

# **ALDERMAN RICHARD HALLAM PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **Pupil Voice Policy**



# Pupil Voice Policy

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## Aims

The term 'pupil voice' refers to ways of listening to the views of pupils and / or involving them in decision making.

At Alderman Richard Hallam Primary School, we believe that children should be active participants in their own learning and that their opinions should be heard and valued, both in school and the wider community. We actively seek ways to engage pupils and encourage them to contribute.

We believe, therefore, that it is best practice to seek every opportunity to hear the views of our pupils about their school; how they perceive it, what they like about it and how they would like it to improve. Issues raised by pupils will range from the everyday, for example, arrangements at lunchtime, to more strategic issues such as developing the curriculum further to best suit their interests. We believe that we should seek, wherever possible, to respond to pupils' views and thereby enable them to play a part in shaping our school's future development.

Pupil Voice is very important to us as a school as we believe that it supports many of the values that we want to instil in the pupils such as: British Values, confidence, oracy, being an

active participant in the community and the world and understanding that their opinion and voice is important.

### **Pupil Voice at A.R.H.**

Children at A.R.H. are encouraged to voice their thoughts, opinions and ideas from the moment they join our school. This is done in class, through daily check-ins, through oracy work and a myriad of other strategies to ensure they know their voice is valued and important. This is further strengthened in the following key ways:

#### **Pupil Views**

Pupils, from a wide-variety of groups including SEND, PP, WBB, etc., will be given opportunities to share their thoughts around the curriculum and the school through: the evaluation of trips (this will identify if trips are enjoyable and educational for pupils), half-termly discussions with the school council (to identify actions for the school from the pupils), half-termly meetings with Anti-Bullying Champion's (to discuss the wellbeing and behaviour of pupils), end of topic sheets (to identify the learning that has taken place across the curriculum) and new/possible additions to the Pupil Surveys (to identify possible developments around the curriculum).

#### **School Council**

Our school council promotes democracy, leadership and mutual responsibility throughout the school. At the beginning of every academic year, all children are asked if they want to run for the School Council. If they wish to do so, they are then asked to prepare a speech explaining why they would be good at this role and then a ballot is held in each class. There is one representative for each class in Years 1 – 6. Elected class representatives meet half termly. The process of school council provides:

- A positive forum for pupil voice;
- Structured opportunity for pupil-leadership dialogue;
- Pupils with an insight into democracy;
- A forum for pupils to instigate change in respect of elements of school life, e.g. school meals, social areas, outdoor equipment;
- A feeling of self-worth and mutual respect for pupils.

Historically, the School Council members have arranged fundraisers such as movie nights and themed discos. We then discuss how they wish for these funds to be spent. The School Council has helped to raise money for: the Sensory Room, class books, friendship stops for each playground, wet-play games and playground equipment, amongst other things.

#### **Head Councillor Elections**

As part of being a member of the School Council, all of the children get given roles that range from treasurer to marketing to head councillor. Year 5 and 6 children are given the opportunity to run for head councillor and if they are elected they get the final say in any

votes, they are used as school representatives and will take a more lead role during meetings. In order to become head councillor, candidates have to record a short video to introduce themselves, explain why they would be good at this role and briefly outline any changes they wish to implement. These videos are then shown to the whole school and a private ballot is carried out in each class. This helps to instil democracy and responsibility within the pupils.

### School Council Interviews

It is always our aim for members of the school council to be involved with interviews for key posts (teachers, SLT positions, etc) and to meet with the interviewee to give them a tour of the school or to ask the interviewee a range of questions. The questions are changed regularly to reflect the feelings and focuses of the school council. This process is overseen by the Pupil Voice Lead who discusses the pupil's responses to each candidate and then feeds back to the interview panel on behalf of them. This allows pupils to feel that their ideas and opinions are valued when it comes to any staff members that they could encounter. It also gives the members of the school council a chance to develop their oracy skills.

### Peer Support

As a school, we feel it is vitally important that children are able to support each other academically, emotionally and socially and we work hard to equip our children with the skills to do this effectively. This is done regularly in class through use of talk partners and group work but also across year groups with partner classes and reading buddies.

### Anti-Bullying Champions

Recently, we have aimed to increase the numbers of Anti-Bullying Champions to ensure that all year groups have access to them. From Year 4-Year 6, we will aim to ensure that there are a minimum of 12 Anti-Bullying Champions across the year groups: this equates to roughly 3 per class. The ABCs in these year groups receive regular Anti-Bullying Champion training, including peer mediation training, and have a meeting each half term to discuss any issues and share any successes. The ABCs are visible on the playground as they wear hi-vis vests. It is their role to mediate minor playground disputes, support any staff on the playground with disputes and ensure that all children are happy and included on the playground. In the younger years, certain children are chosen as 'Playground Buddies' to ensure that all children feel included on the playground. The ABCs regularly visit the younger children during break and lunch times to support them with games or disagreements.

### Playground Buddies

In the younger years, certain children are chosen by their teachers as 'Playground Buddies' to ensure that all children feel included on the playground. These children have demonstrated attributes such as confidence, good listening and friendliness in order to be chosen for this role. In order to support the Playground Buddies further, the ABCs regularly

visit the younger children during break and lunch times to support them with games or disagreements.

### Peer Mediation

Peer mediation training is delivered to all pupils in Year 4 as part of our school's Behaviour and Safety Curriculum to help all children to understand how to resolve conflict, manage emotions and support with minor disagreements during unstructured times. This training may be further discussed in Year 5 and in Year 6 if deemed necessary.

### Responsibilities and Roles

At Alderman Richard Hallam Primary School, we have an appointed Parent, Carer and Pupil Voice Lead who works alongside the member of SLT responsible for Behaviour and Attitudes to ensure that parent, carer and pupil voice is prioritised within the school.

The Parent, Carer and Pupil Voice Lead is responsible for:

- Overseeing pupil views which includes ensuring that the links to the forms are sent out each half term, monitoring the responses, sharing the responses with the relevant year groups through the curriculum folders and working closely with the curriculum lead to ensure that we are responding and reacting to the results;
- Training and appointing ABCs;
- Working with the School Council which includes meeting once per half term with both the KS1 and KS2 councils and putting them forward for a range of opportunities within the school such as interviews and greeting visitors;
- Supporting and organising the fundraising ideas raised by the School Council and ABCs. All of the Pupil Voice budget is raised and spent by the School Council and ABCs;
- Organising events and charity fundraisers such as Anti-Bullying Week, Children in Need, Comic Relief;
- Delivering whole school assemblies about Anti-Bullying;
- Working with staff on ideas to support children's mental health such as worry drop in sessions, worry boxes etc;
- Creating links with other schools to broaden the development of the pupil voice within school and create links that would benefit the wider community;
- Training staff on the importance of peer mediation and strategies to support children's mental health;
- Working closely with the mental health lead and safeguarding lead to create surveys for both pupils and parents to ensure that we are continuously striving to improve practice within the school in these areas.

All teaching staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring that Pupil Views are being filled in regularly and accurately in line with the views of the pupils.
- Using the Pupil Views feedback when planning future lessons.
- Ensuring that ABCs and School Council member are given relevant opportunities within class to support and develop their roles.
- Ensuring that all children feel listened to and valued in the classroom setting.

### **Inclusion**

It is expected that all children will be given the opportunity to voice their thoughts, ideas and opinions and no child will ever be excluded from this process on the grounds of any protected characteristics. All children are entitled to this as part of the school ethos. It is hoped that this approach will motivate and support children's learning and participation as an active member of the school community at all levels including Gifted, More Able and Talented pupils, EAL pupils and children identified with a Special Educational Need and/or disability (SEND).

### **Monitoring and Review**

Monitoring and review takes place on a regular basis in accordance with the School Improvement Plan. Bi-annual surveys are completed by both pupils and parents and carers to assess any areas for development, pupil views are gathered and reviewed half termly which leads to feedback being provided for staff in the curriculum folders and the school council are given opportunities to feed back to class teachers and the leadership team about their successes on a regular basis.

Please read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Parent and Carer Voice Policy