



Imagine Newsletter

A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention

Information for Parents
Issue # 12

Restoring Peace After Bullying

Trying to make peace after bullying or other wrongdoing is becoming an effective strategy some schools are using. Why is this approach working?

It offers:

- A balanced focus on the child who bullied, the child who was bullied, and other affected community members
- A voice for everyone to share their stories and to be actively involved in rebuilding relationships
- A chance for the child who bullied to put things right again and start the healing process

How might this be done in a bullying situation?

- The child who bullied and the child who was bullied are invited together
- The child who was bullied is given a voice in the process
- The child who bullied is encouraged to listen
- They see if they can agree on a way to make things right

This approach, called "Restorative Justice", is about repairing relationships as opposed to placing blame and punishing. It requires the people involved in the situation to find solutions. Solutions imposed by others are less effective and less likely to be followed.

Benefits for the child being bullied:

- They are given a chance to share their story
- They can feel safe again
- They can let go of the past and move on
- Forgiveness might come, but cannot be forced

Benefits for the child who bullies:

- They can see clearly what they have done
- They can hear how their behavior caused harm to others
- They learn to empathize
- They are given the opportunity to make things right & reconnect with the community

Benefits for schools:

- Decreased bullying and other conflicts, exclusions and suspensions
- Increased skill-building in the areas of relationships, for example negotiation, problem-solving, and conflict resolution
- If bystanders are included, they can see the effect their "non-action" has had on the situation
- It helps to build a school community that is safer and more caring

Resources

"Restorative Justice: Transforming Society"
by Arthur Lockhart & Lynn Zammit
- available from www.inclusion.com

Web Sites

Conflict resolution Network Canada
<http://www.cnetwork.ca>



The Centre for Restorative Justice, SFU
<http://www.sfu.ca/crj>

The Nation Centre for Restorative Justice in Education
<http://www.transformingconflict.org>