

Youth Justice

Restorative Justice Case Study: Referral from the Children's Reporter

An 11 year-old was referred to the Restorative Justice Service from the Children's Reporter office for two offences (Sept/Oct 2006) of vandalism, namely striking golf balls towards a school building – breaking windows and kicking sections off a residential property's boundary brick wall. The cost of repairs was estimated to be £100 for the school and £200 for the private residence.

The young person had two previous offences in 2005/2006. They lived at home with two younger siblings and their mother. No other issues were highlighted.

On our initial visit, the young person admitted and explained their part in each incident. They explained that they had been playing golf in an open grassy area when another peer started to aim golf balls towards the school building. The young person admitted to joining in with this for a short time before moving away. The young person had been made aware of some of the potential consequences of his actions by their mother and appeared to have understood these. The young person was quite remorseful and willing to put it right with the school.

In the second incident again the young person was influenced to copy another peer and kick bricks off a wall. However a relative of the resident came out and caught hold of the young person and gave him a rollicking, which appeared to have given the young person a bit of a fright. The young person reported that they had since met with the resident and given an apology which they believed was accepted at the time. Although a bit apprehensive and not wishing to meet with the relative, the young person wished to make amends for his actions and was very willing to participate with the Service in order to confirm whether the apology was acceptable and sufficient amends for the incident.

The people harmed all participated with the Service. The school requested that the young person could carry out a Reparative Task for them in order to repay the time lost in a staff member tidying up and dealing with the above offence.

The young person willingly agreed to the reparative task and carried it out with diligence and good attitude. The young person learned about the impact their actions had had on the school and its pupils/staff and was able to verbalise a sincere apology to them, which was accepted.

The two people harmed confirmed that the young person had previously apologised to them but as there was quite an amount of damage (financial costs), requested that the young person carry out a reparative task for the benefit of someone elderly within the local community for a few (token) hours. The young person again willingly agreed to do this and an elderly resident with disabilities was identified locally as requiring help with weeding/pruning within their garden. The young person worked tirelessly for two hours in the garden and the work carried out was very much appreciated. The young person quickly learned that people in the community do notice and appreciate young people giving a helping hand, as several acknowledged the young person and gave praise during the task. This highlighted that there were benefits to working for the community rather than destroying it, which was acknowledged by the young person. They are now endeavouring not to repeat such actions.

AM Campbell, Sacro Youth Justice Worker, May 2007

Perth & Kinross Youth Justice Service

