

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE








Pocketbook

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What is restorative practice?



Restorative practice (RP) is based on the philosophy and principles of restorative justice (RJ). Restorative practice involves:

- Viewing crime/wrongdoing through a 'relational' lens – understanding **that harm has been done** to people and relationships
- Understanding that when such harm is done, it creates **obligations and liabilities**
- Focusing on **repairing** the harm and **making things right**



How does it work?



This means that when things go wrong you:

- Involve those responsible for and those affected by the behaviour in solving the problem
- Provide high levels of support for all parties, whether perpetrators or those affected
- Address the needs of all those involved in harmful incidents
- Provide strong messages and reminders about what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable

Your first reaction might be that no one has this sort of time to give! Be reassured that the investment of your time will reap dividends, including saving time in the long run. UK schools that have embarked on this journey report strong improvements in behaviour, ethos and academic outcomes.

RP is not a plug-in programme. It is a philosophy and a way of living and breathing school values. It requires whole school buy-in, high quality professional development and careful implementation.

Putting RP into practice – Sam and Kyle



Let's look at an incident that involves bullying behaviour and see how RP can guide your response:

It's break time, and you are just about to head to the staffroom for a cup of coffee when you witness an incident between two pupils. As students leave your classroom, Sam trips Kyle who stumbles to the floor. Kyle gets up and is then pushed against the display wall by Sam.

How should you deal with this incident?
What responses are available to you?



What happens next?

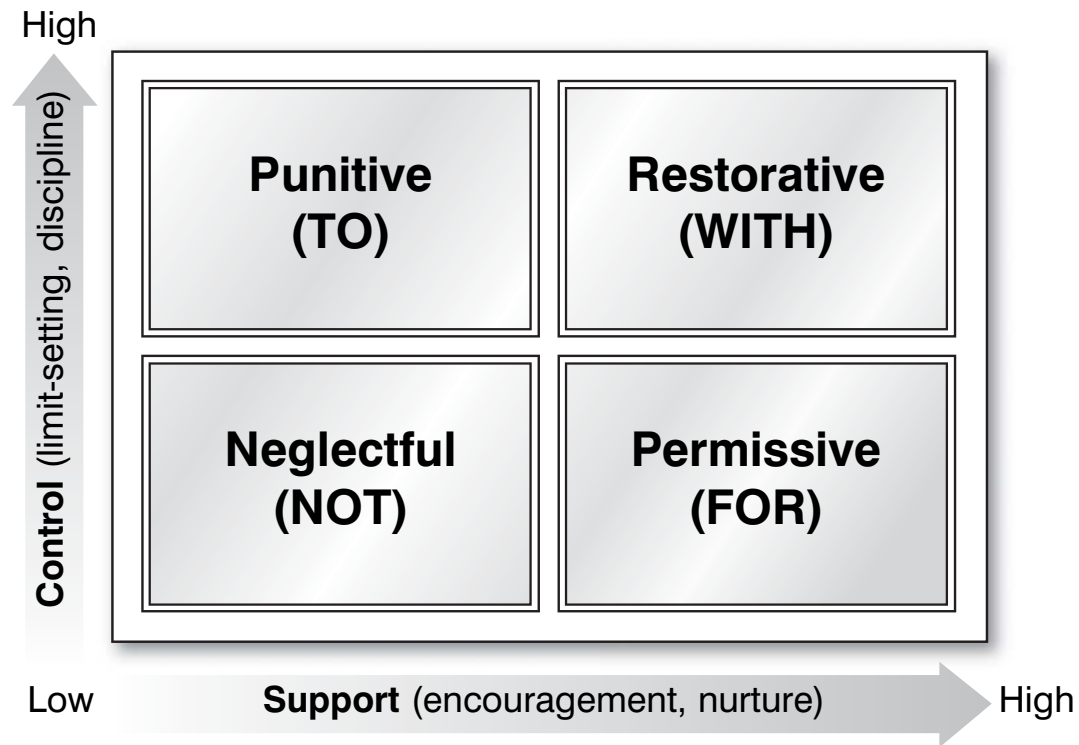


1. You could turn a blind eye and ignore or pretend you didn't see the incident because you're in a hurry to get to that cup of coffee.
2. You could see it as a bit of harmless 'boys will be boys' fun that, at best, would require a mild admonishment and save Sam from certain punishment if referred to the Deputy Head's office.
3. You could come down hard on Sam and dish out some strong medicine.
4. You could bring together the two boys involved and solve the problem in a way that is both respectful and constructive.

As teachers, how we manage an incident like this is important. We need to choose an approach that will deliver **useful** outcomes. We need to be aware of the **benefits and risks** for the students – and for us – in our choice of response. Above all, we need to be clear about our responsibilities and roles in shaping the social skills, character and emotional competence of the young people in our care.

We can explore the Sam and Kyle incident in more depth by comparing the four possible responses within the helpful framework of a 'Social Discipline Window'.

A Social Discipline Window



Social Discipline Window (Watchel, 1999) Used with permission

Using the Social Discipline Window



In the Social Discipline Window opposite, the horizontal axis represents the emphasis placed by the teacher or school on support for students – how you encourage and nurture them as learners and meet their individual needs as members of a school community.

The vertical axis is about structure and limits. It represents the emphasis placed by the teacher or school on the rules, boundaries and standards that are in place to provide the best possible environment for teaching and learning – how you manage the classroom learning environment, how people treat each other in that environment, and what the constraints and limits are for everybody's behaviour.

The way you respond to an incident might be seen as **neglectful, permissive, punitive or restorative**.

How do the four possible responses to the 'Sam tripping Kyle' story fit within this framework?

About the authors

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is the Managing Director of Margaret Thorsborne and Associates, a consultancy committed to increasing job satisfaction and productivity by improving workplace and community relationships. Margaret pioneered the use of the formal conference process in schools in Queensland in the mid 90's and has trained conference facilitators in education, police and justice sectors across Australia, NZ, Britain, USA and Canada. She is widely regarded as an international expert in the implementation of restorative practices across whole school communities.

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