

AGREED DRAFT

EMPOWERING LEARNERS

Introduction

An empowered system creates a culture of collaboration and collegiality with learners, parents, colleagues and multi-agency partners. All share a vision for education based on the values and needs of the community.

Learner participation is an important part of an empowered system. Learner participation is defined as all of the ways in which children and young people contribute to school and the wider empowered school system, working with educational professionals, parents, carers, peers, and community members.

Other aspects include learner achievement both in and out of school. Schools should recognise learners' achievements and ensure that, wherever possible, all learners are achieving. They help learners develop knowledge and skills for life, learning and work.

'The ethos and culture of our school reflects a commitment to children's rights and positive relationships. Our children and young people are eager and active participants who are fully engaged, resilient, highly-motivated and interact well during activities. Learners' experiences are appropriately challenging and enjoyable and well matched to their needs and interests. Learners exercise choice, including the appropriate use of digital technology, and taking an increasing responsibility as they become more independent in their learning.'

Quality Indicator 2.3 How Good Is Our School 4, Education Scotland, 2015

Learners should feel empowered within their classroom or learning environment. They should receive high quality feedback and have an accurate understanding of their progress and what they need to do to improve. Learners should also be able to give effective feedback to peers on their learning and suggest ways in which they can improve. This builds confidence and resilience in learners.

Learner participation can be achieved by supporting learners to build the skills encapsulated in the four capacities of the curriculum, aiming for all learners to become; Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Responsible Citizens, Effective Contributors. Learner participation should underpin the ethos of the school community, with emphasis placed on building positive relationships between all contributors in an empowered system.

'Since children and young people are the main recipients of all that our schools offer and deliver, they should be involved in discussions about the wider life of the school.'

How good is OUR school?, Education Scotland, 2018

A rights-based approach can help to support the empowerment of, and collaboration across, the education system and will benefit learners, school leaders, teachers, parents and carers and wider partners. The benefits of enhanced learner

AGREED DRAFT

participation include improving attainment, achievement, behaviour, health and well-being, and a better school ethos based on trust, respect, and collaboration with the community, and dialogue across generations.

'Communicating our ideas to everyone in the school is really important'
Secondary pupil, Education Scotland learner participation guidance

Principles

In an empowered system, learners:

- participate as underpinned by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, most notably Article 12 (respect for the views of the child) and Article 13 (freedom of expression);
- are enabled to engage in planning and leading their learning, and to have meaningful dialogue about approaches to learning and teaching;
- are clear about how they can share their ideas and have a role in leading and shaping change through clear systems for engaging them in participating, which are agreed, understood and used regularly; and
- understand and see the impacts of their participation in their learning, in their setting, and in local and global communities.

Resources

- Applying Nurture as a Whole School Approach: <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/self-evaluation/Applying%20nurture%20as%20a%20whole%20school%20approach%20-%20A%20framework%20to%20support%20self-evaluation>
- Education Scotland (2018) Learner Participation in Educational Settings: <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/self-evaluation/learner-participation-in-educational-settings-3-18>
- SHRC Human Rights Based Approach Self-Assessment Tool: http://www.scottishhumanrights.com/media/1814/shrc_panel_self-assessment_tool_vfinal.pdf
- 7 golden rules for participation: <https://www.cypcs.org.uk/education/golden-rules>
- How good is OUR school?: <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/self-evaluation/frwk20-how-good-is-our-school>