



SAINT FINIAN'S NATIONAL
SCHOOL

Restorative Practice Policy



Restorative Practice Policy

Introduction

St Finian's National School seeks to promote a good working and playing environment for all children in a safe, supportive and non-threatening environment. Through its policies, procedures, activities and structures the school aims to create an environment in which:

- People feel valued
- Self-esteem is fostered
- There is respect, tolerance and fairness
- People in difficulty are supported
- There is open and honest communication
- Effort is recognised and striving for improvement is taught
- Difference and diversity are valued
- Conflict is handled constructively and conflict resolution

Context

- Saint Finians NS is a mixed DEIS Band 1 primary school situated in Glenties Park in Finglas South, Dublin 11. The school has twelve mainstream classroom teachers, six SET teachers, one part time SET teacher (3 hours) shared with another local school, one Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinator and one Early Start Teacher, two job share Child Care Workers and eight Special Needs Assistants.
- We have 6 SEN support rooms, one Nurture Room, one Early Start room, one sensory room and sensory spaces on both corridors..
- We value and respect the uniqueness of each child in our school community. We strive to empower pupils with diverse needs to reach their fullest potential as individuals and as members of the school and wider community.



- We are a trauma informed/nurturing school/creative school. Some children are identified with disability, with additional educational needs and may also present with additional care or behavioural needs. Our goal as a school staff is to meet the needs of all children, including children with learning difficulties, disabilities or children who have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).
- Social, moral and civic values are promoted
- Initiative and creativity are stressed.

These aims are implemented in the daily transactions between management, staff, children and the wider school community.

Mission Statement

St Finian's N.S. is situated in the parish of Rivermount, in Finglas South. We are guided by the Catholic ethos of our school which we have summed up for wellbeing with one sentence from the gospel; Our mission is to provide a safe, secure, happy learning environment for the entire school community.

'That they may have life and have it in abundance'. John 10.

Philosophy

The St. Finian's school motto is 'mol an oige agus tìochfaidh sí'. Our school is a trauma informed/nurturing/creative school and commits to using its resources to ensure and promote the care and wellbeing of our children. We strive to develop and maintain ...

- Courteous relationships within the school
- A well-chosen curriculum, appropriate for our context
- Understanding of our particular context
- After school activities



- Thoughtfully crafted systems, structures and policies
- Good Communications
- Interest and concern for the children
- Gratitude, for our parents, our children, our talented staff and the support of the wider community (The Primary Care Teams, Better Finglas, Barnardos, The Lions Club, St Joseph the Helper, The Peter McVerry Trust)

The eight points above are central to how our school operates. They are also central to ensuring the wellbeing of the whole school community. We measure the wellbeing of our pupils using the following indicators; being physically active, being responsible, being connected, being resilient, being respected and being aware.

The Restorative Practice Model

We are teaching children to learn and use restorative practice techniques in our school. Restorative practice provides a focus on developing positive relationships between all members of the school community. It gives opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour and learning. Restorative practice is a process whereby children are given the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and how they and others have been affected by it so as to help heal broken relationships and prevent reoccurrence. Restorative practices questions will be practiced through circle time. Restorative practice corners will be set up in each classroom. A calm corner with a range of sensory equipment will be set up in each classroom. Children will be provided with a safe space they can go when they are feeling overwhelmed.

Aims of Restorative Practices in the context of code of behaviour



Our overarching aim is to create a happy, secure environment for our pupils in which there is a sense of good order and a reasonable approach to discipline. In this way, a large group can be organised so that the school can operate smoothly for the benefit of all.

Our goal with our code of good behaviour is to teach explicitly and to demonstrate to children exactly what we expect from them. We want our children to be enabled to show respect in and by their words and actions to all.

Our goal with restorative practice/conflict resolution is to provide a template for all staff to deal with situations as they arise and to provide a template for the children so that the process is fair, clear and understandable to them.

Finally we aim to enable children to have the tools to navigate conflict and to resolve conflict should the need arise.

Teaching the Behaviour we want to see

All pupils are expected to behave in a reasonable manner both to themselves and to others, showing consideration, courtesy and respect for other pupils and adults. We must teach the children how we want them to act and be role models in our own actions.

In September all teachers, SNA's and staff explicitly teach the positive behaviour we want to see. Time is taken to teach children emotional regulation strategies. We are a nurturing/trauma informed school. All teachers and SNAs are trained in 'Brain Calm'. All Special Educational Needs Teachers and all SNAs and all the Early Start Team are trained in Nurture. Children are taught how to name different emotions, to describe what these emotions look like and to discuss appropriate ways of acting when we experience different emotions. Children will develop skills needed to manage their emotions. Each class participates in a daily mindful moment with daily breathing techniques to promote a feeling of calm and self efficacy and affirmations to promote positive self talk. We make every



effort to 'catch the children' being good. The staff praise and encourage kindness, calmness, restorative questioning and answering, circle time and wellbeing.

Restorative Practice

Our school's approach to restorative practice sits within our particular context.

An important part of our school approach to behaviour is the concept of 'Restorative Practices'. Our Behaviour Policy is focused on the positive aspects of behaviour. We promote the notion of a school community where everything we do is based on mutual respect. *'We sail our ship together'*.

Pupils are expected firstly to respect themselves and then to treat each other and staff members with respect. Teachers and staff members are expected to treat children with respect. We take the view that most pupils (other than some pupils with additional needs) choose their behaviour to a great degree; there is always an alternative. If they treat others poorly, they may be acting out their own anger and frustrations, but they can also learn to choose differently and more positively. We ask children to treat others as they want to be treated themselves.

The Rules of Anger are:

It's ok to be angry.

When I become angry:

- I don't hurt others
- I don't hurt myself
- I don't hurt (damage) property
- I talk about how I feel.



Repairing/Mending Relationships – Rationale:

If I become angry and hurt someone with my words or actions, I must try to make things right. I will do this by talking with the person I hurt, and I must be prepared to offer an apology, and I must be prepared to guarantee that I will not hurt that person again. I must try to realise myself what it feels like to be hurt with words or with actions and I must try to recognise the damage that my poor behaviour can do to others. In this way, I help myself to mend and I help my victim to mend.

What does 'Restorative Practice' involve for our school?

Restorative Practices is a process to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense and to collectively identify and address harms, needs and obligations, in order to heal and put things as right as possible .

Resource : www.transformingconflict.org

Restorative Practice:

- Creates an ethos of respect, inclusion, accountability and taking responsibility
- Creates a commitment to relationships, impartiality, being non-judgemental
- Encourages collaboration, empowerment and emotional articulacy

Key Skills of Restorative Practice are:

- Active listening
- Facilitating dialogue and problem-solving
- Listening to and expressing emotion
- Supporting others in taking ownership of problems

An important element in Restorative Practice is Fair Process:

Expectations - everyone knows what is expected of them

Engagement - involves individuals in decisions/listens to views

Explanation - clarify how decisions are reached



'Individuals are most likely to trust and co-operate freely with systems – whether they themselves win or lose by those systems – when fair process is observed'.

Kim & Mauborgne , Harvard Business Review, July - August 1997

People who have been harmed need:

- Someone to listen to my story
- Time to calm down
- A chance to ask – why me? What did I do to deserve that?
- The person concerned to understand and acknowledge the impact their behaviour has had on me
- A sincere spontaneous apology
- Things put right, if possible
- Reassurance it won't happen again

Offenders are asked the following questions:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?
- What do you need to do to make things right?

School Group Conferences can be held to deal with issues:

- Offenders tell what they did
- Everyone talks about what impact this has had on them
- The group reaches a shared understanding of the harm that has been done
- The group negotiates an agreement about how to repair the damage and minimize further harm



Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at a Board of Management meeting on October 2022 and will be reviewed in two years.

Signed: _____

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Appendix 1

Restorative Questions to respond to Challenging Behaviour

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking about at the time?
3. What have your thoughts been since?
4. Who has been affected by what you did?
5. In what way have they been affected?
6. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

To help those harmed by other actions

1. What did you think when you realised what had happened?
2. What have your thoughts been since?
3. How has this affected others?
4. What has been the hardest thing for you?
5. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?