

Introduction

Villanova is committed to the personal growth of its students and the welfare of all members of the College Community. The College espouses a specific approach to pastoral care and discipline based on the *Restorative Practices* philosophy. This philosophy, which aligns with the College's Augustinian approach to education and behaviour management, provides Villanova students with the opportunity to develop self-discipline and positive behaviours in a caring, supportive environment. It is one practical way in which the College supports members of its community to become '*of one mind and one heart on the way towards God.*'¹

Policy Statement

Through its commitment to a restorative approach to pastoral care and discipline, Villanova College seeks, in each of the three schools, and in age-appropriate ways:

- to actively promote and nurture the physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual well-being of its students
- to actively promote, nurture and protect healthy relationships and good order among members of the community
- to educate students towards self-directed right behaviour
- to encourage respect, healing and restoration both for those who are harmed, and for those who cause harm, through wrongdoing
- to enable students to build personal responsibility by developing skills of reflection and empathy with others, and by enabling them to be accountable for the real consequences of any wrongdoing

in order to encourage them to strive for the Augustinian ideal of being '*free people acting under the influence of grace, rather than slaves under the law*'²

Rationale

A positive school climate, in which young people feel connected and safe, is the best environment for learning.

The *Restorative Practices* approach reflects the central value that the College community places on relationships - among all members of its community. High value is placed on the positive development of social/emotional skills in students within, and through, these relationships, in order to best encourage their personal and moral development. The approach views conflict and wrongdoing primarily through the lens of the harm these cause to people and relationships, and emphasises the obligation of meeting the needs of those affected by this harm.

The College believes that its approach to the management of student behaviour should primarily be an educative one. That is, the fundamental aim of the behaviour management philosophy and practice should be for students to learn to be responsible for themselves and their actions and to make genuine, positive contributions to their community. A restorative approach sees conflict or wrong-doing as an opportunity for students to learn about the consequences of their actions, to develop empathy with others, and to seek to make amends in such a way as to strengthen the community bonds that may have been damaged. It encourages students to engage with this challenge in a way that draws on the Augustinian practice of *interiority* - through contemplation and conversion from a focus on the self, towards a focus on the 'other'.

Valuing both a strong sense of community and right behaviour based on sound moral principles, Villanova has high expectations of all its community members. Students are called to high standards of personal behaviour and are challenged when these expectations are not met. They are challenged, however, in a way that respects them as individuals made in the image and likeness of God, to enable them to correct their behaviour and to make amends to those affected. Through developing empathy for others, students learn to become more positive, supportive and contributing members of the College community.

The *Restorative Practices* approach emphasises working *with* students to educate them to right behaviour. In calling students to make a personal transformation from a focus on the self towards a focus on others and the common good, it is a particularly Augustinian approach. It holds tenaciously to the College's community values, and challenges members to demonstrate these values in all their interactions with others.

A restorative approach values the person while challenging negative behaviour, echoing St Augustine's call to "*love the sinner, hate the sin.*"³ For St Augustine, it is only through the loving support of one's community that a person is enabled to develop their full potential by turning from sinful ways toward the right path.

Implementation

This policy, and the procedures and practices that flow from it, are to be part of staff, student and parent induction on an ongoing basis and are to be included in the various handbooks published by the College.

Policy approved by College Council 27th October, 2010

1. St Augustine, The Rule of St Augustine *Constitutiones Ordinis Fratrum S. Augustini* (Rome 1968) Chapter I
2. St Augustine, The Rule of St Augustine *Constitutiones Ordinis Fratrum S. Augustini* (Rome 1968) Chapter VIII
3. St Augustine, City of God XIV, 6