

Circle Time

At Wood End we use circles every day in class, in meetings, at playtime and lunchtime. Circles build connections between people, help us to find out about each other and what is important to us and establish shared understanding of community values.

What is Circle Time?

It is a dedicated time when the whole class/group sit together in a circle without any physical barriers. One person leads the circle and ensures that everyone is abiding by the circle rules of listening to each other and taking turns to speak. A circle starter will be introduced and ideas modelled if necessary. Each child will then have a turn to talk. An object is often used as a talking piece so that everyone knows whose turn it is to speak. Circles generally focus on feelings, preferences, hopes and dreams.

What is the purpose?

- Giving everyone a voice
- Different ideas and opinions are valued
- Enhance relationships and establish a respectful community
- Connection and similarities
- Build confidence and self-esteem
- Develop social skills
- Increase vocabulary

When are they held?

Usually they are held first thing every morning, 'check-in' circles. Circles are also run at the end of each lunchtime. Some lessons use circles and sometimes classes hold 'check-out' circles at the end of the day. Occasionally circles are used to resolve issues or conflicts. All adult meetings start with a circle too.

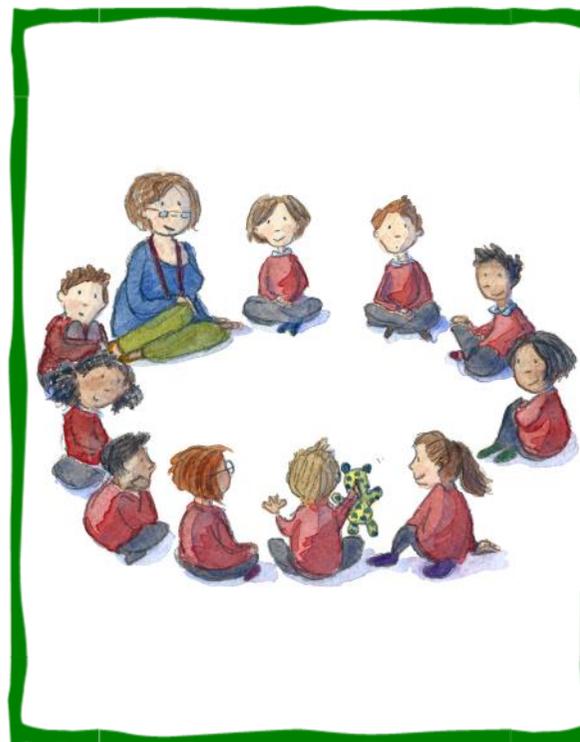
Example circle starters

- "What is your favourite colour / toy / TV programme?"
- "What makes you laugh/smile?"
- "Tomorrow I am hoping to..."
- "The best thing about today was..."
- "What makes a good friend?"

Try circle time at home, in the car or out and about, and have fun making your own circle starter ideas.

Let the children decide and discover more about each other.

If you would like a pack of circle starter ideas to use at home, please contact Mrs Rayner or Mrs Hall.



Restorative Practice



GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Restorative Practice

Restorative Practice is the commitment of all adults to build respectful relationships and a calm, positive environment.



How do we do that?

- This is done by having regular Circle Time, which ensures that everyone is listened to and has a voice. The circle leader encourages everyone to follow the agreed circle expectations. Adult-only meetings are all started with a circle.
- The circles focus on feelings, experiences, ideas and hopes.
- Time is spent on analysing adult body language and verbal language to ensure that we are dealing with all behaviour in a fair, firm and respectful manner.
- Using key questions such as 'what happened?' 'How do you think felt when that happened?' 'What do you think needs to happen now to make things better?' The adults help children to verbalise and take responsibility for their actions. We are teaching children that their actions have an effect on others and that there are consequences.
- Build respectful relationships with parents/carers and the wider community.

What is the purpose of Restorative Practice?

- To provide everyone with a sense of belonging to a community (e.g. school, class, group etc).
- To teach lifelong social skills, such as taking responsibility for own actions, listening and respecting differences.
- Improve behaviour and provide a calm environment so that each child can engage with learning.
- Less stress for everyone.

Where can I find out more about Restorative Practice?

- Speak to any member of staff or the school Lead Practitioners, Mrs Rayner and Mrs Hall.
- Visit the Restorative Foundation website www.restorativefoundation.org.uk

School, Families and Community Working Together

Restorative Practice is a method that helps everyone learn how to build good respectful relationships. It also provides a learning opportunity to understand how our actions affect others and the need to take responsibility for them.

By holding regular 'Circle Times', children are given the opportunity to gain lifelong skills in the following:



Respectful relationships: the heart of well-being, achievement and success