



# Children's Rights and Participation Strategy

2020-2022

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## Education Scotland Children's Rights and Participation Strategy

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## 1. Introduction

By the end of this parliamentary session in May 2021, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) will be fully incorporated into Scots law with a legal duty on all public bodies to protect and respect the rights of all children. The aspiration is for all children and young people aged 3-25 to have the opportunity to contribute to decisions and know that their ideas are listened to, valued and considered.

Children's rights and participation are an identified priority in several national policies, guidance and strategies including:

- [Children's and Young People \(Scotland\) Act \(2014\)](#) Parts 1, 3 and 9
- [Progressing the Human Rights of Children in Scotland: An Action Plan \(2018 – 2021\)](#)
- [Child's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments \(CRWIA\) Guidance \(2019\)](#)
- [Getting It Right For Every Child \(GIRFEC\)](#)
- [Common Core of Skills, Knowledge and Understanding and Values for the 'Children's Workforce' in Scotland \(2012\)](#)
- [Fairer Scotland Action Plan \(2016\)](#)
- [National Guidance: Child Protection Committees and Child Protection Chief Officers \(2018\)](#)
- Education Scotland's suite of self-evaluation documents to support schools, early learning and childcare (ELC) settings Community Learning and Development, and colleges include several references to children's and young people's rights and participation. For example, the fourth edition of [How Good Is Our School \(HGIOS4\)](#) states that we have a duty to 'involve children and young people in decisions about how their needs should be met'. [How Good Is Our School? Fourth edition \(HGIOS?4\)](#) [How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare?](#) [How Good is the Learning and Development in our Community?](#) [How Good is our College?](#)

### **Our vision for rights and participation**

We are committed to the UN convention on the rights of the child and will promote the rights of all children, and responsibilities of adults to uphold their rights. We are committed to improving the levels of children and young people's participation in their learning, lives and communities

## 2.0 What is this strategy trying to do?

As an agency of the Scottish Government, Education Scotland aspires to be a world leading organisation whose policies, practices and services are developed through quality engagement with children and young people. This strategy provides an overarching framework to support Education Scotland in embedding children's rights as set out in the UNCRC and mainstreaming the participation of children and young people in all our internal and external work. It also supports us to deliver on our vision for equalities and equity, and to support the Scottish Attainment Challenge

### 3.0 How will we deliver our strategic vision and aims?

Implementing this strategy requires close cooperation and coordination across our organisation and in our work with external stakeholders. Education Scotland will ensure all planning protects and respects children's rights through three key strategic objectives:

1. Embedding rights and participation in corporate systems and processes (inward) by:-
  - Developing and delivering professional learning for all internal staff
  - Referring to UNCRC in staff development and review and objective setting
  - Ensuring all planning refers to and reflects the UNCRC
2. Mainstreaming rights and participation in education (outward) by
  - Developing and delivering professional learning with and for external partners
  - Ensuring all colleagues who work in or with educational settings promote understanding and awareness of the UNCRC
  - Gathering the views of children and young people to inform and when relevant, co-design policy, services and practice. Scottish Government guidance should be used to support this  
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/decision-making-children-and-young-peoples-participation/pages/participation/>
  - Implementing the use of [child's rights and wellbeing impact assessments](#)
3. Securing continuous improvement in implementation of rights-based approaches (forward)
  - Annually reviewing the impact of service delivery in relation to children's rights

### 4.0 What are the key features of implementation?

Key features include:

- increasing understanding of the UNCRC in staff, children, young people, parents, carers and wider communities.
- ensuring we place learner participation, Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and the UNCRC at the heart of all actions.
- supporting and developing new structures and platforms for children and young people to participate and to influence decisions within education, locally and nationally.

- taking particular care to ensure the views of vulnerable learners are sought, including those with [protected characteristics](#), additional support needs (ASN) and those who are Care Experienced (CEYP).
- sharing and valuing the different contributions and perspectives that children and young people bring to our work and the work of our external stakeholders.
- demonstrating transparency and openness by adding the strategy to our website as part of our suite of approaches for improvement.
- developing a focus within Education Scotland on delivering our rights and participation objectives through our business planning and reporting processes.

## 5. How will we monitor and evaluate the impact of this strategy?

We have put in place the following measures to ensure we deliver on our rights and participation strategy:

**Programme Board:** We will report on the three work streams through the existing Programme Boards governance arrangements. Each directorate will have clear arrangements to report on progress with incorporating and implementing UNCRC

**Responsible Officer(s):** To ensure that we discharge our responsibilities appropriately, a few responsible officers will report back on progress with the implementation of the strategy and plans. This will also allow officers to identify effective practice and opportunities for collaboration

**Planning:** operational and strategic planning will continue to use existing methods. However, an optional plan is available in section 6 if required

## 6. Children's Rights and Participation Operational Action Plan (template)

Responsible Officer:

<b>Objective 1: Embed rights and participation in corporate systems and processes (inward)</b>				
<b>Action(s)</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>How we will measure progress?</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>

<b>Objective 2: Mainstream rights and participation in Education (outward)</b>				
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>How we will measure progress?</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>

<b>Objective 3: Secure continuous improvement in the implementation of rights-based approaches (forward)</b>				
<b>Action(s)</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>How we will measure progress?</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>

## 7. links and resources

<https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/>

<https://childreninscotland.org.uk/>

<https://www.gtcs.org.uk/News/news/childrens-rights-guide.aspx>

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>

<https://www.whocaresscotland.org/>

<https://young.scot/>

<https://www.youthlinkscotland.org/>