

HAVING YOUR SAY



>> FROM TOP TO BOTTOM!

In keeping with best practice, the Board of Governors should discuss key issues with the school council. This can help when looking at any issues involving pupils.

Why

Children and young people have the right to have their opinions considered when decisions are being made that affect their lives.

This will also help the school do what it has to according to law and help it meet the needs of the UNCRC (see Insert 1).

The main principles drawn from the UNCRC regarding children's participation (Article 12) are:

- The right for all children to express their views
- The right to express their views freely
- The right to be heard in all matters affecting them
- The right to have their views taken seriously, in accordance with their age and maturity

How

To create **best** practice, senior management need to create an environment to empower pupils to participate at Board of Governors meetings in a meaningful way.

One of the key areas in which the Board of Governors can involve the school council is through the School Development Plan. This gives the opportunity for pupils to express their views on the whole school's development. Input into the School Development Plan needs the appropriate amount of time allocated, so that

the school council can give all pupils the opportunity to have their opinions heard.

Involving pupils early in the process ensures that pupils' views are placed at the centre of the School Development Planning process and are not simply added at the end of it.

Legislation says that pupils must be consulted in the development of key policies (see Insert 1), in areas which directly affect them, such as the anti-bullying and discipline policies. The Board of Governors could develop creative ways of discussing key issues with pupils in less formal ways. These creative methods could be developed in partnership with the school council and rolled out across the whole school.

Including the school council in this process creates a sense of ownership and makes the policies more relevant to the pupils.

As in all forms of participation with children and young people, there are different levels of involvement.

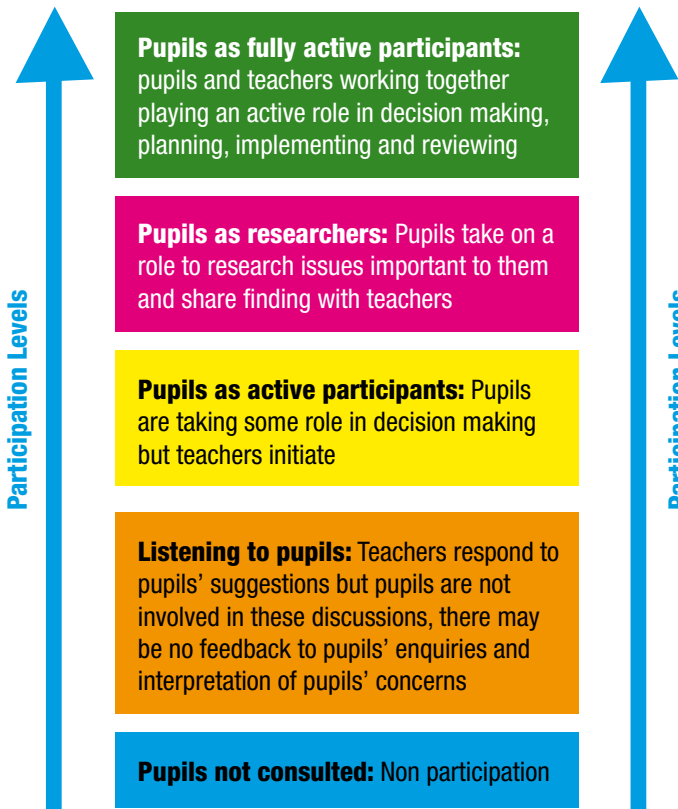


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Where is your school on the journey?



Checklist

Have you:

Tick

1. Involved the school council in the early stages of discussion []
2. Provided the school council with information on key issues []
3. Kept jargon to a minimum []
4. Adapted any meetings to meet pupils' needs, including meeting within the school day []
5. A process that will guarantee that pupils views would be listened to []

For further information on how the Board of Governors and the senior management team can liaise with, work with and develop a framework to include pupils in the school business, you may wish to visit the following websites:

Participation for Schools:

www.participationforschools.org.uk

Hear by Right, National Youth Agency:

www.nya.org.uk

Association for Citizenship Teaching:

www.teachingcitizenship.co.uk

School Councils Wales:

www.schoolcouncilswales.org.uk

National School Board Association, USA:

www.nsba.org

Dept. of Education, New South Wales:

www.schools.nsw.edu.au

Dept. of Education, State of Victoria:

www.education.vic.gov.au

Ministry of Education, Ontario:

www.edu.gov.on.ca

Alberta School Council Resource Manual:

www.ahsca.ab.ca

