



## **Restorative Justice Policy**

## School Mission Statement

***To educate young people to meet the challenges of life courageously, use their talents to the full and live the values of Christ's Gospel.***

### **Restorative Justice Philosophy Statement**

Thornton College is a school community, which endeavours to live true to the values in our Mission Statement and accepting of the wide ranging differences, which exist among its members. In order to make our community work we believe that it is essential to recognise the intrinsic worth of every member of that community as a unique individual with a unique contribution to make, but more importantly, and in keeping with our ethos, to recognise that each member is of equal value to God (imago dei).

We also recognise that, in each community, there will, from time to time, be conflict, as differences of opinion emerge and individuals speak and act in ways which cause hurt to others, whether intentional or not. The mark of a strong community is not the absence of such conflict but rather, the way in which the community recognises and deals with it so that relationships which are broken can have the potential of being restored, that those who feel victimised are heard and that we are all called upon to take responsibility for our part building a community of respect and responsibility, where forgiveness is encouraged and where honesty is required. To this end, we believe in the concept of Restorative Justice in that what has been said and done cannot be unsaid and undone but needs to be dealt with constructively, framed correctly and lessons learned.

‘Peace-making does not mean passivity. It is the act of interrupting injustice without mirroring injustice, the act of destroying evil without destroying the evildoer, the act of finding a third way that is neither fight nor flight but the careful, arduous pursuit of reconciliation and justice.’

### **What is Restorative Justice?**

Restorative Justice enables those who have been harmed to convey the impact of the harm to those responsible, and for those responsible to acknowledge this impact and take steps to put it right. Restorative approaches refer to a range of methods and strategies which can be used both to prevent relationship-damaging incidents from happening and to resolve them if they do happen.

Effective Restorative Practices foster awareness of how others have been affected by inappropriate behaviour. This is done by actively engaging all participants in a process which separates the deed from the doer and rejects the act not the actor, allowing individuals to make amends for the harm caused. Restorative Practices acknowledge the intrinsic worth of each person and their potential contribution to the school community.

We believe that our Restorative Practices framework will:

- Improve behaviour and attitudes;
- Provide explicit tools within a defined framework to challenge unacceptable behaviour, resolve conflict and repair harm;
- Improve relationships; establish rights, accountabilities and responsibilities to the community.
- Provide a safe, philosophical basis for staff, pupils and parents to share ideas and discuss issues openly and honestly.

Our policy is based on the belief that the victim has a voice and that voice should be heard.

When someone has been harmed they need:

- Someone to say sorry.
- Someone to listen.
- To be allowed to be upset or angry.
- To reach a position where they feel better.
- For the other person to understand the cause of the upset or hurt.
- To be respected.
- To know it will not happen again.
- To draw a line underneath it and have a fresh start.

By putting the victim at the centre of the process, the wrongdoer is held accountable to the person they have harmed and is also given the choice to put things right and to make amends.

A Restorative Conversation is not a soft option; it requires the wrongdoer to accept responsibility for their actions and find a way to put things right, including reassuring the victim that it will not happen again. If the wrongdoer is not prepared to do this, or the offence is repeated, then the Behaviour Ladder, The School Code of Conduct and other relevant policies come into effect. There are a series of graduated sanctions which will be implemented.

The concept of being RESTORATIVE is central to what it means to be human and is a vital part of the education of children. It is about:

- Showing respect – everyone is important
- Taking responsibility – owning up.
- Reparation – putting things right.
- Re-integration – starting again.

We intend that this approach will help our students develop good relationships, resourcefulness, resilience, reflective thinking, appropriate risk-taking and the ability to take responsibility.

### **Promoting Restorative Approaches**

Our Code of Conduct states that we want everyone at Thornton College to be happy and to be able to learn and to be safe. All pupils are encouraged to be aware not only of their own needs but also those of others. We aim to develop values of respect, tolerance, self-control, resilience and a sense of responsibility. However, unfortunately we cannot get it right all the time and conflict is a part of life – it is how we deal with it that makes the difference. The restorative approach helps us to learn from conflict by aiming to repair and balance.

At Thornton College, we have high expectations of our pupils. We encourage all children to try their best to achieve their goals. They should understand that it is the responsibility of staff and pupils to uphold and maintain our school rules. For occasions when this is proving not to be the case, we use restorative approaches to help pupils understand the impact of their actions and how to put it right. We believe that by using this Restorative Approach we are giving pupils the skills to independently make better and more informed choices in the future.

Restorative approaches encourage pupils to think about how their behaviour affects others, both pupils and staff. It helps children to develop respect, responsibility and truth telling.

If a pupil in our school has been negatively affected by someone's behaviour, we will try our very best to make sure they feel that it has been put right for them and that it will not happen again.

If a child has done something wrong, they will be asked to put things right and change their behaviour so it does not happen again.

### **The Process**

When our pupils find themselves in conflict or upset we will ask them:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking when it happened?
- What needs to happen to put this right?
- What would you do differently next time?
- 

We might also say to our pupils:

- What would you think if this happened to you?
- How can you put this right?
- What could you do differently next time?
- What other choice could you have made?
- How could you make sure this does not happen again?

Most situations can be dealt with by working through these questions with the intention of a fair outcome for everyone. If somebody is upset, the aim is that they feel better. If someone has done something wrong, the aim is that they take responsibility for their actions and help to fix the situation

### **Praise and Rewards**

At Thornton we believe that the key to promoting positive behaviour is through praise and rewards. Some of the ways we do this are:

- Positive comments every day and in Reports
- Stickers
- Star charts for staying on 'Green'
- Commendations, House Points and Certificates
- Mention in assemblies or the Head's Letter
- Providing opportunities for students to recognise and praise each other through peer assessment and listening and responding in lessons and in 'circle time'.

Accentuating the positive often helps to prevent the multiplication of the negative. We aim to be a community in which the positive is upheld and applauded, so that our students learn self-discipline with regard to their own words and actions and learn to make good choices, as well as accept responsibility for the choices they do make and their effects on others.

Discipline is not control of children – many children are not easily controlled. When children's lives and behaviour are too regulated by others, they feel no need to control themselves, since others do it for them. An important long-term goal is to facilitate the development self-discipline. We believe that discipline is about leading by example, guiding and encouraging children within a framework of rights and responsibilities to consistently think about what they do and make good choices. These should work together to create a caring community atmosphere.

To that end, we adopt a resolution focus to issues which arise in school on a day-to-day basis. We promote the concept of a fresh start: although persistent or serious misbehaviour needs recording,

every child must feel that every day is a fresh start. We aim to recognise conflict, face it, deal with it fairly and move on positively with the aim of restoring peace within the community.

Our guiding principles are;

**RESPONSIBILITY:** taking responsibility for your own actions

**REPAIR:** developing the skills within our school community so that its individual members have the necessary skills to identify solutions that repair harm and ensure behaviours are not repeated

**RE-INTEGRATION:** working through a supportive process that aims to solve the problem and allows young people to start again.