

Wootton Academy Trust



Restorative Justice Policy

- a) This policy applies to all schools managed by Wootton Academy Trust
- b) This policy was adopted by Wootton Academy Trust in January 2015
- c) This policy was reviewed by Wootton Academy Trust in January 2015

This policy, which is an appendix of the Rewards and Behaviour Policy, deals with the policy and practice which informs Wootton Academy Trust's use of exclusion

Aims

The Restorative Justice approach at Wootton supports the Wootton Academy Trust Behaviour Policy and offers an alternative approach to the traditional responses to challenging behaviours. Restorative Justice provides an alternative to the belief that punishment will change behaviour and achieve compliance. It is an educative approach, helping those involved to learn how to change. The aim of Restorative Justice is to enable all involved to accept and agree responsibility, reparation, reintegration, restoration, and behavioural change and is of paramount importance to how The Partnership Centre works going forward.

Restorative Justice aims to assist the development and repair of relationships between students and adults. It takes everyone involved from the past (what happened) to the future (repairing harm) and requires people to reflect on who has been affected. It aims to help the "wrongdoer" develop some empathy for those affected.

Principles:

- To be respectful of the dignity of all concerned.
- To focus on actively seeking ways of repairing harm in relationships.
- To help create dialogue and communication.
- To be fair, open, and honest; treating all participants with respect.
- To provide a safe environment that will allow all participants to engage, learn and gain a shared understanding.

The Lead Professional's Role

At Wootton we aim to offer a structured intervention by trained, neutral facilitators to help participants to understand each other, find resolutions to issues causing conflict and repair harm. The process always takes place in a safe environment that allows all taking part to engage with the process. Participants are given the opportunity to openly state their views, listen to others and acknowledge their views.

The Restorative process is based around questions such as:

- What happened?
- What were you feeling / thinking at the time?
- What do you think / feel about it now?
- Who has been affected by what has happened?
- In what way?
- What impact has this incident had on you and on others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

The approach will require all staff to be aware of the principles of Restorative Justice, and how to apply them when resolving situations within and outside their classrooms. In addition the Lead Professional for Behaviour, the Behaviour Managers and the other Partnership staff have been trained to use this model to resolve more difficult problems, in a formal and structured manner with the aim of creating restoration and reparation between those involved.

The Restorative Approach model can be applied in a number of ways, working with individuals, small groups and whole tutor groups. It can take the form of informal work immediately relating to an incident to more intensive meetings planned over a number of sessions. Where appropriate, parents may be involved in Restorative Justice resolutions.

Unsuccessful meetings or refusal to take part

The Restorative Justice process relies on all parties agreeing to take part in sessions, to commit to the process and be willing to accept the outcomes. Unless all have agreed to take part the process cannot begin. Once the process has started all parties need to remain committed to the process. If during a session any of those taking part are unable or unwilling to proceed the session will close and an alternative resolution will be imposed. If those involved fail to

comply with the expectations of the agreement alternative solutions may be applied in accordance with the school's consequences and sanctions policy.

Informal Sessions

An informal Restorative Justice meeting might not include formal preparation but will ordinarily include a follow up. It may be needful for a contract to be agreed at the outset. An individual member of staff may take the initiative and lead the process. It may be an impromptu meeting involving an informal chat based around restorative questions. Outcomes may be recorded and kept on file where appropriate.

Formal Sessions

A formal Restorative Justice meeting will ordinarily include a referral, preparation, and contract/PSP and debrief. There will normally be a follow-up meeting after an appropriate period of time. Outcomes will be recorded and kept on file. All staff can make a referral to the Lead professional for Behaviour if they feel that a formal Restorative Justice meeting needs to take place. The Partnership Centre team will decide whether the Restorative Justice approach is appropriate, the parameters of the process and who will be involved. The Lead Professional for Behaviour will take responsibility for monitoring the process and the recording of outcomes. There is a referral form and a Feedback form to be filled in by all the participants in Restorative Justice sessions.

The Agreement

The agreement may include the use of consequences, such as detentions and periods working in The Partnership Centre. In other circumstances it will be about restoration, resolution, acceptance of other people's views and feelings, and apology.

It is important to ensure that the person chairing a Restorative Justice meeting has a full understanding of the situation. At the start of the meeting brief explanations of the difficulties to date and who is involved should be available.