

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE – Taking us further down the Pastoral Path

All students and staff recently underwent a four-day Restorative Justice training programme, led by Australian pioneer in this field, Mr Terrence O’Connell. ICD uses Restorative Justice to resolve conflict and repair relationships if they have broken down. The basic principles are as follows:

- Everyone has a chance to be heard
- Victims can tell offenders how they have been affected
- No-one is judged
- Conflicts are resolved in a safe environment
- Students find a peaceful way forward with one another

All staff are now using these methods in their approach to conflict situations and the results are very heartening. Students are “buying into” this process and both victims and offenders report on its fairness, liking the fact that everyone gets a chance to “tell their story”. The college has been keen to harness the support of our parents in this venture and two workshops were especially run for them by Mr O’Connell. Claire Venon, Vice Principal stated, “Relationships are key to the happiness and success of any environment. Restorative Justice is a very powerful way of repairing these relationships if they break down. We all encounter difficulties throughout life and this method gives our children the tools to fix things for themselves when things go wrong, in a safe, non-violent and fair way. The principles of Restorative Justice are simple, logical and based on moral values. The results we have had so far are impressive.”

Caption for photo of Restorative Justice:

David Devennie, Youth Diversion Officer, PSNI; Terence O’Connell, Restorative Justice Pioneer, Mr Adrian Nugent, Senior Education Welfare Officer, SELB, Cathy McCann, Child Protection Officer, SELB and Mr Andrew Sleeth, ICD Principal pictured during the week long training in restorative justice practices at the college.