

St Margaret's Catholic Primary School Aberdare



Relationships Policy

**We are learning to live like Jesus in everything
we do.**

**Spring Term 2025
Review date Spring Term 2027**

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Relationship Policy

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to outline how we approach relationships within our school community. This involves a whole school approach to building, maintaining and (when needed) the repairing of relationships with all we work with – children and adults, pupils, staff, governors, families, local community, and all the agencies we work with. We make every effort to achieve this using a consistent restorative approach.

Explaining the Restorative Approaches Framework

We are proactive in building and maintaining relationships in order to create a sense of community. When relationships are positive, we are less inclined to harm each other, thus reducing the amount of conflict in our school community. We constantly reflect on what we need from each other in order for us to be our best. We will always endeavour to actively work with each other to resolve problems and conflicts, not trying to rescue, impose or ignore issues. We will use consistent restorative approaches to make this happen, for preventing harm, for early intervention, and to high level response for more serious harms. Please see the Appendix below for the levelled approach and our best practice framework.

Restorative Principles and Best Practice

When relationships have been damaged it is important that the appropriate and levelled restorative steps are taken, to allow those involved to repair harm, build empathy, problem solve, and move forwards at the earliest opportunity. It is helpful for all at St Margaret's RC Primary to remember at all times the core restorative principles outlined by the Restorative Justice Council & Wales Restorative Approaches Partnership. (See below). These principles are key to St Margaret's consistent model for addressing harm. They align to the Donaldson report, the overarching aims of Welsh Government Curriculum Reform, and the United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child.

Building and Maintaining Relationships

All staff have been trained in, and are expected to use, Restorative Approaches. This involves building relationships with the children, colleagues, parents and carers, and the wider school community. One way that we do this is through the use of circles for weekly check ins and using problem solving issues as they arise. A range of circle practices are threaded throughout teaching and learning to build relationships, and increase collaboration and reflection.

We also expect staff to use the restorative enquiry and I message to encourage the person we are working with to be reflective, honest, and to find a way forward with their issue. Our classroom agreements are developed each year with each new year

group, to build our classrooms as communities who care about each other's needs and their own needs, and behave with respect for each other.

Our peer mediators who are pupils from year 5 upwards are also key members of the restorative team. They help address issues at the earliest and lowest level possible using the same approach on request from children. When we have meetings with family members, carers and other agencies, we will adopt a restorative mindset and approach as our first choice wherever possible.

Teaching and Learning

We aim to foster a love of lifelong learning in our pupils, and so all staff, model good relationships and practice what we preach. We collaborate between ourselves and with the pupil and their learning journey, and engage with their families and carers wherever possible to build relationships and engagement in learning. Staff have had several INSET days and supervision to develop our skills in using different circles to build and maintain relationships. We use circles in teaching and learning, for example, when starting a new topic; in plenary sessions; to encourage peer led learning and listening and speaking skills cross curriculum; and to make and share decisions in school council meetings.

All behavioural incidents and conflicts are opportunities for social and emotional learning at any time, and with children and staff, including lunchtime supervisors and support staff and families/ carers. A restorative response enables children and all adults working with them to work together consistently to build up our learning community.

Classroom Agreement, Circles in Classrooms and Circles in Groups.

At the start of the Academic Year

- A Classroom Needs exercise is completed with each new class, and whole-school needs are identified from these. (RA lead to ensure this is completed by the end of the second week of the Autumn Term). Classroom Needs are to be revisited at the start of the Spring Term and are actively referred to and revised by all staff and pupils as needed.

On a Weekly Basis

- Use of circle time during Monday registration. Teachers have a role to play in engaging pupils and encouraging them to take the lead at times.
- Monday morning circles are in place to check in after the weekend and to gauge children's moods.

Dealing with Incidents, using a Restorative Approach

- All staff are expected to support the principle of using a Restorative Approach by supporting and challenging each other and pupils in adopting this as the preferred approach.
- When dealing with minor incidents staff should use 'I messages' and the Restorative Enquiry Questions to deal with the situation presented. These core questions are the same for peer mediators and for more formal meetings, and are shared with all pupils and adults. They are:-
 1. What happened?
 2. What were you thinking? How were you feeling?
 3. Who has been affected and how?
 4. What do you need to feel better? What are your strengths?
 5. What do you want to happen now in order to move forward?
- Restorative Practices should not be viewed in isolation or as tools that are used only when harm is done, but should instead be modelled and linked to all positive interactions that occur throughout the school day.
- Engagement with families/ carers and partner agencies will also be delivered using the same consistent approach wherever possible.

Repairing Relationships

When conflict occurs, we expect those involved to find solutions to move forward and repair the relationship where possible. By having a common restorative approach to resolving conflict, we can achieve this in a fair and inclusive way with all affected. We problem solve and plan so that the harm does not happen again.

- Any parties involved should be given the opportunity to take part in a Restorative Meeting following adequate preparation, using the restorative enquiry and giving the person time to think about the questions they will be asked and how they can repair the harm and move forward.
- At the end of the meeting when all involved have agreed a way forward an Outcome Agreement must be filled in to record what has been agreed and then signed by all parties. These records will be kept securely in the Headteacher's office and tracked by the restorative facilitator to ensure the agreed outcomes are carried out over time.
- All must agree to take part in the meeting and it should be held as soon as possible to prevent further harm and escalation. Ideally, a restorative meeting will take place the same day as the issue arises, unless for health, safety and wellbeing issues more preparation time is needed to enable more engagement and reflection, and/ or more people need to attend e.g. parent/ carer or social worker.

Appendix

Resources for Best Practice and Guidance

The Restorative Justice Council is the best practice organisation we look to for information and resources and ideas. Their website is www.restorativejustice.org.

Wales Restorative Approaches Partnership is our training and local delivery partner and chosen by Happy Town Borough Council for schools development. They hold the national Restorative Services Quality Mark and Training Practice Quality Mark and advise us on practise, materials and standards. Their website is www.restorativewales.org.uk

The six Principles of restorative practice from the Restorative Justice Council are:

1. Restoration
2. Voluntarism
3. Impartiality
4. Safety
5. Accessibility
6. Empowerment

Wales Restorative Approaches Partnership (and other countries e.g. Canada) also include these additional principles/ values (and especially important in education):

- Being non-judgemental
- Being empathic
- Inclusion

Restorative Approaches Framework at Restore School

	<u>What</u>	<u>Who</u>	<u>When</u>	<u>Where</u>
Building and Maintaining Relationships	Classroom Agreement	All Classes Teaching Support Staff	Start of Year	Classrooms
	Circles in Classrooms	Pupils	During lessons across the curriculum	
	Circles in groups for Support and Challenge 'Talkabout' sessions for identified KS2 pupils	Ed Psych. EWO Behaviour support Teaching Support staff	As required Friday mornings	Classrooms
	'I' Messages (Stage 1)	Teaching Support Staff Lunch Supervisors	During lessons, break and lunch times, etc for low-level disruption	Classrooms, hall, yard, corridors, Heart Space
	Restorative Conversation – "informal chat"(Stage 2)	Teaching Support Staff Lunch Supervisors Peer Mediators	During lessons, break and lunch times, etc for low-level incidents, or if an I message has not been effective	Classrooms, hall, yard, corridors, Heart Space
	Restorative Conversation – Formal Meeting (and Problem-solving circle if required) (Stage 3)	Teaching staff Support staff	For continued low-level incidents when an "informal chat" has not been effective	Quiet area, e.g. empty classroom, Heart Space
	Formal Conference (Stage 4)	Led by a fully trained staff member (not involved in the incident) Parents and Senior Staff to be informed	Serious incidents	Private room, e.g. ELSA room, empty classroom
	Restorative Space/Exclusion (Stage 5)	ELSA Headteacher/Deputy	Extreme circumstances	ELSA room Headteacher's office

Levelled response to issues

The restorative approach uses the lowest level and simplest response at the earliest opportunity by all affected by the issue/s

STAGE 1 - 'I' messages

- The pupil is made aware of the issue by the member of staff who uses restorative language to speak to them, for example,
 - 'When I heard you.....I felt
 - When I see youI feel disappointed that....
 - This is affecting me (and maybe others) in this way.....
 - Would you please.....(invitation for the specific behaviour requested)
- There does not need to be a formal record

STAGE 2 – Restorative Conversation

- Informal chat using the Restorative Questions (this does not always require preparation time or an outcome agreement).
- Could take place in the classroom or corridor, dining hall or playground at any time.
- Individual member of staff takes initiative and leads process.
- Low level pupil issues can be referred to the peer mediators for a restorative one to one meeting, or conference between pupils. The same practice and recording and supervision standards apply for pupil led meetings as with adults, with clear safeguarding processes and staff oversight.
- Record on 'Stage 2 recording log'. Brief log of what's happened, date and who held meeting with child.

STAGE 3 – Formal Meeting

- If poor behaviour continues, a pupil and teacher meet for a more formal conversation about the incident.
- Pupil is given a copy of the Restorative Questions and allowed time to prepare if needed. There may be another member of staff present to facilitate the meeting. A problem solving circle could be required.
- An outcome agreement needs to be produced in the meeting and signed by both parties.
- Only staff members who have had the four day training can facilitate these meetings.
- Record on sheet provided below.

STAGE 4 – Formal Conference

- A formal meeting may be required to deal with more serious incidents, and must be facilitated by a member of staff that is not involved. Senior staff and/or parents/carers should be informed.
- The restorative questions are asked to each party.
- There must be an outcome agreement.

Restorative Conversations Log

- Only staff members who have had the four day training can facilitate these meetings.
- Record on sheet provided below

STAGE 5 – Restorative Space/Exclusion

- In extreme circumstances, a pupil may be sent to the Headteacher's office
- There must be a restorative conversation or meeting, and a re-integration meeting with the member of staff involved, and a written and signed Outcome Agreement produced that is shared with all affected for tracking outcomes delivery and change.
- The re-integration meeting must be carried out by a member of staff who has had the full RAIS training
- The Outcome Agreement should be revisited in a week's time to monitor progress.
- Record using template below.

Restorative Approaches across key school strategies



Restorative Approaches and the Rights of the Child

A restorative approach helps meet the needs, rights and responsibilities of children and those working with them. The United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) ¹ reminds us that children have the right to be: **Protected; Equal; Educated; Heard; Healthy and Safe**. Working restoratively especially addresses the key rights from the following articles in the Charter :-

Article 3 Everyone who works with children should always do what is best for each child

Article 12 Your right to say what you think should happen and be listened to

Article 13 Your right to have information.

Article 15: Your right to meet with friends and join groups and clubs

Article 19 You should not be harmed and should be looked after and kept safe.

Article 23 Your right to special care and support if you have a disability so that you can lead a full and independent life.

Article 25 Children who are not living with their families should be checked on regularly to make sure they are okay.

Article 28 Your right to learn and go to school.

Article 29 Your right to become the best that you can be.

Article 31 Your right to relax and play

Article 33 You should be protected from dangerous drugs.

Article 34 The government should protect children from sexual abuse.

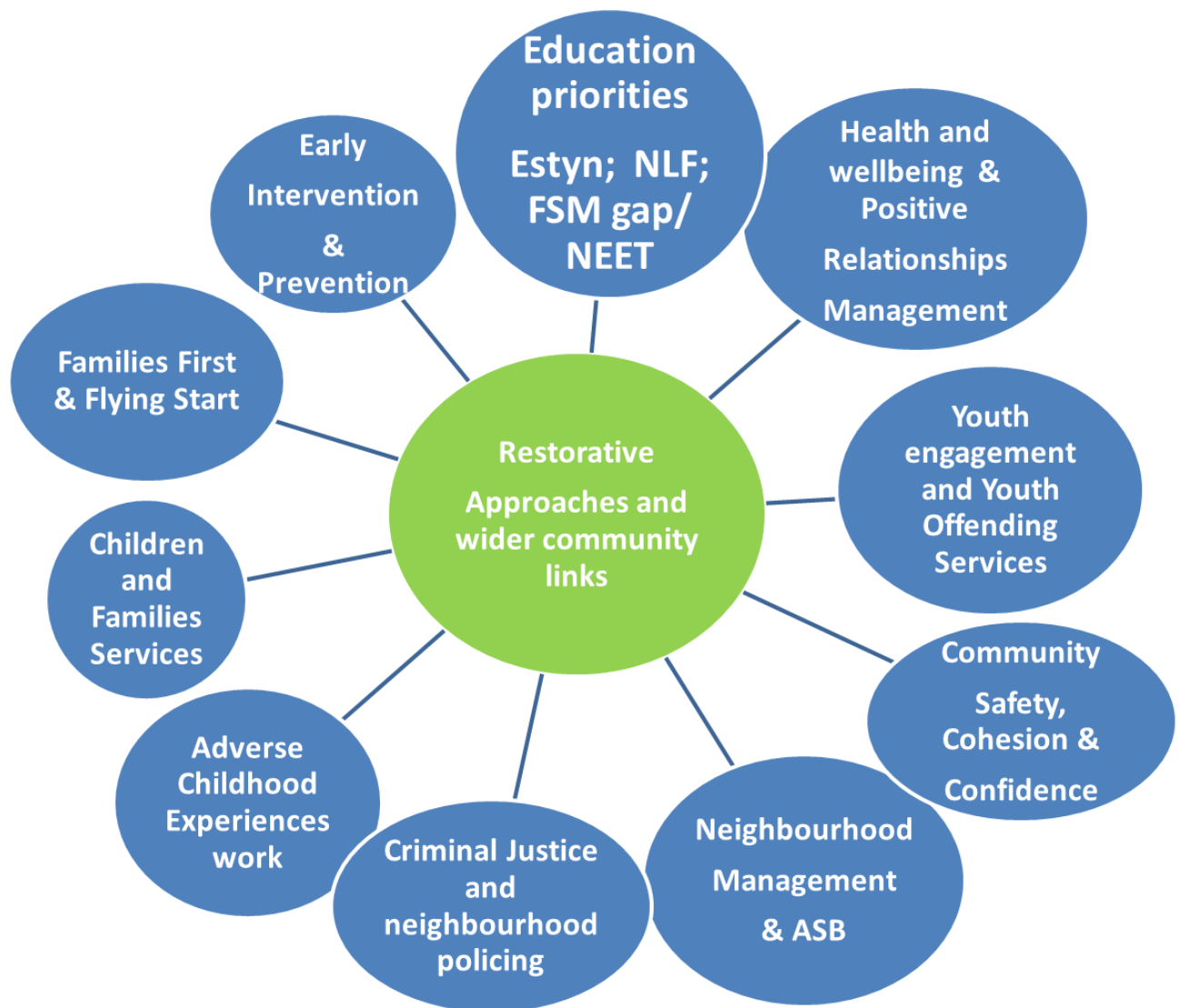
Article 36 You should be protected from doing things that could harm you.

Article 37 Your right to be treated fairly if you break the law

Article 39 Children should get special help if they have been abused.

¹ Children's rights are all the things that children and young people need to make sure that they are safe, have the things they need to survive and develop, and have a say in decisions that affect their lives. The **United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** gathered children's human rights into articles. Welsh Government decided to take an extra step and make the UNCRC law in Wales with the **Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011**. The Measure has changed the way we work, and we have to consider children's rights in everything we do. See www.childrensrights.wales

Restorative approaches and links to wider community and strategic programmes





Stage 3 - Formal Conversation Log

Name _____ Date _____

Preparation - Give pupil restorative questions to prepare for conversation

1. What happened?

2. What were you thinking? How were you feeling?

3. Who has been affected and how?

4. What do you need to feel better? What are your strengths?

5. What do you want to happen now in order to move forward?

Outcome agreement:

Signed: _____



Stage 4 - Formal Conversation Log

Name _____ Date _____

Preparation - Give pupil restorative questions to prepare for conversation

1. What happened?

2. What were you thinking? How were you feeling?

3. Who has been affected and how?

4. What do you need to feel better? What are your strengths?

5. What do you want to happen now in order to move forward?

Outcome agreement:

Signed: _____



Stage 5
Restorative Space/Exclusion

Attendees:

Conversation Minutes:

Outcome Agreement: