



Oakhill Drive Public School

Student Relationship and Engagement Policy - 2019

At Oakhill Drive Public School, we believe:

- Students are at the centre of all decisions
- Learning goes beyond the curriculum
- Relationships are central

Oakhill Drive Public School adopts a relational approach to addressing mistakes and resolving conflict. When mistakes occur, relationships are impacted upon and reparation is required.

The school follows a non-adversarial set of procedures that aim to stop the behaviour and rebuild relationships. As the policy name suggests, our approach is to draw attention to the child not being able, at this moment, to fully “engage”. We seek to work with parents in a true partnership collaborative way, asking them to assist the school to produce more engagement and to understand why a child is unable to fully engage at present.

Suggestions are sought from parents of ways we could try to help students work with us and others. By targeting attention on “engagement” rather than “behaviour” the process is more productive, less confronting and stressful for all involved.

By using restorative practices, students are guided to identify the specific effect that their behaviour has had on their environment and their relationships. Addressing that effect becomes the primary focus of the disciplinary action. Students recognise the impact of their actions on others and find ways to repair the relationship, returning harmony to their environment. In doing so, this is an educative process, whereby students are learning a process to rebuild, when they experience adversity. The relational approach involves all stakeholders in assisting the parties to repair the relationship damaged and move forward.

This involves:

- acceptance
- apology
- forgiveness
- a committed behaviour change
- positive expectations (hope)
- compassion (empathy in action)

All relationships are highly valued at Oakhill Drive and are at the centre of all things that we do. The relational approach is supported by Positive Psychology practices which are embedded in the culture of the school. Dr Martin Seligman, a leader and researcher in Positive Psychology describes positive relationships as an essential component of wellbeing (Seligman, 2013). In addition to building wellbeing, research shows that constructive **teacher- student relationships** have a large and positive impact on **students'** academic results (Hattie, 2009).

Much research increasingly supports the use of restorative processes to enable a lasting resolution to conflict, over strategies involving sanction and punishment. These practices may occur between student and teacher or between groups of students, known as restorative circles.

In some cases, an individual Personalised Learning and Support Plan (PLSP) may be developed to ensure a student has all the resources needed for a successful resolution.

Restorative questions in solution-focused conversations when things go wrong include:

- *What happened?*
- *What were you thinking (and feeling) at the time?*
- *What are you thinking and feeling now?*
- *Who or what has been affected by what you have done and in what ways?
Who else?*
- *What needs to happen now?*
- *What can you do to make it right?*
- *What will you do differently next time?*

(Sourced from Roffey; Changing Behaviour in Schools, 2011)

Restorative questions to the student that has been hurt or affected include:

- *What did you think about what happened?*
- *How have you and others been hurt?*
- *What has been the hardest thing for you?*
- *What do you think needs to happen to make thing right?*

(Sourced from Restorative Practices Australia)

Oakhill Drive Public School works in partnership with parents/carers to achieve our school vision of students “becoming healthy, well rounded, global citizens who contribute to the creation of the common good in today’s knowledge based, dynamic, interdependent world” (Oakhill Drive PS Annual Report 2018). School expectations of respect, responsibility and resilience form the basis of all relationships and actions. When expectations are breached, a process to support students to resolve conflict, rebuild relationships and take responsibility for mistakes is followed. Responsibilities of students, staff and parents are outlined in Appendix A.

The diagram in Appendix B shows the processes, which may be applied when conflict arises or inappropriate behaviour occurs or is repeated. Each situation is addressed individually, depending on the severity of the behaviour and the needs of the student. If a student’s behaviour escalates beyond the level of the classroom after specific strategies have been implemented, the following may be applied: referral to the Assistant Principal, parents consulted, referral to Deputy Principal and referral to Learning Support Team (including the school counsellor). Serious incidents of violence will be referred directly to the Deputy Principal or Principal.

Consequences, are an important part of the restorative process. These are discussed with each student and determined on an individual basis, dependent on the situation. Specific consequences may be appropriate for all, some or a few students. Where possible, consequences are linked to the mistake and student-driven as part of the restorative conversation. A Reflection Sheet (Appendix C) may be completed and made available to parents. Personalised Learning Support Plans may be developed to support a student's behaviour.

Communicating and recording of incidents and resolutions is the responsibility of the staff member who has managed the incident. This may be the classroom teacher, another teacher or executive staff. This information is communicated to parents and recorded on STARS as appropriate. Student welfare issues are raised at staff or LST meetings when appropriate, to ensure all teachers are supporting students across the school.

Department of Education Student Welfare Policy (2017) states that all members of the school community have a right to feel safe at school. In extreme cases, when a student's behaviour continues to cause concern; suspension, exclusion or expulsion become options and the Department of Education's policy will be followed. This will be made available to parents/carers. Students may be suspended immediately, in very serious cases, according to the discretion of the Principal. These may include:

- extreme persistent disobedience, disruption and continual harassment of other students or staff
- violent behaviour

Suspension is used as an educative consequence and is productive in that it primarily 'protects' all parties. It provides an opportunity for the school to liaise with external support personnel to develop strategies to address the concern, and engage all stakeholders in an educative behaviour changing process, in which damaged relationships are restored.

Related Policies

The Oakhill Drive Public School Student Wellbeing Policy consists of the following sub-policies:

- Student Relationship and Engagement Policy
- Student Recognition Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Learning Support Policy
- Student Leadership Policy

All Oakhill Drive policies within the Student Wellbeing Policy align with the NSW Wellbeing Framework for Schools (2015) and embrace the ideas and practices of Positive Psychology. All policies focus on the strengths, virtues, beneficial conditions and processes that contribute to each student's ability to 'Connect, Succeed and Thrive'.

References

Seligman, Martin; Authentic Happiness, 2013

Hattie, John; Visible Learning, 2009

Appendix A

Responsibilities of students, staff and parents in the Restorative Process

Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be honest • Listen respectfully • Take responsibility for actions • Engage in respectful conversation with teacher and students involved, to reach a solution • Think deeply about answers to restorative questions • Show empathy for others harmed e.g. Golden Rule • Think creatively about resolution • Complete and return Reflection Sheet, if required • Show resilience in accepting consequences • Follow through with restorative actions • Articulate the learning from the mistake • Show a genuine willingness to repair relationships • Discuss with parents, if deemed appropriate • Move on from the experience once resolved: Tomorrow is a new day.
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a sensitive, caring and supportive approach • Address incidents of inappropriate behaviour when/where they occur • Identify expectations at the beginning with a focus on the relational and educative outcomes • Follow the restorative process and questions • Use a solution-focused approach • Listen respectfully and without pre-judgement to all parties • Show empathy to all parties • Guide students in finding a fair resolution for all • Build self-confidence and worth by focusing on strengths • Support the student with re-teaching, if needed • Show encouragement and praise when appropriate • Contact parents, when appropriate • Inform relevant teachers • Document incident and outcomes on STARS, when appropriate • Refer to Executive, when appropriate • Move on from the experience once resolved: Tomorrow is a new day.
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen calmly to the child's account of the incident • Use restorative questions if seeking further information • Discuss Reflection Sheet with child, if used • Support the child in repairing relationships and accepting consequences • Reinforce the learning from the incident • Encourage your child to move on from the experience once resolved: Tomorrow is a new day.

Process for Resolving Conflict and Managing Relational Behaviour

Minor Issues

Classroom teachers investigate incident.

Teachers have solution-focused conversations with student/s using restorative questions.

Informal communication with parents, may be required.



If not resolved, Referral to Assistant Principal.

Development of strategies to support student/s.

Personalised Learning Plans may be developed.

Consultation / communication with parents



If not resolved:

Referral to the Learning Support Team or DP for further intervention. Personalised Learning Plans may be developed. This may involve support from external agencies.

Serious Issues

Classroom teachers inform Assistant Principal of incident.

APs have solution-focused conversations with student/s using restorative questions and/or Reflection Sheet. Discuss consequences.

Develop ongoing strategies with classroom teacher to support student behaviour.

Consultation / communication with parents, may be required.



If not resolved or for very serious or repeated incidents, referral to the Principal/Deputy Principal

Consultation/communication with students and parents.

Personalised Learning Plans may be developed.

Support from external agencies may be required.

Student Reflection and Learning Response Sheet Name: _____ Date: _____ Appendix C

<p>1. Incident Today I made a mistake. This is what I did....</p>	<p>2. Impact My actions have damaged my relationship with and made them feel..... (May be more than one person)</p>
<p>3. Making it right This is my plan to make it right for those people affected by my actions.</p>	<p>4. Responsibility This is a consequence that I feel is fair and I am prepared to accept.</p>
<p>5. Learning This is what I have learnt from this incident.</p>	<p>6. Promise This is how I will act or choose to behave next time I am in this situation.</p>

Date of follow up meeting:

Parent signature and comment

