Responsive Restorative Practices & Remote Learning

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Unchartered Waters of Discipline & Remote Learning

The Restorative Practices Team, in partnership with the Offices of Student Engagement & Student Discipline, first would like to acknowledge how grateful we are for our educators who are working diligently to ensure students still have access to learning through these uncertain times. Along with most Jeffco staff, this is new territory for us as well. Please let us know if there are additional resources we can create to support you or if you have any feedback on what we've created thus far.

As we address students' language and behavior in this new remote learning reality, please consider the following to support holding students accountable in a way that also facilitates learning and fosters empathy and understanding.

If behavior escalates and there is a need for a restorative conference, refer to this resource for tips on Facilitating Virtual Restorative Conferences.

Note: Unfortunately, we are seeing an increase of discriminatory behavior towards Asian members of our district community as a result of the Coronavirus. Some resources suggested by the Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Team are Speaking Up Against Racism Around the New Coronavirus and Coronavirus: Protect Yourself and Stand Against Racism. To support responding to hateful language towards any individual, please reference Teaching Tolerance's Let's Talk: Facilitating Critical Conversations with Students, Speak Up at School, & Responding to Hate and Bias at School. This pocket guide also provides convenient phrases for in the moment.

Being Proactive

As usual, the most powerful tool we have to prevent challenging behaviors and, likewise, to address them effectively is to have **meaningful relationships** between adults and students as well as among students. This is made increasingly difficult when we do not have the luxury of interacting in person.

Here are some suggestions for establishing meaningful relationships with appropriate boundaries on digital platforms:

- Find creative ways to foster community in your digital classroom

- Establish clear guidelines for remote learning, ideally with student input
  - Transform your student-generated classroom guidelines, if you already have some, into a virtual version
  - Have students submit possible guidelines through a Google form or discussion board and create your guidelines based on their suggestions and using their language
- Create a structure for students to process and reflect on these guidelines.

  - For example: Choose a particular guideline and have students journal about:

    - why they think the guideline exists,

    - what they predict will be most challenging for them in upholding the guideline as a remote learner, and

    - a strategy they are going to try to use to be successful in upholding the guideline.
- Once the guidelines have been established, prepare students with what they might expect as far as your response to typical online behaviors
  - For example: *"Please note that any inappropriate posts will be removed immediately from our online platform. I will then follow up with the student who posted and any who commented to talk about how we can repair any harm that may have been caused as a result of the post."*
- Make 1:1 conversations with students a normal part of remote learning so that, when you need to provide feedback to a student around behavior, the structure already exists

Establishing these structures in advance will give you some footing for addressing challenging student behavior should it arise in the future.

Responding to Harmful Behavior

Our ability to hold students accountable for harmful behavior is absolutely made more complicated by our remote learning environment. Keep in mind that this new reality is new and confusing for not only our educators, but also students and families. Give grace often.

To ensure you are approaching this behavior with a restorative mindset, reference the [Social Discipline Window](). Continue to utilize the [Restorative Responses Toolkit]().

If a student exhibits challenging behavior through remote learning, consider the following steps to address it:

- Use immediate strategies to mitigate the impact of the behavior.

- ○ For example: simply removing whatever was posted that was harmful from the view of the rest of your classroom community
  - ○ Temporarily suspending chat or discussion board functions, if your platform allows it, to give you more to time to respond thoughtfully
- If applicable, provide a whole class reminder of the expectation just as you would in a classroom environment

  - ○ Consider including some of the language students have used to describe why this guideline exists in your reminder.
- Send a specific redirect to the student who exhibited the behavior a reminder of the established guidelines and expectations, the same way you might redirect a student during class
  - ○ Use a neutral tone
  - ○ Avoid language that is overtly shaming and blaming
  - ○ Use "I" statements like those outlined here
  - ○ Remember that it can be easy to misinterpret tone through digital communications so reread your redirect or consider a video/audio recording
  - ○ Ask questions to avoid lecturing and shutting the student down

If the behavior warrants more follow up, because it was especially harmful or because it is part of a larger pattern of behavior:

- Follow up with a 1:1 conversation with the student ensuring both parties are able to participate in a meaningful way.
  - ○ This will be most impactful if students are already accustomed to 1:1 feedback conversations with their educators throughout remote learning.
  - ○ Give the student the space to lead this conversation as a series of online messages from the adult will quickly feel like a lecture (see next bullet for ideas).
- Provide students with the reflection questions you plan to use in advance so that they understand the flow of the conversation ahead of time. Consider use one of these templates:
  - ○ Elementary Reflection
  - ○ Secondary Reflection
  - ○ *Note:* Ensure that these reflection forms result in an eventual conversation. Reflection forms are to help prepare the student for the conversation, not a replacement for it, as they then become punitive.
- Designate a time to chat online, via chatbox, video chat, or on the phone (Google Voice number) and work your way through each of the following framework

Question	Skill(s) Built	Who should answer first?	Alternative Way to Ask (or Back Up Questions if you get an "I don't know")
What happened?	Build perspective, Acknowledge the behavior	Student	What happened right before I moved your seat? How did you feel during math today?
Who was impacted?	Understand impact of behavior	Student	How do you think _____ might have felt when you did that? Who saw you do that? How do you think they might have felt?
What part can you take responsibility for?	Taking Accountability	Teacher (to model taking accountability)	What is a choice that you made? What would you do differently next time?
How will we make things right?	Repairing the Harm	Student, with adult support if they struggle to identify next steps	How will we move forward? How will we fix it? What do you think your consequence should be?

If you are struggling to get the student to engage in this conversation, consider leveraging your relationship with them as a trusted adult by:

- Begin with an expression of empathy, such as "This is a really confusing time for me, and I'm sure it feels confusing for you too."
- Let the student know how their behavior made you feel with an "I" statement
- Ask questions to show them you care about their perspective, or
- Framing your request as an offer of support, such as "I just want to talk about this so I can figure out how to better support you moving forward."

If you choose to engage families in this conversation, be mindful that this experience is new for them as well as for you. They may not have immediate ideas as to how to support their young person and may also be experiencing some challenges with this new reality themselves. Use this template for those conversations to ensure you are providing grace for our parents and guardians as well. Also, share this Restorative Practices at Home resource with them as an additional support.