



YOUTH  
SPORT  
TRUST

WELL  
SCHOOL  
COMMUNITY

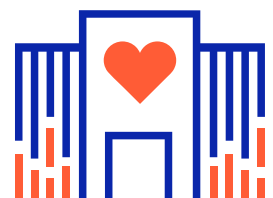


## Care first, move more, exclude less: Top tips

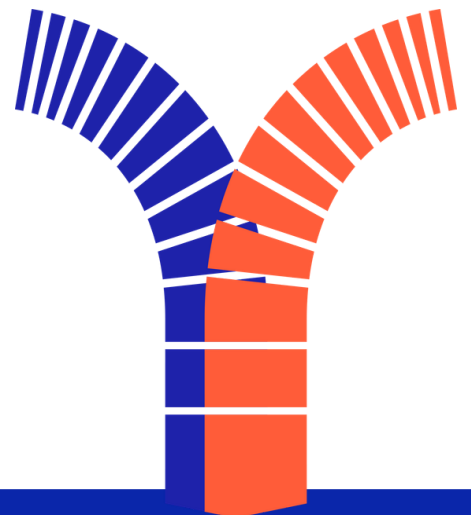
Schools across the country are facing increasing challenges around:

- behaviour
- attendance
- staff wellbeing
- disengagement
- rising suspensions and exclusions

This guide shares practical tips for schools wanting to begin a similar journey to Burnley High School



*Well Culture.*



This resource has been designed based on the Well Schools Well Culture pillar.



## 01 Start with Your Vision and 'Why'

Successful culture change begins with a shared moral purpose.

Before introducing new systems or strategies, ask:

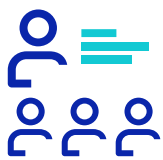
- Why are current approaches not working?
- What outcomes do we want for young people?
- What kind of school culture are we trying to create?
- How do we want pupils and staff to feel every day?

Top Tip

Focus conversations on:

- inclusion
- belonging
- relationships
- learning time
- wellbeing
- dignity

Avoid positioning restorative practice as "being soft." It is about accountability with support.



## 02 Review your data honestly

Look beyond headline behaviour figures.

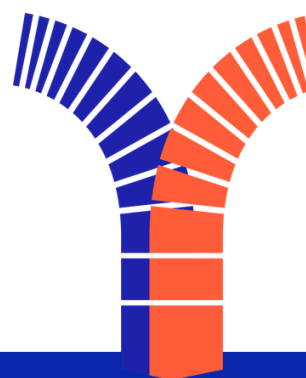
Analyse:

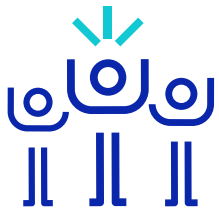
- repeat suspensions
- reasons for sanctions
- disadvantaged/SEND representation
- lost learning time
- attendance patterns
- staff wellbeing and turnover
- parental complaints and engagement

Top Tip

Look for:

- repeated behaviours from the same pupils
- sanctions that are not changing outcomes
- patterns linked to unmet needs or school systems





### 03 Bring your staff with you early

Culture change only works when staff understand and believe in the approach.

Invest time in:

- professional learning
- open discussion
- addressing concerns honestly
- building shared language

Top Tip

Explain:

- the neuroscience of behaviour
- the impact of trauma and stress
- why punitive cycles often fail
- how restorative practice improves accountability

Staff need to understand the “why” before they can consistently deliver the “how.”



### 04 Define and teach your values

Values cannot just live on posters.

Successful schools:

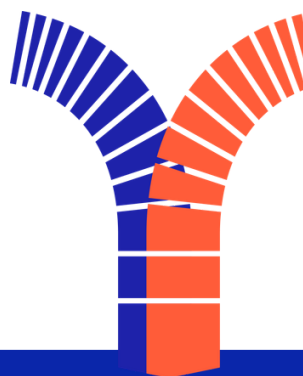
- co-construct values with stakeholders
- teach them explicitly
- model them consistently
- use them in everyday language and decision-making

Top Tip

Ask:

- What does respect look like here?
- What does belonging feel like?
- How do adults model calm and consistency?

Ensure pupils, staff and families all hear the same messages.





## 05 Reduce public confrontation

Many behaviour escalations happen because young people feel shamed, cornered or dysregulated.

Top Tip

Train staff to:

- regulate first, respond second
- avoid power struggles
- use private conversations where possible
- separate behaviour from identity

Example:

Instead of:

"You're being disrespectful."

Try:

"Something's not gone well here. Let's work through it."



## 06 Replace punitive with restorative

The goal is not avoiding consequences – it is changing behaviour through reflection, repair and relationships.

Move from:

- "What rule did you break?"
- to:
- "What happened?"
- "Who was affected?"
- "What needs to happen now?"

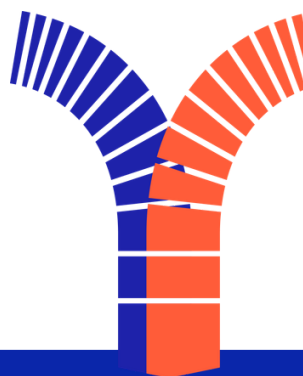
Top Tip

Develop simple restorative scripts or "playbooks" for staff to use consistently.

Keep language:

- calm
- curious
- non-confrontational
- relational

Consistency matters more than perfection.





## 07 Prioritise inclusion in the classroom

Every suspension means lost learning and often deeper disengagement.

Before removing a pupil, ask:

- What support has already been tried?
- What need is driving this behaviour?
- How can we repair and reintegrate successfully?

Top Tip

Create internal restorative responses before considering exclusion:

- reflection spaces
- restorative meetings
- check-ins
- mentoring
- movement breaks
- trusted adult support



## 08 Involve families as partners

Families should feel supported, not judged.

Top Tip

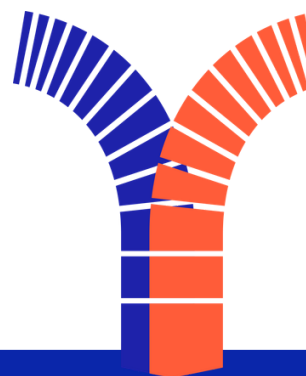
Shift communication from:

- "Your child has done..."
- to:
- "We want to work together to support..."

Build trust through:

- regular positive contact
- restorative meetings
- empathy
- transparency

Parents are far more likely to engage when they feel respected.



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## 09 Protect staff wellbeing



Restorative practice only succeeds when staff feel psychologically safe and supported.

Top Tip

Create structures for:

- staff voice
- wellbeing initiatives
- peer support
- active listening
- workload reduction where possible

Calm adults create calm schools.

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## 10 Accept change takes time



This is not a quick-fix programme.

There will be:

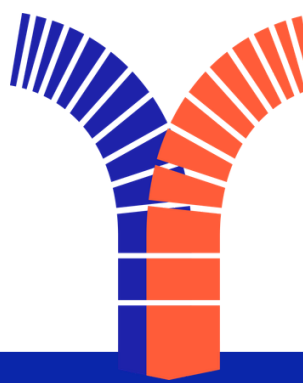
- setbacks
- scepticism
- inconsistency
- difficult moments

Top Tip

Celebrate small wins:

- reduced repeat incidents
- improved relationships
- positive student voice
- better attendance
- calmer corridors
- improved staff morale

Sustainable change happens gradually through consistency.





# Timelines

## Month 1–2

- Review behaviour and suspension data
- Gather stakeholder voice
- Establish vision and values
- Identify training needs

## Month 3–4

- Deliver trauma-informed training
- Introduce restorative language
- Develop behaviour scripts/playbooks
- Pilot restorative approaches with key teams

## Month 5–6

- Embed routines and coaching
  - Review impact regularly
  - Share success stories
  - Refine systems collaboratively
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# Key Principles & Reflections

Care lots

Relationships come first.

Move more

Keep young people engaged in learning, movement and belonging.

Exclude less

Use exclusion only when absolutely necessary.

Final Reflection

Trauma-informed and restorative practice is not about lowering standards.

It is about:

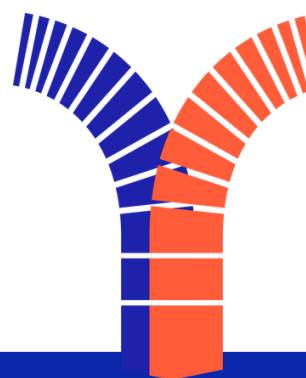
- maintaining high expectations with humanity
- understanding behaviour rather than simply punishing it
- building a culture where young people can repair mistakes and succeed

The most powerful shifts happen when schools move from asking:

"How do we punish this behaviour?"

to:

"What happened, and how do we help this young person move forward?"





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