**A GENERIC SCHOOL HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS WITH IDEAS FOR A STAFF THAT IS IMPLEMENTING RESTORATIVE JUSTICE DISCIPLINE USING THE SKILLS AND STRATEGIES OF *DISCIPLINE THAT RESTORES.***

BY Ron and Roxanne Claassen (2020)

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School Discipline - Teacher Handbook: *DISCIPLINE THAT RESTORES***

(The blank above and throughout this document is to allow you to insert your school name)

The name *Discipline That Restores* (DTR) is used to highlight the intended purpose, which is to encourage teachers, students and others in the school community to go to each other in time of conflict and constructively resolve their differences. *Discipline That Restores* is a specific methodology with specific skills and strategies to guide teachers and administrators who wish to implement DTR.

When teachers follow the DTR process, it will enhance the academic purpose and atmosphere of the campus both educationally and developmentally. The DTR process will enhance maturity and at the same time provide students with the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. It will encourage students to take responsibility by holding them accountable for their actions including making restitution for damages. It will also provide the opportunity for reconciliation of those who have been injured or estranged. It will enable the restoration of an individual to his or her place in the community.

Discipline at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School is an expression of the practice of building a community. *Discipline That Restores* is expressed with a "centered" instead of a "bounded" perspective. The "centered" approach focuses on the preferred model of demonstrating how we are to live respectfully and civilly together - the “Do's." Primary attention is focused on the center, on becoming more respectful, responsible, and accountable. All members of the community strive to voluntarily and consciously experience and nurture right relationships with others as reflected in our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ school mission statement. This “centered” approach requires discipline through accountability, which begins with self-examination and self-control, and includes personal and communal responsibility. It encourages truth-telling because there is no fear of punishment. Mistakes can be made right.

By contrast, a "bounded" approach focuses on external rules and regulations - the "don'ts." Primary emphasis is on what shouldn't be done and avoiding misbehavior. *Discipline That Restores* is understood as training that molds or perfects one toward living in respectful community. DTR provides both accountability and encouragement. Although the primary focus for discipline is "centered" it does recognize boundaries. These boundaries help the individual become aware of when she or he may not be in right relationship with the people and standards established by and for the community.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School has agreed on a set of standards that reflect its understanding of becoming a more respectful and responsible community. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School seeks to provide opportunities for personal and social growth and development within the context of our school community. Discipline is viewed as a means of encouraging individuals and groups to be accountable to the stated objectives of the school community and to each other. *Discipline That Restores* has been adopted as our accountability system.

**COMMUNITY LIFE AND BEHAVIORAL VISION**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School is an educational community in which the teachers, administration, staff, parents and students share a commitment to respectful community life. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School believes that the total welfare of people is of paramount concern. It seeks to respect the dignity, worth and individuality of each person within the school community. Yet, it recognizes that in order to maintain community, occasionally it becomes necessary to subordinate individuality for the sake of community.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School values community and seeks to integrate constructive living and learning, reflection and action. Community implies a sense of care and concern for one another. Within community, interpersonal relationships are part of the learning process. Community assumes that individuals will become more responsible for, and accountable to, one another. As they do, they are better able to understand themselves and make thoughtful decisions and commitments in our school community and in the broader community. The quality of human relationship and the sense of mutual care for one another should be a dominant emphasis of our life together within the school community. Community needs to be understood both in the smaller, as well as its larger contexts. This sense of mutual care for one another leads to a safe learning environment that allows students the freedom to explore and excel academically.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School is committed to creating and sustaining an environment that facilitates not only academic development, but also the personal, social, and emotional development of all its members. This is our commitment and we seek to do so with excellence.

The rules of any public school community grow out of a blending of traditions and values. This school holds in high esteem the following values:

peace and justice;

modest dress;

thoughtfulness in social relationships and entertainment;

honesty;

respect for self and the rights, opinions and property of others;

respect for and obedience to the laws of the state;

willingness to do good in every situation.

living in a way that balances their individual freedom with their community responsibility.

accepting the responsibility for abiding by the standards and policies of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School.

conduct and behavior in the larger community that reflect well upon the school community

develop role of being responsible and accountable citizens of the world

Within a school community it is important to pursue what makes for peace and for mutual up-building. Recognizing that its students are at various stages of academic, social, and emotional maturity, \_\_\_\_\_\_ School strives to provide an atmosphere which will be conducive to academic, social, and emotional growth for all. This environment thrives when one considers not only one’s own interests, but also the interests of others. The school community, students, teachers, administrators, staff and parents are not only to avoid endangering the academic, social, or emotional lives of each other, but are also to encourage one another and provide positive assistance when possible. The spirit of this vision is one of concern for and service to others.

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ SCHOOL COMMUNITY STANDARDS**

All students are expected to abide by the respect agreements that they help create in their classroom and in other school settings (library, cafeteria, etc.). In addition to their respect agreements and the state Educational Code standards, the following are some standards that all are expected to abide by:

* The school recognizes that the use of tobacco products and alcoholic beverages presents a danger to personal health and, therefore, it strongly discourages members of the community from using them. No member of the community may use or possess tobacco, alcohol or illegal drug products on campus or while traveling to or from school. This also includes any event that is school sponsored on or off campus. Being on campus under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs will result in a restorative justice disciplinary action. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School is a drug-free environment.
* Exercise wholesome thought and speech patterns (use of profanity and coarse joking, particularly that which is degrading to gender, ethnicity and/ or people groups, is not acceptable) and will result in restorative justice disciplinary action.
* In an effort to minimize awkward situations, and to protect their personal relationships, students are expected to refrain from inappropriate public displays of affection.
* (You might want to add some others that may not be included in respect agreements and/or may be specific to your context.)

**RESTORATIVE DISCIPLINE POLICY**

**MISSION**

The mission of Restorative Justice Discipline is:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School is committed to dealing with all violations and offenses by holding students accountable to the community for their behavior by recognizing the injustice/violation, and searching for agreements that will restore equity and clarify future intentions (including a support and accountability plan), documented in a written and signed agreement. This restorative justice discipline process is done in ways that recognize and protect dignity of all involved, promote personal growth and maturity, while encouraging reconciliation and restoration.

Discipline at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School is an expression of the practice of community. It is expressed through a "centered" perspective in which the focus is on our core values rather than a “bounded" perspective built only on rules and regulations. Discipline is understood as training that molds and develops one’s character providing both accountability and encouragement. Students are encouraged to remember that, since the relationships of the community are very important, discipline is a process of mutual accountability with the goal of restoration and reconciliation and should be a way of living and relating that often begins even before any specific standards have been violated or “rules" actually broken.

When community relationships are damaged by conduct that is inconsistent with the, respect agreements, behavioral standards and/or expectations of the school community, all members of the community are encouraged to seek resolution as early as possible through cooperative methods like peer mediation (students or teachers), student/teacher meeting, thinkery, mediation/conference and other cooperative strategies. If a referral is made to the school authorities indicating a serious violation, the goals of the restorative justice discipline plan are still the same. The authorities decide on the most appropriate safe method for proceeding.

Confronting and resolving conflict is normal and expected. Many minor violations can be resolved informally by listening to each other and negotiating resolutions or seeking the help of peer mediators. We believe that violations of our adopted standards, rules and policies, can be resolved in ways that are constructive and restorative for all involved. We recognize that there is danger and opportunity in each violation. The danger is that the people directly involved and others in the community respond in ways that cause everyone to emerge from the response further alienated, more damaged, disrespected, disempowered, and less cooperative with each other and the community. The opportunity is that the violation and its harms can be recognized; agreements can be made to restore equity as much as possible, to create a safe and respectful future, and to arrange for follow-up accountability meetings that will encourage and support keeping the agreements. We believe that trust will grow when constructive agreements are made and kept, even where trust did not exist before. Writing the agreements is important so all involved have a common memory of agreements made as they meet for follow-up and decide whether or not the agreement has been kept and/or whether or not additional agreements are needed.

We prefer to accomplish this kind of discipline as much as possible utilizing cooperative structures of discussion, mediation or conferencing. We also recognize that there will be times when a person feels wrongly accused, is unwilling to enter a cooperative process, or agreement cannot be reached through a cooperative process. In those cases a restorative authority structure is designed by the school authorities. The decisions/actions of these authorities and the consequences imposed will be guided and tested by whether they are respectful, restorative, reasonable, and as much as possible, intended to reintegrate those who were harmed by the violation.

Since our community values both freedom and responsibility, some conflicts or violations are normal, inevitable, and expected. When all parties respond in ways that are respectful and constructive, it can be very stimulating and helpful in clarifying standards, rules, and values. We do not have to agree on everything in order to live and study together in a supportive, respectful, and civil environment.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School is committed to a student discipline process that is fair, restorative, and consistent with an emphasis on restorative justice and peacemaking. The goal is to create a just and peaceful environment based on the value of right and respectful relationships rather than on fear of punishment. We believe that in this safe environment, disagreements can be vigorously debated and discussed in an atmosphere of trust and respect. Academic success thrives in this atmosphere.

**RESTORATIVE JUSTICE DISCIPLINE GOALS**

While we aspire to be a community of mutually caring and uplifting relationships, we also recognize that we who are involved in community are imperfect people. Our student discipline at \_\_\_\_\_\_ School is intended to be a process that:

1. Is fair and just.

2. Will enhance the academic purpose and atmosphere of the campus.

3. Is educational and developmental for the students involved, encouraging student maturity by providing students with the opportunity to learn from their mistakes.

4. Provides opportunity for reconciliation of those who have been harmed or estranged, enabling the restoration of each involved individual to each other and to the community.

5. Encourages student responsibility by holding them accountable for their own actions including making restitution for damages.

6. Enhances the safety and wellbeing of all people on campus.

7. Improves individual and school academic success.

**RESTORATIVE DISCIPLINE PROCESS**

When a student’s behavior disruptive to the teacher or other students, the following process is followed to help the student modify their behavior and to regain the student’s cooperation with their teacher and other adults at the school.

**STEP 1: Teacher/Student Usual Constructive Reminders**

The student is made aware of his/her disruptive behavior.

The student is invited to modify his/her behavior.

The student who modifies his/her behavior and becomes cooperative is thanked, encouraged and supported.

If the student does not modify his/her behavior, proceed to Step 2.

**STEP 2: Respect Agreement Reminder (**During the first week of classes, each teacher follows the DTR lesson plan to create a respect agreement with their class - for teachers who have more than one class, there are options for creating multiple agreements - which is signed by the teacher and all students.)

The student is constructively reminded of the respect agreement s/he helped create and signed.

The student who modifies his/her behavior and becomes cooperative is thanked, encouraged and supported.

If the student does not modify his/her behavior, proceed to Step 3.

**STEP 3: I Message or Active Listening**

The teacher respectfully speaks to the student using I Message that follows the DTR prompts.

Or the teacher invites the student to talk and listens using Active Listening skills.

The student who modifies his/her behavior and becomes cooperative is thanked, encouraged and supported.

If the student does not modify his/her behavior, proceed to Step 4.

**STEP 4: Look with the student at the Four Options Model**

The teacher restates that they have a conflict, brings the student’s attention to the Four Options Model, states

his/her preference for option #4 and invites the student to choose the option they think will be the

best way to deal with the conflict.

**IF THE STUDENT AND TEACHER CHOOSE #4** (A time is arranged for a meeting.)

**STEP 5: Student/Teacher Meeting**

The student and teacher follow all of the steps in the DTR teacher/student meeting process.

If an agreement is reached, the agreement is written on an agreement form and signed by both.

The student who makes an agreement and signs it, is thanked, encouraged, and supported.

**STEP 6: Follow-up Meeting(s)**

The teacher and student meet at the agreed upon time to read the agreement and decide together if

all of the agreements are being kept. If all are being kept, they decide if they want or need another

follow-up meeting.

When all agreements are being kept, they celebrate and recognize that “When agreements are made

and kept, trust grows.”

**IF THE STUDENT AND TEACHER CHOOSE #3** (A time is arranged for a meeting with a mediator.)

**STEP 5: Student/Teacher Meeting with a Mediator**

The mediator helps the student and teacher follow all of the steps in the DTR teacher/student meeting

process.

If an agreement is reached, the agreement is written on an agreement form and signed by teacher,

student, and mediator.

The student who makes and agreement and signs it, is thanked, encouraged, and supported.

**STEP 6: Follow-up Meeting(s)**

The teacher and student meet with the mediator at the agreed upon time to read the agreement and

decide together if all of the agreements are being kept. If all are being kept, they decide if

they want or need another follow-up meeting.

When all agreements are being kept, they celebrate and recognize that “When agreements are made

and kept, trust grows.”

**IF THE STUDENT REFUSES TO CHOOSE #4 OR #3**

**STEP 5: Thinkery**

The teacher completes the Thinkery referral form, gives it to the student, and the student goes to the

Thinkery and gives the form to the person responsible for the Thinkery.

The person in the Thinkery reads the referral and gives the form back to the student to complete

(sometimes the student needs some help in getting started on completing the form

constructively.

The student completes the form, discusses their responses with the Thinkery person, and again is

presented with the Four Options Model and invited to choose #4 or #3.

If the student chooses #4 or #3, the form is completed and the student returns to their teacher,

gives the teacher the form, and the process above, for when a student chooses a #4 or #3, is

followed.

**IF THE STUDENT REFUSES TO CHOOSE #4 OR #3 AFTER THE THINKERY MEETING**

**STEP 7: A Family Conference**

The Thinkery person (might be a counselor) or other designated person convenes a family conference. The first conference may just include the student, parent(s), teacher, and mediator. The mediator leads the meeting following all of the steps in the DTR Meeting Process. If agreements are reached, they are written and a follow-up meeting is scheduled. If at the follow-up meeting, all agreements have been kept, all are thanked and encouraged and together they celebrate and recognized that “when agreements are made and kept, trust grows.”

If they do not reach agreements or if the agreements made are not kept, the next Family Conference includes administration, additional family members or other student support people, and the teacher and support people. The mediator leads the meeting following all of the steps in the DTR Meeting Process. If agreements are reached, they are written and a follow-up meeting is scheduled. If at the follow-up meeting, all agreements have been kept, all are thanked and encouraged and together they celebrate and recognized that “when agreements are made and kept, trust grows.”

**IF NO AGREEMENTS ARE MADE IN THE FAMILY CONFERENCE**

**STEP 8: School Authority Structure - #2 or #1 on the Four Options Model**

The administrator who has the responsibility now makes a decision for the student and the family that did not reach agreement in the Family Conference. The school authority continues to follow restorative justice discipline principles and now makes a decision for the student and family, all the time continuing to offer and encourage the student and family to try a Family Conference again. If the student and family refuse to re-enter a Family Conference, then the decision is imposed. The person making the decision creates and evaluates it based on the following criteria: Is it respectful, reasonable, intended to be restorative, and re-integrative.