



Restorative Justice Conferencing

December Newsletter

What to do with students waiting for conference day?

Leaving embattled students to simmer until conference day can have a potential downside. I would be remiss in not acknowledging these concerns. So what confidence can we have that students will refrain from further conflict?

Each situation has its specific circumstances, but in addressing potential problems between the event and conference day, we approach it in the same way as if we could conduct a conference the day of the incident. The intake meeting with the facilitator is where we review the situation and discuss the aims and benefits of the process. This pre-conference meeting is where we establish how we are going to address the problem. By the time of the pre-meeting, the student has already volunteered for the conferencing option offered by the administrator. Having **volunteered** for conferencing, the student has made the first step in changing the behavior. Additionally, having met and confided in the facilitator, a relationship is established in which the student is asked to avoid further altercation and confirm the commitment. Ninety nine percent of the time this stops further problems until the Conference can be held.

In cases where the students cannot be trusted with their behavior or have the potential to re-victimize the students, it is prudent to have them serve an in-house suspension or allow them to observe up to

a 10 day home suspension if the situation dictates complete separation. It is common to suspend students who have multiple victims or provoke a group to engage in unruly behavior.

Most situations and schedules allow for prompt processing, but when there is a delay due to parental, school event or supporter schedules, the student pre-meetings will establish a commitment to refrain from further altercation and interaction.

I would invite a conversation and the opportunity to have a conference addressing your special student situation.
586-569-6238

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<http://rjcconferencing.wordpress.com>

RJC Moment

In one case the administrator had decided to send a student home that was the center of a drama that had a potential of involving several students. Knowing the student at the center was trying their best to stay clear of the others, the administrator authorized an approved leave-of-absence. This allowed the student to continue studies needed for the approaching graduation, let the drama die down and let the conference commence without altercation between incident and conference. This is one example of what can be done with that one percent who has to be separated from the situation.

RJC Facilitator Frank Malik
586-569-6238
fmalik@wcskids.net