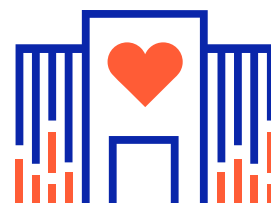




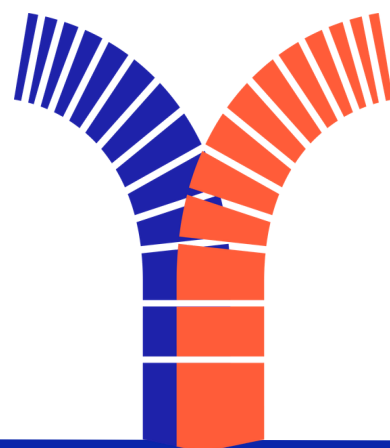
Care lots, move more, exclude less

Brief Summary for School Leaders

This work outlines Burnley High School's transformation into a trauma-informed and restorative practice school, focused on reducing exclusions, improving wellbeing, and tackling disadvantage through culture change.



Well Culture.



Key Messages

The Challenge

Before the culture shift:

- There were 132 suspensions between Sept–Dec 2023
- 37 students were suspended
- 160 learning days were lost
- 75% of suspended pupils were disadvantaged students

Many suspensions were linked to uniform issues and repeat behaviours. Staff recognised that punitive sanctions were not addressing underlying causes and often worsened disengagement.

The school concluded that:

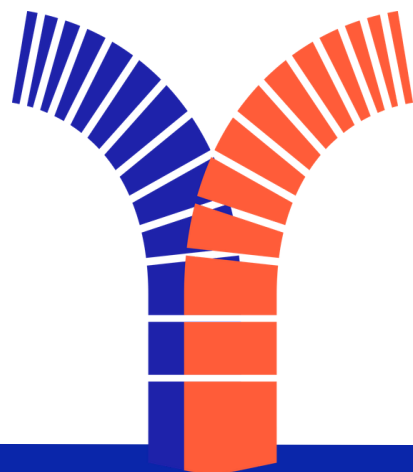
- sanctions did not address the “why” behind behaviour
- pupils fell further behind academically
- behaviours were repeated
- some students became disconnected from school rather than supported by it

The culture shift

The transformation began gradually and intentionally.

Key Milestones

- 2021: Headteacher Emma Lewis introduced staff training inspired by the New Zealand All Blacks and culture-driven leadership.
- 2023: Following ResearchEd input from Tom Bellwood, the school reviewed its values and identity.
- Stakeholder engagement: Students, parents, teachers and governors were consulted on what it means to be part of Burnley High School.
- September 2023: New school values were launched and explicitly taught and modelled across the school community.



Introducing a trauma informed & restorative approach

In response to repeat suspensions and ineffective sanctions, the school:

1. Reviewed suspension data
2. Researched trauma-informed and restorative practice
3. Delivered whole-staff trauma-informed training
4. Built staff understanding around the "why"
5. Developed micro-scripted restorative playbooks with staff collaboration

Instead of focusing on punishment, conversations shifted towards:

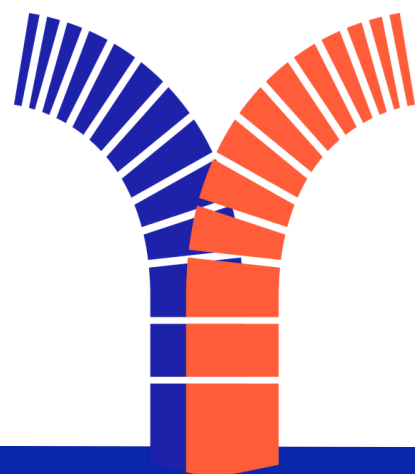
- understanding what happened
- recognising impact on others
- rebuilding relationships
- helping pupils move forward responsibly

Questions used in restorative conversations included:

- "What happened?"
- "Who has been affected?"
- "What do you need to do to move on?"
- "What needs to happen now?"

The philosophy became:

"If we let them off, we let them down."



The Impact

The impact was significant and measurable.

Suspension Reduction

Between Sept–Dec 2024:

- 0 suspensions
- 0 students suspended
- 0 learning days lost

Compared to:

- 132 suspensions and 160 lost learning days the previous year.

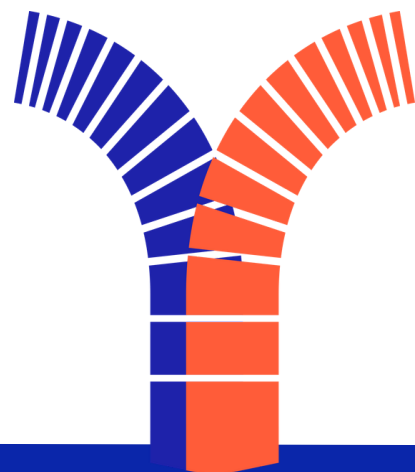
Wider Outcomes

The school also reported:

- attendance above national and local averages
- strongest outcomes in the Burnley area
- increased student participation in sport
- improved student voice and wellbeing
- stronger parental engagement
- low staff turnover and absence
- highly positive staff wellbeing feedback

The school replaced detentions with restorative approaches and received multiple awards, including:

- YST 2025 Outstanding Contribution to your Place
- TeacherTapp Most Improved Wellbeing Award
- Educate Awards 2025 winners



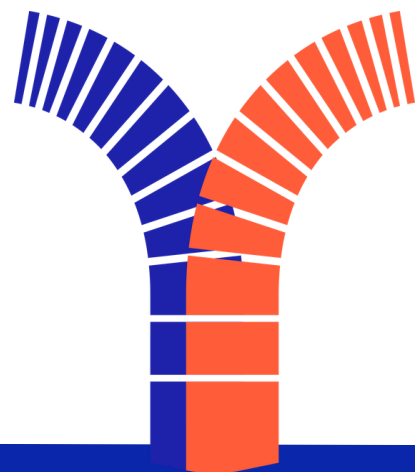
The Core message

Burnley High School's experience demonstrates how a values-led, trauma-informed, restorative culture can:

- **reduce exclusions entirely**
- **improve wellbeing and engagement**
- **strengthen relationships**
- **raise outcomes**
- **create a more inclusive school environment**

The school describes this as:

"the best and most impactful change we have made as a school."





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