether they were harmed or did the harm, as well as their supporters in a face-to-face process. This process aims to address the harm, make things right and prevent reoccurrence, and is based on the ideas of restorative practices and mutual accountability.
- e. Restorative Peer Juries – The peer jury is about creating a space where students can be respected and heard and can engage in a corrective process for behaviors. Juries shall be convened for restorative purposes as an alternative to other interventions or consequences, and shall not be conducted in an adversarial manner (restorative Peer Juries are different from student courts). The Peer Juries may be held in the school that is attended by the student who caused harm or in a school within the area of the student’s school. In order to appear before a school Peer Jury, the student who caused the harm must admit to committing the misconduct, and the student and parent or guardian must agree to abide by the decisions of the school Peer Jury and complete the corrective actions it recommends.
- f. Impact Panels – A forum for students or adults who were harmed by an incident to tell other students who have caused harm about the impact of the incident on their lives and on the lives of their families, friends and neighbors. Panels typically involve three or four speakers who have experienced harm, each of whom spends about 15 minutes telling their story in a non-judgmental, non-blaming manner. These forums are used to educate other students about the impacts of harm in the school community. While some time is usually dedicated to questions and answers, the purpose of the panel is for those impacted by the harm to speak, rather than for those who have caused harm to engage in a dialogue.⁹⁴
- g. Mediated Conferencing – A process that provides those harmed by an incident an opportunity to meet the person who caused the harm, in a safe and structured setting, and engage in a mediated discussion of the offense. With the assistance of a trained mediator, those who were harmed are able to tell the person who caused the harm about the incident’s physical, emotional and other impacts; to receive answers to lingering questions about the incident; and to be directly involved in developing a plan for the harm to be repaired.⁹⁵

F. Student and Family Rights

1. Information about the use of restorative practices at schools shall be provided to all students and parents or guardians.
2. The student who has committed the behavior shall have the right to participate in restorative responses instead of more traditional forms of discipline such as suspension and expulsion.
3. The student who has committed the behavior has the right to participate actively in identifying the solutions and responses to repair the harm done.
4. The student(s) who were impacted by the behavior shall have the option, but are not required to participate in restorative practices and identifying the solution to repair the harm done.
5. Families and friends of the student who committed the behavior and the students impacted by the behavior have the right to participate in the restorative process.

G. **School districts shall require and provide restorative practices training** by experienced practitioners for all members of the school community, and districts shall further engage teachers, students and parents/guardians to help design and lead the trainings.

1. All administrators and support staff shall receive training on using restorative practices in interacting with staff, parents or guardians, students and the community and in responding to conflict.
2. All teachers, counselors, social workers and other support staff shall receive training in incorporating restorative practices into lessons and day-to-day classroom activities and as a technique for classroom management and conflict resolution.
3. All students shall receive instruction on restorative practice in the classroom through appropriate activities and shall receive academic and/or community service credit for attending classes on restorative practice and/or participating in restorative committees, groups or boards.
4. All families and members of the community shall have access to training in restorative practices through regular workshops and community building activities.