

# Restorative Justice Conferences: Community Justice Forums

## 1. What is a Community Justice Forum?

A Community Justice Forum is a formal restorative conference that allows people affected by an incident of serious harm in the school or community to:

- Participate in a safe, respectful process that encourages open dialogue about the issues
- Focus on the incident and not the personalities involved
- Provide wrongdoers with a chance to accept responsibility for their actions and learn how their behaviour has affected others
- Give those harmed the opportunity to explain how they have been affected and provide suggestions about how the harm might be repaired

## 2. Who attends a Community Justice Forum?

- The person causing harm and their supporters
- Those harmed and their supporters
- The conference facilitator/s
- The school officer who investigated the incident
- Other school and community personnel as appropriate

## 3. What happens during a Community Justice Forum?

- Participants listen to the stories of what happened so they have a clear understanding of the impact of the behaviour on everyone present
- Everyone decides what needs to be done to repair the damage caused

- An agreement is reached and signed by key people
- Follow-up occurs at an agreed time

## 4. What are the outcomes of a Community Justice Forum?

The primary outcome is the agreement which may include:

- An apology
- Repayment of money
- Volunteer work at the school or in the community
- Repair of physical damage to property
- Assurances that the behaviour will not happen again
- A peace letter agreeing to cease all negative contact
- A research project

## 5. What are the benefits of this approach?

- Those harmed have a chance to have their say in a safe forum
- Family and other supporters get to talk about how they have been affected and make suggestions
- The person causing harm learns how their behaviour has affected others and takes responsibility for their actions
- Relationships are repaired and strengthened
- Everyone learns from the experience



**Community Justice  
Program**  
of the  
**Sunshine Coast**

For more information contact  
604.885.2266 or [cjp-sc@eastlink.ca](mailto:cjp-sc@eastlink.ca)

# Restorative Approaches in School District No. 46

## *Partners in Learning*

School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast)

Community Justice Program  
of the Sunshine Coast

Halfmoon Bay Community School



*A community focused on restorative solutions*

## Restorative Justice:

- Views harmful behaviour as a violation of people and relationships
- Believes that violations create obligations and liabilities
- Seeks to heal and repair the harms caused and rebuild relationships

## A Restorative Approach is focused on:

- Accountability
- Problem-solving through open dialogue
- Working together to address needs and restore relationships

## Restorative Approaches in School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast)

A Restorative Approach represents a different way of responding to harm in the school or community. It views punishment as an often inadequate response to addressing harm because it may not address the needs of those who have been harmed. Harm done to an individual, school or community must be addressed in a meaningful way in order to create safe and healthy schools and prevent further harm from occurring.

### A Restorative Approach focuses on:

- Inviting full participation of those harmed so that they have a role and a voice in deciding what needs to be addressed
- Addressing and healing the harms resulting from a conflict or wrongdoing
- Seeking direct accountability from individuals responsible for causing harm
- Reintegrating and repairing relationships where possible
- Strengthening the individual and community to prevent further harm

## Restorative versus Traditional Approaches to Discipline:

A Restorative Approach looks at past incidents in the present with the aim of repairing the harm and strengthening the relationship. A Restorative approach asks:

- Who was harmed?
- What are their needs?
- How will these be addressed so that the harm can be repaired?

Justice is achieved when the wrongdoer accepts responsibility and repairs the harm so that the relationship can be restored. This maximizes the possibility of acceptance back into the school or community.

A Traditional Approach focuses on the past with the aim of establishing blame (whose fault is it?) and delivering punishment. A traditional approach asks:

- What rules were broken?
- Who did it?
- What consequence/punishment is deserved?

Justice is achieved when the wrongdoer is punished. This route can alienate and stigmatize the wrongdoer and offers limited possibility for full acceptance back into school or community.

## Restorative Questions:

To respond to harmful behaviour, instead of asking "Why did you do that?" ask...

- What happened?
- What were you thinking of at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by your actions and in what way?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?

To help someone who has been affected by challenging behaviour ask:

- What did you think when you realized what had happened?
- What impact has this incident had on you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

## Restorative Approaches Balance:

