



Listening to Children Policy

Reviewed: Sept 2022

Next Review: Autumn 2025

Rationale

In 1989, the world's leaders officially recognised the human rights of all children and young people under 18 by signing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Convention says that every child has:

- The right to a **childhood** (including protection from harm)
- The right to be **educated** (including all girls and boys completing primary school)
- The right to be **healthy** (including having clean water, nutritious food and medical care)
- The right to be treated **fairly** (including changing laws and practices that are unfair on children)
- The right to be **heard** (including considering children's views)

Children, who are capable of forming views, have a right to receive and make known information, to express an opinion, and to have that opinion taken into account in any matters affecting them. The views of the child should be given due weight according to the age, maturity and capability of the children.

(See Articles 12 and 13 of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.)

Introduction

At Bedgrove Infant School we believe that:

- Speaking and listening are paramount to a child's education and learning within the world.
- Communication and expression are both important and valuable.
- Children have a right to be heard and we have a commitment to listen.
- The development of a child's confidence to talk in a range of situations is paramount to their overall well-being.
- Children's ability to listen carefully is key to social and emotional competence.
- A feature of effective leadership is engaging pupils as active participants in their education and in making a positive contribution to their school and local community.

The Government is committed to the promotion and protection of children's rights, in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It believes that children and young people should have opportunities to express their opinion in matters that affect their lives. Some of the benefits of involving children and young people in decision making are:

- **It encourages pupils to become active participants in a democratic society** - by holding youth parliaments and school councils, which develop skills such as co-operation and communication and encourage them to take responsibility.
- **It contributes to achievement and attainment** - young people involved in participative work benefit in a range of different ways. Increased confidence, self-respect, competence and an improved sense of responsibility have all been reported by young people who contribute in school. Schools also report increased motivation and engagement with learning.

At Bedgrove Infant School we aim to:

- Build respectful and caring relationships with all children and families while focussing on learning and achievement.
- Observe and listen to children to discover what they like to do and respond appropriately.
- Encourage and extend curiosity and learning by asking and answering questions and investigating conversations.
- Identify and respond to any particular difficulties in children's language development at an early age.
- Support all children to communicate, including those who are non-verbal, use alternative communication systems or are learning English as an additional language.
- Help children to communicate thoughts, ideas and feelings and build up positive relationships with adults and their peers.
- Model active listening when listening to children and show respect for what they have to say.

- Support children to take turns and listen to each other when speaking in groups.
- Develop thinking skills through encouraging children to explain, reason and justify answers.

Through our curriculum we will:

- Listen with enjoyment, and respond to stories, songs and other music, rhymes and poems and make up their own stories, songs, rhymes and poems.
- Create an atmosphere in which children are comfortable and happy to talk with peers and adults.
- Give daily opportunities to share and enjoy a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books, rhymes and music, songs and stories.
- Plan an environment that is rich in signs, symbols, notices, numbers, words, books and pictures that take into account children's different interests, understandings, home backgrounds and cultures.
- Provide time and relaxed opportunities for children to develop spoken language through sustained conversations between children and adults, both one-to-one and in small groups and between the children themselves.
- Allow children time to initiate conversations, respect their thinking time and silences and help them develop the interaction.
- Developing speaking and listening skills through daily routines.
- Adult -led activities and child- initiated activities in communication friendly spaces.

All of our staff will:

- Allow children time to respond to questions or have their turn in conversation.
- Adapt their language to meet the children's needs.
- Value children's non-verbal skills, and support children by using e.g. PECS cards, Makaton etc.
- Aim to extend children's vocabulary by asking open-ended questions.
- Ensure that there is an effective two-way communication system between teachers and parents.
- Observe children's success and difficulties – look, listen and note those children with poor communication skills.
- Provide intervention groups to support the above.

Opportunities offered within school for children to begin being active participants in a democratic society:

- School councillors elected by peers in every class in Year 1 and 2.
- Democratic decisions for topics/activities within year groups.
- School Sports teams represent the school at events throughout the year.
- Pupil Survey completed each summer term to canvas children's views on school and gather ideas for improvements.
- Children begin to understand the democratic process e.g. voting for a class story, mascot etc. through a show of hands
- Lessons around British Values

Activities which promote achievement and attainment:

- The Choices Tree supports and promotes positive attitudes towards behaviour and attainment
- **STEPS training for staff to support management of behaviour has an emphasis on positive reinforcement**
- Ambassadors Scheme – using peers as role models throughout the school.
- Minion Board – supporting children to understand how to treat others in the school and the world beyond
- Circle times are planned in to discuss pertinent issues around friendships as well as topics
- Nurture groups
- Interventions tailored to the individual needs of children
- Individual Play Therapy sessions for identified children
- Children in F2 take home cameras for the weekend and then share the pictures with their classes.
- All year groups invite visitors in to speak to the children e.g. firemen, blind dogs, puppet shows.

“The most basic of all human needs is the need to understand and be understood. The best way to understand people is to listen to them.”

Ralph Nicols (Listening & Learning)