

Safety and wellbeing of children and young People

Edithvale Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

Our staff promote a culture of respect, fairness and equality, and foster respectful relationships. The school environment is inclusive and empowering, valuing the positive contributions of students and creating a sense of belonging and connectedness that are conducive to positive behaviors and effective engagement in learning.

All students have a responsibility to:

- Care and value themselves, others, teachers and the school community.
- Be safety conscious in relation to themselves and others.
- Treat others with respect and good manners.
- Keep the guidelines of good behaviour, modelling and supporting school rules.
- Develop a sense of accountability for their own actions.
- Work to achieve their personal best whilst allowing others to do the same.
- Allow for others to learn and to respect the rights of others.
- Explore their full potential in their learning.

Every now and then, despite the best efforts of everyone, things don't always go to plan. When an incident occurs that requires some form of teacher intervention, we always follow a Restorative Practice approach to help educate and support students involved.

Dialogue to manage conflict

To the person who has done the harm:

- Can you tell me what happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since then?
- Who do you think has been affected by your behaviour?
- How do you think they have been affected?

To the person who has been affected:

- What was your reaction at the time of the incident?
- How do you feel about what happened?
- What did you think at the time?
- What have you thought about since then?
- How have you been affected?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?

To the person who has done the harm:

- Is there anything else you want to say?

To each person:

- What would you like to see happen to repair the harm?
- Is this fair?
- Is this realistic and achievable?
- (could formally record and sign the agreement at this stage)

To both people:

- Is there anything else you would like to say?
- I would like to thank you for the way we worked through the issues.
- (maybe we could meet again soon to see how things are going?)

Restorative practice is a strategy that seeks to repair relationships that have been damaged, including those damaged through bullying. It does this by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the offender and forgiveness by the victim.

The rationale behind this approach is that when offenders reflect upon the harm they have caused. They become remorseful and act restoratively. The focus of the conversation is solely on the unacceptable behaviour of offenders rather than their moral character. This can lead to healthier interpersonal relations among our students and, ultimately more effective learning.

Included to the left is an example of the questions that staff will work through when holding a restorative conversations with students.

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/methodrestorative.aspx>

Our regular wellbeing lessons that use the principles of the Resilience Project (Gratitude, Empathy and Mindfulness) and the DET Respectful Relationships program are designed to help create a safe and supportive environment where all students are happy and healthy. In being proactive as much as possible, rather than be reactive, we can arm our students with strategies and skills to help deal with the challenges that life throws at them.