



Ysgol Bro Gwaun

Pupil Participation Policy

Polisi Cyfranogiad Disgyblion

Mae copi caled o bob polisi ar gael yn swyddfa'r Ysgol, gyda dyddiad dechrau, dyddiad adolygu a llofnod bob rhanddeiliad oedd yn rhan o greu'r polisi. Cysylltwch a'r swyddfa am fwy o fanylion.

A hard copy of all policies are held in the School office, they include a start date, a review date and signatures of all stakeholders involved in the creation of the policy. Please contact the School Office for more information.

PUPIL PARTICIPATION

1.0 Definition

Pupil Participation is about children and young people having their voice heard when decisions are being made that affect them and being actively involved in decision-making processes. The Welsh Government has adopted the following definition, which itself came from consultation with young people:

“Participation means that it is my right to be involved in making decisions, planning and reviewing any action that might affect me. Having a voice, having a choice.”

2.0 Pupil Participation in context

International

The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** is an international agreement that protects the human rights of children under the age of 18. The UNCRC sets out these rights in 54 articles. Several of these articles are particularly relevant to educational settings. Article 13 and 17 set out the right of children and young people to access and share reliable information; whilst Articles 28-30 set out the right to an education which develops every child’s personality and talents to the full, in the context of their language and culture.

The basis for pupil voice is to be found in **Article 12 of the UNCRC**, which sets out the right of children and young people to express an opinion and to have that opinion taken into account when decisions are being made on any matter that affects them. This Article is seen as particularly important, in that it is an enabling right, empowering and supporting children and young people to access the broader rights under the UNCRC.

National

Wales is the first country in the United Kingdom to embed the principles of the UNCRC into legislation. The Children and Young Persons (Wales) Rights Measure (2011) places a duty on Welsh ministers to have “due regard” to the rights and obligations within the UNCRC when making any new policies or laws. The first **Children’s Commissioner** in the United Kingdom was created in Wales in 2001 with an independent role in protecting children and young people’s rights.

The Welsh Government’s **National Standards for Children and Young People’s Participation** have been developed for and with young people, setting out how children and young people can be involved in decision-making in meaningful and effective ways. (Appendix 2)

Local

Pembrokeshire has set out its priorities and actions for improving and enhancing children's and young people's rights and participation in the strategy document – **A Strategy for the Participation and Rights of Children and Young People in Pembrokeshire 2013-2016**. The strategy commits Pembrokeshire County Council to formally adopt the UNCRC and ensure it is incorporated into everything the council does that may impact upon the lives of children and young people living in Pembrokeshire.

A Pledge for Children and Young People has been developed in 2014 which reflects Pembrokeshire's commitment to upholding rights under the UNCRC. A Children's and Young People's Rights Office has been established which will support schools to meet national standards in participation by achievement of the national Kitemark award for the **National Standards for Children and Young People's Participation**.

3.0 Rationale

Our school recognises that children and young people who participate in decision-making enjoy enhanced self-esteem and motivation, gain important personal, social and organisational skills and become familiar with group and democratic processes. We believe that pupil involvement in decision-making leads to better relationships, more relevant and effective policies, and better learning. Our school is committed to developing effective pupil participation with pupils and adults working together as partners ensuring that the school provides the best possible learning environment for all.

In line with our strategic equalities plan, we recognise the importance of ensuring opportunities to participate in decision-making processes are made accessible to **all** pupils, including those more vulnerable pupils, so that they feel included and involved in the school community and know that their views count. **We recognise that pupil voice in schools is closely linked to the safeguarding of children and young people. Pupils who are empowered to raise concerns are better safeguarded, and any potential issues can be dealt with more effectively and promptly.**

4.0 Strategic aims

Participation is a process rather than an event, with varying degrees of involvement, from being consulted on a predetermined issue to young people choosing their agenda, making their own decisions and taking them forward. Our school aims to develop participatory practice so that all pupils have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of consultation and decision-making activities.

Roger Hart, in his 1992 essay "Children's Rights and Participation – from Tokenism to Citizenship", developed the concept of a "ladder of participation". In line with the Pembrokeshire Participation Strategy, where Hart's ladder is illustrated, our school aims to use the Hart's ladder concept to challenge

ourselves to work at the highest possible levels of the ladder in everything we do.

5.0 Developing a whole school approach

Pupil participation is embedded in our school development plan, regularly discussed at staff meetings and reviewed at Governing Body meetings. We encourage a consistent and positive attitude to pupil participation by ensuring that all staff, including non-teaching staff:

- understand what is meant by pupil participation;
- understand the benefits of pupil participation for individual pupils and staff and for the whole school community;
- are clear about their role in terms of supporting pupil participation;
- are kept well informed about issues being discussed and proposals put forward by the school council and other pupil representative groups.

6.0 Key roles and responsibilities

In order to ensure that pupil participation is taken forward in a way that is strategic and holistic and that pupils are included in decision-making processes as a matter of course, *Ysgol Bro Gwaun* has established the following key roles:

Designated Governor for Pupil Participation

The designated governors for Pupil Participation are Mrs Michelle Bateman and Mr Matthew Jenkins.

The designated governors should undertake Pupil Participation training and has the following responsibilities:

- ensuring that the Governing Body is aware of the benefits of developing a whole-school approach to pupil participation;
- encouraging the Governing Body to adopt the Welsh Government's National Standards for Children and Young People's Participation for Wales to underpin their ways of working when involving pupils in decision-making;
- maintaining active links between the Governing Body and pupil representative groups. This may entail attending School Council or other meetings, and - in secondary schools - ensuring that the School Council is aware of their right to nominate two pupils from amongst their membership as Associate Pupil Governors to represent pupils' views on the Governing Body;

- ensuring that Pupil Participation is a standing item on Governing Body meetings, and encourage the school council and other representative pupil groups to contribute their views and ideas;
- ensuring that pupils are actively involved in a timely and appropriate manner when policies and procedures which affect them are being planned, reviewed and evaluated;
- ensuring a good flow of communication and feedback between the Governing Body and pupils, using the networks and channels of communication that are in place;
- working with Senior Leaders to promote a whole-school approach to Pupil Participation and to communicate this approach to staff, partners/carers and local partners;
- encouraging the Governing Body to celebrate the role of pupils as active citizens in improving their learning and environment.

Named member of the Senior Leadership Team

The named member of the Senior Leadership Team for Pupil Participation is Ms Emma Bowen, and is responsible for:

- liaising with the designated governors to ensure that Pupil Participation is promoted and developed as a whole-school approach - including the development and implementation of a Pupil Participation Policy - in line with the Welsh Government's National Children and Young People's Participation Standards;
- working with the designated governors and the Senior Leadership Team to ensure that effective approaches to Pupil Participation are: incorporated into relevant school policies; identified in the school improvement plan; reflected in strategies and methodologies for teaching and learning; discussed at Senior Leadership and staff meetings; a standing item on Governing Body meeting agendas and monitored and evaluated by staff and pupils;
- encouraging understanding of and positive attitudes towards Pupil Participation amongst the whole staff, including non-teaching staff, through the sharing of information, training and good practice;
- promoting inclusive policies and methods of participation which encourage all pupils to participate in decision-making processes, including marginalised pupils, and those with Additional Learning Needs;

- ensuring that channels for communication and feedback are working effectively, so that information is shared in ways that are timely, inclusive and appropriate;
- promoting and celebrating the achievements of pupils through participation - e.g. through regular or special Assemblies, the school newsletter/web-site, prize-giving ceremonies, notice boards, etc.

The School Council Link Teacher

The School Council Link Teacher is Ms Emma Bowen.

The School Council Link Teacher supports the School Council by:

- organising elections;
- training class/year group representatives;
- arranging and attending meetings;
- helping pupils to prepare agendas, minutes and action logs;
- offering support and guidance;
- reporting back to colleagues;
- informing parents/carers and governors;
- helping to raise the profile of the School Council;
- supporting staff to facilitate class/form council meetings;
- briefing staff on timings of meetings and School Council elections;
- monitoring and evaluating progress made.

The School Council Link Teacher also supports our other **pupil participative groups**.

Our other participative pupil groups include the eco-group, the SNAG group, the Healthy Schools group, the learner voice groups, the school effectiveness groups and the peer supporters.

The Class Teacher/Form Teacher

The class teacher/form teacher has an important role in supporting pupil participation by:

- raising awareness of a range of opportunities for pupils to actively participate in decision-making;
- ensuring that all pupils are encouraged to participate;

- allowing regular time for pupil-led class/form meetings and supporting pupils to facilitate these meetings;
- allowing time for Year/School Council members to feedback promptly after meetings;
- supporting and facilitating a variety of ways for pupils to collect and present the views of pupils e.g. through questionnaires, pictograms, suggestion boxes, focus groups.

All staff should be supported and encouraged to promote Pupil Participation through awareness raising and training. Although some staff and governors have a key role in promoting and supporting a holistic approach to pupil participation, it is everyone's responsibility.

Associate Pupil Governors (APGs)

The Head boy and Head girl of the academic year are nominated as the Associate Pupil Governors to sit on the Governing Body.

APGs represent the voice of the School Council, as stated in the School Councils (Wales) Regulations (December 2005), as representatives of the views of all pupils in the school at Governing Body meetings and, in turn, communicate matters from the Governing Body to the School Council, and to the wider pupil population.

Our APGs this academic year are Huw Davies and Megan Davies.

Responsibilities include:

- attendance at Full Governing Body meetings. (These often take place at the end of the school day);
- attendance at Governing Body sub-committees, as appropriate;
- involvement in consultation and discussion prior to and at School Council meetings, as to what issues pupils may wish to include at Governing Body meetings;
- liaison with the Designated Governor to discuss the inclusion of items on the Governing Body agenda;
- feedback to the School Council regarding issues arising at Governing Body meetings, which are of concern to pupils, including the possibility of wider whole-school consultations.

The APGs receive training to help them fulfil the above responsibilities. (Appendix 5 The Role of APGs – Encouraging Good Practice)

7.0 The Scope of Pupil Participation

Pupils in our school are involved in decision making across a wide scope of matters relating to teaching and learning, policy and school improvement including:

- improving learning;
- social responsibilities;
- behaviour management /anti bullying/restorative practices;
- improvements and additions to the curriculum;
- planning, reviewing and implementing policies;
- school self-evaluation processes and the school development plan;
- school improvement;
- whole school ethos and a code of conduct for pupil-teacher relations;
- extra-curricular activities;
- staff appointments;
- fundraising and links to charities;
- developing resources and facilities;
- improvements to the school environment;
- sustainability e.g. recycling, development as an eco-school;
- pupil welfare including peer support, mentoring;
- transition from primary to secondary;
- the quality of pupils' experience of their Learning Pathway at 14-19, including the range of learning options available, accessibility and support;
- food and fitness;
- links with the local community and involvement in community projects;
- representation to the local authority on issues of concern e.g. transport, safe routes to school.

Structures and processes in place in our school:

This will be individual to each school and could include for example the following

- Our School Council
- Class/form year councils (secondary)
- Eco club
- SNAG group
- PE ambassadors
- Learner voice groups/PSE group
- Healthy forum
- Restorative links
- Pupil Voice groups/forums
- Listening to learner's groups
- Peer mentors

NB Ysgol Bro Gwaun **Constitution** sets out the rules for the running of the School Council and can be found in a separate document. (see Appendix4)

8.0 Inclusion

At Ysgol Bro Gwaun we ensure that **all** pupils have opportunities to have their voices heard and to participate in decision-making processes in their learning environment, not just those who are more articulate. We actively encourage all pupils, including more marginalised and 'difficult to engage' children to participate in decision-making. Our year and School Councils are inclusive and representative of all sections of the school community with representation from..... (for example pupils with ALN, EAL and ethnic minorities).

Specific Strategies

- Pupil Voice forums for children who are from a variety of disengaged groups
- Pupil mentors supporting vulnerable pupils
- Restorative practice

9.0 **Resources**

Ysgol Bro Gwaun ensures that sufficient resources are available to ensure that pupil participation is meaningful and effective.

Training

Both the senior teacher responsible for Pupil Participation and the School Council Link teacher have undertaken specific training in Pupil Participation. The senior teacher ensures that all staff, including non-teaching staff, have positive attitudes towards pupil participation and understand the benefits of it. Pupils are trained in pupil participation giving them the skills and understanding to participate effectively.

Time

Pupil Participation is regularly discussed at Senior Leadership and staff meetings, and is a standing item on Governing Body meeting agendas. The School Council Link teacher is given allocated time to carry out the role and is supported by the named member of the Senior Leadership Team for Pupil Participation. There is designated time allocated for class, year and school Council meetings within curriculum time, including time for year/School Council members to feedback to pupils.

Finances

Money is raised for School Council activities through fund raising activities organised by the pupils.

Accommodation

Ysgol Bro Gwaun ensures that the School Council is supported with an appropriate room available to carry out their meetings. The School Council meetings are held in the Conference Room.

USEFUL LINK for resources: www.pupilvoicewales.org.uk

NB. Training materials and resources can also be found in the Pupil Participation area of the Pembrokeshire Portal.

10.0 **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Our Pupil Participation Policy is monitored and evaluated annually, in consultation with pupils and staff, under the seven National Participation Standards and forms part of the school's self-assessment process. An annual action plan is developed highlighting the areas for development under each of the seven standards which forms part of the school development plan.

11.0 Pupil Participation Contacts

The Local Authority Children's and Young People's Rights Office	
Kathy Young-Powell System Leader for Participation and Rights 01437 775499	Rose Davis Children and Young People's Rights Officer 01437 775744

12.0 Appendices

- Appendix 1 Developing/reviewing your Pupil Participation Policy
- Appendix 2 National Standards for Children and Young People's Participation
- Appendix 3 Pupil Participation Action Plan
- Appendix 4 Preparing a Healthy School Council Constitution
- Appendix 5 The role of Associate Pupil Governors (APGs) – Encouraging Good Practice

APPENDIX 1

Developing/reviewing your Pupil Participation Policy

Developing, implementing and reviewing a pupil participation policy should be part of your school's self-evaluation process and should be done in relation to the National Standards for Children and Young People's Participation. It's the process itself, rather than the end document, that is important. By involving children and young people in creating your policy, you will send strong messages that you take their voice seriously, and want to involve them in making their learning environment better. Schools who have engaged in such processes report improvements in engagement, behaviour and attainment, and a better environment for all.

It's important not to lose sight of why this process is happening - i.e.

- so that learners feel they are listened to, respected, and involved in their organisation;
- to empower pupils to raise any potential safeguarding concerns they may have and potentially resolve these at an early stage;
- to improve outcomes for learners in terms of well-being and learning;
- to engage learners in the process of organisational improvement, so that they can be active agents in their school community, thus developing important life skills;
- to ensure that policies and processes reflect the needs of learners, and are therefore effective.

The Annual Process

Step 1	Self-assess against the 7 National Participation Standards and map structures/processes in place
Step 2	Draft policy , based on mapping exercise and self-assessment; use the LA model policy as a guide
Step 3	Create an action plan with priorities under the 7 National Participation Standards.
Step 4	Consult with pupils and staff on the draft policy and action plan
Step 5	Revise the policy and action plan in the light of the consultation and give feedback
Step 6	Develop a young person version of the policy in poster form eg: organise a competition for the best poster portraying it.
Step 7	Launch and Implement the policy and action plan

NB Once your policy is firmly established and embedded, the process in subsequent years will be more focused on the action plan, rather than whole school policy.

APPENDIX 2 NATIONAL PARTICIPATION STANDARDS

Having a Voice – Having a Choice

Do we meet your standards?

*'We' means anyone asking children and young people to participate. 'You' have a right to expect these standards.

"Participation means that it is my right to be involved in making decisions, planning and reviewing any action that might affect me. Having a voice, having a choice"



INFORMATION



This means:

- Information that is easy to understand for everyone
- Adults working with you who know what is going on and are up front and clear.

We will:

- Ensure everyone has enough information to get properly involved
- Let you know what difference you being involved will make
- Inform you about who is going to listen and make changes.

IT'S YOUR CHOICE

This means:

- You choose if you want to get involved or not
- You choose to work on things that are important to you
- You choose what you do and how you do it.

We will:

- Give you enough information and time to decide if this is something you want to do.



NO DISCRIMINATION



This means:

- Children and young people are all different but you all have the same right to have a say about the things that matter to you.
- We want everyone to feel welcome and be able to get involved if they want to be.

We will:

- challenge any discrimination
- get in touch with children and young people in lots of different situations
- get you involved in things you want to do.

RESPECT

This means:

- Everyone has a chance to have a say, your opinions are important and we will respect them.

We will:

- listen to your ideas, views and experiences
- take you seriously and treat you fairly
- work with you to do something about the things you tell us are important
- work with you to help change things for the better.



YOU GET SOMETHING OUT OF IT



This means:

- We want you to enjoy and benefit from taking part
- We know that you have other things to do in your lives as well!
- Making sure that participating is a positive not a negative experience.

We will:

- work in safe, fun, and enjoyable ways
- make the most of what you know
- do positive things that build your confidence
- meet in friendly places that are easy for all young people to use
- value and respect what you have to offer.

FEEDBACK

This means:

- It's really important that you know what difference you have made and how your ideas have been used.

We will:

- keep you up to date with what is happening
- give feedback as soon as possible and in ways that are easy to understand for everyone.



IMPROVING HOW WE WORK



This means:

- We want to learn and get better at the way we work with you.

We will:

- look at the way we work with you and how to improve it

- ask you what has gone well and what needs to change
- make sure your views make a difference to the way we make plans and decisions.



These are the agreed children and young people's participation standards for Wales

APPENDIX 3

Pupil Participation Action Plan Academic Year 20__/20__					
Areas for Development	Action	Responsibility	Evaluation / Progress	Completion Date	
Standard 1 – Information					
Standard 2 – It's your choice					
Standard 3 – No Discrimination					
Standard 4 – Respect					

<p>Standard 5 – You get something out of it</p>				
<p>Standard 6 – Feedback</p>				
<p>Standard 7 – Improving how we work</p>				

APPENDIX 4

Preparing a Healthy School Council Constitution

The constitution sets out rules for running a School Council, including:

- objectives;
- rules for meetings;
- role and responsibilities of council members;
- rules for electing members.

Here are 10 steps to preparing a reliable constitution:

1. Name

What is the name of the School Council?

2. Purpose

What are the School Council's aims and objectives?

3. Members

What is the composition of the membership both of the School Council and Year Councils? Is everyone represented? Is gender balance planned for?

4. Elections

How are members elected? Is it a secret ballot? Is the election well publicised and high profile?

5. Officers

Who are the officers - eg: chair, vice-chair, secretary, treasurer, press officer? How are officers elected?

6. Responsibilities

What are the responsibilities of members, officers, staff and the Headteacher?

7. Removal / Resignation

How can members resign or be removed, if found not to be fairly representing the needs of others?

8. Meetings

When, where and how are meetings held? How is the agenda formed? How are decisions made? How are actions undertaken?

9. Boundaries

Are there clear rules for the debate? Are students trained in meeting skills? Are there certain issues that it will not be possible to discuss at the School Council?

10. Finances

Does the School Council have a budget? If funds are raised by the School Council, is there any match funding arrangements?

APPENDIX 5

The role of APGs – Encouraging Good Practice

*Taken from WG guidance document Pupil Participation – Good Practice Guide
(www.pupilvoicewales.org.uk)*

The role of Associated Pupil Governor (APG) was established by the School Councils (Wales) Regulations (December 2005), with the aim of ensuring that pupil voice could be represented at Governing Body meetings in secondary school settings in Wales. Some areas of the role are elucidated and explored below, in order to encourage good practice.

Appointment of Associate Pupil Governors

It is important that Associate Pupil Governors are correctly appointed, and there are indications that this is not happening in all cases. The position is therefore clarified below:

- As stated in paragraph 7.-(1) of the School Councils (Wales) Regulations 2005, the Headteacher of a school must ensure that the School Council has the opportunity to nominate up to two pupils from its membership to be Associate Pupil Governors. This means that the School Council must be informed that they have this choice, and be allowed to choose those pupils who will best represent them at Governing Body meetings. These representatives may be the Head Boy and Head Girl - but not in every case. Staff selection of Associate Pupil Governors is not acceptable.
- The Governing Body must accept any pupil nominated in accordance with paragraph (1) above, and appoint him or her as an Associate Pupil Governor, unless there are reasons to disqualify him/her under Schedule 5 of The Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005.

Benefits of APGs

It's important that Governing Bodies are aware of the role of APGs - and their potential benefits for the Governing Body and the wider school community. Supporting and developing the role of APGs should enable the Governing Body to be more effective in its decision-making, including new insights and fresh approaches.

Continuity

There can be problems with lack of continuity with the role of Associate Pupil Governors, partly due to the fact that older pupils are not available during the summer term due to exam pressures. To alleviate this problem, schools should consider a hand-over period for the APG role at the beginning of the summer term, and ensure that training for the role is in place. Governors should also consider whether younger pupils (e.g. Years 9 and 10) may be allowed to have representation on the Governing Body.

Associate Pupil Governors may hold office for one year, after which they may be reappointed if they are still on the School Council. When School Councils are

nominating pupils from amongst their members to be APGs, the merits of continuity should be weighed against the desire to be inclusive and to give new members the opportunity to represent the School Council and pupils as a whole on the Governing Body. The effectiveness of Associate Pupil Governors will depend on the skills of those appointed, but also on the quality of the relationship and trust built up between governors and pupil representatives. These are all issues that need to be considered carefully.

Suggestions for Effective Communication

- Consideration should be given to effective, inclusive and timely communication between the Governing Body, Associate Pupil Governors, the School Council and the body of pupils in the school so that information is shared, opportunities for pupils to contribute their views are maximised, and feedback is received.
- Pupils should be aware of the role of APGs, who they are, and what they are able to achieve, whilst also understanding the importance of presenting views and ideas through democratic channels.
- Governors (in particular the Designated Governor) can support APGs by ensuring that they receive any papers well in advance of meetings in an accessible form, and by being aware of the use of language, acronyms and jargon in Governing Body meetings, which can be intimidating and form a barrier to participation.
- When APGs have been involved in discussing policies and procedures at Governing Body meetings following wider consultation with pupils, they should ensure that the results are fed back through School Council or other pupil representatives to the body of pupils, if possible with an explanation of how pupils' views were represented and influenced the final decision.

Exclusion of Associate Pupil Governors from meetings

The Governing Body may exclude Associate Pupil Governors from discussions regarding sensitive and confidential matters. These include:

- staffing matters such as pay, discipline, performance management, grievance and dismissal;
- individual pupil discipline;
- admissions;
- election, appointment and removal of governors.

In addition, the Governing Body has discretion to exclude Associate Pupil Governors from any discussion which, because of its nature, is considered to be confidential. This discretionary power must in no circumstances be used as a pretext to exclude Associate Pupil Governors from discussions, and there should be an expectation that Associate Pupil Governors are present for a significant proportion of Governing Body

business. An understanding of the scope and limitations of the Associate Pupil Governor role should be part of induction training for pupils taking on this role.

The budget and financial considerations

One of the areas of discussion which Governing Bodies are presently advised they may wish to exclude Associate Pupil Governors from is the budget and financial considerations of the Governing Body.

Governors should consider carefully before excluding pupils from these matters. It is recommended that young people gain knowledge and experience of budgeting, and this is encouraged by other areas of Welsh Government policy. Pupils may also be able to bring a unique perspective to discussions around what would be value for money, and how pupils would react to proposed developments. For these reasons, it is recommended that Associate Pupil Governors are included in discussions around budgeting and finance in appropriate ways wherever possible.

Effective planning and timings of meetings

Considering that Associate Pupil Governors may be excluded from certain agenda items, it is important that Governing Body meetings are carefully planned, so that items to which Associate Pupil Governors may have input are placed together on the agenda, preferably towards the beginning. Consideration should also be given to the timing of Governing Body meetings and their accessibility for Associate Pupil Governors. Many Governing Body meetings take place at the end of the school day, and the school should ensure that Associate Pupil Governors are able to travel home safely. The Designated Governor should also ensure that Associate Pupil Governors have opportunities to participate effectively in meetings, and that they are supported in becoming acquainted with the format of meetings, and the language used.

Pupil representation at non-statutory governing body committees

Associate Pupil Governors may be members of non-statutory Governing Body committees, and may vote at those committees if the Governing Body grants them voting rights. Associate Pupil Governors may not be members of the following statutory Governing Body committees:

- Staff Disciplinary/Dismissal Committee
- Staff Disciplinary/Dismissal Appeal Committee
- Pupil Discipline and Exclusions Committee
- Admissions Committee
- Staff Grievance Committee.

There may be an argument for saying that pupils can play a more valued and meaningful role on some of the non-statutory Governing Body committees rather than on the Full Governing Body. Pupils can play a key role in the School Improvement committee, for instance, including a genuine input into the School Development Plan, School Self-evaluation and School Effectiveness. Whilst this is true, it must be remembered that it is the Governing Body rather than its constituent committees that has a strategic view and takes key decisions regarding the management and development of the school. Pupils have a right to be represented on the Governing Body through Associate Pupil Governors, and they must be presented with all the

necessary information to make a genuine choice as to what is best for the pupils of the school as a whole. As mentioned above, support should also be in place to ensure that Associate Pupil Governors are able to take an active role in Governing Body business.

PEMBROKESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CYNGOR SIR BENFRO

Ysgol Bro Gwaun

Children and Schools

INVOLVING PUPILS IN STAFF APPOINTMENTS

POLICY FOR SCHOOLS



INVOLVING PUPILS IN STAFF APPOINTMENTS A MODEL POLICY FOR SCHOOLS

1.0 Rationale – Why involve pupils in staff appointments?

Ysgol Bro Gwaun is committed to developing effective pupil participation, as outlined in our school's Pupil Participation Policy. We recognise that children and young people have a right – as stated in Article 12 of the UNCRC – to be involved in making decisions that affect their lives, and the right to an education (Articles 28 and 29). The extent to which pupils are involved in decision making needs to be across the whole workings of the school including the appointment of staff. Pupils are uniquely placed to contribute views about the effectiveness of both teaching and non-teaching roles in terms of the candidates' manner and their approach to working with them and giving them support. As recipients of learning, they are also well placed to contribute views about the effectiveness of teaching candidates' approach to teaching and classroom management techniques. Involving pupils in staff appointments can give clear benefits to the school, pupils and the candidates themselves and should be seen as a routine part of the appointment process for all staff. It is also cited as good practice in the Local Authority mandatory Safer Recruitment training for managers in school.

2.0 Benefits for the school

Through involving pupils in staff appointments the school will:

- Gain an added perspective on the candidate – in particular how he/she relates to pupils;
- Better understand what skills and qualities pupils look for in an effective teacher, teaching assistant and other support roles;
- Send a positive and powerful message to candidates that pupils' input is valued and taken seriously;
- Help to develop stronger working relationships between staff and young people;
- Develop more inclusive and effective recruitment and selection processes;
- Show our commitment to pupil participation in a meaningful way.

3.0 Benefits for the pupils

Through being involved in the interviewing process, pupils:

- Gain confidence and self-esteem;
- Feel that they are valued and that their opinion counts;
- Develop a sense of belonging and ownership;
- Acquire important knowledge and skills – e.g. about the interview process and what principles this is governed by; about how to carry out a fair and effective interview;
- Improve their communication and team-working skills;
- Learn something about what makes a good teacher, teaching assistant, administrative support; caretaker etc.

- Feel they can make a difference.

In order for these benefits to be felt, our school will ensure that the pupils' role in the staff appointment process is meaningful and that their involvement is **NOT** used in a tick-box fashion. We understand that there could be prejudicial effects if children and young people feel that they have been manipulated or ignored.

4.0 Benefits for the candidates

Pupils' involvement means that candidates will:

- Have a better understanding of the school's commitment to pupil participation and how we value it and take it seriously;
- Have a better understanding that how they interact with pupils is a crucial part of the job they are applying for;
- Be afforded the opportunity to give a truer reflection of their character and how they would interact with pupils in practice;
- Have a positive sense of endorsement from pupils once they have been selected and appointed.

5.0 The Process

The process of involving pupils in staff appointments needs to be clear and consistent. It is important to ensure that standards of fairness and consistency are maintained and that the process is safe and positive for all involved. Our school will ensure that the process is planned carefully with appropriate consideration given to how pupils are involved in each of the following stages:

5.1 Planning

It is important to remember that, however pupils are involved in the appointment and selection process, it is the governors who have ultimate responsibility for the recruitment and selection of staff. *Ysgol Bro Gwaun* has set up a system for involving pupils which is utilised for all appointments of staff. This system is clearly understood by staff, governors and pupils and regularly monitored and reviewed.

The level and extent of pupil involvement will vary depending on the nature of the role being appointed and the age of the pupils involved. Foundation Phase and lower Key Stage 2 pupils should have opportunities to be involved in the process. However certain elements of the process may need to be adapted to ensure that they are age appropriate and that the experience is meaningful and worthwhile.

Teaching appointments

1. A pupil panel is appointed to conduct a parallel interview with candidates and give feedback to the formal interview panel.
2. Shortlisted candidates are asked to teach a lesson and feedback is collected from the pupils in the class.

Non-teaching appointments

1. A pupil panel is appointed to conduct a parallel interview with candidates and give feedback to the formal interview panel.
2. Depending on the role, shortlisted candidates may be asked to assist in a class, work with a group of children or interact with pupils in another task.

The school ensures that practice is considered in line with the National Participation Standards.

Prospective candidates will be informed that pupils are involved in the selection process, so as to help them in preparing their application.

Miss A Finn (School Council co-ordinator) will ensure that the safeguarding of the pupils is paramount throughout the process.

5.2 Training

The school ensures that everyone involved in the recruitment and selection of staff has information, support and training to ensure the process is confidential, fair and consistent and has due regard for equal opportunities. The named member of the senior leadership team with responsibility for pupil participation is responsible for supporting the pupils involved throughout the process. This senior member of staff will ensure that the pupils have the necessary information and training to undertake their role effectively. The information and training needs to be accessible to the pupils in an age appropriate manner.

Training is important so that members of the pupil panel:

- Have the information and skills required to play a meaningful and effective role in the process;
- Are aware of key principles which need to be adhered to when interviewing and selecting candidates for a post;
- Have a positive experience and gain confidence and important life skills.

Key elements to include in the training for the pupil panel are:

- An explanation of job descriptions and person specifications (including essential and desirable skills);
- Clarification of the selection and interviewing process - as well as the scope and limits of pupils' involvement in this;
- Necessary principles that have to be adhered to as part of the appointment process, and their implications for practice (i.e. openness, fairness, confidentiality, equal opportunities);
- Some understanding of employment law (for older pupils);
- First impressions and countering bias (especially where internal candidates are involved);
- Listening skills;
- Interviewing and question techniques - e.g. how to ask questions in order to gain the required information from a candidate;

- How to use recording and score sheets and how to record comments and opinions in a clear and appropriate manner;
- Making decisions as a group;
- Giving and receiving feedback in an appropriate way.

5.3 Drawing up the Job Description and Person Specification

Pupils would **not** normally be involved in drawing up the job description unless a new role is being created where pupils' input may be beneficial.

The pupil panel will draw up their person specification from a pupil perspective. Their ideas need to reflect the requirement of the job as described in the job description and ensure that due regard is paid to equal opportunities. The training of pupils needs to ensure they understand that the person specification will form the basis for their questions asked at interview. For teaching appointments, the pupils' insight into particular aspects of the role such as classroom management, teaching styles and rewards and sanctions will provide useful and relevant information.

5.4 Short listing

Pupils will **not** be involved in the short listing process. Logically, if pupils are to be involved in the short listing process, candidates should be informed in advance and tailor their applications to the age of the pupils, and this would be impractical. Also where internal candidates are rejected at this stage, it is easier for everyone if pupils are not involved in that decision. However, part of the training of pupils should include what happens at the short listing stage and the reasons that pupils are not involved in this part of the process to ensure that they don't feel disempowered.

5.5 Interviewing

Pupils will be consulted following the demonstration lesson or interactive task with pupils using a clear set of criteria. Pupils on the panel will be supported to prepare for the interview process and how it is conducted by the senior named member of staff. E.g. deciding who will ask which question, going through the method for recording.

In order for the interview process to be a positive, open, fair and safe experience for candidates and pupils, the following aspects are taken into account:

- **Openness** – the candidate will know beforehand what is expected of them so that they can prepare. As well as knowing the brief for the demonstration lesson or activity with pupils, they will also be told the age range and number of pupils who will be on the interview panel and how the pupils' views will feed into the decision making process.
- **Fairness** – pupils will ask the same questions of all the candidates and have an agreed scoring system. All the pupils' questions will be based on the pupils' Person Specification. Pupils will be trained to understand that they need to disregard any prior knowledge of candidates and base their scoring/feedback solely on the answers to the agreed questions.

- **Safety** – the senior named member of staff ensures that the process is fair and that child protection procedures are observed. All pupils on the panel are trained in the importance of maintaining confidentiality and understanding that they must not discuss any of the candidates with anyone not involved in the selection process. The school has an agreement protocol in respect of confidentiality which all pupils involved are asked to sign.
- **Positive experience** – the senior named member of staff acts as a ‘mentor’ to the pupils on the panel, supporting the pupils through every stage to ensure that the experience is safe and positive for them. This senior member of staff will be present at the interview to give any advice or reassurance that the pupils require. They will only intervene if fairness is being compromised or if the pupils need support. The pupil panel will be large enough for pupils to feel confident and be able to represent pupil voice but not so large that candidates feel intimidated. The pupil chair of the panel should be supported to make each candidate welcome and ensure that the panel stick to the agreed questions and avoid any ‘trick’ questions.

5.6 Feedback to the Adult Pane

Pupils will score each candidate and collate their scores so that the average score for each candidate is presented to the adult panel. The main adult panel will take the pupils’ views into account and consider all aspects before coming to a final decision. The pupil chairperson or the senior named teacher will support the pupils with this process.

Pupils are informed at the planning stage how their views are fed into the process to ensure there is no disillusionment later on.

Feedback to candidates is undertaken by the adult managing the recruitment process. Pupils are told that they must not discuss the process with candidates. This reinforces the fact that it is the governing body which is responsible for appointments and they are not handing over their power to pupils.

The main adult panel will let the pupil panel know the final decision. Where this does not agree with the recommendation from the pupils, the adult panel will give a brief explanation of factors which were taken into account.

5.7 Induction

Pupils are involved in the induction of new staff. The specific pupils involved will depend on the role of the new staff member. Pupils will help to identify how they can help a new member of staff settle into their new role. They will consider what the new member of staff needs to know, who they need to meet and how they can contribute to this process.

6 Evaluation against the National Participation Standards

The school recognises that pupil’s involvement in staff appointments needs to be meaningful and effective. The school will therefore regularly evaluate the processes

for involving pupils in staff appointments against the National Participation Standards, as part of the school's self evaluation process.

The following checklist helps the school to incorporate the National Participation Standards into our practice:

National Participation Standard	What this means for the effective involvement of pupils in staff appointments
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils receive the information they require in a timely manner and in an accessible format so that they understand the processes involved, and are able to participate in interviewing and selection in a meaningful and effective way. • Pupils receive training which enables them to understand the selection and interviewing processes, and their role in it.
It's your choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils have a choice as to whether they wish to be involved in the interviewing and selection processes or not.
No Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible, a cross-section of pupils is involved in the interviewing and selection process, not just a select group. This can happen through the demonstration lesson/interactive task with pupils and/or through ensuring a cross-section of pupils is represented on the pupil panel in terms of age, gender, background, ability and additional needs.
Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils are clear about the scope and limitations of their role. • Adults listen to pupils' views and take them into account.
You get something out of it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils gain an understanding of the interview and selection process and the principles it must adhere to. • Pupils are supported in gaining skills to help them in fulfilling their role effectively (through staff support and training).

National Participation Standard	What this means for the effective involvement of pupils in staff appointments
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils are informed of the impact of their involvement. • Where the outcome of the interview differs from that recommended by the pupils, other factors taken into account are clarified.
Improving how we work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone involved in the interviewing and selection process (including the pupil panel) is able to feed in their thoughts about how things went, so as to improve practice in the future.

7 Interviews Involving Internal Candidates

Particular sensitivities are involved where internal candidates are to be interviewed. It is important that all concerned - both the pupil panel and candidates - understand that they should under no circumstances discuss the interview process with anyone else outside the interview itself, either before, during or after the recruitment and selection process. Any questions which candidates may have about the process should be directed to the named adult contact.

Members of the pupil panel and candidates should understand that all decisions are based on the candidate's response to agreed common questions and evidence of how they meet the person specification as evidenced during the interview, and should in no circumstances be influenced by what is known about them outside the interview situation. Where internal candidates are involved, it will be important to include something in the training for the pupil panel about first impressions, impartiality and countering bias.

Where internal candidates are involved, particular care should be taken in selecting members of the pupil panel, as it's important that judgement isn't clouded by any positive or negative bias due to experiences outside the interview process.

Offering the successful candidate the post, giving feedback to candidates on the interview process, or telling them they have been unsuccessful should always be undertaken by an adult. This is particularly important where a candidate is known to the young people involved.

8 References

'The Recruitment Pack' – Save the Children Scotland
www.savethechildren.org.uk/scotland

Pupil Voice Wales - www.pupilvoicewales.org.uk