



Restorative Practices, including Round Table

***"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone"** Romans 12:18*

***"The conversation is the relationship"** Susan Scott (Fierce Conversations)*

In the spirit of the Christian Gospel, St Andrews Lutheran College is committed to using Restorative Practices with all members of our community to build harmonious relationships and resolve issues of concern or conflict, openly and respectfully.

We encourage open communication, preferably face-to-face, and encourage feedback.

We seek, not just to put a stop to unhelpful, harassing or discriminatory behaviour, but also to repair harm, "put things right" and bring about reconciliation between the parties in the spirit of Matthew 18:15.

Restorative Practices form the cornerstone of all policies and procedures relating to behavior management, staff/student welfare and complaints/conflict resolution. Trained staff facilitate the processes.

All staff and students are expected to be supportive of and participate in Restorative Practices when they are involved in a conflict or issue. Parents are asked to support a "restorative pedagogy" that builds a school culture that is fair, safe, and encourages effective learning.

The use of Restorative Practices is normative at St Andrews and they are applied to most situations. However, there are some unusual situations where Restorative Practices are not recommended, at least in the first instance (see below).

There are some situations where refusal by a student or staff member to engage in Restorative Practices to repair harm they have caused, could place at risk their continued enrolment/employment in the College community.

What are Restorative Practices?

Restorative Practices (RP) is a philosophy and a continuum of processes from informal chats to formal structured conversations (St Andrews Round Table Policy) or mediation. RP is based on the following premises:

1. **Conflict causes harm that needs to be repaired.** "Pain that is not transformed, will be transmitted." Richard Rohr
2. **Fight or flight are generally inappropriate responses to conflict.** We do not run away or give in to conflict. We do not pay back.
3. **Conflict needs to be addressed by all parties, preferably face-to-face, in a structured, safe environment.** (*Note: refer to the College's Child Protection Policy for special circumstances relating to sexual harassment or abuse)



4. **People involved in a conflict, wrongdoing or misbehaviour need to be actively involved in the process of resolution.** Imposed solutions or punishments can be less effective and less educative.
5. **Using Restorative Practices is not a “soft option”.** Core values include respect, inclusion, accountability and commitment to relationships.
6. **Participants learn social and emotional skills they will use throughout their lives** such as: active listening, facilitating dialogue, problem-solving, expressing emotion appropriately, developing personal awareness, empathy and taking responsibility.
7. **Logical consequences and sanctions (e.g. detentions, suspensions, staff disciplinary procedures) are still used** but in the context of RP (e.g. “what can you do to make things right?”).

Round Table

“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone” Romans 12:18

The Round Table is one of the key Restorative Practices used at St Andrews to resolve conflicts involving staff and students, through a structured, face-to-face conversation under the guidance of a trained facilitator.

All staff and students are expected to be supportive of and participate in Restorative Practices when they are involved in a conflict or issue.

Why do we need the Round Table?

- As in any community, we experience conflict among our students, staff, and parents. We are committed to providing, when possible and appropriate, opportunities and resources for students, staff, and parents to learn and practise conflict transformation.
- This policy is an integral part of both our Behaviour Management and Anti- Bullying policies and is based on current best practice in this field. It can be used alongside of, or instead of, more traditional sanctions such as detentions, suspensions etc.
- There are a number of skills and attitudes we are seeking to develop in our students and staff across the whole College:
 - The laying down of “weapons” such as pay-outs, gossip, insults, evil eye, excluding, etc
 - Having the courage to face up to someone who has hurt us
 - Having the courage to face up to someone whom we have hurt.
 - Being able to cope, chill out, stay calm and centred, etc
 - Listening to others and appreciating their point of view
 - Learning to fight gracefully and fairly (i.e. put one’s point of view assertively, not aggressively)
 - Identifying and solving problems
 - Accepting responsibility and being accountable.
 - Being trustworthy and keeping an agreement
 - Learning how to forgive and move on

Who uses the Round Table?

Any participants to any conflict that arises in the College and affects members of the community e.g. students, staff, parents, people from outside the College who have been affected.

When do we use a Round Table?

- **Students:**
Reported cases of malicious **gossip**, persistent **disruptive/defiant behaviour** by a student or students who may not have responded to routine behaviour management, and especially when it seems related to conflict involving particular staff members, some cases of **bullying**, reported cases of **vilification or discrimination** (eg in relation to ethnicity or disability), where a **harmful culture of “pay-outs”** etc is evident among students or staff, or any **protracted conflict** that is affecting our community, and does not appear to be resolving.
- **Staff:**
Reported cases of workplace harassment or discrimination or conflict with other staff members, parents or students.

Is “Going to the Table” expected at St Andrews if there is a problem?

- Going to the Round Table is “the way things are done at St Andrews” to resolve conflicts and restore relationships. In most situations, a Round Table will be recommended after a person has been unable to resolve a situation using a personal approach or when a situation is more difficult or ongoing.
- There are some situations when a Round Table is not recommended. This is normally decided at a pre-conference interview, or by Senior Management of the College.
- Some students are required to attend a Round Table as part of a disciplinary process or if wrongdoing has been determined.
- Students and staff can ask to have a Round Table if they feel the need for it

What happens at a Round Table?

- “Round Tables” is a process that we lead students and staff through in order to teach, and allow hands-on experiences of, conflict transformation. Although there are two actual round tables in the College that we can use, it is preferable to use an unobstructed circle and conducted in any quiet, private area.
- The process itself is a structured conversation, led by a trained facilitator, where the parties to a conflict or those involved in a problem situation (with supporters if necessary) meet face-to-face to discuss the issue. It is based on a script that includes key questions that encourage participants to be honest and real about the harm that has been caused, and to widen each person’s understanding of what has been going on. The goal is to “free up” emotions, prejudices etc so that an agreement for some level of resolution can be reached. Accountability is provided by follow up meetings.
- “Going to the Table” differs from Mediation in that it may not be as issue-focused and, for students, may be required by the Principal or other staff. It should be noted though, that all participants are treated with respect and it is up to each person how much and in what way they contribute to the meetings. The important thing is that they experience the process.
- Round Table meetings can only be conducted by suitably trained staff that have been approved by the Principal.

“conflict is a common concern andit can be a positive experience to ‘let go’ and participate in the process.reaching this deep or felt understanding involves individual and collective emotional transformation. The two are linked. Personal emotional transformation is directly linked with the transformation of relationships between people.”
from “Transforming Conflict” by David Moore & John McDonald

"The Round Table is intended to be a place of peacemaking, where the process itself, the environment of the table, and a willingness to 'make a difference', will help make it possible to turn conflict into co-operation."

from "The conversation is the relationship" Margaret Thorsborne

Special Conditions for the Use of Restorative Practices

The use of Restorative Practices is NOT PERMITTED under the following circumstances (but RP may be used to conclude a matter on the advice of legal personnel):

- Where mandatory reporting is required e.g. alleged child sexual abuse. Advice of Police or Department of Child Safety to be followed.
- Where an adult wishes to make a complaint through the Safe Place Process. Advice of Safe Place Committee to be followed.
- Where a matter involves unlawful behaviour and it is deemed necessary to report it to the Police. Advice of Police or Department of Child Safety to be followed.
- Where a staff member, after discussion with the Complaints Contact Officer, chooses to follow another path to achieve resolution of a complaint.

The use of Restorative Practices MAY NOT BE RECOMMENDED

- Where the matter is a very sensitive one (e.g. sexual harassment), or involves particularly sensitive students or staff members.
- Where a parent, after explanation of processes and possible benefits, expressly forbids the use of RP with a child under the age of 18, following explanation of processes and possible benefits.
- Where there is a significant disparity of power or status between parties to the conflict.
- Where considerable time has elapsed since the dispute and parties have clearly "moved on".
- Where one party has initiated legal proceedings.

The use of Restorative Practices WILL GENERALLY BE REQUIRED by the College:

- Where a student or staff member has admitted to wrongdoing or harmful behavior (intentionally or unintentionally)
- Where the College requires Restorative Practices to be used as part of disciplinary proceedings in response to alleged harmful behaviour by a student or staff member.

Restorative Approaches and Practices. Retrieved May 19 2008, from www.transformingconflict.org

Thorsborne, M., & Vinegrad, D. (2006) *Restorative Practices in Schools: Rethinking behaviour management* (3rd ed.). Queenscliff, Victoria : Inyahead Press

Scott, Susan *Fierce Conversation* 2004

(Restorative Practices, including Round Table comprise the Appendices of the Complaints and Conflict Resolution Policy and Procedures.)