

Restorative **Justice** in LAUSD

healing  
peace  
community building

community circles  
relationships  
reconciliation

meditation

All Students

*"Restorative Justice is a process to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense and to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations, in order to heal and put things as right as possible"*

— Howard Zehr, 1990

### Restorative Justice at a Glance

The following principles reflect the values and concepts for implementing Restorative Justice practices in the school setting:

1. Acknowledge that relationships are essential to building a successful school community.
2. Ensure equity of voice amongst all members of the community. Everyone is valued, everyone is heard.
3. Sets high expectations while offering supports, emphasizing doing things "with," not "to" or "for".
4. Build systems that address student misconduct and harm in a way that strengthens relationships and focuses on the harm done rather than only rule-breaking.

### What are Restorative Justice practices?

Increasingly used in U.S. school districts and worldwide, restorative practices promote trust and respect in relationships, setting the foundation for teaching and learning. In addition, the practices provide meaningful opportunities for students to develop self-discipline and positive behavior in a caring and supportive environment.

### What is Restorative Justice?

Restorative Justice practices promote values and principles that use inclusive, collaborative practices for being in a community. Restorative Justice practices help schools create and maintain a positive school culture and climate. Restorative Justice practices:

- Build community
- Celebrate accomplishments
- Intervene in offending behavior
- Transform Conflict
- Rebuild damaged relationships
- Reintegrate students into the learning environment

The District adopted the School Climate Bill of Rights in May 2013 and committed to implementing Restorative Justice practices in all schools by 2020. Restorative Justice emphasizes community building and commits to restoring relationships. Restorative practices promote and strengthen positive school culture. Moreover, pro-social relationships also improve within the school community.

### Why Restorative Justice in schools?

Restorative Justice is a philosophy and an approach to discipline that moves away from punishment toward restoring a sense of harmony and well-being for all those affected by a hurtful act. It provides families, schools, and communities a way to ensure accountability while at the same time breaking the cycle of retribution and violence. It is based on a view of resilience in children and youth and their capability to solve problems, as opposed to the youth themselves being the problems adults must fix. It focuses not on retribution but on reconnecting severed relationships and re-empowering individuals by holding them responsible. This approach acknowledges that, when a person does harm, it affects the persons they hurt, the community, and themselves. When using restorative practices, an attempt is made to repair the harm caused by one person to another and to the community so that everyone is moved toward healing.

- A restorative approach in school requires students to think about themselves and how they deal with one another and to work on developing healthy relationships and learning how to manage conflict. Implementing a restorative approach in a school can have a positive impact on students at school and at home.
- When Restorative Justice practices are consistently applied within a school wide content, they improve school climate, promote community, and reduce student misconduct. They will also strengthen positive school culture and enhance pro-social relationships within the school community.
- The Restorative Justice model is a three-tiered model of prevention, intervention and reentry in response to conflict/harm.
- Restorative Justice practices work to lower suspension and expulsion rates and to foster positive school climates with the goal of eliminating racially disproportionate discipline practices.



### What are the benefits of Restorative Justice in LAUSD schools?

- Members of the school community will:
- Build safer and more caring school environments.
  - Have an opportunity to be heard.
  - Understand the greater impact of one's actions and learn to take responsibility.
  - Repair the harm one's actions may have caused.
  - Recognize one's role in maintaining a safe school environment.
  - Build upon and expand on personal relationships in the school community.
  - Recognize one's role as a positive contributing member of the school community.
  - Increase instructional time on task and a decrease in student misconduct.
  - Build practices to take time to listen to one another.
  - Reduction in bullying and other interpersonal conflicts.
  - Increase awareness of the importance of connectedness to young people.
  - Recognize the need to belong and feel valued by peers and significant adults.
  - Greater emphasis on responses to inappropriate behavior that seek to reconnect, and not further disconnect young people.
  - Schools will see a reduction in suspension and expulsion rates.
  - Build confidence in the school community to deal with challenging issues.

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