

RESTORATIVE ESSENTIALS

Restorative Conversations

TIME REQUIRED

20 minutes minimum

FORMAT

Individual and small-group reflections, whole-group discussion

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE LEVEL

Levels 2 and 3

OBJECTIVES

- To explore and discuss public opinions and community perceptions of how behaviour is managed by schools.
- To suggest possible responses and discuss how they would align with your school's pedagogy and practice.

PROCESS PHASE COVERED

Participation



Preparation

Follow-up

COMMENT: BALANCING REQUIREMENTS AND OPINIONS

At times, schools find themselves under considerable pressure from whānau and community groups to respond to behaviour in certain ways. Both these responses and the messages they give are important.

Public opinion and expectation are often divided, which makes it even more difficult for a school to decide how best to respond to an issue.

Schools and boards of trustees are bound by policy guidelines and legal requirements. If the issue is contentious, they may also have story-hungry media beating at their door.

The worksheet **Responding to public opinion** gives a range of sample blog entries in response to a fictitious incident involving a school's standards and disciplinary measures.

ACTIVITY**Individual reflection**

Read the comments on the worksheet **Responding to public opinion** and then write your own response, giving your opinion or feelings on the issues being discussed.

Small-group discussion

Share your thoughts on the comments and your response with the group.

If you were charged with responding as a school, what would you say? As a group, write a 5–8 line response giving the school position.

Whole-group discussion

Discuss and evaluate the school responses. Do they align with your school's pedagogy, policies, and values? Which responses are the most effective? Why?

An incident in which a student swears at school and the teacher apologises is taken up by the media and attracts a wide range of comments from the public in response.

PUBLIC COMMENT

I guess it depends on what the student said and to whom – not often you hear a teacher apologising!

Hemi #3

I wonder if the teacher said something to provoke the student. For the teacher to apologise they must have said something first and maybe the student was having a bad day.

Jenny #12

I think that it's really good when a teacher or adult can say sorry when they make a mistake – it happened to me once and I really began to see that teacher in a different light, in a good way.

Andy #15

Teachers are human too you know!!!

Ghandini #21

I am all for clear, consistent boundaries and consequences but we should look at the big picture, listen to both sides of the story and where appropriate apologise, whether you're the student or the teacher. Where and how are these children going to learn if not in schools?

Julia #28

How schools have changed. 20 years ago when I was at college if a student swore, out came the cane! While I don't believe physical punishment is the best way to get people to change their behaviour, where do you draw the line? Inappropriate behaviour in schools should be handled the same as in the real world. If you step out of line in my work, expect to get your butt kicked and your life made a living hell. When you enter the workforce your mother won't be there to stop an angry workmate and your boss isn't going to apologise. I think school kids have got it easy and the Government has taken away teachers and parents' right to physically punish, it's the only way they will learn!!

Martin #31

You've got to be kidding. Bring back the cane!

Joel #35

If students cross the line they need to face the consequences. I would not want my children in schools where swearing is condoned by the school.

Kirsty #37

Your personal response to the comments

How the school might respond as a public statement