



Transforming Conflict

7 Recommendations for Implementation of Restorative Practices in Schools

- **Recommendation 1**

Any school seeking to implement a restorative approach should engage local authority endorsement and support. Going it alone is possible, but much harder. Ideally this would be project managed and an authority-wide steering group would form part of this support.

- **Recommendation 2**

Ensure that senior staff, and especially the Headteacher, are 'on board'. This means modelling a leadership style that is congruent with restorative principles, using restorative approaches to deal with conflicts with adults (staff, parents, governors, officers of the local authority, etc) as well as young people. It also means ensuring that school policies reflect restorative values and practice.

- **Recommendation 3**

Establish an 'in-house' steering group, representing all sections of the school community including students. This recommendation seeks to ensure that the project is addressing as many needs as possible and that no single person feels isolated and overwhelmed with the responsibilities of effecting whole-school change on their own.

- **Recommendation 4**

Ensure that the restorative initiative is in the school development plan and is linked to other related initiatives (such as developing emotional literacy), as much of the curriculum as is practicable, as well as developing behaviour and attendance policies that are in line with restorative values and practices. We encourage the establishment and development of a relationship management policy, rather than a behaviour management policy as the latter can often focus largely or exclusively on the behaviour of young people.

- **Recommendation 5**

Make links with other schools and agencies that are also developing a restorative approach. These clusters or partnerships across sectors make it possible to share training and develop networking. Partnership also makes possible the sharing of restorative facilitators who can offer support in cases where an in-house facilitator might be inappropriate.

- **Recommendation 6**

Build in on-going evaluation and monitoring from the outset of the project. Invite the school community to identify what issues are important to them and then develop evaluation tools that will measure these. The whole school community can take ownership of evaluation and acquire skills and a sense of progress along the way.

- **Recommendation 7**

Anticipate challenges, welcome scepticism and accept that whole school (i.e. culture) change can take several years – between 3-5 years is likely.

These recommendations are based on Belinda Hopkins doctoral thesis - 'Implementing a restorative approach to behaviour and relationship management in schools - the narrated experiences of educationalists' (2006) as well as an ever increasing amount of practical advice being given by us to schools.

For more information, visit the website at www.transformingconflict.org or ring 0118 9331520.