Participation Toolkit

A resource for involving children and young people in decision-making in school.

My Voice

ea Education Authority



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Introduction

Introduction

Many of the decisions made about education are made by adults and the thoughts and feelings of children and young people are often not considered, although the choices made will have an impact on their lives now and their future. Participation provides students with the opportunity to make a real change within their school and community. Evidence has shown that when students are part of decision-making processes, the services provided are more effective and valued by all. It offers opportunities for the voices of students to be heard within schools and communities and to wider key decision makers.

Important to this process is meaningful engagement, not just seeking students' views, but being a key partner in the decision-making process. Participation is based on a collaborative approach where adults place value on students' opinions about their wants and needs, entering into co-design with them.

Students of all backgrounds, abilities and walks of life should be able to participate in all aspects of their education on the basis of equity. In some instances, additional support, encouragement, and resources may be needed to facilitate participation on an equal basis.

This toolkit has been created to support educators to engage the voice of their students in decision-making processes and facilitate them to express their views on their school experience, teaching and learning, and issues that are important to them. The toolkit provides guidance for establishing and running a School Council, but also how to engage students in other methods of youth voice including surveys, focus groups and thematic projects. The activities included are adaptable for any age group and context, and many alternatives and expansion options are detailed. Most activities can also be run as stand-alone activities in class to give students a 'taster' and start building their capacity to participate fully.

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Longstone Special School, Dundonald
Willowbridge Special School, Enniskillen
Rainey Endowed School, Magherafelt
Sperrin Integrated College, Magherafelt
St Louis Grammar School, Kilkeel
Mount Lourdes Grammar School, Enniskillen
St Aidans High School, Enniskillen
Devenish College, Enniskillen
St. Joseph College, Enniskillen
St. Fanchea's College, Enniskillen
Enniskillen Royal Grammar School, Enniskillen
Erne Integrated College, Enniskillen

What is Participation?

What is Participation?

Participation is a way of thinking and working which facilitates joint decision-making with students and teachers. It's not just about students taking part in classes and activities, but actually having a say in what is being provided, decisions that are made, and how things run.

Effective participation shows that the school creates a culture of valuing the rights and opinions of its students. Consultation with students should be **ongoing, active and meaningful** and it should inform learning experiences and the school's decision-making processes. There are several identified benefits for both students and teachers, when involving them in decision-making in school.

The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) details that being involved in participation can:

- Promote confidence and self-esteem in students.
- Provide opportunities for students to learn and practice the skills needed in different professional roles such as negotiating, planning, reporting, communication and working with others.
- Offer students the chance to develop important decision-making and problem-solving skills.
- Provide opportunities for students and teachers to develop more meaningful relationships.
- Encourage students to make a commitment to their studies and/or school policies when they have been involved from the outset in the school's design and implementation plan.
- Provide opportunities for teachers to show that they respect their students' views.
- Ensure that more relevant and appropriate decisions can be made with regards to students and their needs.
- Increase feelings of ownership and influence over the decisions which are made by adults in relation to them.

(NYCI Youth Participation Charter, 2007)

Improvements in learning, achievement and school performance.

Better understanding of the rights of other people.

Better prepared to become ethical, informed and active citizens.

Develop creative thinking, decision making and problem solving skills.

Improve self management and working with others.

Develop community spirit, personal responsibility and concern for others.

Improve resilience, determination, commitment and self belief

Develop openness to new ideas and perspectives.

There are also benefits for students in participation, including improved health and wellbeing, improved engagement and behaviour, and improvements in learning, achievements and school performance. They also gain a better understanding of the rights of other members of the school community and of the consequences of actions that affect others. Students are better prepared to become ethical, informed and active citizens of Northern Ireland and of the world, and attitudes towards active citizenship become more positive.

Active participation also embeds across the Northern Ireland school curriculum to develop the young person as:



An Individual **A contributor to society** **A contributor to economy and environment**

It enables them to develop thinking skills and personal capabilities including self-management, working with others, problem solving, decision making and creativity.

It develops attitudes and dispositions including community spirit, personal responsibility, concern for others, commitment, determination, resourcefulness, pragmatism, self-belief and openness to new ideas.

(CCEA, Big Picture Curriculum)

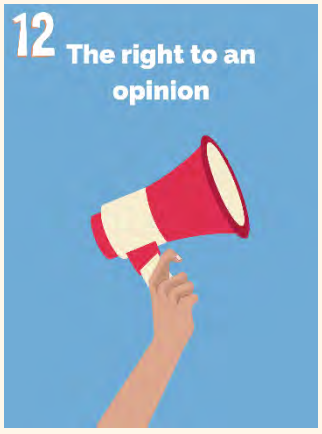
Policy Framework

Policy Framework

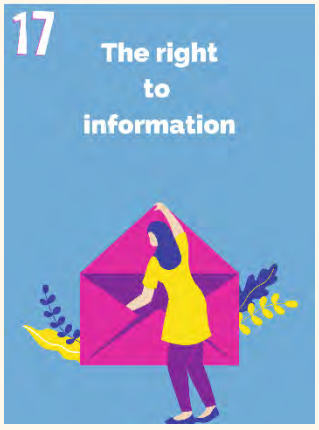
Education and Youth Services in Northern Ireland have embedded participation of young people as an underpinning component from early stages.

In 1989 the United Nations created the 'United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child' which listed 'the right to an opinion' as one of the rights children and young people were entitled to. Thus, began the process of co-signatories agreeing to make these rights statutory, with the UK government becoming a signatory in 1991.

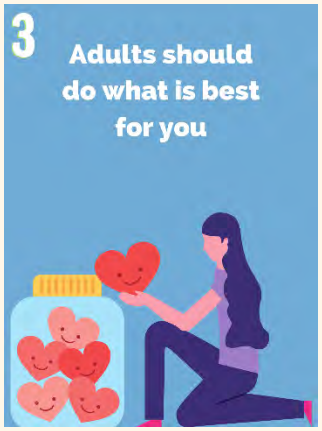
CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD



Article 12 – Children and young people have the right to give their opinions freely on issues that affect them. Adults should listen and take children and young people seriously.



Article 3 – Adults should also think about what is best for young people and how their decisions will affect them.



Article 17 – Young people have the right to get information about the decisions affecting them.



Article 42 – Governments should actively engage with young people, so they know their rights.

Following this, legislation and policy is now in place for young people to have a say in the development of services and polices that affect their lives, namely:

The **Education and Libraries NI Order (2003)** supports schools and EA in their consultation with students, stating that Boards of Governors must listen to the opinions of students when making or revising policies.

Children's Services Co-Operation Act (NI, 2015) places a statutory obligation on all children's service providers to improve the well-being of children and young people in a manner that realises their rights under the UN convention.

Our Children and Young People Strategy (NI, 2020-2030) prioritises 'young people living in a society which respects their rights' and 'making a positive contribution to society' as two of their key outcomes.

The **Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Act (2016)** states that educators have a duty to 'seek and have regard to the views of the child.'

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) outline indicators of effective participation in schools:

Students:

- Know that they have a right to be heard.
- Are able to express their views in a variety of ways.
- Are confident that their views are valued and will be acted upon, as appropriate.
- Make a discernible impact on improving the school.

The Provision:

- Is underpinned by meaningful collaboration between students and adults.
- Ensures that all students have regular, meaningful opportunities to share their views on their learning experiences and other aspects of the school.
- Ensure that students receive feedback on how their views have been considered and used to inform decision making.

School Leaders:

- Foster an ethos of active participation and promote students' rights, equality and inclusion.
- Welcome, encourage and act on direct communication with students.
- Prioritise staff professional learning about students' rights and participation.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of participation in school.

(Empowering Improvement: New Framework for Inspection, 2024)



Values of Participation

Values of Participation

Participation in schools should be **ongoing, active and meaningful**. To do this, adults need to embrace the values of participation.

1 RIGHTS BASED

Young people have the right to give their opinions freely on issues that affect them. Adults should listen and take children and young people seriously. (Art 12) Adults should also think about what is best for young people and how their decisions will affect them. (Art 3) (UNCRC)



2 VOLUNTARY

Young people choose to take part and can also choose not to take part.



3 USER LED

Young people are given the space, means and opportunity to have their voices heard on topics / things that matter to them. We must acknowledge young people as stakeholders. We must be open with them on how their information will be used, and feedback should be given on the impact of their participation



4 EMPOWERING

It gives young people the skills, knowledge, and tools to be able to participate in making decisions that affect their environment and lives.



5 ORGANISED

Young people have the right to share freely with others what they learn, think, and feel, by any means, as long as it doesn't harm other people. They should be supported to join or set up groups that enable them to meet with others – as long as it poses no harm to others. (UNCRC Art 13, 15)



6 PURPOSEFUL

Young people taking on valued roles, addressing issues that are relevant to them and influencing real outcomes. It is carried out honestly and not just because it must be done.



7 PARTNERSHIP

It is a partnership between young people and adults, where young people are seen as assets and add value to the decision-making process.



8 OBLIGATION

Adults have an obligation to ensure young people are represented, listened to, and have influence.



9 ONGOING

Participation is a process and a culture, it's not a one-off event and requires ongoing commitment.



10 INCLUSIVE

It must be accessible for all young people without discrimination, and recognises and values diverse backgrounds, needs and circumstances, and aims to remove blocks and barriers to participation.



11 EVOLVING

It must happen at the individual young person's level – with acknowledgement that young people will learn, grow and develop along the way. As their capacities grow, their opportunities to influence matters should also grow.

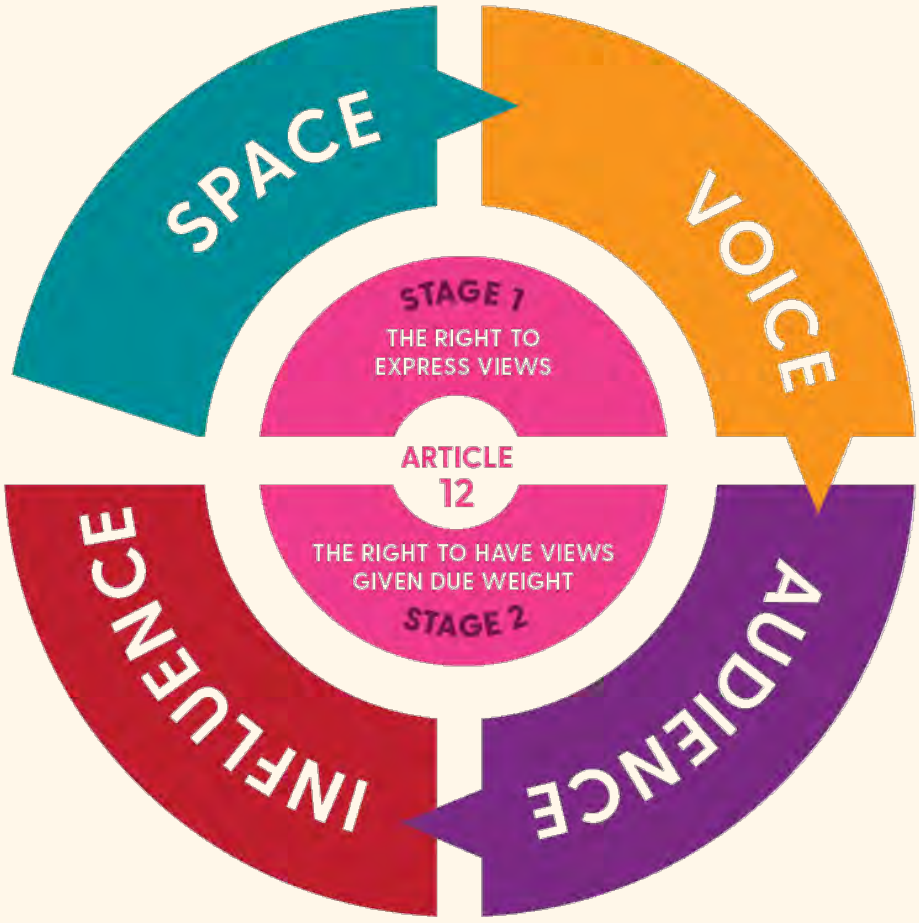


The Lundy Model of Participation

The Lundy Model

Education Authority has adopted the Lundy Model of Participation (2007), which is grounded in Article 12 (UNCRC), as its preferred model of practice. This model provides a way of conceptualising Article 12 of the UNCRC into practice and focuses on four elements, which have a rational chronological order:





Facilitating **'Space'** and **'Voice'** requires educators to be knowledgeable and skilled in group work development, setting up safe spaces, and using interactive, creative,

and age-appropriate methodologies to engage students in discussion and exploration of a topic.

Facilitating **'Audience'** and **'Influence'** can be more challenging. We can't complete an effective consultation without having someone to listen AND do something about it, otherwise it becomes tokenistic.

Hub na nÓg has developed an Everyday Spaces Checklist, Planning Checklist, Evaluation Checklist and a Group Evaluation Form which are key when considering engaging or consulting with students for participation. The Everyday Spaces Checklist is useful for schools to consider their culture of participation in their everyday activities. The Planning and Evaluation Checklist are useful when developing lessons, programmes and participative structures used to capture the voice of your students.

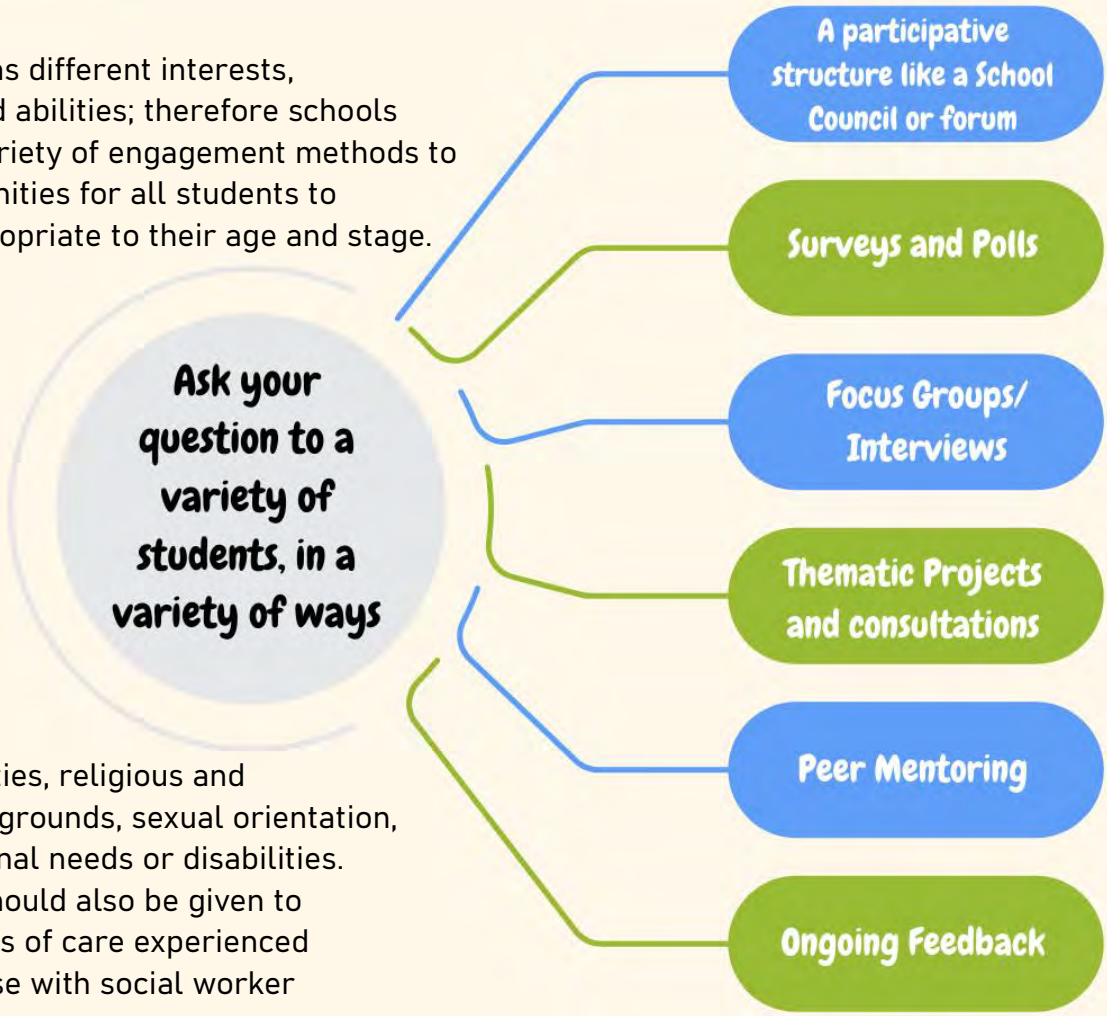
Please see Appendix 1 for Everyday Spaces Checklist, Planning Checklist, Evaluation Checklist and Group Evaluation Form.

Please see Appendix 2 for Other Models of Participation.

Methods of Participative Practice

Methods of Participative Practice

Every student has different interests, perspectives and abilities; therefore schools need to use a variety of engagement methods to provide opportunities for all students to participate, appropriate to their age and stage.



When consulting with students, it is important to seek opinions which represent your school population, different age groups, genders, ethnicities, religious and community backgrounds, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities. Consideration should also be given to seeking the views of care experienced students, or those with social worker involvement.

Triangulation in research and consultation means using multiple data sources, methods and investigators to explore a question. Using a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods also helps to enhance the validity and the credibility of your findings.

If you aren't sure which methods will work best for your students... ask them:

- What decisions would you like to have more input into? (It could be helpful to provide examples or options... but don't make any assumptions; show them the 'boring' options too.)
- How often do you want to give your feedback?
- How do you want us to capture your feedback?
- What issues would you like us to explore this year?
- Who are the most important people to hear your feedback?
- How do you want us to update you on what we did with your feedback?

Participation is for everyone

Participation is for everyone

Participation is important for all age groups and abilities, but we need to make it accessible and appropriate for them by considering factors including:

- Use of language.
- Visual aids.
- Physical and intellectual ability.
- Literacy levels.
- Confidence.
- Attention spans.



In our resource section, look out for the colours above which will signify if an activity is appropriate for primary, post-primary and students with SEND.

You may need to make adaptions depending on the needs of the children and young people who are engaging and more guidance on this can be found on the following pages.

Student Voice in Primary School

Even within a primary school context, older students sharing their voice looks very different than the younger students. Some may have trouble understanding questions or articulating themselves. Imagination and thinking skills will be different and some may not understand that other people have different experiences or opinions than them. Some students may struggle with independent thinking and be more likely to follow or copy others.

It is important to start by helping students to understand what 'having a voice' means and the power they have. It's also important to help them understand how decisions are made, and what is possible or realistic.

- Use **images, colours, and visual aids**.
- Provide **sentence frames** to get them started when responding.
- **Label** relevant objects, resources, key phrases or parts of the classroom.
- **Explain jargon, idioms or slang**, and avoid using them altogether when possible.
- Use **creative methods** of capturing feedback that require little or no reading or writing e.g. drawing, collages, photography, acting it out, lego, play-doh etc.
- **Flashcards** can be helpful in answering questions.
- Using **physical ways of giving feedback** is also universal e.g. hand gestures, facial expressions/emojis, stand up voting etc.
- **Circle time** is a staple of most primary school classrooms, so consider how you can integrate a student voice question or activity into these times.
- Incorporating a student voice activity or habit into your **daily classroom routine** will promote engagement e.g. a question of the day, a check-in or check-out activity.
- Students love to see colourful and **interactive displays**, especially showcasing their own work so consider how you can use these to collect feedback about a topic.
- **Suggestion boxes** have proved to be more useful in primary school contexts. You can even involve the older students sorting through the suggestions of the younger ones to begin a consultation process.
- Older students in **peer mentoring** or buddy roles will be able to capture feedback from the younger students they are supporting.
- Use of **digital tools** like online surveys, forms, polls or Kahoot quizzes.
- Use **extracurricular clubs** or committees to promote student's voice about their shared interest e.g. Eco club.

Student Voice for SEND

Students attending Special Schools and those with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) attending mainstream schools, may have different physical, emotional, intellectual and communication needs that may present challenges to 'having a voice' in school. The goal is to empower each student to have their own unique experience that meets their needs, and we need to be flexible and provide multiple accessible options to give and receive feedback.

Students whose capacity is not synonymous with their age, want to feel and be treated like others their age but with simpler language and concepts, therefore it is important not to make activities or resources too child-like.

- Use **images, colours, and visual aids**.
- Choose simple **symbols** to represent different aspects of student voice, and use them consistently so that students are able to connect them with behaviour and actions e.g. 'yes/no', 'agree/disagree.'
- Provide **sentence frames** to get them started when responding.
- **Label** relevant objects, resources, key phrases or parts of the classroom with words and symbols.
- **Explain jargon, idioms or slang**, and avoid using them altogether when possible.
- Use **creative methods** of capturing feedback that require little or no reading or writing e.g. drawing, collages, photography, acting it out, lego, play-doh etc.
- **Flashcards** can be helpful in answering questions.
- Using **physical ways** of giving feedback is also universal e.g. hand gestures, facial expressions/emojis, stand up voting etc.
- Use **Assistive Technology** where required for reading, writing and speaking e.g. Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), Read and Write, Immersive Reader, Dictaphones, Apps.
- Use of **digital tools** like online surveys, forms, polls or Kahoot quizzes.
- Make the most of **accessibility features** on iPads and computers e.g. screen filters, fonts, sizing and spacing.
- Use of **Makaton, BSL or signing**.
- Use **familiar** people, question types, materials, visuals and logical sequencing to capture feedback.
- Using a mix of **structured feedback and open-ended** responses is important.
- **Circle time** is a staple of many classrooms, so consider how you can integrate a student voice question or activity into these times.

- Providing information in a **range of different formats** will encourage understanding e.g. written format, an infographic, an audio recording.
- Incorporating a student voice activity or habit into your **daily classroom routine** will promote engagement e.g. a question of the day, a check-in or check-out activity.
- Students love to see colourful and **interactive displays**, especially showcasing their own work so consider how you can use these to collect feedback about a topic.
- During activity facilitation, it is important to consider any **sensory issues** that might arise e.g. the suitability of the room, group size, noise, materials being used etc.
- Interpreting responses might require more care to not make any assumptions or misunderstand. **Asking the same question in various different ways** will allow you to triangulate data through multiple methods to validate your findings.
- **Positive reinforcement** will be important to raise student's confidence and alleviate anxiety.

Student Voice for Newcomers

Our schools are becoming much more diverse and multi-cultured and it is important to get feedback from newcomer students on their experiences in education. Some may be able to communicate in English better than others, and some may have cultural needs which also need to be considered.

- Use **images, colours, and visual aids**.
- Provide **sentence frames** to get them started when responding.
- **Label** relevant objects, resources, key phrases or parts of the classroom in both English and in the student's native language.
- **Explain jargon, idioms or native slang**, and avoid using them altogether when possible.
- Use **creative methods** of capturing feedback that require little or no reading or writing e.g. drawing, collages, photography, acting it out, lego, play-doh etc.
- **Flashcards** can be helpful in answering questions.
- Using **physical ways** of giving feedback is also universal e.g. hand gestures, facial expressions/emojis, stand up voting etc.
- Use group activities where students can gain **support or guidance from their peers** who many understand better.
- Use **translator apps**. (Although be cautious about overreliance on these as they are not always accurate.)
- When you're organising feedback sessions or focus groups, keep in mind that some students might not be available on particular dates or times during the day, due to **religious holidays and practices**.
- If you're offering **food and refreshments**, make sure they are appropriate for all students.
- Be aware that some students might not feel comfortable **discussing certain topics** due to their cultural backgrounds, and we should do everything possible to make them feel comfortable and safe to engage.

What do students want to give feedback on?

What do students want to give feedback on?

Based on our engagement with students, these are some of the issues and themes they wish to be consulted on, however not an exhaustive list. Some of these issues can be challenging for teachers to explore depending on their training, confidence and experience. If you would like further support in developing participation in any of these areas, please get in touch with the Regional Participation Team in EA Youth Service.

Learning and Teaching

Students are keen to give their feedback on:

- Subjects on offer at GCSE and A-Level.
- How learning styles and differentiation are incorporated in the classroom.
- The relevance of curriculum content to their future and how subjects prepare them for independence and adulthood.
- How they prefer to be assessed.
- Being involved in the recruitment process of teachers.

Health, wellbeing and pastoral care

Students are keen to give their feedback on:

- The mental health services provided by the school.
- Stress management.
- How incidents of bullying are dealt with.
- Support with transitioning from primary to post-primary school, and from post-primary school to Further or Higher Education.
- Training for teachers on how to support students with mental health difficulties.
- How to deal with safeguarding issues in a supportive way for students.



Students are keen to give their feedback on:

- Extra-curricular activities offered.
- School uniform.
- Food and catering.
- Safety inside and outside school.
- Social activities and events.
- Charity fundraising, community involvement or support for current social causes.
- Improvements to school grounds, buildings and facilities.
- How their families can be supported better by school.
- Challenges with poverty and cost of living.
- Highlighting and solving real issues in their schools which teachers may or may not be aware of.



Students are keen to give their feedback on:

- Experiences of prejudice and discrimination in school e.g. sexism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia etc.
- LGBTQIA+ policy and support for students.
- Initiatives to end violence and abuse against women and girls.
- Relationships and sexuality education.
- Cultural diversity in school.

Developing your approach to Participation

Developing your approach to Participation

Where is your school on the journey?



(Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People, Democra)

Involving young people in decision making in school is essential, but this starts at an individual school level and your approach to participation may be different from other schools depending on your size, context and student population. Taking time to reflect on your current approach to participation and developing your vision for where you would like to get to, is vital for goal setting and action planning.

When reflecting on an approach to participation, it is important to consider the following aspects:

The current approach

Culture and Ethos

How do adults in your school view participation?
Is it valued? What benefits do you see happening?
What barriers do you face? How do students view participation?
Do students feel they have a voice?

Vision for the future

How would you like people in your school to view participation? What attitudes would you like to see?

What behaviours would you like to see? Which benefits would you like to see happening? How can you overcome the barriers? What changes would you like to see happening as a result of Student Voice?

The current approach

Roles and Structures

What processes are in place for students to give feedback?
Do you have a participative structure like a School Council?
How effective are your structures?
How does information flow between teachers, students and decision makers?
Do people know their responsibilities and duties when it comes to facilitating Student Voice and participation?

Vision for the future

What changes need to be made to your structures to make them more effective? How can you promote buy-in from teachers and students?
What changes need to be made to how information flows? – See School Council section on Communication for more information)

The current approach

Opportunities to participate

What methods do you currently use to facilitate Student Voice? Are the opportunities equitable and accessible for all students? Does your feedback represent the diversity of your student population?
What do you ask for feedback about? Do you cover all the areas outlined in the previous section? What kind of feedback do you get? How is the feedback used? Is it useful and meaningful?
How do you tell students about how their feedback is used?

When do students get the opportunity to express an opinion? Be consulted to give their opinions? Have a formal role in decision making? Work in partnership with adults to make decisions? Identify a problem, propose a solution and advocate for it to be implemented?
Plan and make decisions independently?

Vision for the future

What new methods could you try?
How can methods be linked more strategically?
How can you ensure there is consistent practice across all school areas?
If you aren't getting feedback from any of the areas in the previous section, how could you start?

The current approach

Training and Development

How are all students prepared to participate?
How are School Council members trained and prepared for their role?
How are all teachers trained in Student Voice, rights-based practice and participation? Do the School Council coordinators feel equipped and supported to do so?

Vision for the future

How could you incorporate training into normal school practices? Do you need additional support to train teachers? Where can you get this? Do you have the right resources? Where can you get these?
See School Council sections on building capacity to see how you can prepare council members better.

While you are reviewing your approach to participation, you should also involve students. This may be through a school-wide survey, or a focus group with the current School Council or any other relevant groups of students. You can use Appendix 1 for Lundy Model evaluation tools to shape questions and discussion.

Please also see Appendix 3 for a checklist for involving students in feedback developed by Jelly, Fuller and Byers (2000).

School Councils

Preparation

A School Council is a formal group of students who act as representatives of their classmates in discussing school issues. They help to make decisions about how a school is run and take on projects to support children and young people in their school.

A School Council is one of the easiest ways to promote youth voice in your school, but it is not the only way. They are a great way for students to take on leadership roles, promote the voice of the student body, problem solve and impact their school and local communities. They are also great to teach students about democracy and citizenship.

You may be reviewing your current structure, or you may want to set up a School Council for the first time. Before you do this, it's important to prepare and reflect, so that you are clear on the purpose and structure of your School Council. You may wish to consider some of the questions below:

- **Who will be responsible for running the School Council? Why have they been chosen?**
  The teacher running the School Council should have an interest in it, and genuinely value students' opinions. They should be approachable and have a good rapport with students and should have access to communicate with decision makers on their behalf.

- **Have staff received training in how to manage a School Council?**
  Training is not essential, but some teachers may feel ill-equipped to manage a School Council and need support. Please see Appendix 4 for a staff training outline or contact EA Youth Service Participation Team who can offer support in setting up a School Council.



- **What size will your School Council be?**
  You want the group to be big enough so that there is enough energy if a few people can't make meetings, but not too big that it is overwhelming, as students may get lost in the crowd or don't have the opportunity to input. You may want to consider a Junior and a Senior council, but it is important that the two come together regularly. In smaller schools, a representative from each class might work well, but for larger schools it might be better to have a representative for the whole year group.

- **How will you ensure it is representative of your school population?**
  You want to make sure the School Council is a range of age groups, genders and demographics. This may include LGBTQIA+ members, newcomers and students with SEND. You could consider Inclusion champions, or subgroups for particular inclusion issues.

- **Will you have formal roles? What will their responsibilities be?**
  It's not essential, but you may wish to have Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Communications roles. These responsibilities develop the skills of the students, but they need to be trained and supported adequately to succeed. You may also want to consider how School Council members can be identified, such as giving them a badge. Please see Appendix 5 for role descriptions.

- **Who will the audience be for the School Council?**
  Who will listen to the views of the students in the School Council? Will they have access to the Principal or Senior teachers? The Board of Governors? How will their views be communicated to the decision makers?

- **What influence can they have?**
  It is important to manage expectations of the School Council, so they aren't disappointed when their ideas don't happen like they imagined. They need to know what they can and cannot change and understand the parameters and boundaries of decision making. Sometimes we assume that it's too complicated for students to grasp, but the information just needs presented clearly in their language. This will give them a more positive experience, but it will also mean that their ideas are more relevant and realistic.

- **How will you evaluate the progress of the School Council throughout the year?**
  It's important to schedule evaluation and review to see if the School Council is working. Leaving this to the end of the year is too late to improve the experiences of the current cohort. We recommended having at least one review mid-way, but termly reviews are even better. The School Council section on Evaluation and Review will provide more detail.

Recruitment

An important part of setting up a School Council is ensuring that the right people are elected. The election process should be fair, open and supportive to all students in the school. We sometimes find that School Councils are filled with higher achieving students and the diversity of the student body is not represented. Avoid frequent re-election of the same person and support all students to join. It's also important that the nomination process is not seen as a popularity contest, or alternatively as a punishment or a prank.



Students should be nominated because they are interested in creating change, and they are the best people for the job.

- Develop a role description – what skills and qualities are you looking for? Keep it simple. How long will they sit on the Council for? (See Appendix 5)
- Create an Expression of Interest form for students to complete and set a deadline. (See Appendix 6)
- Advertise and communicate this across the school. You may wish to use our recruitment videos to explain the role of a School Council representative.

Recruitment Video 1

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrMaOAv8iV8

SCAN ME

Recruitment Video 2

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WuVz6FqAG88

SCAN ME

- Collect EOI forms and ask each nominated student to create a manifesto – this shows what they care about and why their peers should vote for them. (See Appendix 7)
- Display Manifesto posters around the school or on a noticeboard so the rest of the school can see who is interested in representing them.
- You can hold voting online or in person by secret ballot. You could also do this as a whole school activity with different timeslots for year groups, or in individual classes.
- You can get students to count the votes with teacher supervision.
- Speak to the successful candidates and make sure they are happy to proceed.
- Announce the new School Council to the rest of the school.

When developing role descriptions, you might want to consider specific 'Champion' roles in the School Council. This could be a person with a particular interest in a theme or issue who would advocate and promote that issue in the rest of the school. Examples of this could be LGBTQIA+, newcomers, SEND, sustainability, equality, anti-bullying or mental health.

If you already have a School Council, we recommend that you involve them in the recruitment process for the following intake – ask them what they would like to see happen. You could also ask past members to mentor new members to ease them into the role. You could even run a Speed Chatting open event so students can speak to current members about the role and expectations.

Now that you have recruited your School Council, you will use the Lundy Model to embed meaningful, rights-based participation from the outset.

Your first priority is to set up a **'Space'** where students feel comfortable, included, and supported to engage in participative work. This section looks at activities which can be used to build trust and safety with a new group.

Icebreakers and Energizers

Icebreakers and Energizers promote a relaxed and informal atmosphere. They are a good start to creating a comfortable space for students, fostering trust, and helping groups get to know each other.

Alphabet Name Game	
Duration	10 minutes
Resources	None
Instructions	The first person says their name and something they like that begins with first letter of their name e.g. My name is Jane and I like jelly. The next person says their name and something they like, and then everyone who has gone before them. e.g. My name is Stephen and I like sweaters… this is Jane, and she likes jelly. **Alternative:** If spelling is a challenge, you could ask students to come up with something in a category e.g. food items, or items that are red.

Cartoon Introductions	
Duration	10 minutes
Resources	None or printed cartoon characters
Instructions	Each person picks a cartoon character that they think best represent them and explain why to the group. E.g. Lisa Simpson because I also play the saxophone. **Alternative:** Print out characters to choose one that represents them. Ensure the print-outs depict something about the characters personalities or else younger children are likely to pick ones that look most like them.

One of Us	
Duration	10 minutes
Resources	Post-it notes and pens
Instructions	Each person writes down a fact about themselves on a post-it note and gives it to the teacher. The teacher reads out each fact and the group have to guess which person it belongs to. **Alternative:** If writing is a challenge, give the students a category and ask them to draw their favourite e.g. fruit

Me as a Logo	
Duration	10 minutes
Resources	Paper and pens
Instructions	Ask each person, "If you had a logo, what would it be?" Get the group to design or draw a logo to represent them as a person. Consider colours, images, a tagline. Each person shows their logo to the rest of the group and explains it.

Two truths and a lie	
Duration	15-20 minutes
Resources	None
Instructions	Each person thinks of three facts about themselves – two have to be true and one has to be a lie. They share their facts with the rest of the group, and they have to decide which one they think is the lie.

Popcorn 21	
Duration	10 minutes
Resources	None
Instructions	The group takes it in turns to count up to 21 but cannot consult with each other whose turn it is to speak. If two people speak at the same time, the group has to start from the beginning again. The same person cannot say consecutive numbers. **Alternative:** The group sits in a circle and counts in the same order up to 21. Each person can say up to 3 numbers each and can decide how many they want to say. The person that ends up having to say '21' is eliminated until one person is left. **Alternative:** If counting is a challenge, use the lyrics of a song or nursery rhyme and students have to say one word at a time. You could also write a sentence on the board that the students have to read aloud.

One Frog	
Duration	10 minutes
Resources	None
Instructions	Person 1 says "one frog", next person says "jumped over", next person says "the pond", next person says "plop". The next person says "two frogs", next person says "two frogs", next person says "jumped over", next person says "the pond", next person says "plop", next person says "plop". The next person says "three frogs" and so on.

Connect Me	
Duration	10 minutes
Resources	None
Instructions	Each person will be given 5 random words (everyone will have the same). The group will then get some time to come up with something about themselves that associates or has a connection with the words given. For example, if one word is 'London' they may say "I went to London last month" or "London is where I'd like to live one day". Each person reads out their association with that word for the five words given. This gives the group time to make connections with each other and find common interests.

Beach Ball Q&A	
Duration	10 minutes
Resources	Inflatable beach ball with different colours or segments.
Instructions	Get the group to stand in a circle and throw the beach ball to each person. Whichever segment or colour that their right thumb lands on, they will answer the question for that segment. If the group don't know each other, get them to introduce themselves when they catch the ball. Once they have said their name and answered the question, they will toss the ball on to someone else in the group. They cannot throw the ball to someone on their immediate right or left or to someone who has already had a turn. Continue to toss the ball around the circle until each person has introduced themselves and answered a question. e.g. if you land on red, answer "If you could be in a reality show, what would it be?" If you land on blue, answer "What superpower would you like to have?" **Alternative:** You could also do this with coloured sweets e.g. starburst, skittles. Ask the students to choose 1-5 sweets and answer the questions for those colours. You could also do this with a foam dice and assign a question to each number they could land on.

Starburst Relay	
Duration	15 minutes
Resources	Starburst, rubber gloves
Instructions	Split the group into two teams, set up a table in the middle with a pair of rubber gloves and a packet of starburst sweets. The team race against each other, one by one, to put on the rubber gloves, open a Starburst sweet and eat it. The team that finishes first is the winner.

Jenga	
Duration	15 mins
Resources	Jenga game
Instructions	On each Jenga block, write a question that the person has to answer, or a challenge they have to complete. Play Jenga with the group and ask them to carry out whatever is on the block they remove.

Team Building Activities

The following activities can help the School Council get accustomed to working in teams, form bonds and develop their communication, leadership, negotiation, and problem-solving skills.

Make a team with... (Also known as Clumps)	
Duration	15 minutes
Resources	None
Instructions	The group have to form a team based on the instructions that you shout out. For example, some instructions could include "Get into a team with people who have the same number of siblings as you" or "Get into a team with people who like similar types of music to you." People can shout out or sit down to signal that their team is "complete." Encourage people to work as quickly as possible. Repeat the exercise as many times as you want. You can make this more challenging by not allowing the group to speak.

Human Calculator	
Duration	10 minutes
Resources	Numbers 1-30 printed out on pieces of paper, masking tape
Instructions	Lay out the numbers on the floor randomly and mark out a square around them. Have the group stand around the outside of the square. The group must count from 1-30 as quickly as

	possible by touching and saying the number, only one person can have any part of their body inside the square at one time. Time the activity, and the group can keep adapting their strategy to complete it faster. Increase the numbers if your group is larger.

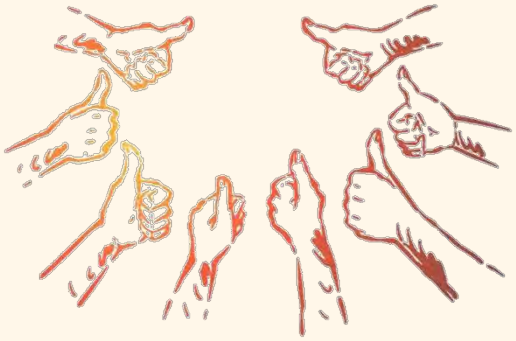
Rock, Paper, Scissor Hoops	
Duration	10 minutes
Resources	Hula hoops
Instructions	Lay the hoops on the ground, creating a random path from one side of the room to the other. Split the group into two teams and each team goes to either side. The team members must jump into the hula hoops to cross the room. When they meet an opponent, they must play Rock Paper Scissors. The loser goes back to the start, and the winner can continue to the other side. The losing team can send a new team member to meet the winner and try to beat them. The game finishes when one team has successfully crossed to the other side.

The Floor is Lava	
Duration	15 minutes
Resources	Paper
Instructions	Split the group into teams of 4-5 people. Give each team sheets of paper (one less that the amount of team members e.g. if the team has 4 members, give them 3 sheets.) The team must use the paper to cross from one side of the room to the other. The floor is lava so if they step on it, they lose use of one foot, then the other, then have to go back to the beginning. If a piece of paper is left unattended, that paper will disintegrate and be removed from play.

Landmines	
Duration	10 minutes
Resources	Paper
Instructions	Set out a grid using A4 paper on the floor and decide a path that you want the students to follow (you may wish to write or draw this on a separate page for you to refer to.) It can be as big or small as you wish depending on the size of your group but recommend at least 12-16 pieces of paper. The aim is for the students to figure out the path without stepping on a landmine. One person steps on the grid and the worker says “Yes” or “No” each step. If they step on a landmine they go back to the beginning and the next person starts. The group must memorise the correct steps that the previous person took. You can add a forfeit in for every time someone stands on a landmine.

Group Contracts

Contracts define what is acceptable and not acceptable behaviour, they allow the School Council to decide how they want to be treated in the group and creates a safe space. It is also important to consider consequences if the contract is broken, the group should take ownership of the contract and challenge behaviour themselves. It is also beneficial to discuss ways of coping with disagreements, tension, or conflict within the group. This will be a good start to developing their Constitution.



Option 1 – Helps me, melts me

- Split a flipchart page down the middle with one half for 'Helps me', and the other half for 'Melts me.'
- Ask the group to suggest things that help them engage with a lesson or meeting, and things that will frustrate them or cause them to disengage.

Option 2 – Word cards

- Print a range of words on pieces of paper and lay them out on the floor with a few blank pages.
- Ask each learner to pick up a word that appeals to them or a blank one if they want to add their own word – discuss what that word means to them and what should be included in contract.
- E.g. respect, language, open mindedness, confidentiality, participation, trust

Option 3 – Group discussion

- Group are facilitated to discuss expectations and requirements to be included in a group contract.

Baselines and Goal Setting

Carrying out a baseline allows teachers to figure out where the students are at, so they can pitch lessons and build capacity at the appropriate level. Baselines can be carried out at the beginning of a programme, or at the beginning of a lesson, and it's important to always review it at the end to see what has changed. Very often we facilitate students to build skills organically without them realising it, however it is important that they understand their development and can articulate it. Supporting students to set goals helps them to see their progress and have a better understanding of the new skills they are developing.

Hopes and Fears	
Duration	10 minutes
Resources	Post-it notes, pens
Instructions	The new School Council members might join for different reasons, and they may feel anxious about their new role. Ask each person to write down a hope on a post-it note, and a fear on another. If the group is comfortable, they can feedback individually, or else the teacher can collect all the post-it notes and read them out anonymously. It is important that the teacher affirms whether their hope can be achieved, and what they can do to alleviate the fears. It is also a useful tool for planning as you know what the group wants to get out of being involved in the School Council. **Alternative:** If writing is a challenge, students could simply state their hope or fear. You could also use a symbol or image they stand beside, or a section of the room for each one. You could also use Worry Monsters.

Why do I want to take part?	
Duration	15 minutes
Resources	None
Instructions	Split into smaller groups and discuss the following questions: • Why do I want to be involved in School Council? • What do I understand about what the School Council is? • If I don't understand something, what do I need to ask or find out more about? • What type of things do I want to get involved in or interested in doing as part of the School Council? Ask someone from the group to feedback to the larger group.

Baseline Survey	
Duration	10 minutes
Resources	Printed survey (See Appendix 8)
Instructions	Discuss and complete baseline survey with council members. Ask each person to set 2-3 goals to improve the scores identified on their survey. There is also a blank copy of the survey in Appendix 8 for you to add your own outcomes for a particular topic. It is important that they baselines are reviewed throughout the programme, preferably mid-way and at the end.

Baseline Spectrum	
Duration	10 minutes
Resources	Masking tape and post-it notes or coloured stickers.
Instructions	Choose which skill or outcome you would like to measure e.g. confidence, leadership, level of participation. Alternatively, it could be level of knowledge in a particular subject area or topic. Put a piece of tape on the floor or on the wall and ask each person to mark on the line with a post-it note or sticker (from 1-10) where they feel they are in relation to the chosen outcome. It is helpful if you place this somewhere where it can remain until the end of the year, as students can revisit it throughout to place more stickers and see their progression.

Baseline Hopscotch	
Duration	10 minutes
Resources	Hopscotch template (Appendix 8)
Instructions	Choose which skill or outcome you would like to measure e.g. confidence, leadership, level of participation. Alternatively, it could be level of knowledge in a particular subject area or topic. Ask the students to mark on the hopscotch template where they feel they are in relation to the chosen outcome. They could complete this individually or you could have a group hopscotch and mark each person's contribution with a post-it note or coloured sticker. It is important to revisit this at the end of the year so students can see their progression. **Alternative:** You could also do this by physically drawing out a hopscotch on the ground and play the game. Credit: Boys & Girls Clubs NI

Once you have created your **'Space'**, you need to make sure that students are equipped and supported to participate and find their **'Voice.'**

This might involve improving confidence, learning how to work with others and communicate better, or it could be increasing their knowledge around what participation means and the role. This section looks at activities to build the skills and capacity of students to engage in meaningful participation, which may include:

- What is participation?
- Leadership, communication and presentation skills.
- Problem solving and decision making.
- Goal setting and action planning.
- Working with others and dealing with conflict.
- Being a part of a School Council – taking minutes, writing letters etc.

UNCRC Charades	
Duration	20 minutes
Resources	Print out a selection of 10 rights on separate pieces of paper in an envelope for each team.
Instructions	Split the group into teams and give each an envelope. The team should give out all the pieces of paper until each team member has at least one, don't show it to anyone else. They need to act out or play charades to describe the right which is on their piece of paper. When the group correctly guess, the next person acts out their right. The first team to complete all 10 is the winner. **Alternative:** Instead of acting, you could also do this as Pictionary.

What is Participation?	
Duration	20 minutes
Resources	Flipchart and markers
Instructions	In small groups, students discuss what participation in school looks like. This can be done as a mind map with key words. Provide feedback to the large group and form an agreed understanding/definition.

	Alternative: To simplify this, discuss what it means to have a voice and the different ways you can have a say about decisions in your life or in school specifically. Providing examples can be useful.

What do I want the School Council to look like?	
Duration	20-30 minutes
Resources	Flipchart, markers
Instructions	It's important that students provide feedback on the planning process of the Student Council and how they wish to engage. **Some prompt questions:** • Meetings – When? How often? How long? Face to face or online? • Communication – How do you want the teacher to share info or materials for the meeting? • Promotion – How will you promote the work that the School Council is doing? • What kinds of activities do you want to do? • What methods do you want to use? E.g. presentations, drama, music, art, photo, video, podcast, writing • What trips or visits would be relevant to the School Council? • What topics would you be interested in looking at? • Who could your audience be? • What changes would you like to see at the end of the year? This would also be a good time to let the School Council know if they have a budget and get feedback on how they would like to spend that. Make sure you manage expectations, tell the group what the boundaries and limitations are so they understand.

What is a Representative?	
Duration	30 minutes
Resources	Flipchart, markers
Instructions	Ask the group to think about what it means to be a representative or leader and the qualities they should have. What are their most important characteristics? What skills should they have? What knowledge should they have? Does that matter? **Alternative:** You could do this as a body outline where each young person draws around themselves of their hands and writes the qualities on the outline.

UNCRC Walking Debate	
Duration	45-60 minutes
Resources	Agree/Disagree signs, UNCRC poster (See Appendix 9)
Background Info	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), agreed by the UN in 1989, is all about making sure children (those aged under 18) in all parts of the world and in all parts of our country have the best possible childhood.
Instructions	Read out the following statements and ask the group to go to a side of the room for Agree, or the other side for Disagree. • Human rights are only necessary for people who live in countries where there is a lot of poverty or war. • Children have their own human rights treaty because childhood is a very precious time. • Ordinary people can do much more than the Government to protect human rights. • You have to be a certain age to have the right to be heard and taken seriously. • If children commit crimes, their rights should be removed. • Children have their own human rights treaty because there are things that children need that adults don't. • Picking on someone is a violation of their human rights. • Babies have human rights. Ask the group to look at the UNCRC poster and discuss if there any rights which surprised them, or they weren't expecting. Are there any rights that are missing that they would like to add? **Expansion options:** 1. Ask each group to put the rights in order of high priority to low priority and provide feedback. 2. Ask each group to choose 5 rights and to pick a real-life example of their chosen rights in action, or being violated. (You could provide newspapers to help them.) 3. Ask the group to choose the rights they think are being upheld well by their school, and the rights they think could be improved and how.

Prime Minister for the Day	
Duration	30 minutes
Resources	Flipchart, pens, magazines, newspapers, scissors, glue
Instructions	Split into small groups and give resources out. Ask each group to create their ideal representative, draw them and give them a name. Around the picture students will write the skills, qualities, values of the prime minister. What issues do they want to tackle, what values should they have? Ask each small group to present their ideal representative to the rest of the group.

	Alternative: To simplify this, you may want to discuss the skills and qualities of a Principal or other leader in your school that will be familiar to students.

Participation Human Bingo	
Duration	10 minutes
Resources	Human Bingo sheets (See Appendix 10), a prize
Instructions	Give each person a Human Bingo Sheet. They have to move around the group and find someone to sign a box in their bingo sheet. They cannot sign their own name on their sheet. Depending on the group size, you can decide if they can have the same person signing twice. The first person to get all boxes signed shouts BINGO and they are the winner. The teacher might want to ask some questions to the people who signed for 'quality assurance.' You may need to change the statements to suit the age group and capacity of the students. **Alternative –** Human Bingo can also be used to ascertain the groups knowledge and experience on a particular theme and to introduce a topic. Appendix 10 also includes a climate change version and one for participation and citizenship.

Participation Quiz	
Duration	10 minutes
Resources	Yes/No signs
Instructions	Many students are involved in all kinds of participative activities but don't connect these experiences with the term 'participation'. Read out the following statements and ask the group to answer, "Yes" or "No". Alternatively you could do this by standing up and sitting down. The following statements are suitable for post-primary students but will have to be adapted to more relevant examples for other age groups and ability levels. Have you ever… • Got involved in organising or running activities for yourself, your friends, or your community? • Signed a petition? • Taken part in a demonstration/protest? • Been involved in a school council? • Taken part in a consultation? • Been involved in a Youth forum?

	• Spoken up on behalf of a cause? • Campaigned on behalf of a cause? • Volunteered in any way? • Got involved in any community/school fundraising? • Done any charity work? • Written an article for your school/youth club newsletter/social media? • Been involved in making a video, writing a song, or making a poster about something important to you? • Voted for something?

Creating a constitution

A constitution sets out the roles and responsibilities of the School Council, and the rules that it must follow and needs to have in place. It provides a framework for how the Council operates and how to deal with problems that may arise.

A constitution may include the aspects below:

The aims and purpose of the School Council or a mission statement. This may also include a different name for the group chosen by the students, branding, colour scheme or logos.

The election process and the process to be followed if a member resigns.

The management roles in the Council and their responsibilities.

A code of conduct or expected behaviour from School Council representatives.

Where, when and how often meetings will be conducted, recorded and reported.

The plan for the year. (See Appendix 11 for sample)

How will information be communicated upwards to decision makers?

How will information be communicated to the rest of the school?

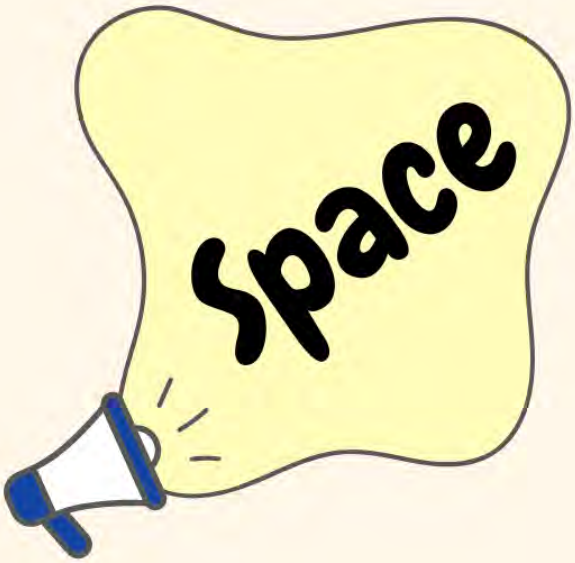
How will information be communicated from decision makers to the council?

Procedures for dealing with a budget if available.

How are problems or disagreements dealt with then they arise?

Meetings

Meetings will be the most important time for the School Council to discuss issues and complete work on projects. Considering the Lundy model will help you to plan meetings appropriately.



- Where will meetings take place? Is the room quiet and free from distractions? Is it big enough to accommodate the group size comfortably?
- How long does a meeting last? Will it be long enough to be useful? Will the students consistently miss classes or lunch break?
- Are meetings uninterrupted and protected on timetable? This shows that the School Council is valued by teachers.
- How often will meetings take place? Project work will need regular and consistent contact if it is to be effective.
- How will members stay in contact outside of meetings? Could you set up a Google Classroom or Teams site?
- Will the coordinator teacher stay for the meeting? It may be appropriate for them to leave at times, so that the students feel comfortable to discuss issues.



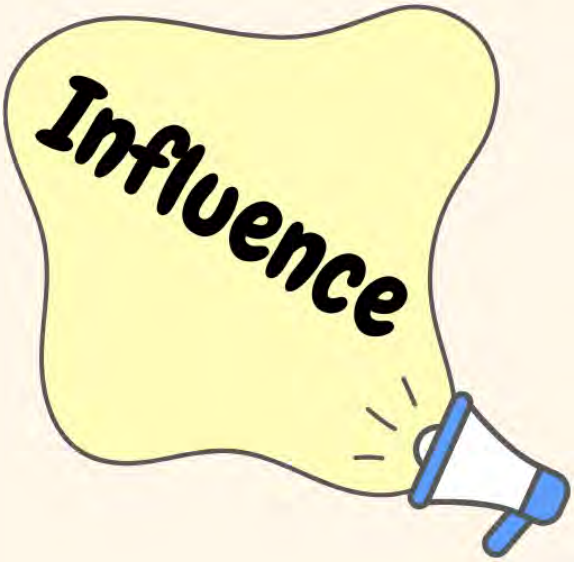
- Is there an agenda for the meeting? Has the agenda come from the school or agreed among the students? (See Appendix 12)
- Have School Council members received information that is appropriate to their age and stage, and easily understood so they can form their views and opinions?

- How will students give feedback? – group discussion, flipchart, creative methods, presentations.
- How will decisions be made? Will there be voting processes? A proposer and seconder of a motion?
- How will meetings be recorded? (See Appendix 12)



- Who hears about the decisions or suggestions made by the School Council?
- Does a decision maker attend meetings, or do they receive regular feedback from the teacher?

- What changes can the School Council make?
- How can they have an impact?
- What are the limitations and parameters so that members manage their expectations?
- How will they receive feedback from decision makers? Even if their suggestions are not possible, it's important to explain why.



Research and Consultation

The role of a School Council is to advocate for the rest of the school and put their viewpoints on the agenda for discussion and action. They need to remember that they are accountable to their peers and need to take it seriously so that the Council will be meaningful and useful. This will require them to consult with their peers to get a wider range of viewpoints and find out what issues the other students care about. It is also helpful to make sure their ideas are sound and other students agree with their plans. This work also allows the School Council to become the 'Audience' and 'Influence' for the rest of the school and gives them leadership responsibility.

Research and consultation is generally easier for post-primary students with more understanding, however younger students or students with SEND should be encouraged to carry out simple consultations, such as voting for options.

What is research?

Research is an exploration or investigation to find out facts and thoughts about an identified theme. It aims to establish the 'truth' of something through a process of enquiry. At times even the most common assumption should be validated before it is accepted.

What is a consultation?

A consultation involves asking people to share their views and ideas about something, recording their ideas in an accessible format and feeding them back to people who are involved in the decision-making process.

Why should we do this?	
Duration	20 minutes
Resources	Flipchart, pens
Instructions	Word storm with large group everything they know about research and why it is important. Ask students to list any research they might have been involved in and identify who might use this research and why.

	Split into small groups and ask them to discuss – • Why should we research and consult with others? • Why is it important we hear the views and opinions of others?

Identify Research and Consultation Methods	
Duration	20 minutes
Resources	Flipchart, pens
Instructions	In a large group, list all methods of research that they can think of, e.g. internet research, community and services mapping, online questionnaires, focus groups, people stopping you on the streets, social media, interviews, etc. In small groups discuss and feedback what they think are the advantages and disadvantages of each of the different methods identified. • What type of information do we think we would get from using the various methods? • Why might each method be useful? • What information would you need – Qualitative or Quantitative data Large group considers and plans which method/s they are going to use for their research.

Aims and Objectives	
Duration	20–30 minutes
Resources	Flipchart, pens
Instructions	After carrying out the previous two activities, the group should now understand the purpose of consultation and how they might like to do this. Once they have decided their theme or topic, or the information they are trying to find out, they need to decide their aims and objectives. Aims are the changes that you are trying to achieve, the aspiration or goal you wish to reach. Aims are broad and general statements of intent and should inform people about the overall purpose. Objectives are the methods or activities by which you plan to achieve your aims. Objectives are more focused and indicate what steps should be taken to reach the goal or aim.

	Prompt Questions: • What are we trying to achieve? • How will the research and consultation help us? • What do we need to find out? Develop Aim and Objectives from the feedback.

Creating the Consultation	
Duration	60 minutes
Resources	Planning Template (See Appendix 13)
Instructions	Using the planning template, plan the consultation to be undertaken with other students.

Sharing your results	
Duration	40 minutes
Resources	Paper, pens, laptop
Instructions	When your consultation is complete you may wish to present your findings to the relevant decision makers and to the rest of the school. You could do this through a presentation, video, noticeboard or newsletter. **Tips to help you do this:** • Make it clear and easy to understand. Does it make sense? • Make it interesting and attractive. Will people be interested? • Make it confidential (no names or details of participants) • Make it with your audience in mind – who are you targeting? • Make it factual and specific. Have you included data and statistics from your research? • Make it easy to share. Is it easy to share with your audience? • Make it eye-catching and attractive. • Does it have a clear message? • Not too many words – can you add photos or images? • Stick to the point – is it relevant? **Alternative:** If you are doing voting, keep it simple by creating a pie chart showing the popular answers.

The below methods are perfect for engaging students in an informal way without facilitating a lesson. You could do this during lunch or free periods, or in form time or personal development classes.

These methods will work well with younger age groups and students with different abilities.

Interactive Voting Methods	
Hula Hoops	Set up two hula-hoops on the floor so that they are next to each other but overlapping. The idea is to create a 'Venn diagram'. One side would be 'yes', one would be 'no' and the middle section would be 'unsure.' Students can stand in the hoops or place a sticker or post it note in the hoop.
Emojis	Students choose between different options by drawing emojis next to each option to represent how they feel about each one. Alternatively, use emoji stickers or simple smiley / sad face stickers.
Dots	Each student is given a set number of sticky dots to vote by sticking them next to their preferred option(s). They can use all their dots for one option or spread them between different ones.
Marbles	Students are given five marbles each and they use them to vote for different options, represented by jars with labels on them. They can put all five marbles in one jar or put some in each, depending on their preferences. (Sweets could also be used as alternative, chocolate coins or paper money)
Vote with your feet	Ask students to move to different parts of the room as their answer to questions. Make sure to record the numbers at each stage.
Thumbs Up	Traditional hands up to indicate if they agree or disagree with different options/choices. Can also use thumbs up/down/middle.
On the Scale	Ask students to stand or place something on a linear scale e.g. a piece of string, rope or tape on the ground or the wall.
Secret Ballot	Students vote for their preferred option(s) by indicating their choices on a piece of paper which is folded and placed in a voting box. The teacher then empties the box and counts the votes.
Ranking	Write or print the different options onto cards and cut them out. Students then rank their choices from first to last depending on their preferences.
Knock Out	The students vote for different options from a list. The option with the least number of votes is 'knocked out' of the running. The students then vote again, and another is knocked out of the competition. This process continues until there is only one left and you have a winner.
Balloon Pop	Get the students to write or draw their ideas on balloons and the group have to choose which ones to pop and get rid of.
Wishing Well	Using whatever materials you can, set up a wishing well. Students write their thoughts, suggestions, or ideas on a piece of paper (printed coin) and throw into the wishing well.

Working on the school's agenda

Decision makers can use the School Council to get feedback on relevant policies and challenges arising in the school. These opportunities are important as you are bringing students into the conversation and facilitating them to be a part of normal decision-making processes in the school.

It is also important to strike a balance so that the School Council is student-led, whilst also meeting the needs of the school.

It can be easy to assume that students won't be interested in policies or school decisions, or they are too complicated for them to understand and are perhaps dismissed because of their age. If you take time to educate the students and provide appropriate information, you might be surprised by how interested they can be!

If you ask for feedback around a topic they don't understand, or don't see as being relevant, then it won't be meaningful.

It is also important that students are consulted **before** a decision has been made; it is tokenistic to expect the School Council to simply agree with a decision that has already been made and can't change. You also need to avoid steering students towards a particular point of view or outcome.



Helpful tips for presenting information in a youth friendly format

- Consider your target audience – age, cognitive ability, literacy level, cultural background.
- Pick out the key information – keep it short and sweet.
- Avoid jargon and complicated words.
- Provide definitions of any words that are difficult to understand, or jargon that is unavoidable.
- Provide the definitions right away, don't leave it until the end.
- Use a minimalist layout – clearly laid out, short paragraphs, larger text and generous line spacing.
- Include images or charts which provide context to the text.
- Use formatting tools to draw attention to important points – bold, italics, underline, bullet points or numbered lists.
- Be careful when using colours or fancy fonts as students with visual impairments or dyslexia may struggle more.
- Consider the main outcomes for the consultation – what exactly do you want to find out? What is the purpose of the engagement?
- Consider how you will feedback to the School Council, and when.
- Get the Student Council involved – older members may be able to create youth friendly information for younger members.

Working on the student's agenda

As well as working on the schools' agenda, it's also important that the School Council get the opportunity to drive the agenda; to address the issues they, and the rest of the student body cares about.

The first stage of this is finding out what is important and relevant to them; we should never assume to know what students might, or might not be interested in. This section looks at activities which can help you explore different topics and issues in creative and interactive ways.

School Mapping	
Duration	40-90 minutes
Resources	Flipchart, markers, magazines, newspapers, scissors, glue
Instructions	Split the group into smaller groups and ask them to create an school map as creatively as possible with the following prompts: • Mark all the important places and landmarks – places that are part of your everyday life. • Where do you hang out? • What parts make you proud to go to this school? • What parts do you wish you could change? • What parts are an eyesore and make the school look bad? • What parts show diversity in your school? • What issues or problems does the school have? • What support is there for students who need help? • Where is a safe place / or a dangerous place in your school? • Who are the important or influential people in your school? (Can be positive or negative) Each small group should present their map to the rest of the group. Teacher should then facilitate a discussion around the common issues or areas for concern identified by each group.

Child's Rights Mapping Activity (adapted from UK Committee for UNICEF UK Child Friendly Cities & Communities)	
Duration	40-90 minutes
Resources	Flipchart, coloured flags or post-it notes, scissors, glue, UNCRC Poster
Instructions	Choose a coloured flag or post-it note to represent rights being respected, and a different colour for rights being violated. Using the maps completed in the previous activity, ask the group to add a flag or post-it note to areas on the map. It would be helpful to provide the UNCRC poster to prompt ideas. The questions below might also help to get students thinking: • Where do you feel really welcome? • What do you like about the places you hang out? What could be better about them? • Where is it easy to make friends? • Where can you go to get help? • What helps you to stay healthy? • How do you like to relax? • How do you access information about the world around you? • What does your family need from your school to feel supported? • What gets in the way of you enjoying school? • How are you able to influence decisions made in your school? • What helps you to learn and develop the talents and ideas that you have? • What do you think your school can be most proud of for students growing up here? • What are the challenges in your school and what needs to improve? Each small group should present their flags to the rest of the group and provide feedback. The teacher should then facilitate a discussion around the common issues or areas for concern identified by each group.

Hot Potatoes	
Duration	45-60 minutes
Resources	Post-it notes, pens, flipchart
Instructions	Give everyone post-it notes and a pen. Ask the group to write down a key issue to be addressed within your school, then stick it onto the flipchart. Split into small groups and ask them to pick 2-3 topics to discuss and feedback why they feel this is a key issue for students in the school and what needs to change. The group should consider what they could/would do as an advocate for this issues/topic.

First Thoughts	
Duration	10 minutes
Resources	None
Instructions	This is a good starting point to look at an issue. List a series of things related to the issue and ask the group to write down the first thing that comes into their head. Try not to censor their thoughts. Discuss the group's thoughts and where they came from.

Traffic Light Issues	
Duration	45-60 minutes
Resources	Traffic light printed or drawn, flipchart, markers
Instructions	Ask the group to identify issues that they feel are important to local students and write these on post it notes. Read out each issue and group and apply the traffic light exercise to each one. 'Red' indicates the issue that they feel strongly about especially those things that anger, annoy, or frustrate them about it. 'Amber' indicates the issues that they feel ok about but could have the potential to get worse if not addressed or improved (or things that are almost good but just missing the mark.) 'Green' indicates the issues that they feel more positive about, or those things that address the issue well. Students can decide individually, or in small groups and feedback to the larger group. The teacher should question the groups to reflect on and clarify which issues are important and the aspects which need action.

Hot Air Balloon	
Duration	40-60 minutes
Resources	Basket or hot air balloon printout, pictures
Instructions	On each table you have a basket (the hot air balloon) and photos of relevant items. For example if you were asking what activities they would want to see in their youth club, you might have a photo of a pool table, table tennis etc. First you ask them to pick all the items they want at the club and put them into their hot air balloon. Then say 'your hot air balloon is losing power, what would you throw out first?', then second etc. **Alternative –** You don't have to throw things out, but how can you reduce the weight? Is there a middle ground or compromise? You could also attach costs to each item and allow students to develop their own budget.

Mood Board	
Duration	20-30 minutes
Resources	Paper, pens, magazines, newspapers, scissors, glue
Instructions	This activity is getting people to think about how they feel about a certain topic/theme. It could be a question for example 'how do you feel about the local sport opportunities for girls?' Each person is given a piece of paper and asked to write or draw how they feel. Once complete everyone sticks their paper onto the wall to make a large collage.

Post-It Note Races	
Duration	10-15 minutes
Resources	Post-it notes, pens, masking tape
Instructions	Mark a start and finish line in the room using string or tape. Divide the group into small teams and give each team a pack of post-it notes each. Give them a set amount of time to come up with as many different ideas about a certain topic as possible. The group should line up their post-it notes at the start line. The first team to cross the finish wins the challenge and can receive a prize. Each group shares some of their post-it notes with the rest of the group, or the teacher can read them out to the rest of the group. Keep the post-it notes for when the group start planning their project/campaign.

Envelope Investments	
Duration	20 mins
Resources	Envelopes, paper money
Instructions	After the group have come up with a list of issues, ask each person to take one of the issues to be responsible for. Give each person an empty envelope and £100 in paper money (a mix of notes). Each person should come up with a one-minute pitch for their issue and why it's the best one. The group go around everyone, listen to each person's pitches and decide if they would like to invest in an issue and how much. They hand over money to the other person to put in their envelope. Finish the activity once everyone has heard all the pitches. The envelope that has the most money is the issue that the group are most passionate and interested in.

Once you have chosen issues and themes to focus on for the year, you may wish to complete an action plan or a manifesto for the year. A manifesto is a written declaration of the intentions, motives, or views of the Student Council and is a perfect way to communicate your chosen themes or projects to the rest of the school. (Appendix 14)

Taking Action

Your School Council has decided on its key themes and projects, now they have to decide what action to take.

The students may choose to create a report or media piece or present their findings to decision makers. They may wish to carry out a social action project to take action around an issue. They may also decide to take forward a campaign to lobby for change. The School Council should be facilitated to plan their action, consider their intended audience, and how they will report and feedback to others.

Taking action may be challenging for very young students or students with SEND however it's important they recognise how they can make a difference and be empowered to do so. Projects may have to be more adult led, with input and manageable decisions being made by students where possible.

What is a social action project?

Once an issue is identified, the group will plan and implement an action that goes towards carrying out a solution. This may be in your school or local community etc. A social action project is people coming together to tackle an issue, support others or improve their local area. People give their time and other resources for the common good.

This is a great video explaining Social Action - https://youtu.be/pg8Apmu-r0s

What is a campaign?

SCAN ME

Campaigns are about communicating a message to create a change. Campaigns are about raising awareness of an identified issue or topic affecting students to the appropriate decision makers and to others in the school to bring about change.

Campaigns can be short or take place over a longer time involving many different methods including protests, strikes, rallies and marches, boycotts, sit ins, petitions, getting people involved in a movement, storytelling, lobbying and can be spread on social media.

Exploring Social Action	
Duration	20 minutes
Resources	iPads, Wi-Fi
Instructions	Give students the definitions above of social action projects and campaigns. Ask them to look on internet for examples of both worldwide and local social action projects and campaigns and present them to the rest of the group. **Things to consider –** What was the purpose of the project/campaign? How did they know if it was successful or not? How did they spread awareness of it? **Alternative:** To simplify this, ask the students to consider examples of people helping others or making a difference in their local area.

Developing a Social Action Project	
Duration	60-90 minutes
Resources	1 and 10 printout, flipchart, pens, Social Action Project Plan (Appendix 15)
Instructions	Label one end of the room with a 1 being most important and the other end with a 10 being least important. Read the below statements and ask the group to stand on a rating scale to identify why they would like to undertake Social Action: • I want to do something good for others. • I want to work with others towards a common goal of making something better for someone or a group of people. • I want to do the right thing. • I want to be responsible. • I want to volunteer. • I want to make changes. • I want to develop new skills. • I want experience for applications for jobs/courses. Using information from research and consultation, complete a mind map of ideas for their social action project to meet the identified need. Complete Social Action Project Plan & see ideas.

Developing Advocacy Skills	
Duration	60 minutes
Resources	Scenario Cards (See Appendix 16)
Instructions	Split the group into 4 small groups and provide each group with a scenario card. Explain to participants that they must develop a goal, plan, and negotiating tactic for their scenario. Small Groups should nominate one person to argue their case to the rest of the larger group. The larger group will then vote on whether or not their plan would be successful. For any small groups that did not successfully win the vote, provide them with time to develop a plan B. Give these groups the opportunity to argue their plan one more time. **Debrief –** • What's the difference between advocating for yourself and advocating for others? • What were the challenges in this situation? • Advocating, but only having a limited amount of information can be difficult, you cannot be an "expert" in everything. • What was difficult about working in a group vs being able to develop a plan yourself? • What was involved in the decision making to vote 'for' or 'against' a group? • What different factors were considered?

What's your Message?	
Duration	30 mins
Resources	Flipchart, markers
Instructions	Split into small groups and ask them to discuss the following questions based on the themes identified in their research and consultation: • What's my message? • How do I want to communicate it? • Who needs to hear it? (And how do I communicate best to this audience?)

Developing a Campaign – What's the vision?	
Duration	60 minutes
Resources	Art materials, magazines, flipchart, pens (Or iPads as alternative)
Instructions	Using arts materials, ask the group to show what they want their changes to look like? What is their vision? For example: What does the layout of the youth centre looks like? What the local play park should look like? What does the programme in the youth centre look like?

Developing a Campaign – Ideal Island	
Duration	60 minutes
Resources	Art materials, magazines, flipchart, pens (Or iPads as alternative)
Instructions	If your group is doing a thematic campaign, you could facilitate an Ideal Island exercise in small groups where they create a world where their campaign has been successful in making a change. What would look different? Consider family life, school, health, relationships, society, laws, public services, careers, and the future.

Scenarios of Change	
Duration	30 minutes
Resources	Flipchart, coloured pens
Instructions	This activity works well following the previous visioning activities. Based on their vision, what changes would they like to see? Use two different colours to circle the changes, one colour for most important, and one colour for most realistic. The changes that are both important and realistic are the top priority for a campaign. Sometimes the changes that students want to see aren't possible, so it helps for the groups to consider how much they are willing to compromise. Consider the requests, and categorise them into three sections – 1. The Bare Essentials – The minimum changes that are needed by decision makers to show they are taking the feedback seriously. 2. The Middle Ground – a scenario where not all of the changes are implemented, but the students are still happy with progress made. 3. The Dream – a scenario where all changes are implemented and have a great impact. **Expansion –** Get your decision makers (Audience/Influence involved in this activity so they can feedback on which changes are realistic and within their power.

Future News	
Duration	30 minutes
Resources	Flipchart, pens, or a newspaper front page template
Instructions	Split into small groups and give each small group a different year in the future. The group must consider their theme or project and what they would like to see changed by that year. They will now design a newspaper front page for that year and what headlines or articles they would like to see.

	Facilitate a discussion on the steps or actions needed to achieve those goals and start to develop an action plan.

Developing a Campaign – The Plan	
Duration	60-90 minutes
Resources	Campaign Plan (See Appendix 17)
Instructions	After completing the visioning activities and exploring changes they would like to see, the group should consider the steps they need to take to achieve their vision. Identify goals of what they want to achieve and identify people who should be involved and who should they speak or present to? What methods should they use to do this? E.g. use media, presentation, speak at a community meeting etc Using the campaign plan template, identify what they are going to do, who will carry out this action and when they will do it. Identify how they will monitor their progress and how they will evaluate their success.

Our Campaign Journey	
Duration	60 minutes
Resources	Large roll of paper, individual sheets
Instructions	Draw footprints on individual paper sheets and write one goal or action on each footprint that might help to achieve their objectives. Use the large roll as a timeline or pathway and ask the students to stick on the path to show the order of when they hope to carry out these actions. The path can be used to create an action plan and assign roles and responsibilities. This can be reviewed throughout to see how near or far they are to achieving them.

Evaluating the Project	
Duration	20 minutes
Resources	Project Diary & Evaluation (See Appendix 18)
Instructions	While the project is taking place, ask the students to keep a learning log of each day. They can do this using the Project Diary or keeping a journal. At the end of the project, you can use the Project evaluation, or reflect on the following questions: • What skills did you learn? • What went well?

	• What challenges did you face and how did you overcome them? • If you were to do it again, what would you do differently? • On a scale of 1-10 (1 = none, 10 = a lot) what impact did your social action project have? • Who benefitted from your project and how? • How have your connections to your school improved? • How has the experience changed your attitude to getting involved in school? **Alternative –** You can do this creatively by using video diaries or creating a podcast. See Review and Future Planning section for more ideas of how to creatively evaluate a project.

School Councils

Communication and Showcasing

Your School Council needs to be visible to be effective. Embedding it into the culture of the school will celebrate it as a meaningful way to get involved in school life and show that the school invests in its students. It will also show the Council members that the school values their input, and it will help them to gain the respect they deserve to develop further and grow.

Other teachers in the school need to have an awareness of what is happening in the School Council so they can support students and promote it during classes. Therefore providing regular updates throughout the year is important.

When developing your Constitution, you should have considered the flow of information and communication processes.

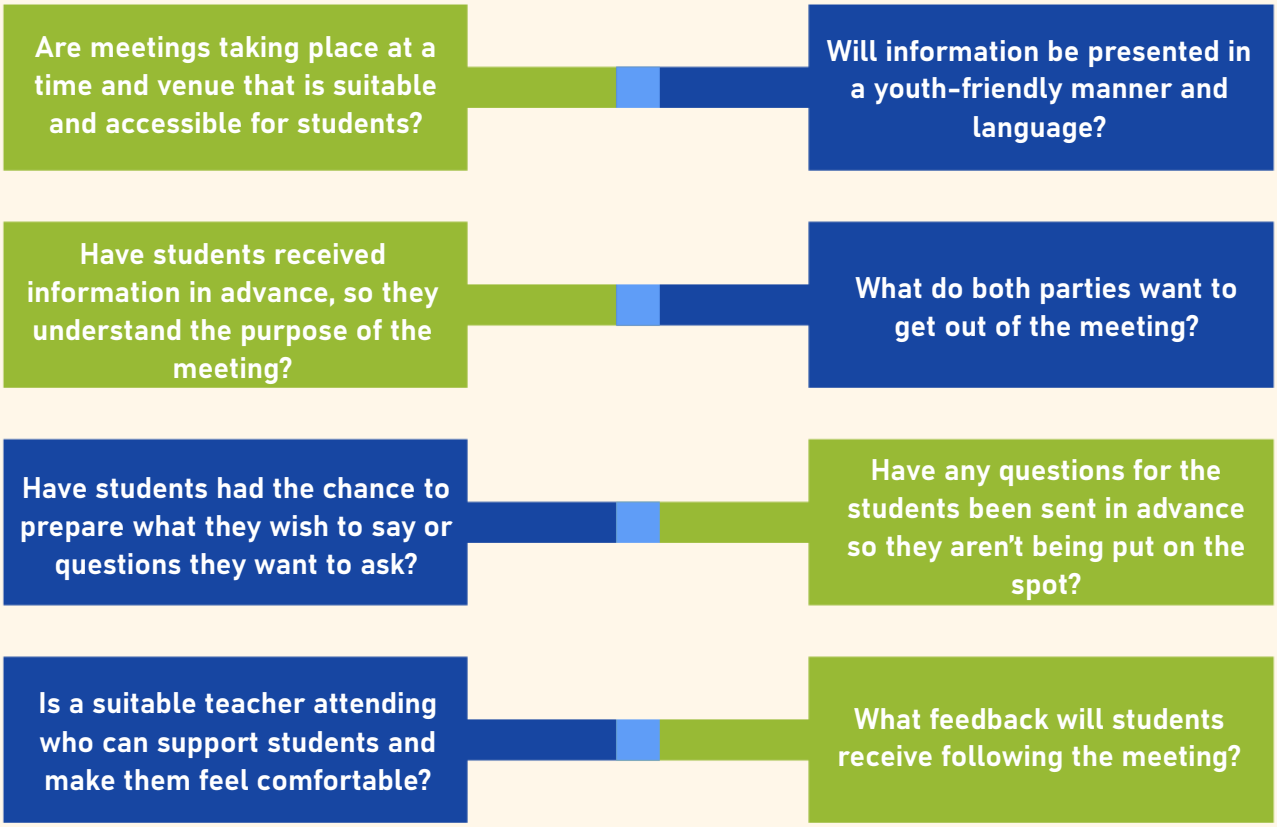
How will information be communicated upwards to decision makers?



Ideally, the teacher coordinating the School Council should have the opportunity to present the feedback and progress at staff meetings, senior management meetings, to the Principal and Board of Governors. You may wish to nominate a Student Champion from the Board of Governors who has a specific responsibility to interact with the School Council and hear from the students directly.

It's important at this stage that the voice of the students is maintained. It can be tempting for teachers to 'professionalise' what they say and filter it through an adult lens to make it more 'acceptable.' Whilst we shouldn't dilute or change their message, we can have conversations with students about use of language and effective communication.

You might also be tempted to bring students into adult meetings. You need to be mindful that it can be challenging to bring students into adult environments like working groups and board meetings, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't do it. There are some things that both students and adults need to consider when collaborating and communicating:



How will information be communicated to the rest of the school?

It's important for the rest of the school to be updated on the progress of projects the School Council is working on, as their actions affect the rest of the student body. You could do this through providing updates at assemblies, creating a newsletter or bulletin, doing video diary updates or updating a noticeboard. Having a dedicated section on the school website or intranet can also be helpful and featuring the School Council on social media. The School Council could also run a lunch or coffee morning for other students to 'drop in' and ask questions or provide feedback.

Year Group meetings or Form Class lessons are also a good opportunity for School Council representatives to provide a verbal update or presentation.

You might also want to consider how you update parents, guardians or other relevant stakeholders in the community.

Please see Appendix 19 for bulletin template.







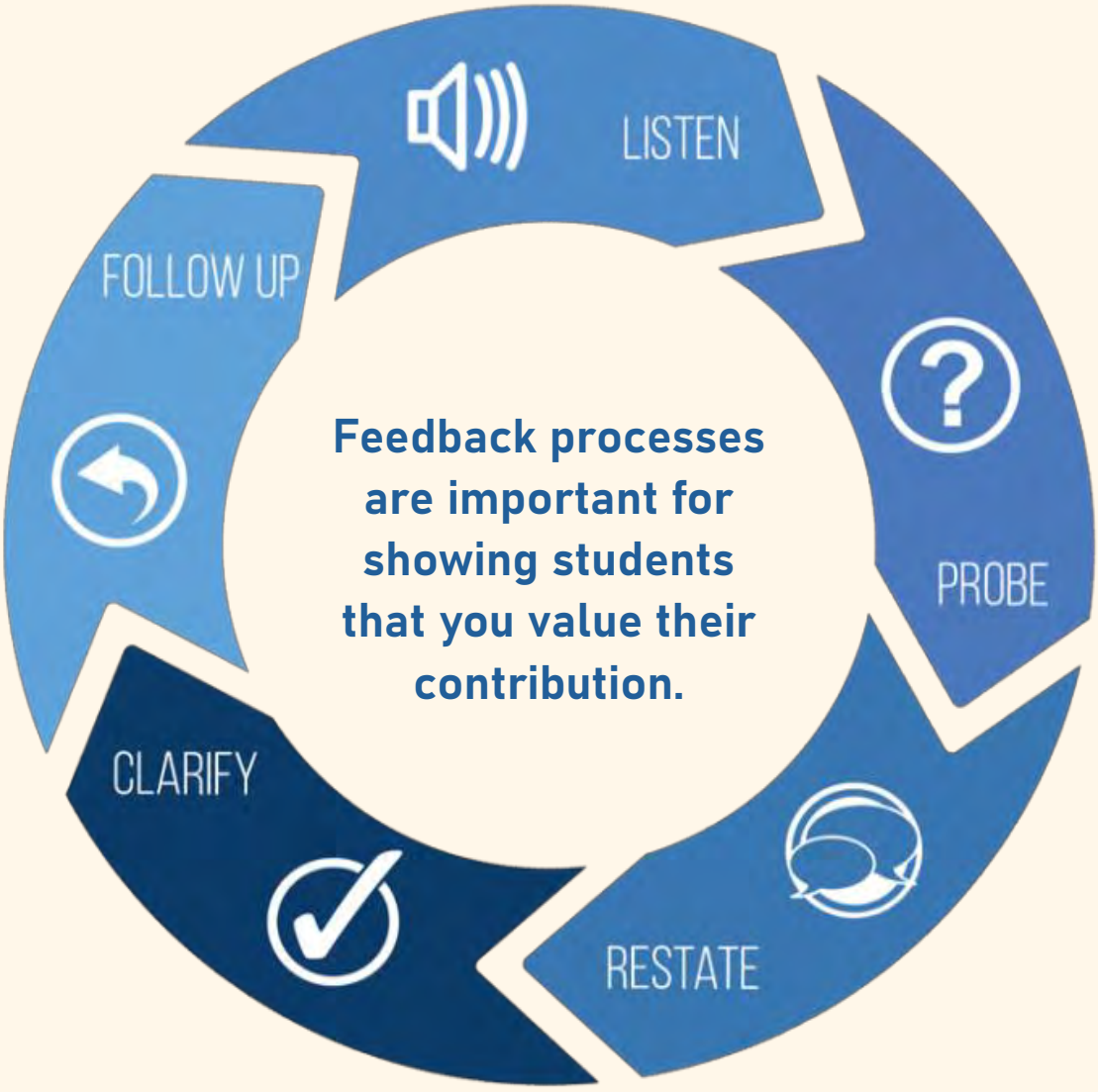
How will information be communicated from decision makers to the council?

As a School Council, you will want to consider how you can provide feedback to other students who participated in consultations.

The decision makers who receive ideas and suggestions from the School Council (i.e. Principal, Board of Governors) should feedback the changes they have made which reflect the School Council's suggestions. Feedback should inform them of who was listening, what actions have been taken and what has been developed – both short and long term. If no action has happened, why not? It is important to openly explain if things haven't happened and the reasons behind them. Senior staff need to be aware that feedback is an integral part of this process, and both clarify and manage expectations.

You should also plan when to expect feedback or distribute it. Often when we work with decision makers, these processes can be lengthy, and students can be left waiting for a long time before receiving feedback. If this is the case, consider interim feedback where you can provide a summary of responses and update the students on the next steps.

Please see Appendix 20 for Feedback template for decision makers.



Celebration

Taking time to celebrate helps the School Council members to take stock and recognise their own learning and development, allows for successes to be celebrated and make plans for the future to enable growth. This can happen throughout the year at any time, as well as at the end.

You may wish to revisit some of the Baselines or Hopes and Fears in Induction section to see what has changed and measure the progress of the students. This can also form part of the evaluation and review process outlined in the next section.

Celebration could be done through Prize Day, or a special assembly to mark the achievements of the School Council. This is also a good time to communicate with the rest of the school on what the School Council has achieved and promote it for next year. You might want to consider certificates or prizes or give the students recognition for their hours spent on the School Council working on projects. Please see Appendix 21 for a certificate template.

Formal celebrations can also be followed by informal activities such as a trip, fun activities, or bringing in food.



You may wish to contact Volunteer Now Youth Team to find out more about their volunteering recognition and impact awards. You could also consider accreditation options so that students complete their School Council experience by gaining an additional qualification. Open College Network provides many courses in youth leadership, and representation and advocacy.

Review and Future Planning

The School Council should be comprehensively and regularly evaluated by both students and teachers to ensure that it is being effective and give confidence to move ahead and develop further. You might want to consider surveys, focus groups or individual interviews to give you a variety of feedback. We recommended having at least one review mid-way, but termly reviews are even better. Leaving this to the end of the year is too late to improve the experiences of the current cohort.

As part of the review process, you might want to consider the following questions:

- Measure progress – did the School Council meet its aim and objectives and achieve its goals?
- How did the School Council make an impact that would not have happened otherwise?
- How have the members developed in their own skills and confidence?
- What best practice methods worked to make things more efficient?
- What problems were faced this year that could be prevented next year?

The Lundy Model can also be used as an effective quality assurance tool to explore how successfully you were able to create Space, Voice, Audience and Influence. Feedback from staff and students around these areas will show you what was done well, and what areas need improvement. You can also use Lundy evaluation tools in Appendix 1.

The activities below can also be used to evaluate the progress with students.

The Blob Tree	
Duration	5 minutes
Resources	Blob Tree (See Appendix 22)
Instructions	Give out a copy of the Blob Tree and ask the students to colour in or circle the 'blob' which represents how they felt about the lesson or the School Council programme as a whole. You can also do this at the beginning as a check-in and then compare how they feel at the end.

Post-It Notes	
Duration	15-20 minutes
Resources	Post-it notes, pens
Instructions	Give each student the same number of post-it notes, usually 3-5. Agree what the group will put on each post-it for example: 1. Something they really enjoyed. 2. Something they learnt in the meeting/programme. 3. Something they would change next time. They can read them aloud to the rest of the group. **Alternative:** If the students don't want to read out their own notes, carry out the Snowball evaluation by asking them to scrunch them up in a ball and throw them in the air. Each person has to grab one that belongs to someone else and read it out instead. **Alternative:** If reading and writing is a challenge, you could get the students to draw or act out their responses.

Head, Heart, Bin, Bag	
Duration	15-20 minutes
Resources	Printout of a head, heart, bin and bag
Instructions	You can either do this as a worksheet with each image on it and get the students to write on it. Or you could stick up a printout of each image around the room and ask students to add post-it notes to each one. Head – Something they learned. Heart – What they loved or felt was good about the lesson/programme. Bin – What they would change or get rid of. Bag – What they will take away with them, or something to bring back for further discussion.

Traffic Light Evaluation	
Duration	15-20 minutes
Resources	Printout of a red, amber, and green traffic light
Instructions	You can either do this as a worksheet with each image on it and get the students to write on it. Or you could stick up a printout of each image around the room and ask students to add post-it notes to each one. Red – Something you are going to **stop** doing as a result of the lesson/programme. Amber – Something you are going to **continue** doing. Green – Something you are going to **start** doing.

Roll a Dice	
Duration	10 minutes
Resources	Large foam dice
Instructions	Each person rolls the dice and answers a question depending on the number they land on. 1. I want to remember… 2. Something I learned today. 3. One word to sum up the day. 4. Something I would change about the day. 5. I'm still confused about… 6. An 'Aha' moment I had today…

Evaluation Pizza	
Duration	20 minutes
Resources	Flipchart, markers
Instructions	Draw a circle on flipchart and split it into 'pizza slices.' Ask the group to come up with success criteria – what would show them that their lesson or programme was successful? Mark each slice with a different criteria. At the end of the lesson or programme, ask them to mark their view on each slice. A mark closer to the centre means they think it was achieved well. A mark at the 'crust' means it wasn't achieved as well.

Washing Line	
Duration	30 minutes
Resources	String
Instructions	Tie a piece of string across the room and explain one end is 'high' and the other 'low' and the rest of the string is points between them. Read out statements about the lesson or programme and ask students to move along the string to indicate their opinion. **Alternative:** Use pegs to pin photos or post-it notes rather than standing.

The 4 F's	
Duration	10 minutes
Resources	None
Instructions	Facts – What happened? What did you see and hear? Feelings – How did you feel during the lesson or programme? Findings – What did you learn? What could be improved? Future – How will you use what you have learnt? You could also do this using 4 flipcharts around the room.

My Journey	
Duration	30 minutes
Resources	My Journey template (Appendix 23)
Instructions	Print handout and distribute to group. Give them time to complete their journey and feedback key points to the larger group. **Alternative:** You could do this without the handout by giving out paper and pens. Ask the students to draw a path or river which depicts their journey on the programme. For positive things, they could represent these visually using flowers, bridges etc. For challenges, they could represent these visually using boulders, walls, puddles etc.

Surveys and Polls

Surveys and Polls

A survey or questionnaire is a method of gathering information using relevant questions from a large sample of people with the aim of understanding a topic or theme as whole. They are the best way to research the attitudes or views of a large group of people. For example, you may use a survey to find out student's opinions about the school uniforms, or what subjects should be offered at GCSE level.

A poll is a short survey where votes are cast and recorded in response to a question. A poll doesn't require detail and only asks one question. For example, a teacher could use a poll to gauge if a lesson was enjoyed. They could place a smiley face and a sad face at the door and as the students leave, they could place a counter or sticker at the appropriate emoji depending on how well they enjoyed the class.

Surveys and polls are good for getting initial data and statistics from students, but they aren't the best engagement method for getting rich, detailed feedback. You may wish to follow up a survey or poll with a focus group or thematic project afterwards.

Before conducting a survey, it is best to plan the process and make sure that a survey is the best way to collect the information you need.

Think through the following questions:

- Why are you conducting the survey?
- What is the purpose?
- What is the most important outcome you need from conducting the survey?
- Who do you plan to survey? How many students? Any particular groups?
- Who are key people who support this project?
- How will you distribute the survey?
- Will you do on paper or online? (Paper may be more suitable if schools don't have access to enough digital devices or have internet access issues. Online is more suitable to reduce human error and make use of analytical tools.)
- What issues and challenges do you anticipate in conducting this survey?
- How will you prepare for and overcome them?
- What are you going to do with the results?
- How will you follow up afterwards?

Briefly explain the purpose of the survey at the beginning and tell students what will be done with the results.

Keep it short and focused.

We would recommend 5-10 questions. It should not take any more than 10 minutes to complete.

Ask the important questions.

You have a short time period to grab students' attention. Don't waste it on a question that isn't relevant or won't be useful.

If you are collecting any personal or identifying information as part of a survey, ensure you are following your school's GDPR policies and include an easily understood privacy statement.

Questions

Use a mixture of qualitative and quantitative questions. If you only focus on one type, students may disengage or answer on autopilot. Use interactive questions like multiple choice and rating scales to keep respondents engaged. Provide clear instructions for answering questions so the student knows exactly what they are supposed to do.

Make all the questions mandatory – If you don't, you may find students skip the later questions and you end up with gaps.

You may have to create different versions of your survey for different students e.g. translating into another language, using visual prompts or emojis. Involve students in designing the survey and checking to make sure it is appropriate for others.

Wording

Use simple language which is easy to understand and avoid jargon.

Don't ask leading questions – make sure your question is worded neutrally.

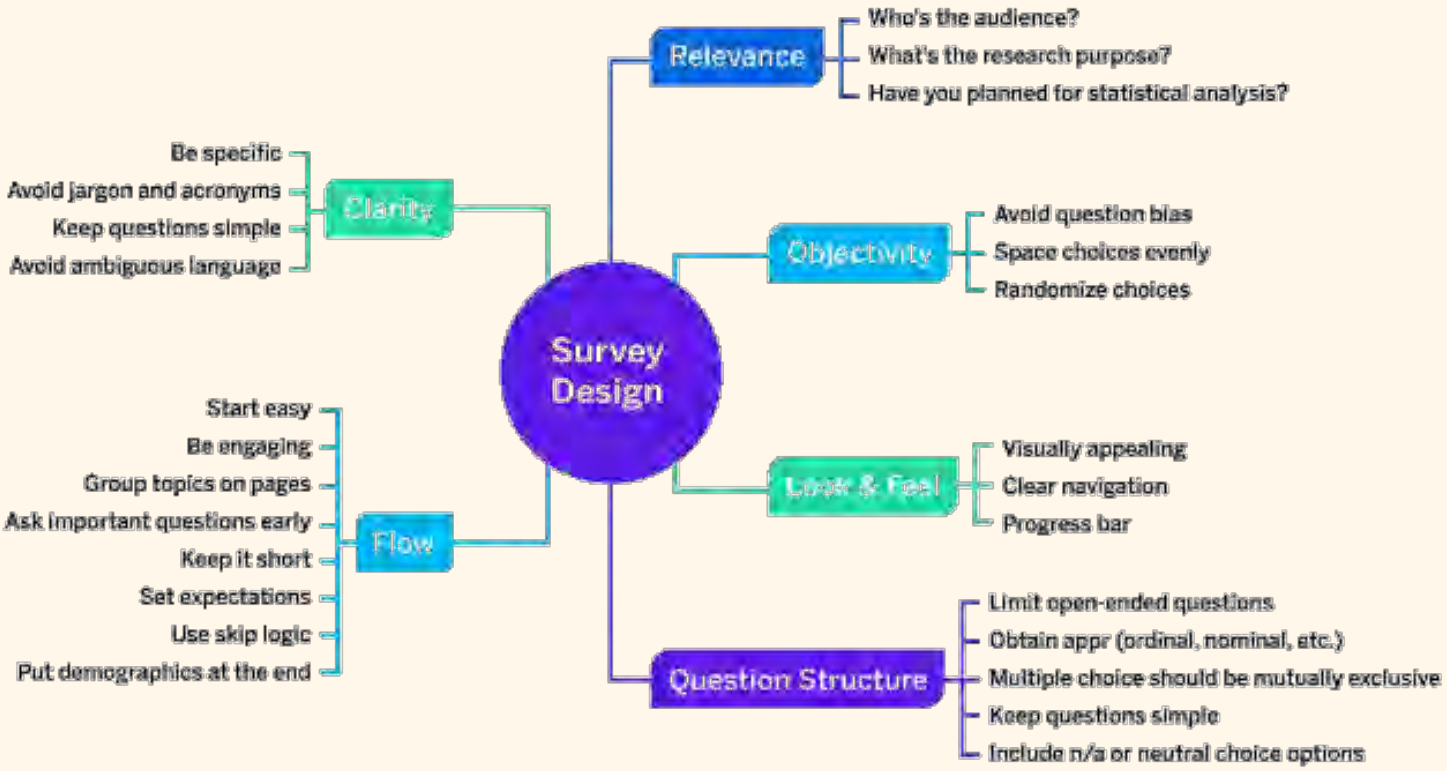
Reverse the direction of some questions to reduce response bias e.g. 'Agree/Disagree: I feel like I have a voice' and 'Agree/Disagree: I don't feel listened to by teachers.'

Always provide a free text box where students can provide more information, tell you why they answered a particular way, or provide other suggestions that weren't thought of during the survey.

Online Surveys

Make sure the survey looks right on mobile devices and tablets. If your survey is public, share it on social media to get more responses – always use the shortened URL or use QR codes for easy access.

Finish the survey by thanking people for completing it and explaining how they can get more information on any of the questions asked.



You may wish to conduct a survey or poll in-person during a lesson. Please see School Council Research and Consultation section for ideas of how to do this creatively. Remember to give someone responsibility for recording responses.

Mentimeter and Slido are digital tools which can be used for both surveys and polls. They can be completed live during class or an event where everyone can see results as they come in, or can be done in the student's own time. Other survey tools include Survey Monkey, Survey Planet, Microsoft Forms and Google Forms. Polls can also be created on Doodle and Polls Everywhere.

Mentimeter

SurveyMonkey

Doodle

slido

Poll Everywhere

surveyplanet

Focus Groups

Focus Groups

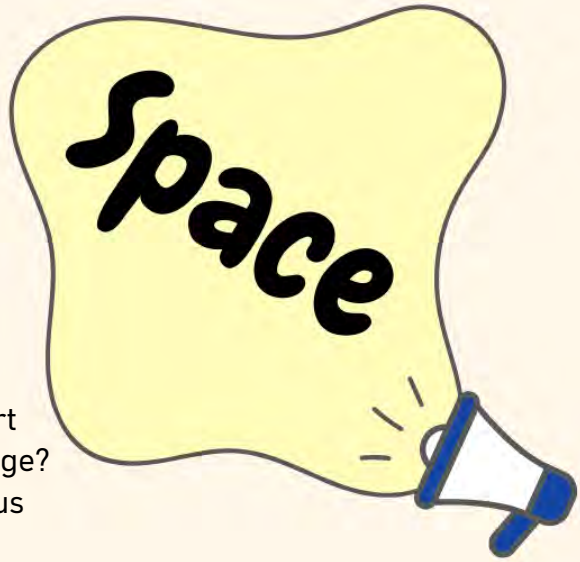
A focus group is a method of research involving a small group of people who are guided through a discussion by a facilitator. The insights provided by focus groups are great for shaping policy and school initiatives.

A focus group can be useful when:



Focus groups used in conjunction with surveys is good practice, as it allows you to get more detail on survey data, find out about student experiences and stories, and understand the context and big picture of the issue. Focus groups are not ideal tools to capture the views of a wide audience because the sample size is small. Focus groups may make students feel more comfortable than they would in a one-to-one interview as they have the support of their peers, but this may also influence them not to speak up if their viewpoint disagrees with the majority.

You can use the Lundy Model principles when planning and facilitating an effective focus group.



- Which and how many students do you wish to engage with?
- Is the focus group diverse and representative of your student body?
- Engagement should be voluntary; how could you motivate students to take part and feel comfortable to engage?
- Where and when will the focus group take place?
- Is the room private from distractions, with enough time to properly discuss questions? We recommend a duration of 45-60 minutes with at least two different activities to keep them engaged, or longer with a break.
- Who is best to facilitate the discussion? Is it a teacher? A neutral person like a youth worker or mediator?
- You might want to do some smaller group or partner discussion as well as whole group interaction. You might also want to provide opportunities for individual feedback by using a comment card.
- Set ground rules at the beginning and reinforce as necessary throughout.
- Don't chastise students for being open and honest, even if they use inappropriate language. If they feel judged for what they say, they won't participate.

We would recommend 8-12 young people to encourage discussion.

Snacks and refreshments are a great motivator for young people.



- Set the scene and explain the purpose of the focus group. Be transparent about how the feedback will be used.
- Have a plan in place in case the topic causes someone to get upset or anxious.
- Please refer to School Council Induction section for icebreakers and developing a contract.
- What background information do students need to understand the questions? (You might want to give them this in advance, as your time in the focus group will be better spent in discussion, rather than explaining the issue.)

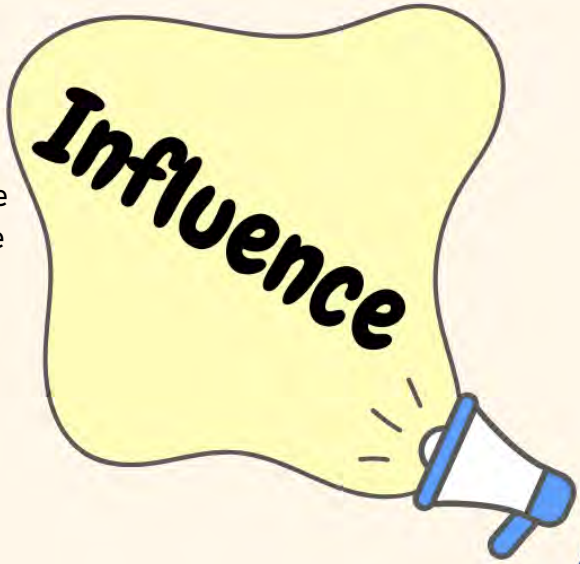
Give out information beforehand so students can think about it before coming to the focus group.

- Is the information clear and easy to understand for their age and ability?
- What do you want to find out from the focus group? Make the questions clear and focused. Prioritise the important questions; as the group may get distracted, and you may run out of time sooner than you think.
- Prompt students for more information by asking 'why?', 'could you tell me more?' or 'could you give me an example?'
- Consider how you'd like them to respond – is it a verbal discussion? On flipchart? Creatively?
- Use active listening skills to show that you value each student's insight and summarise the discussion to make sure you are interpreting it correctly.
- How will you record their feedback? – You may do an audio or video recording (make sure to get consent) or use flipchart to note their main ideas. You may ask a student or another adult to act as notetaker.
- Wrap up and close the discussion by asking if anyone has anything else they'd like to add, thanking them for their participation and telling the students what happens next.
- Please refer to previous Student Council Sections for activity ideas.

Don't worry if the conversation goes in an unexpected direction... let the students lead.



- What are you going to do with student feedback?
- Who needs to hear their views?
- You can also send the students a summary of the discussion.



- How will findings from the focus group be used to make changes?
- How will you provide feedback to the focus group on how their views were used?
- You may want to create a 'You said... we did' infographic to provide feedback in an eye-catching way.

Thematic Projects

Thematic Projects

A Thematic project is a programme or structure which provides an opportunity for students who have a shared interest or shared identity, to represent their voice on a specific theme. This can be based on the needs and the nature of the students and can be established through the initiative of students, or by the recommendation of a teacher.

A Thematic project may address an assessed or recognised need or challenge in the school, like attendance or mental health difficulties among students. The purpose of a Thematic Project is to create a 'voice' or message and facilitate the gathering of information, which will be heard by an audience identified by the students and relevant to the theme, and will lead to action.

School Council members may decide to complete a Thematic project depending on the projects they have decided to take on, or this may be undertaken by other groups in the school e.g. an eco-club, anti-bullying ambassadors.

Exploring the issue

- **Understanding the context** – The group may want to do some research on the issue and understand why it is important to them and the school.
- **Engage with stakeholders** - They may wish to get in touch with other providers and services outside school to find out more about the issue and what is currently being done. They could invite guest speakers or facilitators to tell them more about the issue.
- During this stage, they should clarify their question or problem. Now that they understand the issue better, **what are their aims and objectives?**
- **Research and consultation** – the group may wish to use surveys, polls or focus groups to explore the views of the rest of the school about this issue. Please see previous School Council sections for activities on exploring issues and consulting with others.

Recommendations

- Using the findings from their research and consultation, the group can start to **form their ideas or recommendations** to decision makers.
- They may wish to go back out to their consultation group to **share their ideas and test their theories** to make sure they are on the right track.

Taking action

- Depending on their issue, they may want to do a **social action project or campaign** to take action, or it may be enough to present their issue to decision makers with ideas for how to improve the issue in school.
- The group should consider how to **present their ideas** – this may be through a written report, diagrams, infographics, presentation slides or video, and decide who their audience is.
- Please see School Council sections for guidance on social action and campaigning and how to communicate this to others.

Review

- The group should **evaluate the process** of completing their thematic project and **celebrate their achievements**.
- The audience for their findings should also take this opportunity to **provide feedback** on how the group's work will be taken into account and any changes that were made as a result of it.
- The group could also use this time to **reflect on if any further work needs done** on the issue, and if their recommendations were effective or could be improved.
- Please see School Council sections for ideas on how to do this.

Ongoing Feedback

Ongoing Feedback

Effective participation shows that the school creates a culture of valuing the rights and opinions of its students. Consultation with students should be **ongoing, active and meaningful** and it should inform learning experiences and the school's decision-making processes. This means that teachers should consistently be providing opportunities for students to give feedback, from the everyday experiences to the big decisions. Opportunities for feedback should be part of the culture of the school; it should be intentional and expected so that it becomes a routine. Consultation and feedback does not need to be complicated or long winded; simple steps and actions will promote a culture of student participation.

Student Progress

Developing a personal development or individual learning plan with the student through partnership working will promote ownership and responsibility and increase their self-awareness and confidence. Using baselines can be a helpful tool and these can be done interactively for each subject. See School Council Induction section for ideas.

Exit or Transition surveys can also be beneficial to capture the feedback of students who are leaving, or those who have just arrived from another school.

Classroom Experience

The aim of engagement in this area is about the student's experience, not to criticise individual teachers.

Using 'check in' and 'check out' activities at the beginning of the lesson can help a teacher to gauge how a student has engaged with the class. You could do this by using numbers, scales, emojis or thumbs up and thumbs down.

You could also do interactive polls or surveys digitally using Mentimeter or Slido, or in person using stickers or post-it notes. For example, you could put up a poster on the door asking if the students learnt something new today and ask them to put a sticker beside 'Yes' or 'No.' Please see previous School Council sections for more ideas.

Suggestion Boxes

Having physical suggestion boxes positioned around the school can be useful to encourage students to give anonymous feedback and ideas. You could also do this digitally using a Google or Microsoft Form and display posters with a QR code to complete.

You can also use Suggestion Boxes to get voting or feedback about a particular theme or question using counters. You can even combine it with a ballot bin to promote recycling!



Thought Wall

Having a Student Voice noticeboard in the school can encourage students to share their views on different issues or a particular question. Use plain backing paper and attach some pens to the wall to allow them to write their ideas. Yes, you might get some inappropriate words or drawings, but you might also get some great feedback. You could ask a different question each week, or individual subjects or areas in the school could do their own. For example, the canteen could find out the student's favourite meal of the week. The library could ask for book recommendations. You could ask students to share tips on dealing with exam stress or their ideas for a school event.



Mini Consultations

You may wish to use Form Time, Citizenship or Personal Development Classes to engage students around particular issues or themes. Choose an issue you would like to consult students about, or even better; get your School Council to decide the themes. Write up a short, age-appropriate explanation of the topic, along with some discussion questions for the teacher to facilitate. Include a link to a Microsoft or Google Form to provide feedback. Don't forget to let the students know what you did with the feedback!

You may wish to base mini consultations and thought wall engagements around current news or events or relevant awareness days e.g. International Women's/Men's Day, Anti Bullying week. For a full list of awareness days, please visit https://www.awarenessdays.com/

Useful Links

Useful Links

Department of Education's (NI) Pupil participation website:

https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/school-councils-and-pupil-participation

Hub na nÓg Participation Resources

https://hubnanog.ie/resources/

https://hubnanog.ie/student-councils-that-work-reviewing-and-improving-student-voice-in-ni-schools/

NICCY Pupil's Voices: Pupil Participation in Schools

https://www.niccy.org/pupils-voices-pupil-participation-in-schools-2/

Secondary School Students' Union Northern Ireland

https://ssuni.org/studentcouncils

Volunteer Now Social Action Toolkit

https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/publications/social-action-toolkit/

Commissioner for Children Tasmania – Involving Children in Decision Making

https://www.childcomm.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Guide-to-making-decisions-booklet.pdf

Tusla Participation Toolkit

https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Tusla_-_Toolkit_(web_version).pdf

Seldom Heard – A Practical Guide

https://www.cmetb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Seldom-heard-a_practical_guide.pdf

UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools

https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/

Smart School Councils Community

http://www.smartschoolcouncils.org.uk/

Reach – Understand Children's Rights to Education

https://reach.scot/

Appendix

Appendix 1

Lundy – Everyday Spaces Checklist

Credit: Hub na nÓg

This checklist is designed as a guide to help you ensure that children and young people have a voice in decision-making. It can be applied in many everyday situations including in classrooms, hospitals, childcare settings, child and youth services, youth and sports clubs, youth projects, arts and creative initiatives and other spaces.

Please do not use this checklist for developing policies, plans, services, programmes, governance, research and legislation – use the Planning Checklist on page 18.

Please make sure that the ways you involve children and young people in decision-making are age-appropriate and accessible for all, whether in person or online.



Appendix 1

Lundy – Planning Checklist

Credit: Hub na nÓg

This checklist guides you on how to listen to children and young people and involve them in decision-making when you are developing policies, plans, services, programmes, governance, research and legislation at national, local and organisational level.

You should inform children and young people that they have the right to a voice in decision-making and that you will take their views seriously.



Appendix 1

Lundy – Evaluation Checklist

Credit: Hub na nÓg

This checklist is a guide for the self-evaluation and external evaluation of policies, plans, services, programmes, governance, research and legislation at national, local and organisational level.



Appendix 1

Lundy – Evaluation Form

Credit: Hub na nÓg

Tick the number of stars you would give to everything below. Five stars is the best.

SPACE	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
I have been listened to from the start					
I felt comfortable giving my opinions					
I felt safe giving my opinions					
A lot of different voices were included					

VOICE	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
I got the chance to give my opinions					
I got enough information to help me give my opinion					
I got support to have my voice heard					
I understood what was being discussed					
I could give my opinions whatever way I wanted					
I had enough time to talk					

AUDIENCE	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
I know who wants to hear our opinions					
I know why they want the opinions of young people					
They were honest about what they would try to do with our opinions					

INFLUENCE	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
I know where our opinions are going next					
I know how we will be told about what happens to our opinions					
I think what we said today will be taken seriously					

What were the best things about today?

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.....

.....

.....

.....

What would you change about today?

.....

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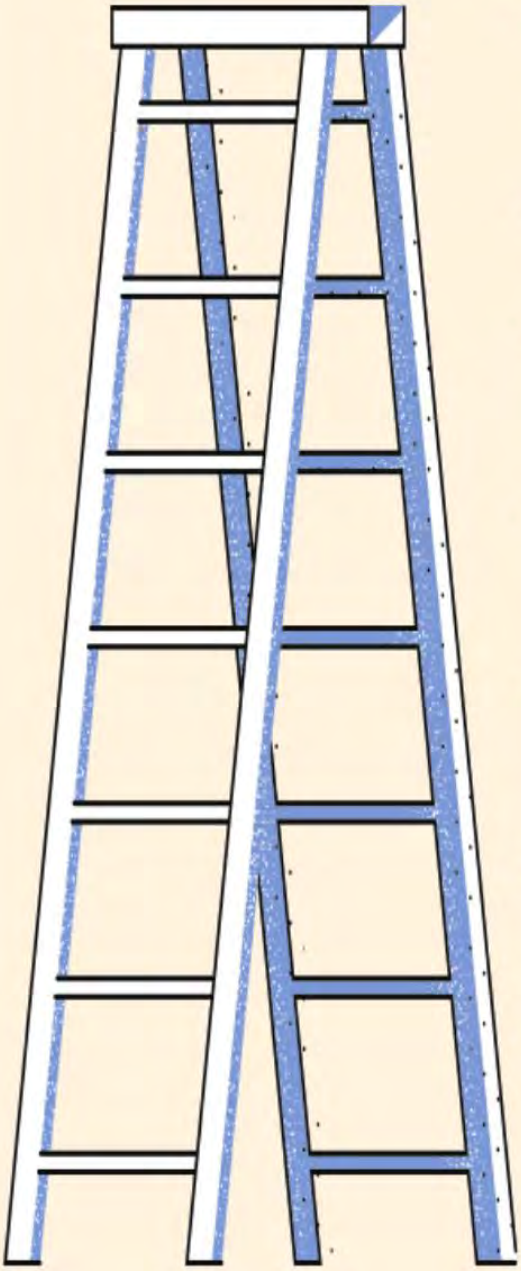
Appendix 2

Other Models of Participation

Credit: Roger Hart, 1992

LADDER OF CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

EIGHT LEVELS OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN PROJECTS



8. YOUTH-INITIATED SHARED DECISIONS WITH ADULTS

Youth-led activities, in which decision making is shared between youth and adults working as equal partners.

7. YOUTH-INITIATED AND DIRECTED

Youth-led activities with little input from adults.

6. ADULT-INITIATED SHARED DECISIONS WITH YOUTH

Adult-led activities, in which decision making is shared with youth.

5. CONSULTED AND INFORMED

Adult-led activities, in which youth are consulted and informed about how their input will be used and the outcomes of adult decisions

4. ASSIGNED, BUT INFORMED

Adult-led activities, in which youth understand purpose, decision-making process, and have a role

3. TOKENISM

Adult-led activities, in which youth do as directed without understanding of the purpose of the activities.

2. DECORATION

Adult-led activities, in which youth understand purpose, but have no input in how they are planned.

1. MANIPULATION

Adult-led activities, in which youth do as directed without understanding of the purpose for the activities.

DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION

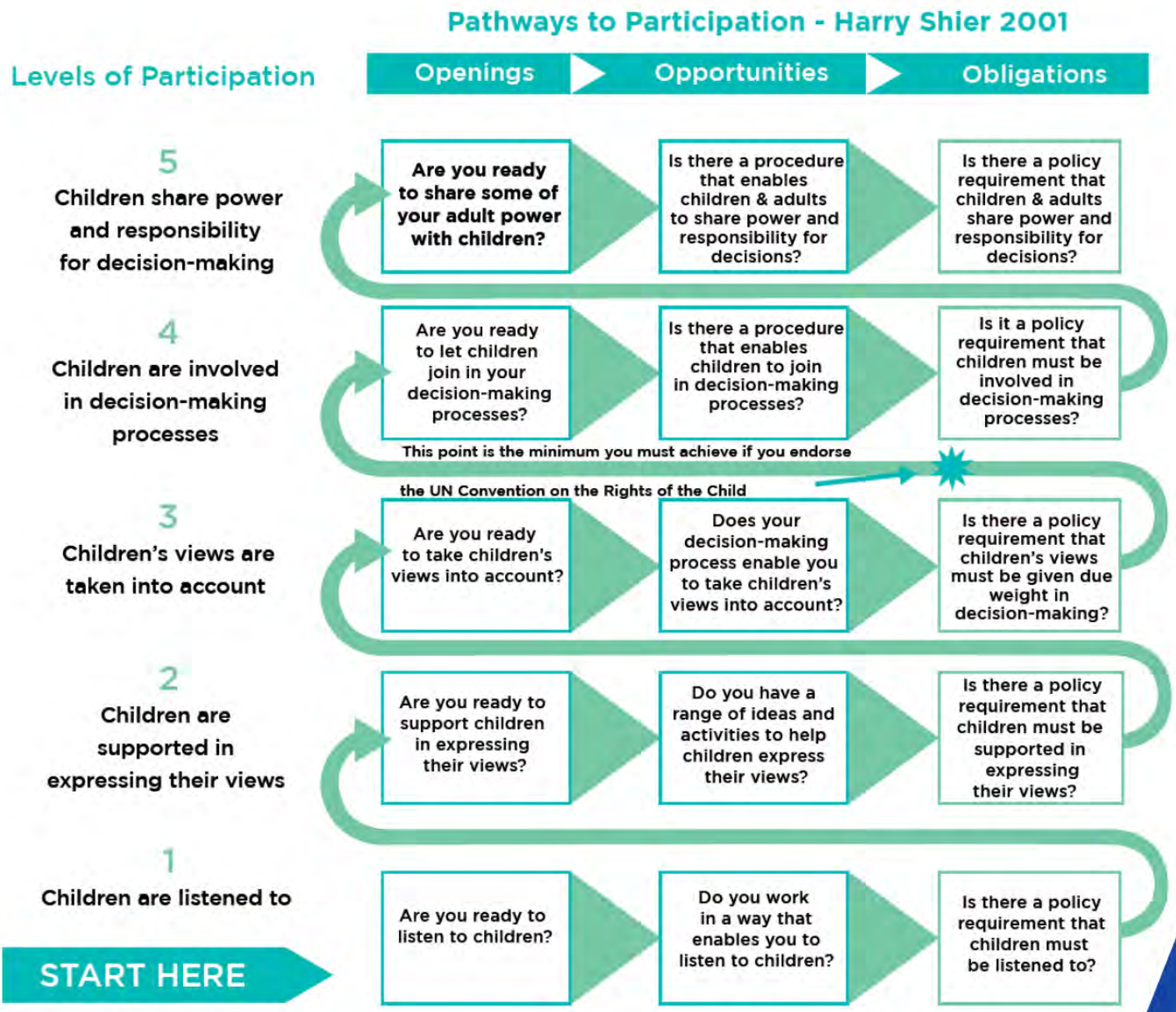
NON-PARTICIPATION

Appendix 2

Other Models of Participation

Credit: Harry Shier, 2001

Figure 3: Shier's Pathways to Participation



Appendix 3

Involving students in practice

(adapted from Jelly, Fuller and Byers, 2000)

Do staff and students engage in dialogue about teaching and learning?

- Do staff make use of a wide range of informal opportunities to enter into a dialogue with students about their learning?
- Is time set aside for staff and students to negotiate targets for learning; review progress; agree revised targets?
- Are students with statements of special educational needs actively and meaningfully involved in the Annual Review process?
- Do staff constantly seek to expand students' opportunities to express their views, needs, interests, choices, preferences and decision through the use of conventional, augmentative and alternative modes of communication?
- Do staff make every effort to develop ways in which students with special educational needs can be actively involved as participants in formal meetings, such as those held as part of the process of Annual review and Annual Reporting?
- Are targets for improving students' own learning and performance included in ILPs and other individual plans where appropriate?
- Do staff receive training in active listening, counselling, conducting tutorials, or mentoring skills?
- Do staff actively promote students' capacity to think?
- Are there lessons dedicated to the direct teaching of thinking skills, study skills and skills for learning?
- Do staff review schemes of work for all subjects in order to identify opportunities for developing key skills and thinking skills?
- Are key skills, for example problem-solving skills and skills for learning, actively promoted in a range of contexts across the curriculum?
- Are students encouraged to create formal and informal 'buddying', peer tutoring, circles of friends and mentoring relationships focused on personal and social skills, positive behaviour, survival strategies and teaching and learning?

Do students put forward their own ideas?

- Do representatives from the School council play an active role in the selection of staff?
- Do students act as agents of control in decision-making processes at school development level?
- Are students involved in developing:
    - codes of conduct for classroom behaviour and discipline?
    - whole-school approaches to policy and practice in behaviour management?
    - policy in relation to bullying or difficult behaviours?
- Do students participate in the process of institutional development at a whole school level?

Do staff attend to students' views and perspectives?

- Are students' perspectives discussed as a regular item on the agenda for staff meetings, senior management team meetings and governing body meetings?
- Do staff encourage, facilitate and make constructive responses to ideas and initiatives that are put forward by students?
- Do staff engage students in constructive debate about ideas and initiatives put forward by others?
- Do staff take account of parent/carer interpretations of students' views and perspectives?
- Do staff take account of other agencies' interpretations of students' views and perspectives, for example health, social services, the voluntary sector?

Appendix 3

Involving students in practice

(adapted from Jelly, Fuller and Byers, 2000)

Does the Board of Governors attend to student views and perspectives?

- Does the governing body seek to elect or co-opt representation from diverse individuals from different backgrounds in the local community?
- Do members of the governing body respond positively to invitations to attend and participate in School Council meetings?
- Are there 'link' governors or 'champions' who have a brief to listen regularly to the views of students either formally or informally?
- Does the governing body receive and respond constructively to reports from the School Council and/or reports about the work of the School Council?

Do senior managers attend to student views and perspectives?

- Does the school articulate clearly its values about student involvement?
- Do senior managers regularly review the relationship between stated policy and practice?
- Do senior managers ensure that lines of communication in the school community remain open?
- Do senior managers demonstrate a commitment to hearing the views of all members of the school community, including the perspectives of students?
- Do senior managers provide a model of respecting and responding to the views of other members of the school community?
- Are students' views fed back to senior managers and governors through a range of approaches to the exchange of information between staff, for example, in regular meetings with supervisory assistants, learning support assistants, staff personal and professional development meetings etc.?

Do school systems and procedures take account of students' perspectives?

- Does the school have student support, guidance, suggestions and complaints and procedures which are readily available, understood and used when necessary, by students?
- Does the school use a range of approaches for gathering students' views and perceptions, for example by questionnaire, interviews, or circle time reports?
- Is data gathered through student questionnaires, interviews and used in the development of curriculum content (what students are taught), effective pedagogy (how students are taught), improved school environment, enhanced resources and improved climate for learning?
- Are students' comments and judgements about their school experiences listened to, valued and, where appropriate, acted upon?
- Are students' views channelled into the school development process via circle time, personal and social education lessons, tutorials, individual review or action planning meetings?
- Does the school development plan to contain targets which reflect priorities identified students?
- Are staff encouraged to be reflective practitioners, re-evaluating their work in the light of students perspectives and entering into critical friendships with colleagues?

Appendix 4

Staff Training Outline

Introduction and Icebreaker

What does participation look like in our school?

You might want to ask the staff to explore the different ways students can participate in your school, or you could lay out different photos and ask the staff to choose one that represents participation to them.

Children's Rights

You could carry out a similiar exercise as the Child's Rights Mapping on Page 53. You want the staff to consider which of the rights are being upheld well in school, and which could be done better.

Lundy Model

Present the Lundy Model and give a brief description of what it entails. Use the Everyday Spaces checklist and ask staff to discuss if their classroom is a good participative space. If you are training School Council staff specifically, then use the Planning checklist in Appendix 1 or 3.

Actions and Goals

Based on feedback in previous activities, ask the staff to outline some actions or goals they are going to take forward to facilitate Student Voice better.

Present the School Council

This is a good time to present your plans for the School Council in the upcoming year. Tell them who will be involved, how students will be recruited, what projects they might be involved in and how they will give and receive feedback. Tell them about timelines as well.

What's my role?

All staff have a role to play in supporting the School Council, whether it be facilitating the group, motivating students to apply, updating students on their progress. Ask the staff to discuss what they think their role should be, and what they need to be able to fulfil it.

Evaluate and Review

The Traffic Light evaluation on Page 67 would work well for this.

Appendix 5

Council Roles

Chairperson/President

The Chairperson will have good leadership skills and a good relationship with the Principal and senior teachers. They will be approachable and have the support of the rest of the council members. They decide on the agenda and runs meetings to make sure everyone is heard. They make sure that decisions are made fairly and that meetings are kept on schedule. They will also check on progress if anyone was assigned tasks and will do their best to resolve any conflict in the group. They will advocate to teachers to make sure that student voice is central to decision making. The Chairperson would likely have to report on progress to senior teachers or to the principal. They also have a duty to make sure everyone is feeling included, valued and happy in their role.

It's also a good idea to have a deputy incase the Chairperson is unavailable.

Secretary

The Secretary carries out the paperwork and administration. They will prepare the agenda and any materials needed for meetings, and they will keep the records and minutes. They will make sure they note any actions or things to be followed up on. They will make sure that everyone gets a copy afterwards and keep a file up to date on the council progress. They might also be involved in preparing paper updates on what the Council is doing i.e. newsletter or bulletin.

Communications Officer

The Communications Officer has responsibility for making the Council visible to the rest of the school. This might involve making a noticeboard, preparing regular updates like a newsletter or bulletin, creating website or social media posts. They will also be responsible for creating content related to projects like photographs, videos and promotional materials. The Communications Officer will likely be creative with good digital skills.

School Council Member

A School Council member will consult and listen to other students. They will bring forward ideas and explore different options together. They will be open minded and respectful towards other members, even if they don't agree with them. They will consider themes, issues and topics related to school life. A council member will make decisions and recommendations and will ask decision makers for feedback. They will work together to carry out social action projects and campaigns.

Treasurer

If the School Council is handling money, through fundraising activities or donations, the Treasurer keeps accurate records of all orders, purchases and expenditure along with receipts, and ensures that records are available if anyone requests to see them.

Appendix 5

Council Roles

Council Member Role Description

Your role

You will:

- Communicate with other students and teachers.
- Consult and listen to other students.
- Represent other students and act on their behalf.
- Consider themes, issues and topics related to school life.
- Think of new ideas to improve your school.
- Make decisions and recommendations.
- Work together to deliver social action projects and campaigns.

Skills

You will develop skills in:

- Leadership.
- Communication.
- Presentations.
- Representing others.
- Decision making.
- Project solving.
- Negotiation.
- Teamwork.
- And more confidence!

What's in it for me?

- Evidence for your Record of Achievement.
- Experience for UCAS and CVs.
- Being a voice for people who don't always get heard.
- Get to make positive change.
- Get to influence decision making in your school.



Appendix 6

Expression of Interest

School Council Expression of Interest

Complete and return to apply!

Name:

Class:

Issues I think are important:

Why I'd be good for this role:



Appendix 7

Manifesto for nominees





3 things you should know about me...

1

2

3

Here's what I care about...

If you vote for me, I will...



Appendix 8

Baseline Survey

Name: **Start date:** **Review date:**

I feel I have good leadership skills.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I feel I have good communication skills.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I feel like I belong in my school.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I feel I can share my opinions and views easily with others.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I know how I can participate in my school.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I feel I am involved in decisions that are made about me.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I feel I can represent others and bring about positive change.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

Appendix 8

Baseline Survey

Name: **Start date:** **Review date:**

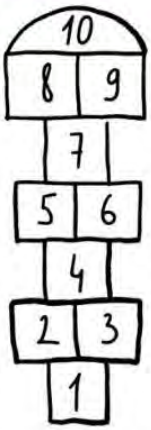
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree
Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree

Appendix 8

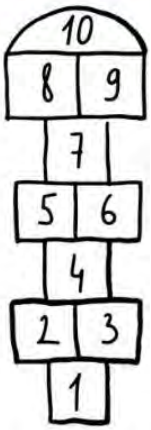
Baseline Hopscotch

Adapted from: Boys and Girls Clubs NI

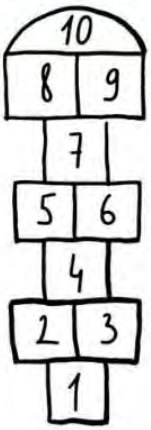
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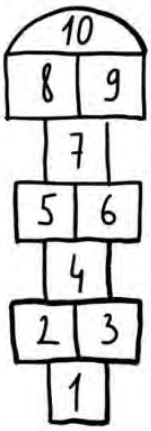
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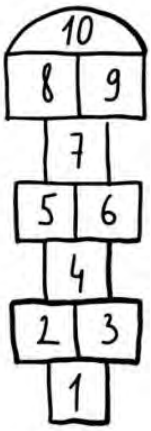
Leadership Skills



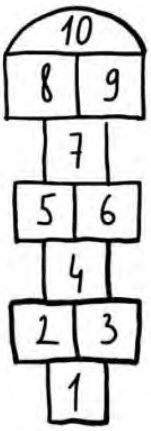
Communication Skills



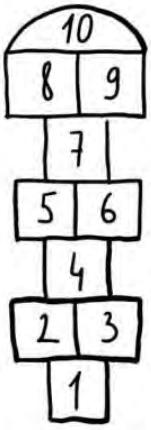
Sense of Belonging



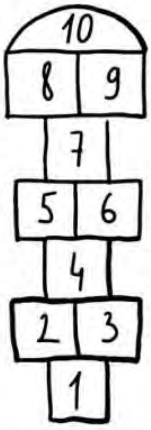
Participating locally



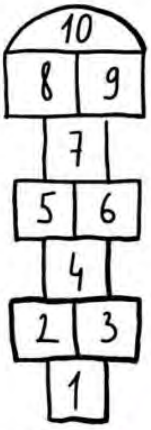
Involved in decisions



Valued & listened to



Representing others



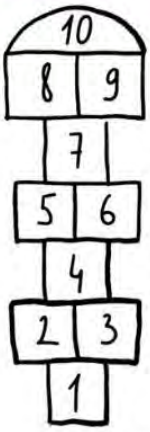
Power to change

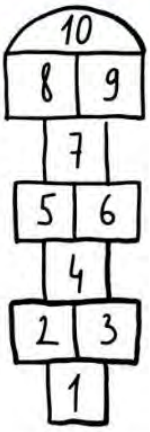
Appendix 8

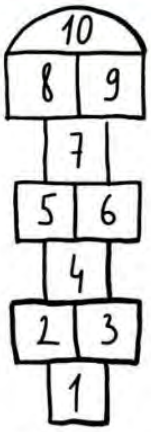
Baseline Hopscotch

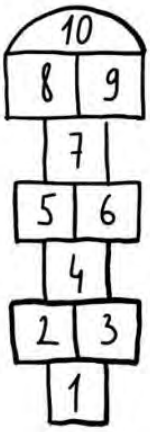
Adapted from: Boys and Girls Clubs NI

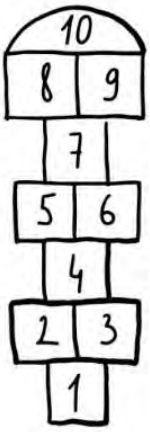
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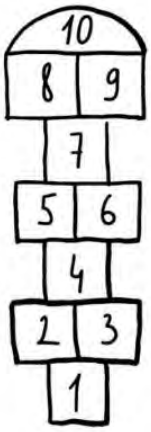


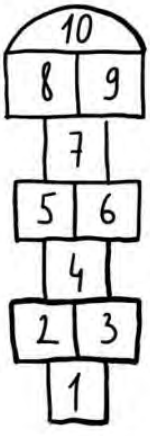


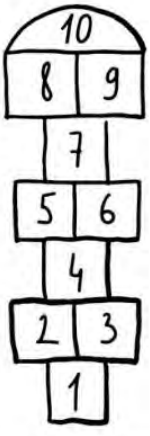


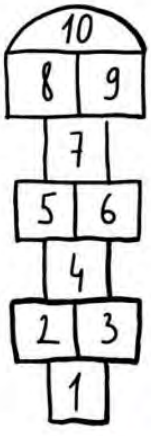












Appendix 9

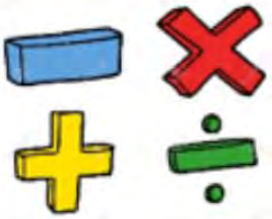
UNCRC Poster



Appendix 10

Icebreaker Human Bingo

Find someone who...

 Has a pet cat	 is left-handed	 Plays a musical instrument	 Is good at math
 Plays football	 Has broken a bone	 Walks to school	 Likes waking up early
 Is the youngest in their family	 Has green eyes	 Loves Harry Potter	 Can whistle
 Loves chocolate ice cream	 Has a birthday this month	 Likes brussel sprouts	 Is an only child

Appendix 10

Climate Change Human Bingo



Has a reusable water bottle	Is a vegetarian	Has attended a Climate Change protest.	Sells unwanted clothes on Vinted
Uses public transport	Has energy saving lightbulbs in their home	Uses reusable shopping bags	Has picked up litter
Recycles at home	Cycles or walks to school/work	Has planted a tree.	Switches off plugs when not in use
Grows their own vegetables	Shops locally	Owns, or knows someone who owns an electric car	Is interested in saving wildlife
Is part of an eco-club or organisation	Has seen Greta Thunberg online	Has taken their own cup to Starbucks (or other coffee shop)	Turns the tap off when they brush their teeth

Appendix 10

Participation Human Bingo

Human Bingo



Find someone who...

Has completed a survey	Knows what UNCRC stands for	Voted for something	Has been involved in fundraising
Created a poster to raise awareness	Has been involved in a campaign	Had an idea to create change	Has volunteered in any way
Has organised an activity for friends, family etc.	Spoke to an adult about something they're unhappy about	Has been involved in schools' council	Stood up for something they believe in
Has helped complete an application	Knows who Greta Thunberg is	Has given their opinion on something that would impact them	Understands what their rights are

Appendix 11

Action Plan

What issues or themes are we going to look at?

What is our goal or vision for this issue?

What steps do we have to take to achieve our goal?

Who are our decision makers or audience?

Appendix 12

Meeting Agenda

Date: Time:

	Agenda Item	Person Responsible
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

Any other business:

Appendix 12

Meeting Minutes

Date: **Time:**

Attendees:

Summary of discussion:	Actions:
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

Any other business:

Date of next meeting:

TOP TIPS

How to take minutes...



1 ATTENDANCE LIST
START BY NOTING DOWN WHO WAS THERE, WHO WAS THE CHAIR AND WHO WAS THE NOTE TAKER.



2 MEETING NOTES
AGAINST EACH AGENDA ITEM, NOTE MAIN POINTS OF DISCUSSION. THIS CAN BE SUMMARISED USING BULLETPOINTS.

3 ACTION POINTS
ACTION POINTS SHOULD BE TAKEN DOWN ALMOST WORD FOR WORD WITH WHO IS RESPONSIBLE SO THIS CAN BE RECORDED ON THE MEETING ACTION SHEET LATER.

4 BE PREPARED
KNOW WHAT IS ON THE MEETING AGENDA AND WHAT WAS DISCUSSED THE LAST TIME. YOU WILL BE ABLE TO FOLLOW THE CONVERSATION AND HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING.

5 WHAT NEXT
AFTER THE MEETING IS OVER TAKE A MINUTE TO DOUBLE CHECK YOUR NOTES WHILE IT'S ALL STILL FRESH IN YOUR HEAD!



TOP TIPS

How to chair a meeting...

1 MEETING AGENDA
PREPARE FOR THE CURRENT MEETING BY REVIEWING THE AGENDA AND THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS NOTES.





2 TIME KEEPING
PROVIDE ENOUGH TIME FOR ALL AGENDA ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED.

3 INVOLVE EVERYONE
ALLOW EVERYONE THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE MEETING AND GIVE THOSE WHO ARE QUIETER TIME TO SPEAK.



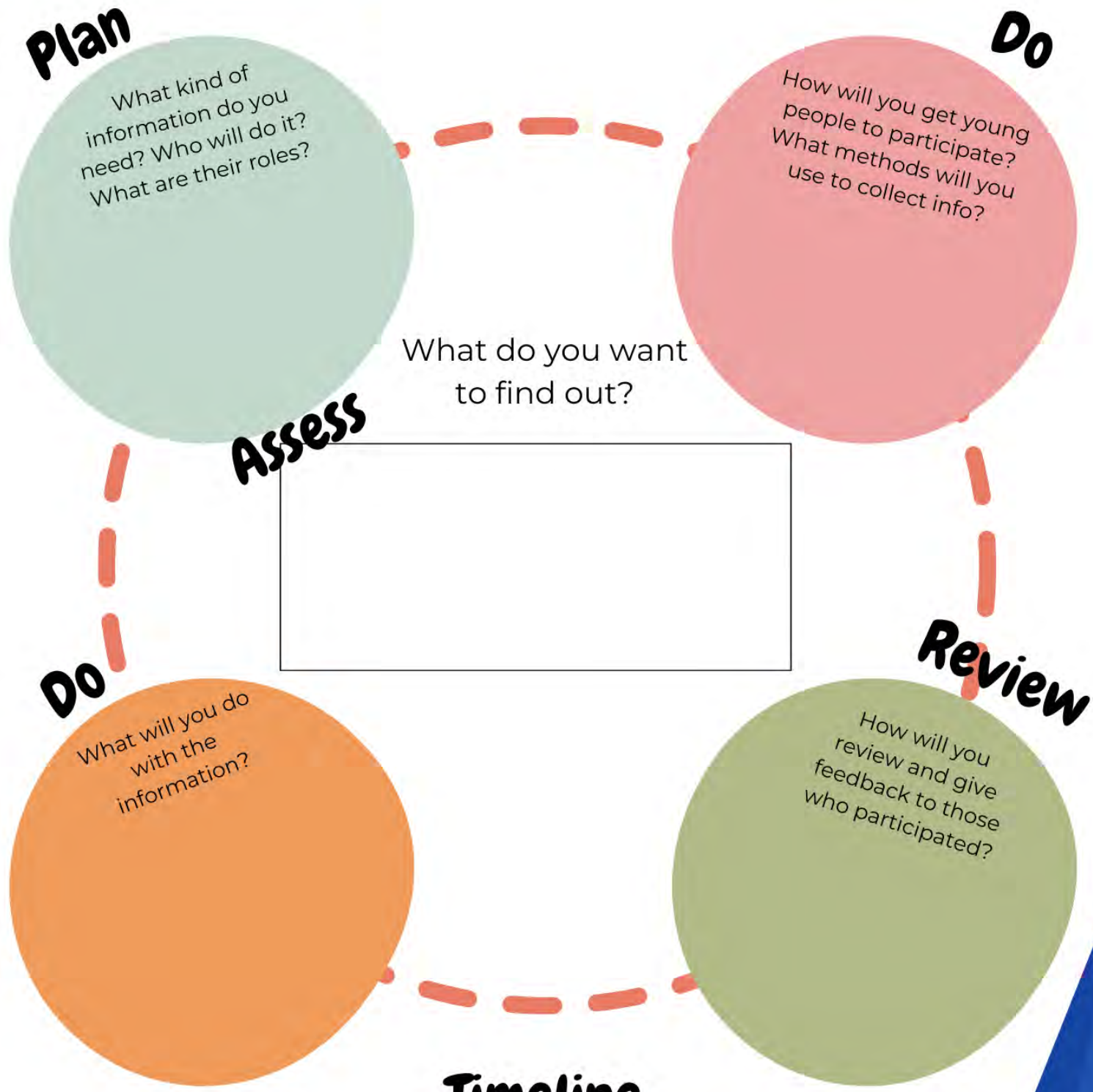
4 ACTIVELY LISTEN
PURPOSEFULLY LISTEN TO EVERYONES POINTS AND IDEAS.

5 SUMMARIZE INFORMATION
AFTER THE DISCUSSION, CLARIFY WITH THE GROUP THAT ALL POINTS ARE UNDERSTOOD. ASSIGN ROLES TO COUNCIL MEMBERS FOR THE MEETING ACTION POINTS.



Appendix 13

Consultation Plan



Appendix 14

Our Manifesto

Our aim...

This year, we chose these issues...

1

2

3

CHANGE we would like to see...

You can expect to see..



For more information or to get involved, please contact:

CONTACT US

Appendix 15

Social Action Plan

What need or problem have you identifed?	
What do you want to achieve?	
What are the specific tasks that need completed?	
What are the roles and responsibilities:	
Who can support or help?	
How do you share this positive project?	

Some ideas for social action projects include:

- Volunteering.
- Fundraising for charity.
- Organising an event.
- Helping others in your community.
- Making your area or school look nicer e.g. clean up, litter pick.
- Creating things to make your school or community better e.g. garden, allotment.
- Looking after the environment e.g. tree planting, recycling initiative.
- Acts of random kindness.
- Collect and donate items.
- Make hampers.
- Create a product with a positive message e.g. a branded wristband.
- Create resources to raise awareness about an issue or support.
- Arts performance.
- Improve a shared space in your school or area.
- Intergenerational work.
- School events.

Timeline

Appendix 16 Developing Advocacy Skills Activity

Scenario 1

You have an opportunity to go on the trip of your dreams. This place has never involved people under the age of 16. How would you advocate to get your dream opportunity? Feel free to create an imaginary trip to state your case.

Scenario 2

You see someone being pushed around by one of your friends in the corridor. You want to stop this from happening immediately. What do you do?

Scenario 3

Your teacher moves the date of your test up two weeks earlier than your class expected. No one feels prepared and it is causing stress among your classmates. How do you convince your teacher to move the test to a time that makes everyone more comfortable?

Scenario 4

Your school's sports field is going to be repurposed to be a car park. How would you advocate to keep it open?

Appendix 17

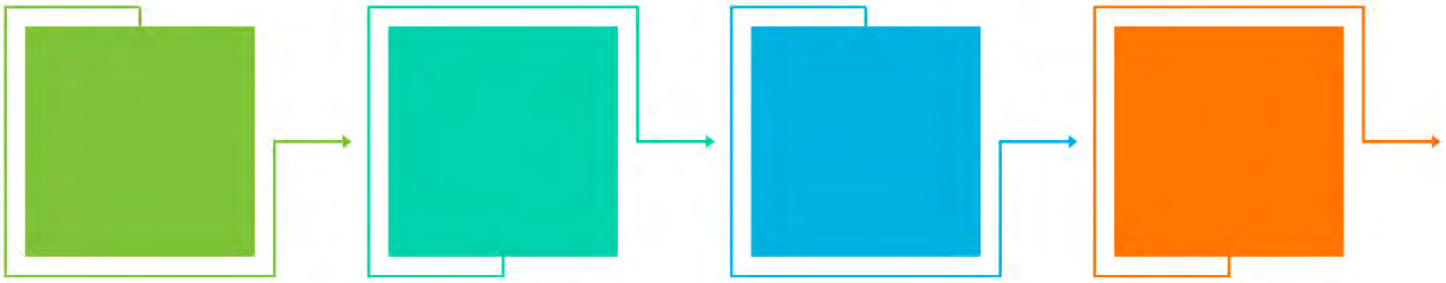
Campaign Plan

Our Vision

Our Audience

Our Goals

Our Actions



To-Do

Resources we may need:

How will we publicise the campaign?

How will we know it is successful?

Appendix 18

Project Diary

DEAR DIARY

What did you do today?

What did you enjoy?

Did you struggle with anything?



What did you learn?

Appendix 18

Project Evaluation

What skills have you gained?

How did your project benefit others?

What went well?

What would you change next time?

How has your connection to community changed?

Appendix 19

Bulletin Template



SCHOOL COUNCIL

NEXT MONTH

THIS MONTH

WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT...

TELL US HERE...

Appendix 20

Feedback Template

Project:	Who is giving feedback?

Question	Feedback
What did you agree with that I said?	
What, if anything, surprised you and why?	
Did you disagree with anything? If so, what and why?	
How has it influenced your views?	
What have you decided?	
What will happen next and when?	
General Comments	
Planned date for further feedback	

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

This certificate is granted to

For being a member of the School Council



Teacher

Principal

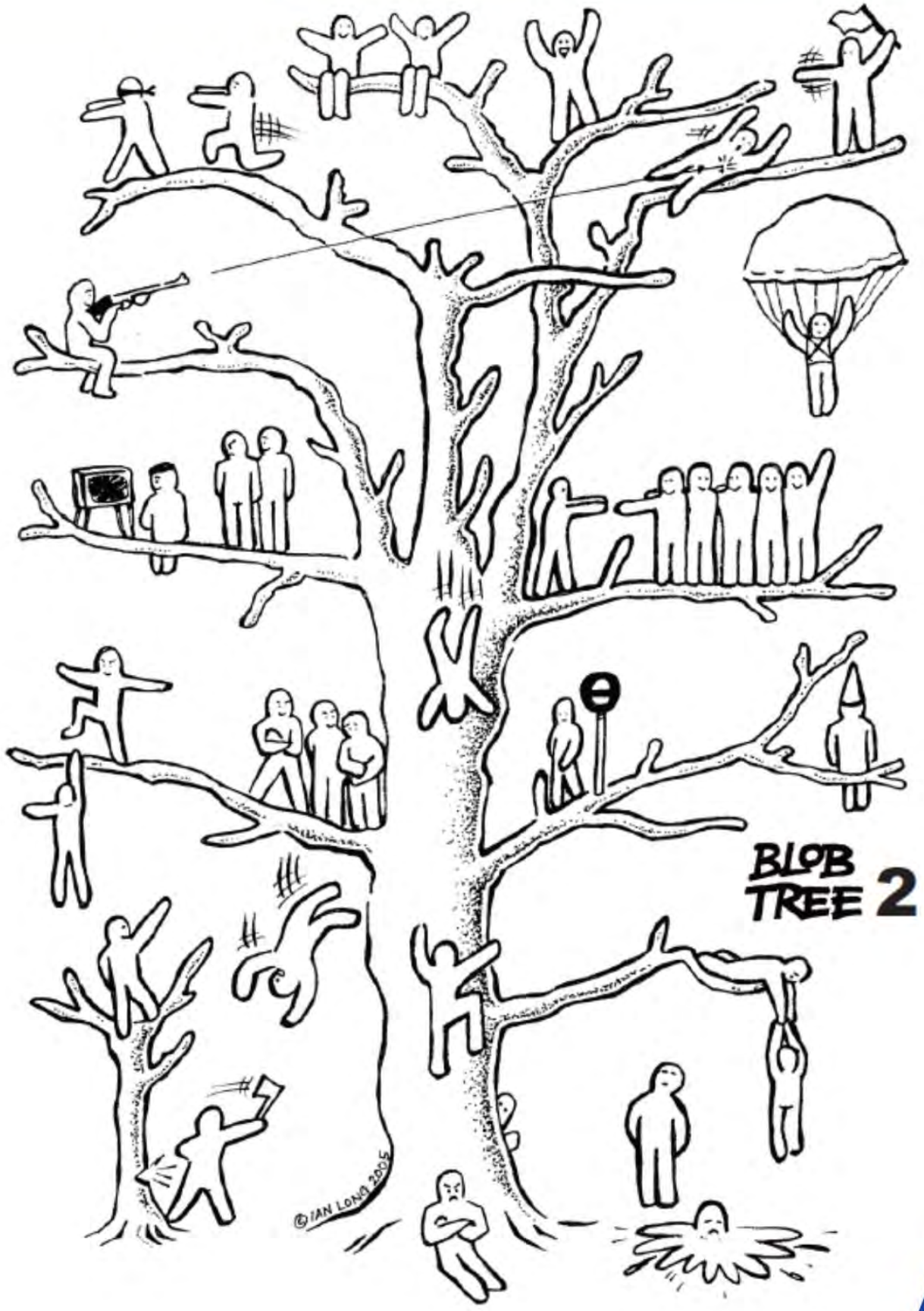
Appendix 21

Certificate Template

Appendix 22

Blob Tree

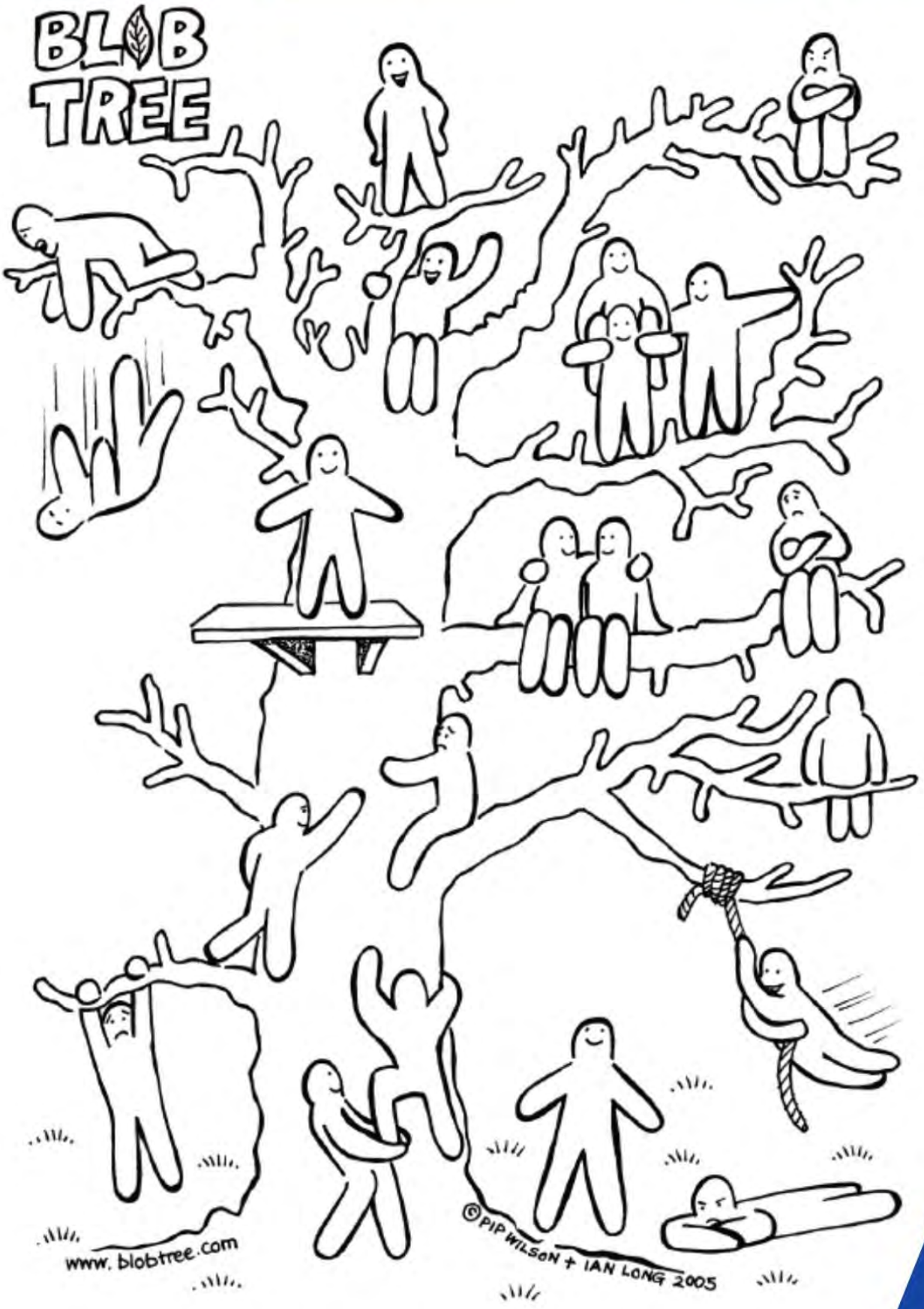
Credit: Pip Wilson & Ian Long



Appendix 22

Blob Tree

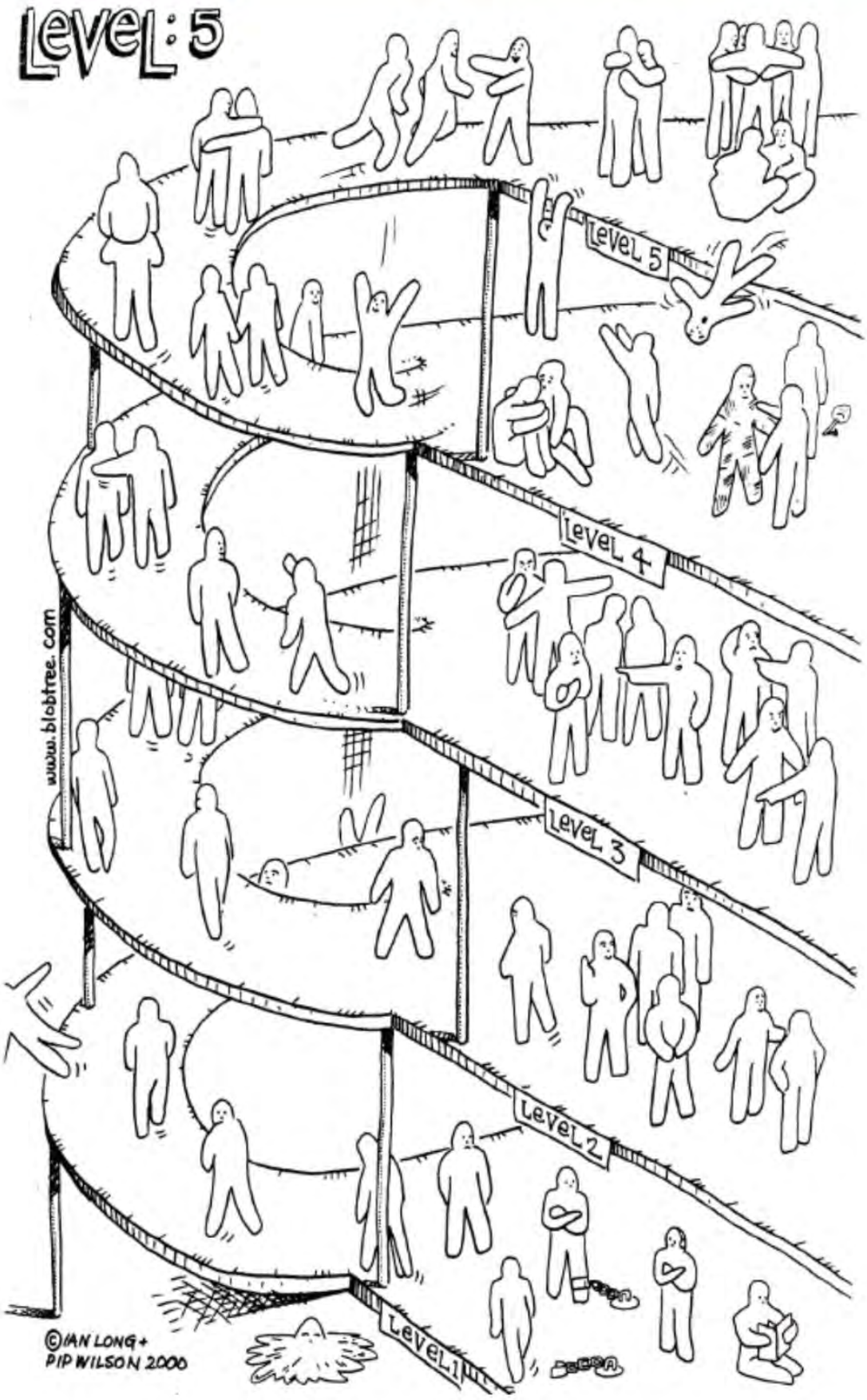
Credit: Pip Wilson & Ian Long



Appendix 22

Blob Tree

Credit: Pip Wilson & Ian Long



Appendix 23

My Journey

Credit: YoungMinds

Expectations / goals:

What were the participants hopes or expectations before starting the project?

Timeline:



Activities:

What were the main stages of the project?



The journey:

What happened?



Reflections:

How does the participant feel about the project overall? What did it mean to them? Did it meet their expectations?

Skills gained:

What did the participant learn? What can they do now that they couldn't do before?

My Voice

ea Education Authority

Youth Service
Education Authority
Rathvarna Youth Resource Centre
22 Pond Park Road
Lisburn
BT28 3LL

September 2024