GETTING EVERYONE INVOLVED!

PUPILS' VOICES: MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

Everyone in the school should agree to the concept and ethos of pupil participation before a structure is set-up. This includes the pupils, principal, board members, teaching and non-teaching staff and parents.

Why

Everyone within the school community needs to value and support the pupils in order for the process to be successful. There needs to be a sense of ownership from the whole school community so the pupil participation forum can draw vital support from each year group and from staff.

This is important as pupil participation forums, at different times throughout their development, will need specific training on issues that may be delivered from within the school.

How

It is vital for both pupils and staff to play an active role in developing the forum.

Usually a named teacher works with the forum and is the link person between pupils, staff and management. The school should demonstrate its commitment to the process by ensuring the link teacher has direct access to senior management.

The list below helps identify possible steps to planning a participative process:

- Attend pupil meetings to discuss pupil participation, e.g. class meetings, year meetings and assemblies or informal discussions in the playground;

- Ask pupils what they would like to see happening in their pupil participation forum;
- Encourage pupils to conduct a survey to determine their feelings on various issues;
- Organise visits to other schools to share learning and examples of good practice;
- Pupils and/or link teacher could meet with the principal or Board of Governors about setting up a pupil participation forum. However, before this happens, they should:
    - Be clear about what they want to achieve;
    - Have prepared an action plan based on the feedback from pupils. This should be written and clearly stated in as few words as possible and, for example, could include ideas such as building up membership of the forum gradually or working on one issue as a pilot.

If managed and run well, experience in other schools shows that pupil participation forums can have a positive impact on the whole school environment through;

- Pupils helping resolve conflicts amongst their peers;
- Positive peer leadership helping develop responsibility;
- Teachers and pupils can work together and share responsibility for maintaining good behaviour;
- Instances of disruptive behaviour, e.g. vandalism and bullying may be reduced. This may have a positive impact on teacher-pupil relationships and the school environment;
- Improved communication between pupils and teachers, senior management and governors;
- The identification of shared goals between the pupils and the adult population of the school.

OUR VOICE TOGETHER

HAVING OUR SAY

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

OUR VOICE MATTERS

NICCY
PROMOTING THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

GETTING EVERYONE INVOLVED!

PUPILS' VOICES: MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

Checklist

Have you: **Tick**

1. Consulted pupils on the need for and support of a pupil participation forum ☐

2. Consulted staff and governors on the need for and support of a pupil participation forum ☐

3. Agreed strategies on building support for the pupil participation forum from within the whole school community ☐

4. Agreement for the pupil participation forum ☐

5. Full support from the whole school community ☐

6. Drawn up an action plan as part of the School Development Plan ☐

For further information and support on how to get started in developing your school forum; finding out how pupils can play a participative role within the school and how to get support from everyone within the school, you may wish to visit the following websites:

Department of Education's (NI) Pupil participation website:
www.deni.gov.uk/articles/school-councils-and-pupil-participation

School Council of Ireland Online:
http://www.studentcouncil.ie/

NCB NI Participation Support Programme for Schools:
http://www.ncb.org.uk/who-we-are/northern-ireland

School Councils UK:
http://www.schoolcouncils.org/

Student Voice (UK)
http://www.studentvoice.co.uk/

Smart School Councils Community
http://www.smartschoolcouncils.org.uk/

Pupil Voices Wales
http://www.pupilvoicewales.org.uk/

Dept. of Education, New South Wales:
http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studleadsrc/index.php

Dept. of Education, State of Victoria:
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/schoolcouncil.aspx

You can find out more about NICCY and the Pupils' Voices programme at **www.niccy.org**, **028 9031 1616** and **participation@niccy.org**. Please contact the Communications team at NICCY if you require alternative formats of this material.

NICCY
PROMOTING THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE