

# Philip's Tips for Conflict Resolution

Second Grade Teacher and Lower School Institutional Equity, Justice, and Belonging (IEJB) Coordinator Philip Mallari shares a few tips and scripts with families looking to incorporate Sandy Spring Friends School's approach to restorative justice when conflicts inevitably arise outside of school.

## Self-Regulation and Restorative Justice for Lower Schoolers

We teach students that feelings don't define us—if you're feeling angry, that doesn't mean you're an angry person. Social friction provides opportunities for learning, like when a student bumps into another kid accidentally—it can cause a runaway train of catastrophic thinking, including absolute statements like, "You are a mean/bad person."

Instead, I try to help students reframe the incident to the present moment with statements like, "We'll let this feeling pass before we find a solution." Then, we try to generate a range of possible solutions. It's part of the Restorative Justice Model.

**"Coaching students through the restorative justice model sets them up to be able to use this method to independently resolve conflict in the future."**

*—Philip Mallari, LS IEJB Coordinator*



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## General Tips for Adults

- Use a calm, neutral tone throughout.
- Avoid labeling a child as "wrong" or "bad."
- Wait until everyone is calm and ready to talk.
- Focus on empathy and active listening.
- Praise efforts to resolve the conflict collaboratively.
- Model restorative language, such as "I feel \_\_\_ when \_\_\_" and "What can we do to fix this together?"
- Give everyone grace, including yourself, recognizing it's hard to do in the moment.
- Remember that practice makes progress.

## Select Restorative Justice Scripts for Adults

- "Let's all take a deep breath and talk about what happened. I want to hear from each of you one at a time. Remember, we're here to understand, not to blame."
- "What happened from your point of view?"
- "How did it make you feel when that happened?"
- "Now that we've heard both sides, can we think together about why this might have happened? Is there anything you think the other person might not understand about how you feel?"
- "Everyone makes mistakes, and part of growing up is learning from them. Let's talk about what we can do to make things better."
- "What do you think you could do to make it better?"
- "What would you need from [name] to feel better or to move forward?"
- "How can we make sure this doesn't happen again?"
- "Do you both agree that this is fair?"
- "What can we learn from this situation to help us next time?"
- "I'm proud of both of you for working through this together. Let's check back in tomorrow to see how things are going."