Implementing Restorative Justice in Further Education Institutions

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LITERATURE

Crime & Conflicts in Education

- Schools regularly deal with crime and conflicts (Porteous, 1998; 2014), which include:
  - Name calling in general
  - Racist name calling
  - Threats with violence
  - Assaults
  - Sexual harassment
  - Students carrying weapons
  - Things taken off students
  - Drugs related offences
  - Tension from the streets are brought in school

- '…*provided quite graphic and convincing evidence of the high levels of anti-social behaviour and violence which children and young people experience*' (Porteous, 2014: 50).

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Restorative Approaches (RA) in Practice

- **The 'National Evaluation of the Restorative Justice in Schools Programme' (Bitel, 2005):**
  - Minor impact on exclusion
  - No impact on student attitude (except for a small number of schools who adopted RJ as a whole school approach)
  - 19% of conferences included parents
  - 92% of conferences reached successful agreements
  - Running conferences is time consuming

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- **Scottish Executive Funded Project (see: Kane et al., 2007; Kane et al., 2008; McCluskey et al., 2008a):**

  - **Primary Schools:**
    - Impact was positive
    - RA implementation had different starting points, aims and strategies
    - RA helped to create a calm and positive atmosphere; and, helped students to develop conflict resolutions skills
    - Improved school ethos and creating positive relationship

  - **Secondary Schools:**
    - Impact of RA varied
    - Slow implementation
    - Difficulty in changing culture
    - Continued use of punitive measures
    - Time in implementing RA

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- McCluskey et al. (2011) – Systematic Review
  - Whole School Approach
  - Partial School Approach
  - Reactive School Approach
- Research on RA in education predominantly focuses on primary and secondary schools
- Research on RA in education is limited in UK, especially in specific sectors: *Pupil Referral Units (PRU)*, *Special Schools* and the *Further Education (FE) sector*.

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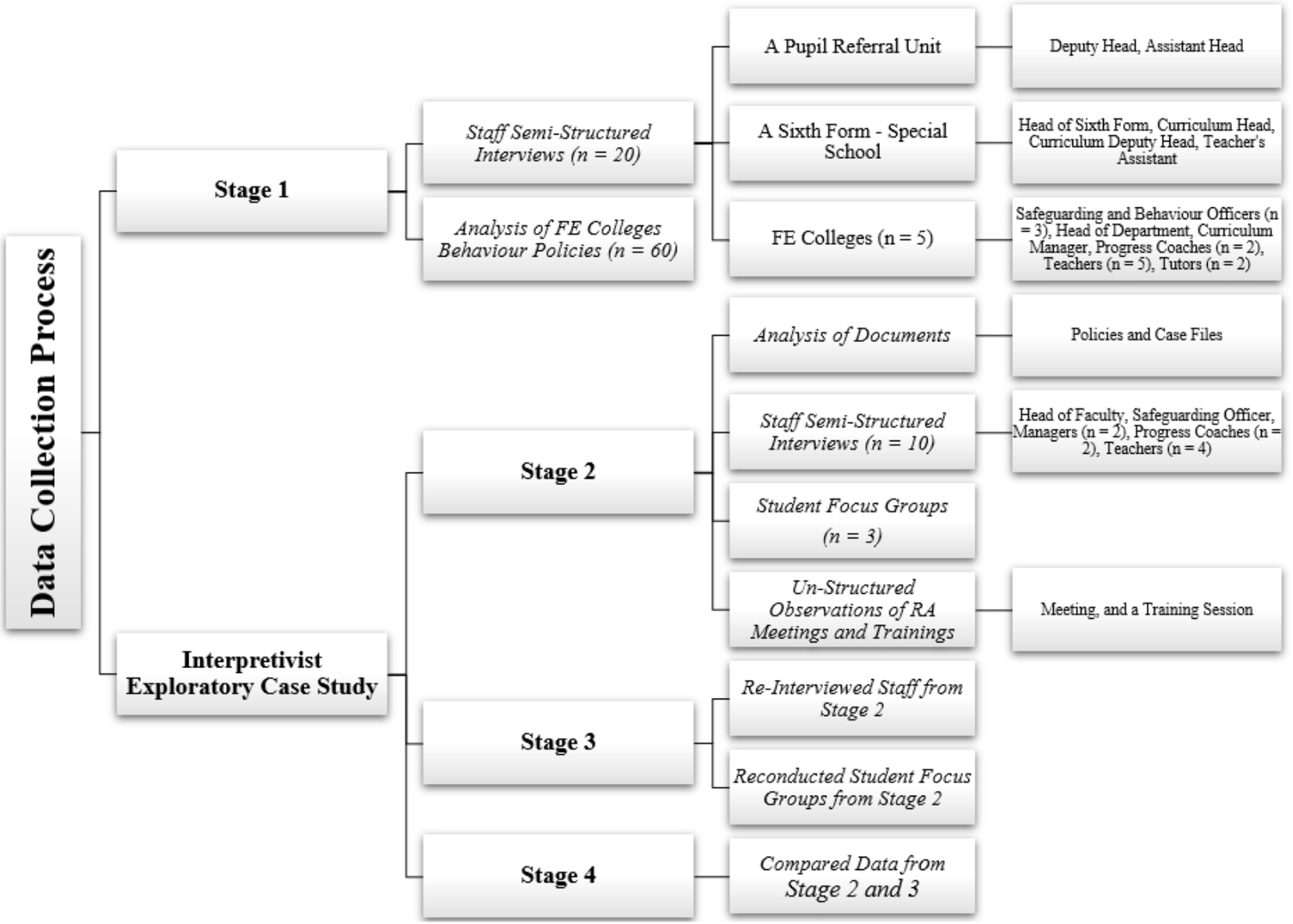
Data Collection Process



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Challenges Faced in Further Education

- Daily Altercations
- Physical Assaults (student on student & student on staff)
- Verbal Assaults (student on student & student on staff)
- Family Feuds
- Drugs
- Possessing a Knife
- Possessing a Fire arm
- Attendance & Punctuality
- **Social Media**
- Staff Feeling Vulnerable and Threatened

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Staff are feeling more threatened this year than any other year. There…seems to be a bit of a…menacing shift in some of the students…We had an incident at one of our other sites where somebody had come in with a gun…there is just a whole change in the country really, isn't there? I think staff feel a bit vulnerable when they're having to deal with…challenging behaviour…staff are really reluctant to challenge now because they're frightened of what the repercussions are. Staff are saying that openly to me…A couple of staff have said, "It's only a matter of time before somebody is killed." **[Bethany, Teacher, FE College (Case Study)]**

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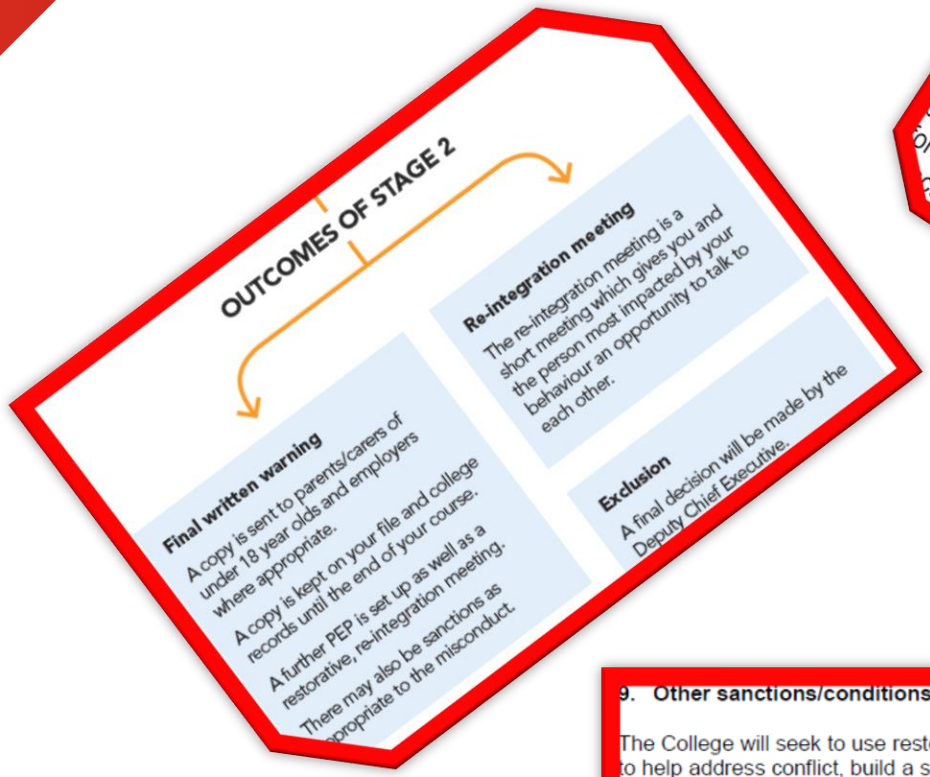
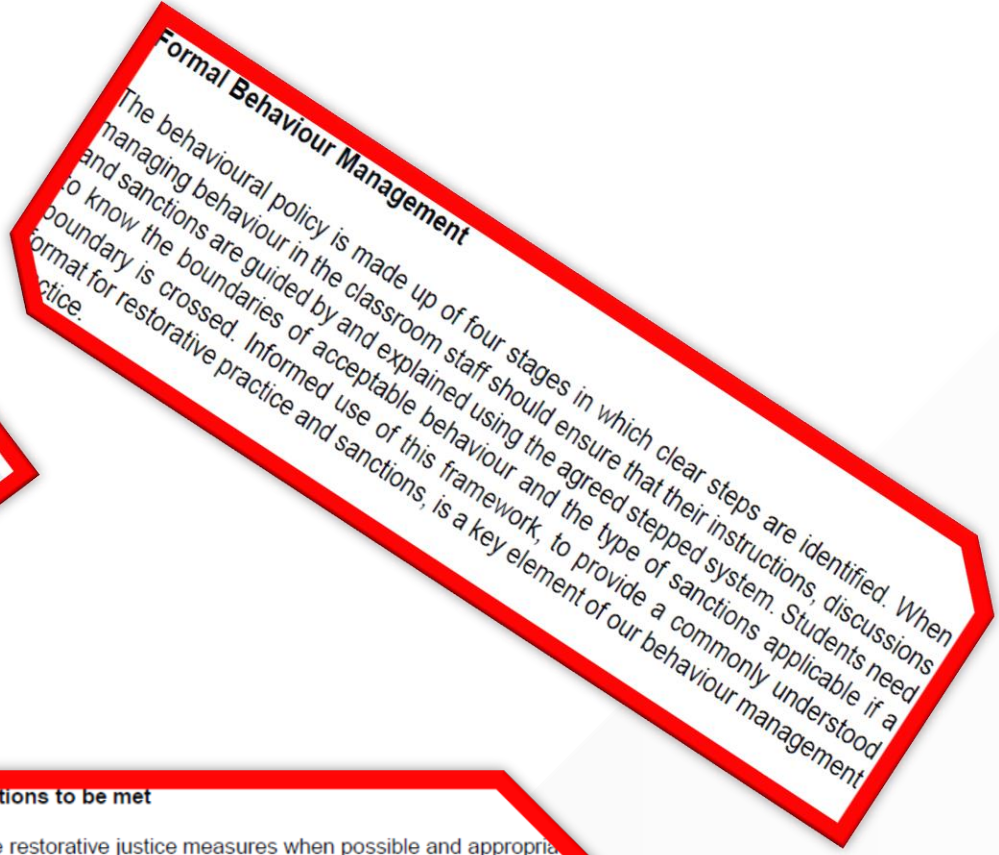
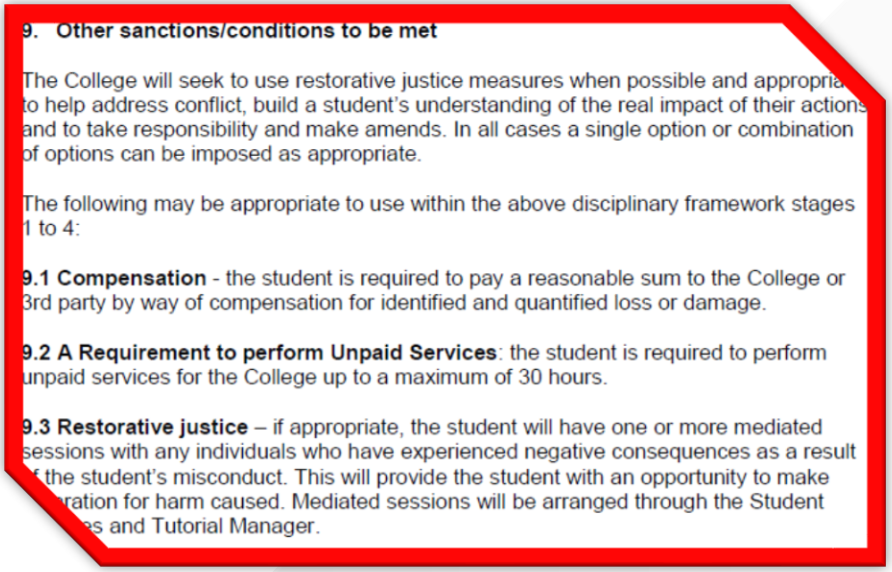
Behaviour Policies







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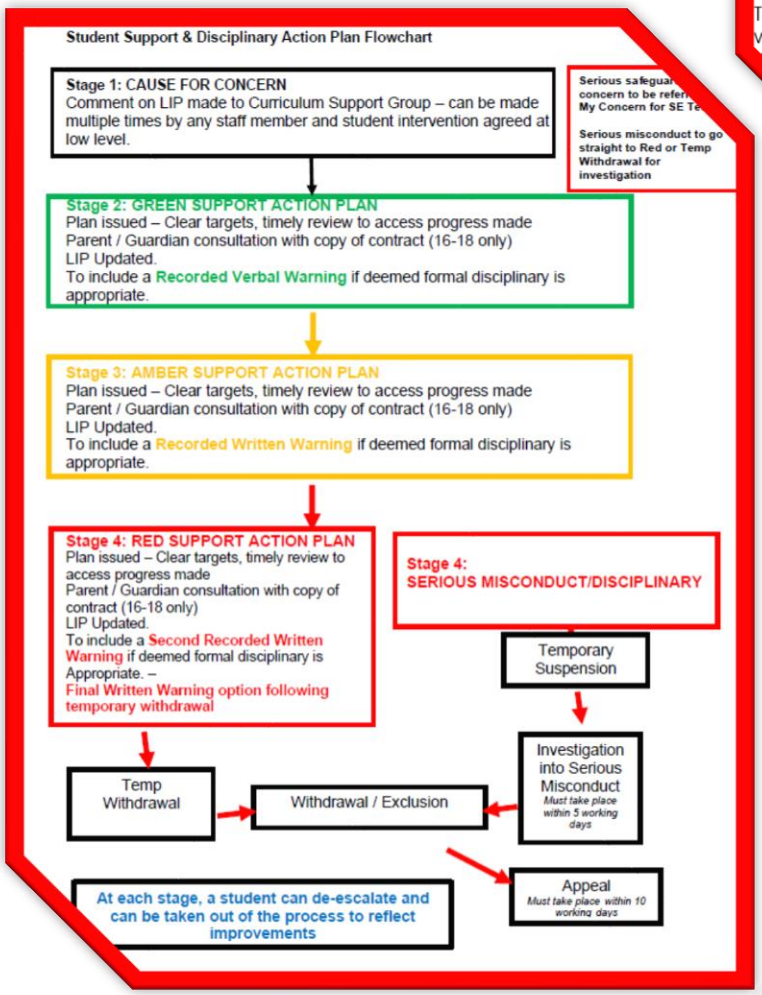
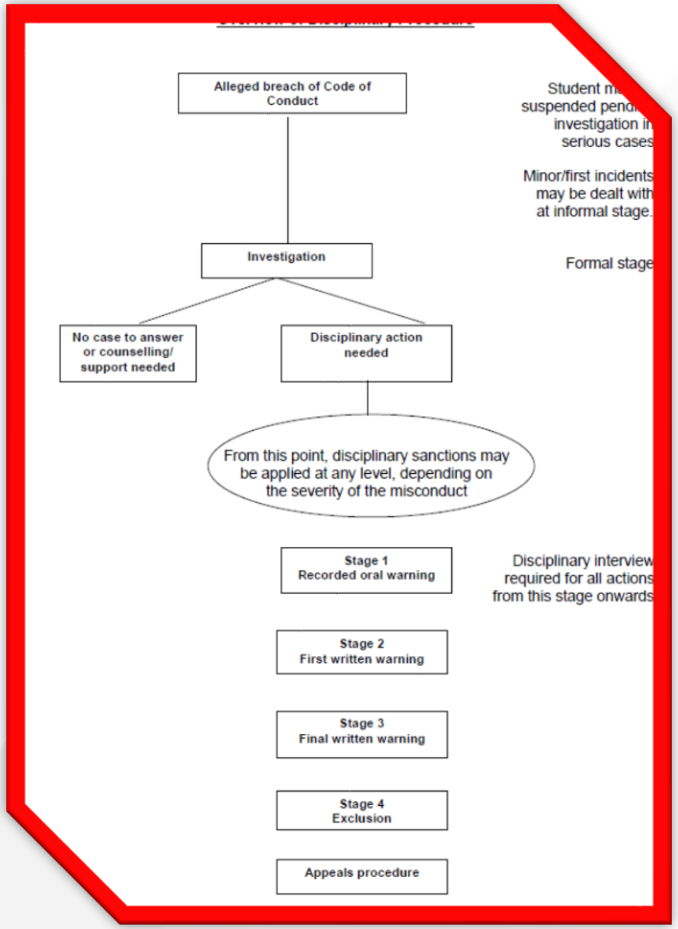
2. Policy

The College will support students' development whilst at College and will take action to ensure students comply with the College Code of Conduct and policies to make academic progress.

The College will set targets at each stage of the Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure. These will be targets for improvement and will be SMART, (Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-constrained).





Further Findings - Understanding

- Repair/Restore
- Remorse
- Closure/Moving on
- Voice
- Understanding (Impact and consequences)
- Responsibility
- Reflection
- Make Amends
- Empower
- Healing Process

- Story Telling
- Empathy
- Opportunity
- Inclusive
- Supportive
- Student Needs
- Building Relationships, Equality, Trust & Confidence
- Developing Problem Solving Skills
- Learning (Diffusing/Life Skills)

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I know that with RJ sometimes, you know, shame has a greater impact, and one of the things about shame is that you teach, and you instil people about humility and about, obviously, the impact that it has. How would they feel if they were in that position, would they face up to their victim?...**[Musa, Safeguarding and Behaviour Officer, FE College]**

- *Re-Integrative Shaming* (Braithwaite, 1989)
- Shame has no place in RA (Ruggiero, 2010; 2011)
- British Asian girls are shamed twice, first in the Criminal Justice System and then in their own community (Toor, 2009)

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Implementation – Successes

- Local government initiative
- Top down & bottoms up approach
- Working collectively
- Staff development days
- Training small teams
- Low cost/budget (in-house training)
- Support from a qualified team (Progress Coaches)

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Implementation – Constraints/Limitations

- Culture change
- Funding cuts
- Cost
- Timetabling (facilitation)
- Lack of confidence
- Confusion on Role and Responsibility
- Space
- Mergers & Restructure
- Training (size of institution & logistics)
- Staff turnover
- Time (implementation and culture change)

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