



# St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Blackhall

## Pupil Voice Policy

September 2021

# ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPIL VOICE POLICY

## **Rationale**

We believe that children need to be active participants in their own education and to feel that their opinions will be heard in the wider school community.

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary, we therefore seek ways to listen to the views of our pupils and involve them in decision-making so that they are engaged as partners in the life of the school. We believe that this will make a positive contribution to the school environment and ethos.

## **Student voice and pupil participation activities at St Joseph's Catholic Primary**

There is a wide range of approaches that we are developing at St Joseph's Catholic Primary to support pupil participation and promote pupil voice:

- Pupil Leadership Team meetings
- Sports Coaching - peer to peer support
- Fundraising campaigns (both teacher and pupil initiated)
- Consultations on teacher/school led projects e.g. re: drafting policies relating to behaviour or anti-bullying; evaluation of learning activities/the creative curriculum
- Pupil questionnaires

Pupils are informed of the outcome of their involvement.

## **Curriculum**

We also believe in embedding pupil voice into the curriculum, with teaching and learning activities being used to enable pupils to focus on how to make informed decisions about their lives, their health and well-being and the environment.

## **Pupil Leadership Team**

One of the principle means by which pupil voice activity is progressed in school is by the use of the Pupil Leadership Team. We believe that our Pupil Leadership Team will enhance and influence positive peer leadership and mutual responsibility throughout the school.

Pupil Leadership Team will

- Be a positive forum
- Provide an opportunity for all children to be heard
- Provide a forum for the leadership of the school to listen to children's knowledge and opinions
- Aid communication throughout the school
- Build the children's confidence, mutual respect and self-esteem
- Encourage the children to be active citizens
- Provide the children with a democratic model
- Be a forum for pupils to instigate change in respect of elements of school life, e.g. school meals, playground, outdoor equipment.

The Pupil Leadership Team will also be used to assist the school with its self-evaluation procedures and enable us to be more accountable to the whole school community.

## **Pupil Leadership Team in Practice**

The Pupil Leadership Team organise the recruitment of their own members, using a voting system that involves all pupils of the school, ensuring representation of all year groups. Every class elects two Pupil Leadership Team Representatives (one child per year group). Pupil Leadership Team meetings will consist of a member of staff, who will generally chair the meeting and the Pupil Leadership Team Representatives.

Every class should hold a class council on a half termly basis. This is an opportunity for Pupil Leadership Team Representatives to discuss the Pupil Leadership Team agenda, and to gather feedback. Pupil Leadership Team meetings are scheduled on the school calendar and take place periodically throughout the school year.

At each meeting, those present and absent are noted, and apologies read out. Matters arising from the previous meeting are discussed, followed by business for the meeting in accordance with the agenda.

At some meetings a guest speaker will be invited. This may be another member of staff, or an outside speaker, such as a local councillor.

Minutes are recorded at each meeting and can be found in the Pupil Leadership file.

Members of the Pupil Leadership Team take part in staff recruitment, forming an interview panel. Pupil feedback is also gathered, following sample lessons. Members of the Pupil Leadership may also represent the school at community meetings and at meetings of the Leadership Team and Governing Body where appropriate.

## **Involving pupils in their own learning**

Pupil participation in their own learning means a range of different things in the classroom. It includes developing projects to reflect interests and needs as expressed by pupils; encouraging pupils' reflection on their own and others' learning; reflection by pupils on the style and content of lessons and opportunities to give feedback to teachers.

Assessment for Learning encourages a view of assessment as an essential part of everyday classroom practice involving teachers and learners in reflection, dialogue, decision-making and target setting.

## **Benefits of pupil involvement**

There is a range of benefits in greater participation. For pupils these include increased self-confidence and feelings of empowerment, and a greater sense of responsibility.

Behaviour has the potential to improve with pupils taking greater responsibility for their own behaviour, as well as improved learning.

We believe that there is a positive impact of pupil participation on their own work and the school environment.

Children's insight into the ways they learn best and the ideas that they have for lesson content and style as well as their ideas on the life of the school should be welcomed. Pupils' learning will improve when their views are taken into consideration. This can only have a positive impact on raising standards.

## **Whole School Approach to Pupil Involvement**

Staff understand the importance in involving pupils in all aspects of their education and learning. Pupil views are valued and time is always given to seeking out and listening to the views of individuals and to taking these views into consideration in any decision making. Opportunities for peer mentoring and support are provided, as are extra-curricular clubs, many of which are run in response to pupil requests.

Charity events and fundraisers for the school and for local and national charities (e.g. Children In Need) are planned in collaboration with pupils, thus giving them ownership and pride in what they achieve.

We believe that all children and young people should have opportunities to express their opinion in matters that affect their lives and strive to ensure that they are provided with teaching and opportunities that equips them to do so as effectively as possible.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Pupil participation and pupil voice are monitored and evaluated by the Head teacher in line with other existing procedures for curriculum development.