

Information for participants attending a Restorative Conference at Bream Bay College

What is a restorative conference?

A restorative conference is a meeting where individuals impacted by an incident in the school or community come together.

This meeting serves as a platform for those who caused harm, those who were harmed, and their respective supporters to collaboratively find ways to mend the damage caused by the incident and prevent further harm.

Who attends a restorative conference?

A conference usually involves the following people:

- The wrongdoer and their supporters
- Those harmed and their supporters
- The conference facilitator (an experienced and trained person)
- The school representative who investigated the incident
- Other school and/or community personnel if appropriate.

What happens during a restorative conference?

Participants hear stories to understand how the behavior affected everyone, physically or emotionally.

They then collaborate to fix and prevent harm.

An agreement is reached, documented, and signed by key people, who get copies.

Follow-up happens as agreed.

What are the outcomes of a conference?

The conference's main result is the written agreement mentioned earlier.

This agreement can cover various things, like apologies, promises to avoid repeating the behavior, community service, repaying money if needed, fixing property damage, and seeking support when necessary.

The possibilities are wide, based on the group's creativity and its ability to make sure everyone follows the agreement.

The process aims to make everyone involved as satisfied as possible.

How long does a restorative conference take?

The duration of a restorative conference varies based on the situation, complexity, and participants.

Preparing for the conference depends on these factors too.

The conference typically lasts around one and a half to two hours, which is a reasonable time investment given the usual time taken to address such incidents in a school or community.

What are the advantages of this approach?

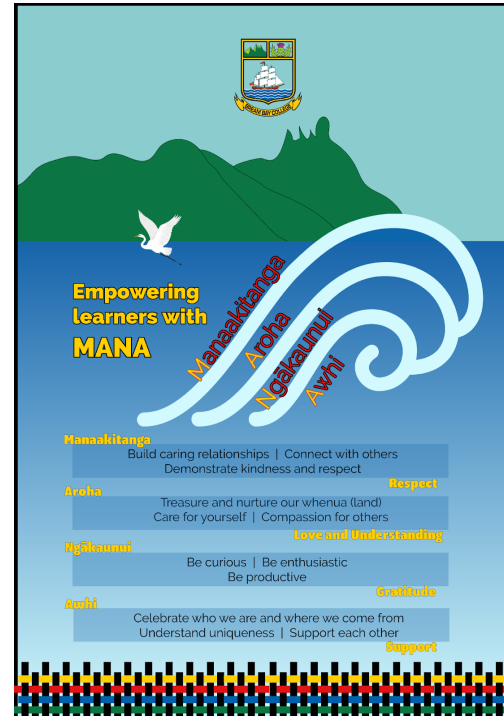
- The harmed can talk about their feelings and needs safely.
- Supporters and family can share too, deciding what to do.
- Wrongdoers face consequences and learn.
- Relationships are repaired and expanded.
- Everyone learns and changes happen.
- For big conflicts, this unites and brings insights, leading to peace.

Thank you for agreeing to attend this conference.

It is important to remember that a restorative conference is not just an ordinary meeting – conferences are focused on finding out who has been affected by an event and in what ways, rather than focusing on blame.

There is also a strong focus on people 'putting it right' if they have done harm to others.

Below are some simple guidelines that will help make this conference a really successful experience for everyone:



- Let the trained staff facilitator lead the conference.
- Wait patiently for your turn to speak – parents speak last to hear the whole story.
- Stay open-minded. Your child might have told only one side.
- Speak with respect and use comfortable language for everyone.
- Address the whole conference, not just individuals, when you speak.
- Share how the event impacted your life or your family's.
- Support other children as well as your own.
- Keep the conference details confidential after it's done, for everyone's good.

Thanks again for your help.

If you have any further questions or comments, please contact the conference facilitator, or Pastoral Deputy Principal, Mark Bayer.

The Restorative Conference Structure and Script

1 - Before the Conference

- Get a report of the incident/s.
- Check with those who have been wronged.
- Check with the wrong doers.
- Invite significant persons who will carry a solution forward.

(They need a good relationship with the wrong doers)

Mention

- This is the incident that has occurred.
- What are the issues for you?
- Do you accept responsibility for your part?
- Do you want to resolve the matter?
- Is there anything else you need to know?
- Be thinking of what might be a good solution or plan to set the matter right and prevent it reoccurring.
- Time, date and place of the conference.

If they seem uncertain they may need to have reassurance by knowing.

- Everyone will have their say.
- The conference decides what the solution will be.
- This is how we do things at Bream Bay College.
- The police have referred the matter (if relevant).
- What sort of questions will be asked....what happened, what they were thinking, what the effects have been, what a good solution might be.

Other preparations

- Room booked
- Seating arranged
- Office informed
- Food, drink, tissues.
- Review script and prepared self.

(You are as prepared as you can be....kia kaha)

2 – Start of the Conference

- Meet, greet and show each person their place.
- Open with welcome, acknowledgement of significance of the meeting and karakia/hope for the meeting.
- We are here to put right a matter that has damaged the relationships between many of us namely.....
- The school/police have referred the matter to be resolved at this conference.
- This may be new to some of you but this is how we deal with these matters at Bream Bay College.
- At any stage people may leave and have the matter dealt with by another forum.
- We are mindful of the motto "the problem is the problem; the person is not the problem". This conference is not concerned with casting judgments or deciding whether people are good or bad.
- We do want to seek understanding of what has happened. We also want those responsible to be accountable for their actions and we want to develop a plan that will set the matter right.
- Can you please introduce yourself, tell us who you are connected with in this conference and in one sentence, what you hope this conference will achieve.
- I will start. My name is.....I have been asked to facilitate this meeting. My hope for this conference is that"

3 - The story

To the offender

Name.... to help us understand about this incident and who has been affected by it, could you start by telling us, in as much detail as possible, what happened.

And then what happened

Can we go back to..... There's a bit I am not clear on

What was happening before.....

How did you come to be involved?

What made you do that?

What were you thinking at the time?

What have you been thinking about since?

Who has been affected by your actions? In what way

4- Exploring the harm

To the Victims

What did you think at the time?

What have you thought about since?

How has this affected you?

How have things changed with your friends?

How did your Whānau react when they heard?

What has been the worst for you?

Victim supporters

What did you think when you heard about this?

How do you feel about what has happened?

What concerns you most?

What changes have you seen in?

As parent/ friend/ colleague what has been the hardest for you?

To the school representative

What did you think when you heard about this?

How do you feel about what has happened?

What concerns you most?

To the offenders supporters

This must be difficult for you

What did you think when you heard?

How do you feel about what has happened?

How has it affected you?

How are things now with you?

How are things now between you all?

5- Apology

To the offender

Now that you have heard from everyone what is that you have realised that you didn't know before?

What difference does it make now that you know these things?

Is there anything you want to say to or anyone else here

Is there something parent/ friend/ colleague needs to hear from you?

6- Agreement

To the victim, victim supporters

I imagine that there are things that you didn't understand before that you do now. What are some of those new understandings?

What difference has that made to you?

What else do you want to see happen as a result of this conference?

To the offender

Does this seem fair?

To the offender supporters

Is there something you would like to see happen that might help the solution.

To everyone

Who will be responsible for supporting this solution?

7- Summary

No further actions/outcomes can be added once the agreement is signed.

Read list of actions and outcomes, and get final agreement from all in the Restorative Conference before signing.

8- Closure

To everyone

This will set us on a new pathway to repair the harm caused.

A copy of this agreement will be given to you all, and the Behaviour System will be updated.

Those who have responsibilities for actions, please report these back to the coordinator.

Thank you for your efforts

Please come for refreshments.