

VOTE FOR ME!

PUPILS' VOICES: MAKING A DIFFERENCE!



A key and integral part of setting up a pupil participation forum is ensuring the election of members is fair, open and supportive to all pupils.

Why

A pupil participation forum is a structure through which all pupils can have their say. This means that every pupil has the right to take part in electing their representatives.

To encourage people to vote fairly, it is important to make sure that the pupils understand why they are voting, and what qualities are required in an effective representative.

The link teacher (see insert 3) in consultation with pupils, senior staff and / or the Board of Governors will draw up rules to define the election procedures, number of pupils on the forum, and how long they can sit on the forum for. Don't forget, procedures can be changed and refined for future elections.

Some small schools may like to have representatives from each class on the forum.

For larger schools, there may be a representative from each year sitting on the forum.

How

Information should be circulated and all pupils should know well in advance that **nominations** are being sought.

Those who want to be elected to the pupil participation forum should submit written nomination forms before the election and have at least two other pupils endorse them. Nomination forms should be freely available in the school. Nominations should be inclusive reflecting for example gender, religion, special needs and ethnic background of the school population.

Following nominations the next stage is the election. There are many ways to elect pupils to the pupil participation forum but the following rules should apply in any election:

- Only pupils can be elected to the pupil participation forum;
- The election procedure is agreed in advance, e.g. first past the post or proportional representation;
- Only pupils can vote in the election;
- One pupil, one vote – everyone has a vote;
- Pupils know where and when voting will take place;
- Voting is a personal choice and should be held by secret ballot;
- Pupils count the votes, supervised by a teacher or parent (some schools have asked officials from, for example, the electoral office to carry this out);
- The pupil participation forum represents all pupils in the school.



VOTE FOR ME!



PUPILS' VOICES: MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

Checklist

Have you:

1. Advertised the election and identified the method of selecting candidates
2. Received candidates' applications
3. Ensured each class/year has been able to nominate candidates
4. Provided candidates with support for developing manifestos, admin etc
5. Provided time for candidates to share their manifesto
6. Organised a voting procedure
7. Ensured independence of voting and counting procedures
8. Introduced elected members to staff and pupils

Tick



For further information and support on how to organise an election, the different types of elections and for sample ballot papers and nomination forms 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/>

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>

Alberta School Council Resource Manual:

<http://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca/?Effectiveness>



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.