

Restorative Justice in Schools Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is Restorative Justice?

Restorative Justice (RJ) is a way to prevent and address harm through “non-punitive, relationship-centered approaches” (Fronius et al., 2019, p. 1).

In schools, restorative justice is an alternative to exclusionary discipline practices such as suspensions or expulsions (p. 1).

So, instead of getting suspended or expelled from school, a student can participate in a restorative justice process to repair harm and make things better.



What does RJ look like in schools?

Scan the QR code to watch what RJ looks like in Pittsfield Middle High School!



Restorative Justice in schools looks different based on the situation. A school-wide approach to RJ includes 3 tiers:

Tier 1: using affective statements and proactive circles to build a positive and safe school environment that prevents conflict

Tier 2: using restorative meetings, meditations, or circles to address low-levels of harm

Tier 3: using responsive circles and conferences, intensive support, and accountability circles to address serious harm or significant challenges

Restorative Justice in Schools FAQ (Cont.)

What is the impact of RJ in schools?

RJ prevents misbehavior by helping youth, teachers, and others to build relationships. This relationship-building creates safer, more inclusive school environments (Walker, 2023).

Restorative justice also reduces school suspensions and arrests, which reduces racial disparities in exclusionary discipline practices (Lodi et al, 2021).

Students academic performance and social and emotional skills (e.g. empathy, responsibility etc.) also increases in schools implementing RJ (Lodi et al, 2021).

The highest impacts and benefits are seen for schools taking a whole-school approach to implementing RJ (Lodi et al, 2021).

What are the advantages of RJ in schools?



RJ prevents conflict from happening in the first place by promoting positive relationships between students, teachers, and others (Lodi et al, 2021).

RJ helps students address the harm they caused while staying in school. Exclusionary discipline removes students from the learning environment, which increases the drop out rates and misbehavior (Advancement Project, 2010. pp. 17, 5)

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