



LOCATION: SCHOOL HANDBOOK, SECTION I, DOCUMENT 32

## **PUPIL VOICE**

### **Rationale:**

We believe that 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. At Abbey Court School, 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.

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 and communicate these effectively.

At Abbey Court, we believe that pupil voice directly contributes to achievement. Pupils benefit from increased confidence, communication skills, self-respect and respecting the views of others, an improved sense of responsibility 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 place a huge emphasis on 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 a greater autonomy over themselves when in the school and wider community.

### **Student voice and pupil participation activities at Abbey Court**

There is a wide range of approaches that we are developing at Abbey Court to support pupil participation and promote student voice:

- Pupil focus groups are being held as an alternative to school council meetings. These meetings are run three times per term, each with a different focus for the pupils to plan, action, review outcomes and evaluate with their peers.
- Enterprise education: Pupils are encouraged to consider and develop their understanding of working to a budget, making a profit and participating in market research activities to develop their confidence in order to express individual opinions and extend an awareness of a democratic society.
- Pupils are consulted with decisions that affect their learning and well-being through setting their own target on the Individual Education Plan (pupil initiated target) each term.
- Visual Annual Reviews at the end of every Key Stage where pupils support teachers to prepare their review with photographs that demonstrate learning and progress.

- Pupil voice survey where pupils can have a say about their school, likes and dislikes and improvements that they would like to be made. This also has a page dedicated to the issues discussed at the pupil focus groups so that every pupil has their say and is heard.

## **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 and their future. Extra-curricular activities, such as residential journeys, stay to tea, camp days, Duke of Edinburgh Expeditions and educational visits, also gives pupils a scope to explore issues that go beyond academic subjects. The pupil voice ethos is embedded in our commitment to UNICEF's Rights Respecting School's Award.

We are committed to promoting pupil voice through the International School's Award. This gives our pupils and young people a window into different cultures and countries, helping them develop as responsible global citizens and preparing them for life in a global society. Through the International School's projects pupils are able to express their views and opinions in an ever changing world and feel as though they make a positive contribution.

## **Pupil Focus Groups**

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

Pupil focus groups will:

- Be a positive forum
- Provide an opportunity for all pupils to be heard
- Provide a forum for the leadership of the school to listen to pupil's knowledge and opinions
- Aid communication throughout the school
- Build the pupil's confidence and self-esteem
- Encourage the pupil's to be active citizens
- Provide the pupil's with a democratic model

Pupil Focus Groups 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 voice in a Global Pandemic (COVID 19)**

As a community we recognise that the disruption to everyday life that has taken place due to COVID 19 has had a lasting impact on some of pupils, causing them anxiety, misunderstanding, anger and frustration about missing school and their friends. Through a carefully planned PSHE curriculum we are encouraging pupils to use their voice in order to express their feelings and anxieties and support them with these through a personalised response to each individual.

Appendix 1: Pupil Voice Survey

Appendix 2: Pupil Voice booklet

Written by Becky Clark - October 2016

Updated Becky Clark – November 2018

Updated: Becky Clark – September 2020

## Pupil Survey June 2018

### 1. I like coming to school because...

95% of students said they like coming to school



#### Why do you like coming to school and why?



Running  
To see friends (x20)  
Swimming (x11)  
Reading books (x2)  
Sensory (x5)  
Tonto (x5)  
Playground  
Rebound  
Dinner time (x3)  
Learning (x6)  
Talking to people  
Work (x2)  
Playing (x5)  
Teachers  
Makes me happy

PAT dogs  
Art  
Music (x4)  
ICT (x2)  
Cooking (x2)  
Water play  
I can use my electric wheelchair  
Horse riding  
I love walking in my walker (x2)  
Acheeva bed  
Reading with Sue  
Learning what's safe on the internet  
PE  
Lessons (x2)  
I like it

### 2. I don't like coming to school because...

Staying in class  
I don't like sitting on a chair  
Wet play  
PE  
We like school  
Work (x8)  
Wearing shoes (x3)  
Lots of people (x3)

I miss my mum  
Reading  
I don't like the nurses room  
I don't like counting!  
Sometimes my friends can be noisy (x2)  
If it is cold and raining  
Because of Drama, History & Maths  
Art & Design (x2)



### I don't like coming to school because...continued...

I'm very bossy  
Waking up early (x2)  
Maths

I get uncomfortable  
I don't like the bus ride  
I don't learn what I want



### 3. What do you enjoy learning at school?

Horse riding (x2)	Learning on the computer (x6)
Educational visits where we learn life skills (x2)	Art (x5)
Cooking (x9)	Sensory room (x3)
Swimming (x13)	Learning about WW2 (x2)
I love PE! (x5)	Being independent
Reading (x5)	Rebound (x2)
Drama (x3)	Maths (x2)
Singing (x3)	Music (x5)
Dancing	Tonto
We like RE, we get to dress up	Friends
Acheeva bed	Being in my walker
Eye Gaze	Geography
Making choices	Helping to tidy
Shopping (x2)	Games
Newsround	

### 4. What would you like to do more of or learn more at school?

Educational visits	Carers/parents visiting
More outdoor learning (x3)	PAT Dogs
Forest school's (x5)	Rebound (x2)
Animal care (x6)	Cooking (x5)
Cooking (x2)	PE (x3)
Swimming (x10)	Maths (x3)
Music (x4)	Tonto (x2)
Playing with sand	Art (x2)
Playing with a ball	To ride a bike
Sensory room (x4)	Soft play (x2)
Computing (x2)	Travel training (x2)
Shopping	More in my walker (x2)
Football	Work experience



### 5. If I am sad, angry, upset or hurt I know that I can talk to...

89% of the students said that they know who to talk to if they are sad, angry, upset or hurt.

### Who would this be?

The adults in the school (x13)  
Our friends (x7)  
Graham  
Sue (x2)  
Barbara  
My teacher (x15)  
We have a stop button  
Jo  
Jackie Hofford  
Vicky Holt  
Sue Mortimer  
Zoe  
Alicia my friend

Victoria  
Louise  
Parents (x6)  
Ms Joy (x4)  
Pat (x2)  
Marcia  
Vicky  
Bus driver  
Geraldene  
Sam Naraine  
Sam Canning  
Lewis



### If no, why?

You can tell by my face, will talk to whoever will listen

### 6. Do the adults and your friends in school help you feel safe? If not can you think of some ways that we can help you?

96% of the pupils said they feel safe

### Why is this?

- I don't know, good at feeling safe
- Yes, you tell us it is okay
- I feel safe when moving in school (manual handling)
- We spoke about this at pupil focus groups
- We all feel safe
- We all feel very safe when we are at school
- Yes! Help me find things



### If no, (why?)

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### 7. We have been thinking about your individual voices and how you can be heard in school this year. Do you think that adults listen to you and that your voice is heard?

98% of the students said that they feel that adults listen to them and that they're heard.

### Why is this?

- We all use different ways to use our voice and we are all listened to
- Yes, I have more choices on my auditory
- Scanning book
- Adults in my class listen
- Yes we think we are listened to in school
- My teachers all listen to me
- I showed my communication book
- Picture exchange communication – PECS
- Yes teachers listen



### If no, (why?)

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### 8. What do you think about our pupil complaints procedure? Do you think that it works well or that it could be better?

66% of the students agreed that it works well



### Why is this?

- If I have a problem, I tell an adult who can help
- Motto shared in assembly from pupil voice meetings, we can tell an adult if we are unhappy using our communication systems.
- I look at the notice on the wall, the ones with the pictures of the adults, yes I can talk to you.
- Yes it does, but it could be better.
- We think it could be bigger so that we can see it better.
- Works well (x2)
- You call or tell the head teacher, I'm not sure how I would find her though
- We have our symbol's
- We could talk and tell an adult
- We haven't had to use it yet!(x2)
- We think it is good! (x2)
- We all think if we have a complaint we know what we do and yes it works well!

**If no, (why?)**

- It could be better (x2)
- Not good, very hard...need help to complain
- Not sure
- I don't know
- We haven't used it in class yet

**9. What lunchtime clubs have you enjoyed going to this term?**

Boccia with Ed (x9)  
Bikes (x4)  
Forrest school (x2)  
Healthy Tuck (x4)  
Art (x6)  
Computer club (x4)  
Drama club (x2)  
Cooking  
Dance (x3)  
Beauty  
Freetime

Basketball club (x2)  
Stories  
None "boring"  
Not sure  
Sand  
PMLO –outside/inside  
Massage (x9)  
Music with Andy (x13)  
Sensory (x2)  
Outside (x2)  
Scooter



**10. What clubs have you not enjoyed going to this term?**

Story (x6)  
Music (x5)  
Art (x2)  
Board Games  
Going outside (x2)  
Science

Food tech  
DVD (x2)  
Health  
Beauty  
Sensory



53% of the students didn't have any clubs they disliked.



## 11. What clubs would you like to be offered?

IPad club (x2)  
Music club  
Lego club (x4)  
Science club (x4)  
Games club (x2)  
Swimming (x2)  
ICT (x3)  
Reading  
Bikes (x2)  
Ball Games  
Makeup club  
Sensory club (x6)  
Running  
Club with Andy (x4)  
Pop music club  
Art  
Story club

Photography club  
Pamper club  
Singing club (x3)  
Dance/disco club  
Kurling club  
Journalism club  
Bingo  
Match of the day/league club  
Water and sand play  
Library club  
PE club  
Breakfast club – we need one!  
Daily living skills  
Gym  
Gaming club  
Computer club

