

Information note – UNCRC Informed Level

Back Ground Information

The UNCRC is the universal standard across the world for children's rights. It covers all aspects of a child's life and sets out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to>

The UNCRC was ratified by the UK government in 1991 It consists of 54 articles, Articles 1-42 are Provisions, and the remainder are around Implementation and monitoring.

There are 4 articles that are known as 'General Principles' and these underpin all other rights – these are:-

- Article 2 – without discrimination;
- Article 3 – best interests of the child;
- Article 6 – survival & development;
- Article 12 – respect for the views of the child.

The articles are also organised under headings that are known as the 3 'ps' – provision (such as education and health); protection (from dangerous activities and drugs for example), and participation (access to information and to be heard)

What is a rights based approach? Transcript of podcast

Having a rights based approach to education promotes improved relationships, ethos and attainment and achievement. In their 2017 report on the 'State of Children's Rights in Scotland', Together (an alliance of children's charities that work to improve the awareness, understanding and implementation of the UNCRC) identified a rights based approach as being:

a principled and practical framework for working with children and young people, grounded in the UNCRC and other international rights conventions. It is about placing the UNCRC at the heart of planning and service delivery and integrating children and young people's rights into every aspect of decision making, policy and practice.

Rights based approaches mean that the articles of the convention underpin the ethos of an organisation, and that all policies and practice are developed through consideration of the UNCRC. The impact of this includes:

- Improved relations between learners and staff
- Improved peer relations across the age ranges
- Improved teaching and learning
- Improved guidance and support
- Creativity
- Emotional empathy
- A better ethos and a greater sense of shared community

- A reciprocal sense of feeling valued, trusted and respected
- Life skills such as teamwork, problem-solving and citizenship
- Improved engagement, empowerment, and commitment to education
- An addressing of the 'attainment gap' between learners from different backgrounds

Further information

It is expected that the UNCRC will be fully incorporated into Scot's law in 2023. This means that all public bodies will have to take children's rights into account in all of their work. In addition, many of the professions in education have references to human rights in their professional standards – this includes early years practitioners, community learning staff and teachers. We also need to be mindful that all human rights treaties apply to children – not just the UNCRC, and the Scottish Government is planning on incorporating another 4 treaties into law – these are

- the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)
- the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

We also need to remember that knowing about rights is only the starting point – learners also need to be able to thrive in an environment which respects them as individuals and upholds their dignity, and also encourages them to uphold the rights of others – for example through campaigning on issues such as climate change or poverty.

The preamble of the UNCRC states that 'the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding', and also references 'peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity'

The incorporation of the UNCRC is an excellent opportunity to further the rights and well-being of children in Scotland – but we all need to work together to make it happen.

Here are some useful resources to help

- [Dignity in School - Children's Parliament](#)
- [UNCRC self-eval toolkit \(thinglink.com\)](#)
- [Together Mapping \(togetherscotland.org.uk\)](#)
- <https://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/#4>