



LOCATION: SCHOOL HANDBOOK, SECTION I, DOCUMENT 32

PUPIL VOICE

Date policy first adopted: November 2016

Date reviewed: November 2025

Reviewed By: Lynne Barnes

Date ratified by Governing Body: n/a

Date of next review: Autumn 2027

Rationale:

All pupils have the right to be active participants in their own education and to feel that their opinions will be heard in the wider school community. We aim to enable an understanding that their voice has influence over the decisions and experiences that shape their lives. At Abbey Court School, we actively promote self-advocacy by teaching pupils to express their views, make informed choices, and develop independence and resilience.

At Abbey Court School, we actively seek ways to listen to the views of our pupils and give them opportunities to be involved in decision-making so that they can engage as partners in the life of the school. We firmly believe that this will form the basis for them to make a positive contribution to the school environment and our ethos.

We encourage pupils to become active participants in a democratic society by holding a range of activities which develop skills that underpin their right to have an opinion, make a choice, and communicate these effectively.

We believe that pupil voice directly contributes to achievement. Pupils benefit from increased confidence, communication skills, identity, self-respect and respect for the views of others, an improved sense of responsibility and ownership, and engagement with learning.

We believe that all pupils have the right to a voice, and this directly correlates with the School's safeguarding policy. At Abbey Court, we emphasise teaching pupils to feel confident, and have the means to express their feelings and talk about themselves with regard to their own safety. This is a skill that is worked on from the Early Years throughout the school, so that the pupils can have greater autonomy over themselves when in the school and wider community.

Student voice and pupil participation activities at Abbey Court

Pupils are supported to understand the value and impact of their voice, recognising that their opinions contribute to real changes within the school and beyond. We provide structured opportunities for pupils to practice decision-making and skills to enable them to advocate for themselves.

There is a wide range of approaches that we use and continue to develop to support pupil participation and promote student voice:

- **Pupil Voice Meetings:** Focus on three topics per year, with opportunities for pupils to plan, act, review outcomes, and evaluate with peers. Leadership responds with “You said, we did.”
- **Enterprise Education:** Pupils learn budgeting, profit-making, and market research, building confidence to express opinions and understand democratic principles.
- **Individual Education Plans:** Pupils set their own targets each term, reinforcing ownership of learning.
- **Annual Reviews:** Pupils work with teachers to prepare their reviews with evidence of learning, interests, and progress.
- **Pupil Voice Surveys:** Pupils share views on school life, activities, and improvements, ensuring every pupil is heard.
- **Representation Opportunities:** Pupils may choose to participate in local or national campaigns, such as Youth Parliament.

Curriculum

Pupil voice is embedded throughout 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, their friendships, community and their future.

Extra-curricular activities give pupils scope to explore issues that go beyond academic subjects: These include residential events/journeys, stay-to-tea or pupil-run café events, camp days, Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, Scouts, Young Farmers, and educational visits within their local community as well as further afield.

We are committed to promoting pupil voice through initiatives such as UNICEF’s Rights Respecting Schools Award, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Mark, and the International School’s Award, giving pupils a global perspective and preparing them for life in a democratic society.

Pupil Voice meetings

We believe that our pupil voice meetings enable pupils to enhance and influence positive peer relationships and leadership, as well as mutual responsibility throughout the school.

Pupil Voice meetings will:

- Provide a positive forum for all pupils to be heard.
- Enable leadership to listen and act on pupil opinions.
- Aid communication throughout the school.
- Build confidence and self-esteem.
- Encourage active citizenship and democratic participation.
- Support school self-evaluation and accountability.

Related documents:

Pupil Voice Survey

Pupil Voice booklet