

LEICESTERSHIRE  
STUDENT AND SCHOOL  
PARTICIPATION  
CHARTER





## Foreword

Encouraging young people to both understand the importance of democratic decision-making and also to develop the skills that go with participative democracy in our communities is a high priority for us.

The democratic life of our country is dependent on future generations playing a full and active part in their communities and making informed choices in elections.

The introduction of the Student & School Participation Charter is a significant development within the authority and clearly shows the progression of opportunities and skills necessary in order for a school to achieve best practice.

Young people are important agents of change in their own schools and given the opportunities can inform all aspects of school life, from quality of teaching and learning through to the provision of healthy eating and the school's environment.

We hope that your schools will respond to this challenge and support this Charter

### **Gareth Williams**

Director of Children and Young People's Service

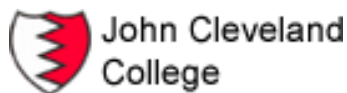
### **Councillor Ivan Ould**

Lead Member for the Children and Young People's Service

## With thanks to:

This document has been created by Martin Porcheron and Simon Schofield with support from:

- Members of Hinckley & Bosworth Youth Council and County Youth Council Leicestershire
- Senior Management, John Cleveland College, Hinckley
- Rebecca Ball, Children & Young Person's Strategic Co-ordinator, Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
- Dick Beaumont, Youth Development Worker, Leicestershire Youth Service, Children and Young People's Service, Leicestershire County Council
- Malcolm Cox, Leicestershire Youth Service, Children and Young People's Service, Leicestershire County Council
- Jane Roberts, Leicestershire Healthy Schools, Children and Young People's Service, Leicestershire County Council



## Contents

Why is it good for a School? .....	6
Why is it good for Students? .....	6
Why is it good for the Wider Community?.....	6
Objectives of the Charter .....	6
Student Participation in School Award.....	7
Glossary .....	8
Understanding this Document .....	8
Criteria for Student Participation in School Award.....	9
Student Council .....	9
Student Council Constitution .....	10
Student Council Budget .....	11
Student Council Meetings .....	11
Student Council Agenda.....	12
Student Council Subcommittees.....	12
Student Council Training and Induction .....	12
Student Council Voting and Decisions.....	13
Student Council Roles .....	13
Student Council Monitoring and Evaluation .....	13
School Management.....	14
Peer Mentoring Programme .....	14
Outside Citizenship.....	15
Appendix .....	16
Appendix A: TellUs3 National Report .....	16
Appendix B: Pyramid of Participation (PoP).....	17

## Why is it good for a School?

This paper aims to promote a healthy and active student voice within the school community and gives every student the chance to make a positive contribution to the school and wider community. The paper includes methods to encourage a healthy school environment with regards to teaching, learning and community action.

This paper can only be successful in its aims if every effort is made by both the Student Body and the school.

## Why is it good for Students?

This paper aims to improve the voice of students and to ensure that their views are listened to within their school. With the adoption of this paper, it is expected that all students will feel that their views are listened to within their local school community by not only their student representatives, but by the School Management and Governing Body.

The TellUs3 Survey concluded that only 12% of young people believe that their views are listened to within schools. See Appendix A part (i) for survey results.

## Why is it good for the Wider Community?

This paper has been developed by two young people who are students at John Cleveland College and who are also members of the Hinckley & Bosworth Youth Council Executive Committee working in partnership with the Leicestershire Healthy Schools Programme to ensure that the views of young people within schools are heard and acted upon fairly and that communication occurs within the Pyramid of Participation. See Appendix B for more information.

The Pyramid of Participation allows the views of young people to be caught and acted upon at Borough, County or National level whenever an issue that is not restricted to the school community is raised.

## Objectives of the Charter

There are three core objectives that are fundamental to the document:

- A mechanism is provided for students to have a say in the decisions made by the School that affect them
- The School values and respects everyone's opinions as long as they are presented in a responsible way
- The students' agenda needs to be recognised alongside the School's agenda

## Student Participation in School Award

If a school is able to achieve a level of compliance with this Participation charter, it will become eligible for achieving accreditation to the Leicestershire Healthy Schools 'Student Participation in School Award' and gain recognition for its achievements as well as providing a valuable tool for self evaluation and a clear structure for improving student participation. The award is split into three levels, Emerging, Established and Advanced.

The long-term goal is to ensure that all schools work towards achieving a good level of participation and the "Advanced" status. However, working towards the award is a process and schools will take different lengths of time to achieve this 'advanced' status depending on their starting point.

The "Emerging" and "Established" awards will be awarded on the basis of self validation by the school. Schools will be required to provide evidence of how the criteria have been fulfilled and have this validated by the Healthy Schools Team. The Healthy Schools Team will periodically undertake a sampling exercise to ensure consistency in the evaluation of standards at these levels.

In order to achieve the 'Advanced' level a visit from the 'Healthy Schools Student Participation Quality Assurance Group' will be required. Evidence should be made available, including a brief outline of how student / class councils are run, examples of different ways students are able to participate in school life, examples of outcomes for young people including individual personal development and illustrations of initiatives that young people have been involved in. The evidence could be a report, photographs, newspaper cuttings, lists of projects/ achievements, newsletters or similar. An award at this level will be valid for two years after which re-validation will be required.

Achieving the 'Advanced level status' will enable schools who have achieved healthy school status to develop their health promotion work further, and move 'beyond healthy school status'. This Award is one of a number of Healthy School enhancements to encourage schools to continue to develop the excellent practice that they have already begun through the whole school approach. We do not set timescales for achieving the Award but anticipate the enhancement will take 12 -18 months to complete.

Achieving the Student Participation in School Award will also help schools to comply with the new duty and legal obligation on all maintained schools to consider the views of children and young people.

***Support and advice is available from the Leicestershire Healthy Schools team:***

Telephone: 0116 3053198

Email: [healthyschools@leics.gov.uk](mailto:healthyschools@leics.gov.uk)

Website: [www.leicestershirehealthyschools.org.uk](http://www.leicestershirehealthyschools.org.uk)

## Glossary

The following terms are used in this document, to help the understanding of this document, they have been defined:

Youth Council	A Borough or District open youth forum that collects and acts on the opinions of young people within an area.
Open Forum	A place where anyone with relevant may attend and give those views where appropriate
Management/Leadership	The School or college management including Head teacher or Principal, subject or department leaders or any year heads.
Student Body	The School community and all students.
Students' agenda	The views and needs of the Student Body.
Peer Mentoring	Peer mentoring is a programme in which young people can receive advice on a range of topics from other people in their same age bracket. See <i>Peer Mentoring Programme</i> for more information.

## Understanding this Document

All criteria listed within this document are displayed with a 'bar' on the right hand side of the text:

- A **Bronze/brown** ball next to a criterion signifies '**Emerging status**'
- A **Silver** ball next to a criterion signifies '**Established status**'
- A **Gold** ball next to a criterion signifies '**Advanced status**'

# Criteria for Student Participation in School Award

## Student Council

**1.1** The School will encourage and facilitate an active *Student Council* that will be responsible for gathering the students' agenda and representing these views to the School Management.



*The Student Council should ensure that:*

**1.2.1** It must be able to listen to the whole range of views and opinions in the School (for example all ages, sexes, mixed behaviour),



**1.2.2** Group size is suitable for debate between students as some students struggle in larger groups (if a group is too large or too small, a healthy debate cannot occur),



**1.2.3** It promotes a good level of group work between members (this is important to break stereotypes and other barriers to good debates),



**1.2.4** It is open and welcoming to all students (it must approach the Student Council as a whole School partnership) - students may contact the Student Council anonymously.



**1.3** The School community will enable students to engage in a consultation process when decision-making processes will affect the Student Body.



**1.4** An appropriate notice board will be allocated to the Student Council to allow communication to the Student Body.



**1.5** The Student Council will be able to access appropriate whole School information systems including, but not limited to Newsletters / Briefings / Bulletins and Internal emails.



**1.6** A copy of the "Its Your School" poster should be displayed in classrooms and other public locations within the school site. The School may modify the poster to suit its needs.




**1.7** The School will enable and facilitate a member (or members) of staff ("link staff") to help the work of the Student Council.




**1.8** Students will be given feedback about key decisions, and why they were made, in a way that the whole Student Body can understand.




1.9 Students within a School should understand the role of the Student Council and can identify its achievements. 


---

1.10 Activities of the Student Council may need support or approval from the School Governing Body or Management. Representatives from the Student Council may be invited to attend appropriate meetings where decisions may be made. Student Council should expect to have outcomes of decisions explained to them. 


## Student Council Constitution

2.1 The Student Council will have a formal written Constitution that outlines the aims, objectives, rules and procedures of the Student Council. The Constitution may be agreed and ratified by the School Management and School Governing Body, if required. 


---

2.2 The Constitution will include the principles of United Nation's "Rights of the Child". 


---

2.3 The Constitution will outline the formal process for how students will be able to be present at Student Council meetings. This must be agreed by the Student Body of the school, it is important to promote openness and accessibility. 


---

2.4 The Constitution will be made easily accessible to all students and related bodies. 


---

2.5 The Constitution will support the school focus on student voice and contribute to the School Improvement Plan. 


---

2.6 The Constitution will be reviewed by children and young people within the School, using consultation methods involving students, parents and staff including Connexions Personal Advisors, assigned Youth Workers and any other appropriate posts. The Constitution should be reviewed periodically where required. 


## Student Council Budget

- 3.1 An appropriate budget should be negotiated to support Student Council activities. 


---

- 3.2 This budget should be sufficient to support an agreed programme of planned activities in any given year, subject to external funding restraints. This budget may include any associated costs of running the Student Council including training. 


## Student Council Meetings

- 4.1 Student Council meetings will be held as often as necessary as deemed by the Student Body and the School. This should be defined in the Student Council Constitution. 


---

- 4.2 Student Council meetings will be held in a suitable room and at a suitable time to give the students the chance to take part – changes to meeting times and rooms will be given to students as soon as possible. 



---

- 4.3 Minutes of all meetings involving members of the Student Council will be available and published for viewing by the School Management, School Governing Body, the local Youth Council and the Student Body. 





---

- 4.4 The Student Council will hold an Annual General Meeting for which it will use to act on annual tasks including a review of the Student Council Constitution and electing a student Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary. Representatives from the School Management will be present at this meeting. Exact titles and positions should be outlined in the Student Council Constitution. 




## Student Council Agenda

- |     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
| 5.1 | The agenda of a Student Council meeting should be set before the meeting in agreement between representatives of the Student Council and the assigned Student Council Link Staff.  |  |
| 5.2 | The Student Council should allow input on the agenda from the entire Student Body (the "Students' agenda") and wider community including local Youth Councils. Methods for anonymous input should be explored (for example, suggestion boxes). |  |





## Student Council Subcommittees

- |     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
| 6.1 | Subcommittees of the Student Council may be formed to focus on specific tasks or roles.            |    |
| 6.2 | Subcommittees should have an appointed Chair and Secretary who will answer to the Student Council. |   |
| 6.3 | Subcommittees may be dissolved once their purpose is served.                                       |  |
| 6.4 | A subcommittee may be required to produce a report or document evaluating its actions.             |  |



## Student Council Training and Induction

- |     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| 7.1 | The School will explore the provision of training for all elected officers on the Student Council either from an external source or by student facilitators.      |  |
| 7.2 | A mentoring programme will be formed for new members of the Student Council: training should be given to existing members on how to induct and train new members. |  |
| 7.3 | The School will explore the provision of training for all elected members of the Student Council (for example, the School Council toolkit).                       |  |




## Student Council Voting and Decisions

- |     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
| 8.1 | Voting within the Student Council will be completed by an agreed voting system as defined in the Student Council Constitution.   |  |
| 8.2 | The outcomes of all decisions will be published in the minutes.  |  |
| 8.3 | Anyone who may be affected by the Council's decisions will be consulted and their views will be taken into account. They should be given enough time to express their opinions in an open format without outside pressure. |  |
| 8.4 | The Student Council will allow the Student Body to anonymously comment on decisions before they are made.  |  |


## Student Council Roles


- |     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
| 9.1 | The Student Council will provide a formal job description and the roles of all elected student roles that will included in the Student Council Constitution. |   |
| 9.2 | The Student Council will agree a definition and the role of appointed link staff with the School Management and other parties involved.                      |  |

## Student Council Monitoring and Evaluation


- |      |  |   |
|------|--|---|
| 10.1 | The Student Council, the School and all affiliated organisations and people will work in partnership to assess the effectiveness of the Student Council in its aims as defined by the Student Council Constitution. A clear set of objectives for the following year will be identified. |  |
| 10.2 | The evaluation should include a report which lists the previously set objectives and then identifies whether or not these aims have been met. This report will be made available to all students, staff and parents on request.  |  |
| 10.3 | A response from the School Governing Body and School Management should be included in the evaluation regarding the actions of the Student Council.   |  |

## School Management


**11.1** Students who contribute to the School will be eligible for recognition. 


**11.2** A clear agreement will be developed between the Student Council and the School Management that will explain the responsibilities and expectations of the Student Council. 


*Clear policies will be developed by a young person-based focus group and reported to the Student Council and School Governing Body that address:*


**11.3.1** Anti-bullying measures to be taken by the School, 

**11.3.2** General behaviour of the students within the community. 


**11.4** Student Representatives will be involved with the appointment of staff and are suitably prepared for this work (understanding the processes, weighting given to their views and equal opportunities). 


**11.5** Student Representatives may seek an appointment, where appropriate, to go to School Governing Body meetings. 


**11.6** Student Representatives may seek an appointment, where appropriate, to go to Management or Leadership Team meetings. 

**12.7** Students will be given the opportunity to be part of the quality assurance process for teaching and learning within the school. 





## Peer Mentoring Programme

**12.1** The School will support the development of a Peer Mentoring programme that will help students on a one-to-one basis and will cover any personal topics or advice that students may require. 

**12.2** The Peer Mentoring programme needs to be appropriately resourced. 

**12.3** The Peer Mentoring programme will have access to staff guidance and have a role in the supporting and promoting of positive practises. 

## Outside Citizenship

- |      |   |   |
|------|---|---|
| 13.1 | The School will allow student representatives and Student Council link staff to attend the local Youth Council's annual conference if possible.   |  |
| 13.2 | Some members of the Student Council should be official representatives on the local Borough or District Youth Council.  |  |
| 13.3 | The local Youth Council should be able to display a notice board in a suitable location within the School for promoting information, news and meeting dates.  |  |
| 13.4 | The School will encourage representatives from the Student Council to collect the views of the Student Body and share them with outside local agencies such as the local Youth Council, Borough or District Council, local Police Authority etc. where necessary. |  |

## Appendix

### Appendix A: TellUs3 National Report

The TellUs3 survey included questions based on the five Every Child Matters outcomes and almost 150,000 young people aged 10 to 15 years old gave their views.

#### Part (i)

The left column lists the available choices. The right hand column shows the percentage of young people who chose that option.

<b>5d: How much do you feel children and young people's views are listened to in the running of your school? (Tick one option only)</b>	
A great deal	12
A fair amount	47
Not very much	27
Not at all	7
Don't know	7

This table shows that only 12% of students felt they are listened to "a great deal" and a third of young people who were asked felt that they are not listened to with regards to running of their school

#### Part (ii)

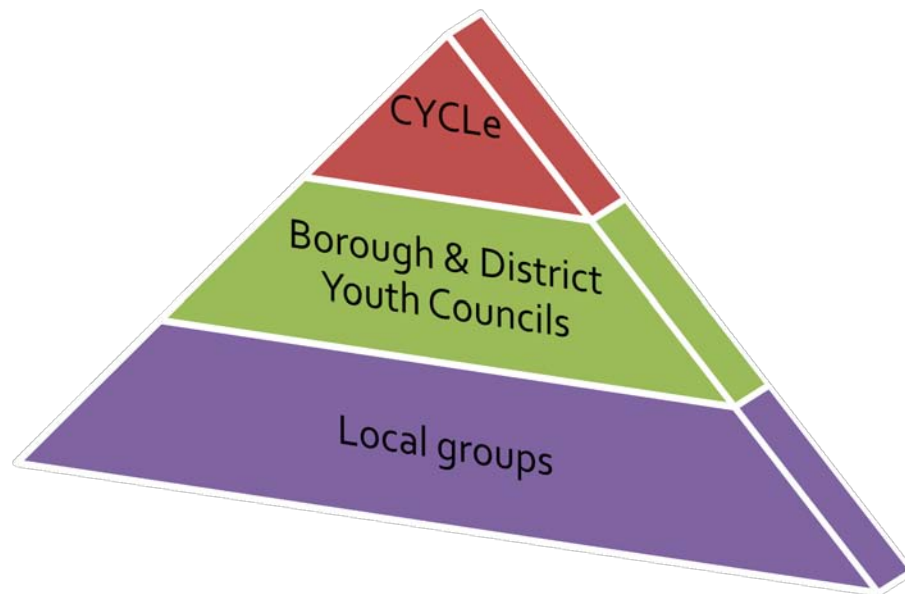
<b>3c: How well does your school deal with bullying? (Tick one option only)</b>	
Very well	14
Quite well	21
Not very well	28
Badly	16
Bullying is not a problem in my school	11
Don't know	10

This table shows that only 55% of students felt that their school does not deal with bullying "Quite well" or "Very well".

For the full report, visit <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Statistics/TellUs3-National-Report>.

## Appendix B: Pyramid of Participation (PoP)

The Pyramid of Participation is about communicating and getting young people's views heard. If a view is raised at a lower level of the pyramid that affects the wider community, then that view will be passed up the pyramid to the most suitable level. Equally, if a view is expressed at a higher level that is more appropriate to a lower level then that view can be passed down. The PoP structure relies on the website The Jitty ([www.thejitty.com/yc](http://www.thejitty.com/yc)) to communicate young people and to coordinate its actions.



### Local groups

The base level of the pyramid includes any local groups such as Student Councils, Youth Groups, Parish Youth Forums, Parish Youth Champions and any small interest groups including young disabled groups and young travellers.

### Borough and District Youth Councils

The second level of the pyramid features Youth Councils. Their role is to focus on capturing and acting on the views of all the young people who either live or go to school in their Borough or District and, if required, pass them on to County Youth Council. They also communicate any messages or ideas of good practice from County Youth Council Leicestershire to localised groups within the area.

### County Youth Council Leicestershire (CYCLE)

County Youth Council Leicestershire is at the top of the pyramid and its role is to support and coordinate the lower levels of the pyramid to ensure they are functioning and working at their maximum potential.