



Enabling Student Voice
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Inclusion Advisory Team & Barnet Resilient Schools




1

Ground rules

- Confidentiality
- Listen to others
- Support each other
- Learn from each other; share good practice and ideas
- Terminology
- Use of Zoom





2

Resilience in Schools Principles

Today's session will focus on one of the underlying eight principles:

Enabling student voice
to influence decisions





3

Focus for the Session

Aims of this session

- What is Self-Advocacy?
- Importance of pupil voice and participation
- Theory & Young people's participation models – e.g. Lundy Model and Hart's Ladder
- Challenges and What's Working
- How we can develop self-advocacy and pupil voice
- Next Steps



4

Question – what is self advocacy?

5

A Definition – self advocacy


- Self-advocacy is confidently speaking up for yourself, your wants, needs, hopes, and concerns.
- Speaking up means to speak out at meetings, to say out loud what you think or how you feel about what is happening during a meeting or during a time when you want to speak for yourself, not having others speak for you or talk instead of letting you talk.
- It means taking pride in yourself and your disabilities.



6

People speaking up about many different topics:

- Where they want to live
- What they want to do during the day
- What services are working for them or not
- How to make friends and be a part of their community
- What to do to have fun



7

Self-Advocacy means a lot

Self-Advocacy means the following:


- Knowing your rights and being informed
- Following through on what you say you will do
- Matching your words with your actions
- Being honest
- Listening to others and talking with them respectfully
- Celebrating all of you, your disabilities as well as your abilities



8

What does self-advocacy enable?

- Improves outcomes
- Key skill for being an independent adult
- Important for identity and confidence
- Reduces shame, stigma and loneliness
- Builds positive mental health and resilience
- Increases access to help
- Guides adults to more effective support



9

Definition Pupil / Student Voice

- Pupil voice in schools means a whole-school commitment to listening to the views, wishes and experiences of all children and young people. It means placing value on what children and young people tell school staff about their experiences.
- Children and young people need to be provided with meaningful opportunities to share their experiences, views and hopes about their school. Pupils need to know that it is safe and that it is important for them to express their views on what happens at school. They need to know that what they say is valued and will be listened to and considered.
- Schools with a strong commitment to pupil voice have reported many positive outcomes. These include a reduction in exclusions, better behaviour, better relationships across the whole-school community, and improving attainment and attendance.

10

Resilient Schools Audit Tool 2021/2022

Student Voice Key question: How does the school or college ensure all students have the opportunity to express their views and influence decisions?

Links with the Ofsted inspection framework: Ofsted Inspectors must have regard to the views of pupils. When assessing the level of behaviour and safety in schools, inspections should look at a small sample of case studies in order to evaluate the experience of particular individuals and groups, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, looked after children and those with mental health needs.

11

What does the Code say

The 2014 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice came into force on 1st September 2014 and provides statutory guidance relating to the new Children and Families Act 2014. It outlines the new legal duties on organisations which work with and support children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

- There is an explicit requirement for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to **be at the centre of all decision-making** in regards to choice and control over the support they receive. This is the case whether the child or young person has an Education and Health Care (EHC) Plan or not.
- Children and young people should therefore **be involved at all stages in the Graduated Approach of Assess, Plan, Do and Review.**
- It has become law that **local authorities must have regard to: The views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person and the child's parents.**
- The importance of the child or young person, and their parents, participating as fully as possible in decisions, and being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in these decisions.

12


What does the Code say (cont)...

- Local authorities must consider how to provide information for children and young people on their rights and entitlements in accessible formats and give sufficient time to prepare for discussions and meetings.
- The child or young person must be closely involved in deciding what support they need and the outcomes or goals they want to achieve.
- Post 16 years, the young person can make their own decisions independent of the family if they so wish.
- Consulting with, and enabling participation of, the child or young person is part of all aspects of the SEND process and as well as informing support for the individual should also influence SEND systems such as the Local Offer and Joint Commissioning.

13

Chat/breakout Activity:

What are the current challenges?



14

Challenges (from Communicating the Code...)

- Enabling the participation of pupils with SEND requires careful planning and skilled practitioners.
- The very nature of their difficulties will make it harder for children and young people with SLCN/SEND/SEMHS/EAL to participate. This can include understanding as well as expressing their views, so ensuring their views are heard and recognised can be a very complex process. However, capturing views is no longer optional.
- Involving young children can also be challenging and will require innovative ways of working.
- Many older children and young people with SEND will also have associated difficulties with reading and writing.

15

Challenges cont... (from Communicating the Code...)

- There can be challenges in terms of time, skills and appropriate resources to ensure children and young people are able to participate.
- Preferred outcomes for children with SEND, their parents and the professionals working with them may vary greatly, and these need to be appropriately recognised and reflected in planning and support. Using parents as a proxy voice is also no longer acceptable. This raises challenges, however, particularly relating to a child's age: while using parents as a proxy voice for children and young people's views may no longer be seen as acceptable, this approach will need to be balanced for parents of very young children.
- There is a need for services to work holistically in capturing a shared vision of what is ultimately important for the child or young person, and to think beyond their own service parameters.

16

Communicating The Code document
<http://www.languageforlearning.co.uk/images/uploads/563dd04a8b729.pdf>


- Time is needed
- An individualised approach
- Make listening and consultation part of everyday practice
- Act on what you have found out

17

THE LUNDY MODEL OF PARTICIPATION

Lundy's model of participation aims to provide a conceptual framework for understanding and acting to fulfil children's right to participation. It's the model we use and LOVE!

The model is designed around **four dimensions**, each which exist in a particular sequential order:



SPACE: This is about providing a safe and inclusive space for children and young people to express their views.

VOICE: This is about providing information and support for children and young people to express their views.

AUDIENCE: This is about making sure children and young people's views are communicated to the right people.

INFLUENCE: This is about ensuring children and young people's views are taken seriously and acted upon where possible.

LUNDY'S MODEL IN PRACTICE

Questions to ask yourself and of your work:

- SPACE**
 - Have young people been asked for their views?
 - How many opportunities have there been?
 - Is the space accessible, friendly and safe?
 - Are the staff been trained and supported appropriately?
 - Have young people been proactively recruited to take part from a variety of backgrounds?
- VOICE**
 - Have young people been provided with the information they need to form a view?
 - Do young people know their participation is voluntary?
 - Are options and fun activities being used to support young people to express their views on topics?
 - Is there enough time scheduled to deal with the topic?
 - Are workshop resources accessible to young people (print disabled and guide readers)?
- AUDIENCE**
 - Are appropriate decision makers involved and engaged?
 - Is there a clear and planned process for communicating with young people's views and views?
 - Do young people know who their views are being shared with and who will support them afterwards?
 - Do decision makers know how young people's views will feed into their decision-making processes?
 - Is the person receiving young people's views the person with the power to make (or influence) decisions?
- INFLUENCE**
 - Were young people's views considered in the decision-making process, and how so (recorded)?
 - Have young people been told about how their views have impacted the decision, and if not, why?
 - Are there opportunities in place for young people to hold decision makers to account for their decisions?
 - What are the next steps young people know or see the impact of their participation?

18

From Tokenism to Citizenship, 1997

Hart's Ladder of Participation

8. Projects initiated by young people, sharing decisions with adults
7. Young people initiate and direct
6. Adults initiate and share decisions with young people
5. Young people are consulted and informed
4. Young people are given tasks by adults and informed
3. Involvement of young people is tokenistic (not participation)
2. Young people are used as decoration (not participation)
1. Young people are manipulated (not participation)

Roger Hart, 2002

This is a helpful reminder of the different forms participation can take and how we can aspire to reach the top of the ladder in the work that we do with children and young people.

Ladder of Youth Participation

- Youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults
- Youth-initiated and directed
- Adult-initiated, shared decisions with youth
- Consulted and informed
- Assigned but informed
- Tokenism
- Decoration
- Manipulation

19

Chat/breakout Activity:

1. What's going well?
2. How do the approaches already in place in your setting fit with these models of participation?

20

Seven stages of pupil voice to support our pupils in the involvement and evaluation of their own learning

- Stage 1 – Adult to notice child's reaction to activity/ experience and give the child the language to describe this
- Stage 2 – Child to eye point to demonstrate choice
- Stage 3 - Child to reach towards or touch object/ symbol/ switch to indicate choice

21

- Stage 4 – Child to independently indicate choice by grasping and moving object/ using voice/ signing / symbols
- Stage 5– Child to say what they have done well, or need to try harder with, using AAC as needed
- Stage 6 – Child to say what they could do next time to improve using AAC as needed
- Stage 7 – Child to comment on their peers' achievements using AAC as needed

22

Person centred - Assess Plan Do Review

- 1.Focus on the child or young person as an individual
- 2.Enable C&YP and parents to express their views, wishes and feelings
- 3.Enable C&YP and parents to be part of the decision-making process
- 4.Be easy for children, young people and their parents or carers to understand, and use clear ordinary language and images rather than professional jargon

23

- 5.Highlight the child or young person's strengths and capabilities
- 6.Enable the child or young person, and those that know them best to say what they have done, what they are interested in and what outcomes they are seeking in the future
- 7.Tailor support to the needs of the individual
- 8.Organise assessments to minimise demands on families
- 9.Bring together relevant professionals to discuss and agree together the overall approach, and deliver an outcomes-focused and co-ordinated plan for the child or young person and their parents

24



25

An Approach

- Look at your Strengths – what have we found out
- Focus in on your Goals
- What is important for you
- What is important to you
- Look at your successes and accomplishments

26

The following are quotes from children, families and young people

- Young people should be allowed to meet without parents so they can talk without being influenced – no matter what their age
- It feels like it's about him, so I'd say it definitely has the child's voice in it and I think it's so important that that is heard. It makes him feel grown up to be involved in the whole process, to be asked for his views and what he wants
- The young person views should be equal to views of parents/ professionals
- Our family story was written by me with our family worker and shows our dreams for Sonny. That he'll go shopping, have his own money, be his own person and live as independent a life as possible
- It should be about the person, not the disability
- Just because I can't speak doesn't mean I don't communicate

27

Gathering Views

What helps you to gather pupil views?

Tips and ideas...

28

How to collect views:

- Signing symbols, talking mats, choice boards, objects of reference e.g. arm band to swim
- Photo books and portfolio, observations of things they like
- All About Me Information
- Passports over time

29

Gathering views cont...

- Direct questions
- Observations
- Photographs
- Achievements
- Videos (ViG)
- Self assessments
- Learning dialogue/journey
- Think out of the box
- Choice boxes
- Technology

30

Gathering Views - other considerations

In order to find out what is important to the child or young person, what is going well and what could be better, the following points will need to be considered:

- **Time is needed**
- find or develop appropriate methods and resources to enable participation
- go at the pace of the individual – try not to interrupt or fill silences
- ascertain their views accurately – this may well take a period of time
- analyse what has been found out, and convert it into meaningful and motivating outcomes that can be shared with the child or young person as far as possible

31

Ideas for pupil participation, voice and self-advocacy



- Person-centred planning and reviews
- Informal chats (playground, lunch hall etc)
- 1-1 interviews, conferences (secondary)
- Special books
- Communication passports
- All about me books
- Child friendly IEPs
- Student councils and class discussion to contribute to agenda
- Suggestion box
- School surveys
- Circle times
- Involvement with planning, reviewing and implementing school policies
- Staff recruitment (e.g. school council consulted)
- Inclusion in school action planning, website, publications
- Regular review with published actions
- Give children opportunity to articulate their voice in a variety of ways e.g. art, poetry, video
- Parent views

32

How can we change the way we work with young people to fit these principles?

- Seeing our role differently
- Catalyst for change –promoting active participation
- Young people should know how we can help, what will happen next
- Young people must always be involved in plans that affect them
- Young people should be involved in target setting
- Young people should know the strategies and interventions and how and why they are used

33

Communicating The Code - What does success look like?

From the child or young person's perspective:

- People involve me in decisions made about my life as far as possible.
- People know how to communicate with me and make the adaptations I need to enable me to get my message across.
- I can let people know what is important to me in my life, and how to support me.
- I am involved in my person-centred review and am supported in thinking about what information I want to share and how to share it.
- I am given information that I can understand about what is possible for my future.
- I am encouraged to make choices throughout my day.
- My views help inform local offers and joint commissioning of services.

34

- <https://www.learningdisabilityengland.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/helping-to-make-self-advocacy-stronger/sharing-self-advocacy-best-practice/>

Anna Freud Centre: [Pupil voice : Mentally Healthy Schools](#)

Pupil Participation – primary
<https://www.niccy.org/professionals-practitioners-policy-makers/participation/pupils-voices-pupil-participation-in-schools/pupils-voices-guidance-pack/>

Secondary [How to guide student voice : Mentally Healthy Schools](#)

35

Next steps

Reflection: What next steps can you take to develop pupil voice?



36