

STUDENT VOICE: a guide to promoting and supporting good practice in schools



NASUWT

The Teachers' Union

the largest teachers' union in the UK

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

There is a wide range of views as to what is meant by student voice. The concept itself, far from being precise and objective, is highly contested.

Understanding of the meaning of student voice and its implications for policy and practice within schools varies considerably, and the term continues to provoke political and professional debate.¹

However, it is also the case that policy approaches in relation to student voice have been largely influenced, particularly in the case of national governments, by the provisions of Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The United Kingdom Government is a signatory to Article 12 of the UNCRC. This states that national governments shall:

'assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.'

The provisions of Article 12 have significant implications not only for the work of schools and education, but also for other children's services, including family law, social care, health care, and youth and criminal justice. However, the application of Article 12 in the context of education has become of keen and increasing interest in recent years.

The reasons for this greater focus on student voice and pupil participation in national level education policy, both in the UK and in other education systems, relate to claims that greater individual and collective involvement and engagement by pupils in their own learning and in the life of their school communities not only ensures that children and young people's internationally recognised rights are respected but also supports other important aspects of their physical, emotional, social and educational development.²

The fundamental principle of involving children and young people in decisions that affect their own lives, as described within Article 12, is perhaps a common sense principle from which few, if any, would demur. Indeed, the

¹ Davies, L, Williams, C, Yamashita, H, and Ko Man-Hing, A, (2007) *Inspiring Schools: Impact and Outcomes* London: Carnegie Young People Initiative.

² United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) UK (2008) *Rights Respecting Schools in England* London: UNICEF UK.

evidence confirms that education and children's services policy makers and practitioners widely support the principle of student voice as expressed here.³ However, it is the ways in which the principles set out in the UNCRC are translated into practice that have tended to fuel debate on the merits or otherwise of consultation and engagement of children and young people.

STUDENT VOICE IN EDUCATION

As part of effective professional practice, teachers have always sought to ensure that pupils are able to articulate their views and participate effectively in their learning and in the wider life of their school communities. This acknowledges that the ability of teachers to motivate pupils to learn depends in a large part on the extent to which pupils' engagement in their own learning can be supported.

However, the relatively recent view that even greater emphasis should be given to the 'voice' of pupils reflects concerns expressed by some educational theorists that full recognition of the rights of pupils, both as individual learners and members of a school community, requires increased democratisation of the relationships between pupils and adults through increased opportunities for pupils to make clear their views and opinions and to participate in whole school decision making to a more significant extent. It should be recognised that this view is based on an assertion that schools, prior to the implementation of policies and practices associated with the student voice agenda, were relatively undemocratic places from the perspective of children and young people.

In an educational context, the work of Professor Jean Rudduck in the 1990s was particularly significant in the development of policy in this area.⁴ Early work on pupil participation and student voice focused for the most part on developing more active engagement by pupils in their own learning and this has continued to be an important strand of educational policy where there was a recognition that effective approaches to enhancing pupils' levels of educational progress and attainment depended upon meaningful and structured engagement by pupils in their own learning. However, it should be recognised that, to a considerable extent, these developments in policy simply reflected established professional practice.

³ Halsey, K, Murfield, J, Harland, J L and Lord, P (2006) *The Voice of Young People: An Engine for Improvement? Scoping the Evidence* York: National Foundation for Educational Research.

⁴ Fielding, M (2001) 'Beyond the Rhetoric of Student Voice: New Departures or New Constraints in the Transformation of 21st Century Schooling' in *FORUM*, Vol. 43 No. 2 pp.100-108.

Nevertheless, it is clear that notions of student voice and pupil participation have become far broader in scope in terms of the development of policy at national, local and school level. The expansion of the student voice agenda has been associated with the development of policies, including:

- greater interest in the role and remit of school councils;
- the appointment of pupils as associate governors;
- formal consultation exercises with pupils over aspects of school policy and practice;
- peer coaching and mentoring;
- engagement of pupils in staff recruitment procedures; and
- pupil evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning, particularly through the use of lesson observations.

It is important to recognise that while approaches to student voice may vary significantly between different schools and settings across the UK, national education policy either requires or strongly encourages the adoption of practice that seeks to increase levels of pupil participation.

THE NASUWT'S VIEW

The NASUWT is absolutely clear that pupils should play an active, constructive and appropriate role in their own learning, the learning of their peers and in the development of their school communities. Protecting and enhancing the right of children and young people to be heard and participate meaningfully in decisions that affect their lives is a key duty of the state in a democratic society and is, therefore, a particularly important principle in the context of the state's responsibilities for ensuring universal access to well-funded and high quality education.

The NASUWT has established six principles that should be reflected in the development of student voice policy and practice at school level.

Approaches based on these principles would merit support by the NASUWT, given that they represent ways that pupils can be helped to make the best possible contribution to their own educational and social progress and attainment and that of their peers.

Principle 1 – Student voice activities should not be a means by which the interests of specific groups of adults within the school are advanced inappropriately.

Advocates of student voice make clear that the identification by pupils of issues of concern or interest is a key feature of effective practice⁵ and that the responsibility of staff in schools is to support the development of student voice initiatives without seeking to distort or influence unduly the messages of pupils.

The NASUWT shares the view that the way in which pupils are supported in initiating and progressing activities within the context of student voice is a critical feature of effective approaches to pupil participation and engagement. It has been recognised that, in some circumstances, the views of children can be manipulated to serve and add legitimacy to arguments supportive of the interests of particular groups of adults within the school.⁶ In light of their position as the most powerful and influential group of adults within school communities, the relationship between senior management teams and structures and activities established to promote pupil participation are particularly important in this respect.

The NASUWT is concerned that student voice activities, in some instances, might be exploited to reflect the concerns and interests of school managers to the exclusion or detriment of other members of staff. This could be evidenced, for example, by student voice activities designed to seek the views of pupils about issues for which teachers have particular responsibility and for which they are accountable to other senior managers, such as the quality of teaching. The way in which students' views are sought or used by the school could be for management rather than educational purposes and to legitimise the management perspective.

Practices of this nature are not only contrary to the true purpose of student voice, they also constitute an abuse of children and young people. Such practices are opposed strongly by the NASUWT.

A key feature, therefore, of effective student voice practice at school level is that issues should not be seen as 'out of bounds' as areas with which pupils may become involved simply on the grounds that they may involve pupil comment or criticism of issues that are exclusively within the remit of school senior management teams.

⁵ Davies *et al.* *op cit.*

⁶ Fielding, M and Rudduck, J (2002) *The Transformative Potential of Student Voice: Confronting the Power Issues* (paper presented to the Annual Conference of the British Educational Research Association, University of Exeter, 12-14 September 2002).

Principle 2 – Policies and practices on student voice must consider effectively the capacity of pupils to participate in particular activities and the extent to which they can reasonably be held to account for the results of their actions.

Students can and should be encouraged to explore, develop and participate in school life as well in the life of the school community as a whole. Indeed, there is strong evidence that where students share a strong and positive affinity with their school, they are likely to be better motivated to learn.

Nevertheless, whilst schools will want to encourage students to take greater ownership and responsibility for aspects of school life, the job of being a student is to learn and not to teach or to manage the school. Therefore, there are school level responsibilities and tasks that cannot be allocated appropriately or reasonably to pupils. For example, some activities require professional skills and expertise and may only be undertaken by qualified and skilled persons who are accountable for their decisions and actions through their status as employees or governors. This principle is reflected explicitly in Article 12 of the UNCRC as a consideration in terms of the influence that children and young people can have over decisions that affect their lives.

This does not mean that schools cannot or should not ask students to take on additional responsibilities for aspects of school life as means by which their personal, social and emotional development can be supported.

School prefects or monitors are well-established examples of this practice and it is not reasonable to suggest that pupils with such responsibilities are undertaking work for which they are not qualified or are being exploited by schools because they are engaged in tasks that should be undertaken by a properly paid adult.

However, application of this principle requires a judgement to be made about whether a specific activity or responsibility can be allocated to pupils.

While this may require assessment of the factors of individual cases, the description of typical student voice activities set out later in this booklet illustrates examples of practice where this principle is applied to form a judgement about the appropriateness or otherwise of a particular practice.

Principle 3 – Student voice activities and policies must be consistent with and support work to promote equality and diversity and tackle discrimination and prejudice.

The NASUWT is committed to the development of school communities where promoting equality and diversity and tackling discrimination and prejudice are fundamental concerns and are embedded within all aspects of school life. This important principle must therefore be reflected in all activities related to pupil participation and student voice.

There are many examples of good practice where student voice activities have been used to challenge prejudice-related bullying and promote equality and diversity. It is vital that approaches to student voice are able to show how they will recognise and progress equality, anti-discrimination and inclusion within schools.

In a legal context, the obligations on schools that rise from the statutory duties to promote race, gender and disability equality and in Northern Ireland, good relations, are of particular importance.⁷

The NASUWT believes that there must be an explicit expectation within school level approaches to student voice and pupil participation that the expression of prejudiced or discriminatory views and opinions by pupils is neither acceptable or tolerable and will need to be addressed proactively, not only to ensure compliance with statutory frameworks in this respect but also to reinforce the principles upon which meaningful work to promote equality and diversity are based.

Principle 4 – Approaches to student voice must be inclusive and give all pupils an opportunity to participate.

A key principle underpinning effective and equitable approaches to student voice is that the engagement of all pupils must be sought in whole school approaches to student voice and pupil participation in respect of issues that affect pupils on a collective basis.

Research has identified the risk of poor practice developing where views that claim to be representative of the pupil population as a whole are, in effect, merely those expressed by a more restricted group of pupils with greater willingness or capacity to engage in certain forms of student voice activity.⁸

⁷ England, Wales and Scotland: Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000; Equality Act 2006; and Disability Discrimination Act 2005. Northern Ireland: Northern Ireland Act 1998, Section 75.

⁸ Fielding and Rudduck *op. cit.*

In such circumstances, decisions can be taken that do not reflect accurately the views of all students and with which they may not agree or that may not be in their interests.

The NASUWT therefore opposes any policy or practice associated with student voice and pupil participation that overemphasises or gives particular preference to the views of some groups of pupils to the inappropriate exclusion of others.

Principle 5 – Student voice activities must not compromise other fundamental rights of children and young people or the legitimate rights and responsibilities of teachers and headteachers.⁹

The NASUWT’s perspective on student voice and pupil participation involves an unequivocal recognition of the absolute right of all children and young people, set out in Articles 28 and 29 of the UNCRC, to access educational provision that develops their personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to the fullest possible extent. The full text of Articles 28 and 29 is set out as an appendix at the back of this booklet.

Securing this universal entitlement for children and young people creates complex and wide-ranging responsibilities for schools for which they are accountable. Therefore, any initiative in relation to student voice and pupil participation that impedes the ability of teachers and headteachers to discharge their responsibilities effectively puts at risk their ability to secure the rights of pupils to the high quality education to which they are entitled.

In this context, the ways in which relationships between teachers and pupils are established and sustained are of critical importance if pupils’ educational rights and entitlements under the UNCRC are to be upheld in practice.

This has particular implications for the exercise of professional and institutional authority, and this position has long been recognised (see, for example, 1989 Elton Report on Discipline in Schools). Indeed, the powers to commission searches of pupils, to discipline, detain and exclude pupils, and to restrain pupils are also founded upon the concept of professional and institutional authority. Similarly, the responsibility of teachers and school leaders to develop and deliver curricula that enable pupils to progress and achieve their potential necessitates that teachers are accountable for the decisions they make. In this context, teachers must exercise their authority to teach and to lead teaching and learning. The authority of teachers is important *‘for the purpose of securing (pupils’) education and wellbeing and*

⁹ Headteachers includes principals.

*that of other pupils in the school and ensuring that they abide by the rules of conduct set by the school’.*¹⁰

This notion of authority is not in any way inconsistent with serious and purposeful approaches to student voice and pupil participation that ensure the views and opinions of pupils are heard and taken account of in decisions that affect their lives in school.

Therefore, a key criterion for assessing the appropriateness and acceptability of any student voice initiative involves a consideration of the extent to which teachers’ professional authority is supported or undermined.

If student voice practices seek to supplant the exercise of authority (and thereby the accountability) by teachers and headteachers then they would constitute practices that would undermine teachers’ professionalism. Such practices are unacceptable to the NASUWT.

Principle 6 – Student voice activities must not add to teacher and headteacher workload or school level bureaucratic burdens.

The NASUWT is clear that approaches to student voice and pupil participation must not work against efforts to tackle excessive teacher and headteacher workload and working hours.

Indeed, where student voice policies have been developed appropriately, they should contribute towards reducing bureaucratic burdens on teachers and headteachers and free them to focus on teaching and leading teaching and learning.

Practices that are not consistent with this key principle not only undermine the working conditions of teachers and headteachers but also threaten the provision of high quality learning experiences for pupils given the distraction from teachers’ and headteachers’ core responsibilities that they represent.

In England and Wales, this is a particularly important consideration in light of the continuing work by the NASUWT to ensure that the statutory provisions of the School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) are implemented in full and that the benefits of the workforce remodelling agenda are realised for all staff in schools and pupils.

The NASUWT is particularly supportive of work, in the context of student voice, to make effective use, where appropriate, of sources of external expertise to complement school-based support. This can not only enrich the

¹⁰ The Elton Report (1989) *Enquiry into Discipline in Schools* (chapter 3, paragraph 74.1) London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office.

quality of pupil participation but also help to ensure that staff in schools, including teachers and headteachers, are able to concentrate on responsibilities and activities that allow them to make the best possible contribution to pupil development and progress.

While the provisions of the STPCD do not apply currently in Scotland and Northern Ireland, the NASUWT is clear that the principles upon which they are based are critical and that policy and practice at school level should reflect comparable objectives in respect of workload and appropriate deployment of the school workforce.

TYPICAL STUDENT VOICE AND PUPIL PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES

There is a wide range of approaches that can be adopted at school level to support pupil participation and promote student voice. It would not be feasible to attempt to summarise and assess each of these approaches meaningfully here.

Nevertheless, it is possible to identify a number of frequently encountered means by which the student voice agenda is implemented and developed within schools.

School councils and pupil consultation exercises

One of the principle means by which student voice activities are initiated and progressed in schools involves the use of school councils. School councils are strongly encouraged by official policy in Scotland, England and Northern Ireland and are a legal requirement in Wales.

School councils can take a number of forms depending on the size of the school and the ages of the pupils involved. In some larger schools they can be augmented by year group or class councils and occasionally schools can set up ad hoc 'working groups' of pupils to consider particular issues. Run effectively, school councils can be an important means by which pupil participation can be secured and there is increasing evidence that they can play an important role in addressing key school level issues, including tackling bullying, poor behaviour and the enhancement and improvement of facilities for pupils.

In addition, many schools engage in consultation activities with pupils on matters affecting their learning in the classroom, on whole school issues and, for example, on such matters as school transport and healthy eating. These consultation exercises might include surveys, discussion groups, circle time sessions or interviews with pupils. As with school councils, pupil consultation exercises undertaken appropriately can be an effective means of seeking the views of pupils on issues of concern to them.

School councils and comparable approaches to pupil consultation are, therefore, not necessarily problematic or contrary to the principles that the NASUWT has set out in relation to student voice and pupil participation. It is how school councils and other consultative exercises might operate or be used by schools that can give rise to concerns.

Issues can arise in relation to the kind of activities with which school councils can become involved, particularly those that threaten to undermine key elements of the relationship between pupils and teachers and the extent to which pupils serving on school councils are able to reflect accurately the views of all their peers. Similarly, the extent to which the results of consultation activities are valid and reliable in terms of the sample of students upon which they are based are critical considerations if changes to school level policies and practices are being contemplated as a result of the findings of such exercises.

It should also be stressed that the management and administration of school councils or other pupil consultation exercises should be consistent with efforts to remodel the school workforce. The adult support provided to school councils should be undertaken by appropriately qualified support staff rather than teachers.

Involving pupils in assessing their own work and setting future progress targets

It is clear that there is increased emphasis on the development of national level policy across all the education systems in the UK on approaches to teaching and learning that involve pupils more actively in assessing their own progress and setting future learning targets.

The NASUWT is clear that such policies will only be realised in practice if they involve embedding approaches to teaching and learning that encourage learners to take greater responsibility for their own progress and achievement and give them the skills and experiences necessary to develop the ability to learn with greater independence.

In this context, approaches to pupil participation and student voice, where pupils are engaged in setting their own learning goals and targets, can be a powerful and effective way of developing learner independence. However, such practices should not be developed or implemented in a way that works against the ability of teachers to take effective decisions about the appropriate teaching and learning strategies to be employed in respect of all the pupils for whom they are responsible.

Furthermore, some approaches that seek to involve pupils more actively in the assessment of progress and the setting of future targets can be unnecessarily workload intensive and bureaucratic. Policy and practice developed on this basis is inconsistent with efforts to tackle teacher and headteacher workload and to reduce overall working hours.

Pupils supporting and working with other pupils

A powerful means by which pupil participation can be developed and supported involves pupils supporting and working with other pupils. Such work can take the form of peer support, where older children support younger children through activities such as listening to them reading or the provision of informal pastoral care, to peer mentoring and mediation, where young people are trained to help other pupils to find positive solutions to disagreements and conflict.

Implemented sensitively and thoughtfully, the introduction of pupil-to-pupil approaches to student voice have the potential to make a significant and positive impact on the quality of pupil behaviour and social interaction within schools and to supporting and improving pupil wellbeing. Where practice is effective in this respect, pupils are still able to benefit from appropriate adult support where necessary and pupil-to-pupil input is implemented in a way that is consistent with other whole school policies, including behaviour and attendance policies, that seek to address similar concerns.

Effective use of external sources of expertise and support to establish and develop pupil-to-pupil approaches to student voice are an extremely important consideration in this respect given that they can ensure that teachers and headteachers are not allocated responsibilities for which other members of the wider children's workforce are more suitably qualified and experienced.

Lesson observations by pupils

Observation of lessons by pupils as a means by which judgements can be formed about the quality of teaching and learning either in respect of the work of individual teachers, the engagement of other pupils or more generally across the school, create significant issues for teachers and have a number of potentially serious implications for both staff and pupils.

Notwithstanding any training that may be given to pupils, the NASUWT is clear that meaningful lesson observation can only be undertaken by adults who are suitably qualified. Views about the quality of professional practice should only be made by individuals with appropriate professional qualifications and experience. In England, this principle is reflected explicitly

in the Performance Management Regulations, which require those observing teachers to have qualified teacher status.

Formal student observation of teachers' practice undermines key elements of the relationship between teachers and pupils by legitimising criticism of teachers. The use of a formal mechanism for pupil assessment of the quality of teaching and learning through evaluations of performance that are not based on professional knowledge and expertise could work to undermine unjustifiably pupils' confidence in teachers' capacity and capability.

In some schools, the approach to the student voice in relation to lesson observation is extending beyond learning that aims to be relevant, purposeful and engaging for all youngsters, to the development of strategies that involve little more than opinion surveying of pupils and strategies that privilege pupils in a way that undermines, disempowers and deprofessionalises teachers.

Regardless of any conditions that seek to commit pupil reviewers to confidentiality in respect of their evaluation of teachers' practice, the fact that pupils cannot be held accountable for violating any such provision means that teachers cannot be given sufficient reassurance that pupil reviewers' opinion of individual teachers will not be communicated more widely.

These concerns do not, however, preclude the ability of teachers, for their own purposes using their own professional mechanisms, seeking feedback from the pupils in the classes and groups for which they are responsible for the purposes of their own professional reflection and to inform future curriculum plans and priorities, nor does it prevent the help and support pupils can give as trained peer mentors and reviews to other pupils.

Pupil involvement in staff recruitment

It has become relatively common practice for recruitment procedures for both teachers and headteachers to involve some element of direct work with pupils. This has involved headteachers visiting the school to observe the teacher who has applied for a post, but it also now may include inviting applicants to plan and teach a lesson to a typical class or group of pupils in the school to which they have applied to work. The NASUWT has serious reservations about this practice, not only in principle, but also because of the equality issues it raises.

The NASUWT does not believe that it is appropriate for interview arrangements to involve seeking the views of pupils on the relative merits of an applicant's teaching and other professional skills to inform recruitment decisions.

In some instances, pupils are being involved more directly in the recruitment of staff, including that of teachers and headteachers, through participation in interview panels, either as panel members or as 'consultants'. The NASUWT does not accept that this practice is appropriate. Membership of an appointment panel carries significant ethical and legal responsibilities in terms of fairness, equality, safeguarding and child protection and ensuring the overall effectiveness of the school team.

The appointment of staff is a serious and important undertaking. The needs of the school to appoint the best person for the job are clearly important and it is also important that all candidates are treated fairly, and that the person who is eventually appointed to the job can be confident in their new role and is not set up to fail. Part of that confidence will be contingent on being able to establish an appropriate level of rapport with pupils and to feel empowered to act with authority. The reality of involving pupils directly in the appointment process has the potential to place these considerations in jeopardy.

It is good practice that all persons represented on appointment panels have been trained to undertake their role effectively and they are accountable for the decisions they make. This accountability is not only to the school, but might also include a requirement to defend an appointment decision in court or at an employment tribunal. Indeed, it would be not only inappropriate but also invidious to expect pupils to share this level of responsibility and accountability. Indeed, it would not be reasonable to place pupils in situations where they are given responsibilities that they may not be able to appreciate fully and that could carry serious consequences if not undertaken effectively.

Pupils as associate governors

Contact between pupils and governors is not inappropriate and can be an important part of effective approaches to student voice and pupil participation. For example, members of a school council may be asked, or seek to attend, a meeting of governors to give feedback on their activities or to discuss future plans. This could be a regular item on a governing body agenda.

In Wales, school councils are able to nominate up to two council members to serve on governing bodies,¹¹ while in England, school governing bodies are able, if they choose, to nominate pupils to act as associate governors.¹² There are potentially serious implications for both staff and pupils if the

¹¹ The School Councils (Wales) Regulations 2005.

¹² School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2003.

engagement of pupil governors with the activities of the governing body is not considered carefully and managed appropriately.

It should be noted that in both England and Wales, governing bodies may exclude pupil governors from any governing body discussion relating to issues including:

- staff appointment, staff pay, staff discipline, performance management of staff, grievances submitted by staff or dismissal of staff;
- admissions;
- individual pupil discipline;
- election, appointment and removal of governors;
- the budget and financial commitments of the governing body; and
- any other matter that the governing body believes should remain confidential to full members.

The NASUWT is clear that the fact that the governing body's powers of exclusion are discretionary runs the risk of involving pupils in the formulation of decisions by governing bodies that present a conflict of interest for the pupils concerned. It would not be reasonable, for example, to expect some pupils to be impartial about individual pupils who may be the subject of a governing body determination and with whom they have a particular personal history of friendship or conflict.

In respect of staffing issues, a decision not to exclude a pupil governor from discussions that could have a direct bearing on the terms and conditions of employment of individual staff and that might involve the disclosure of information that could undermine the continuation of an appropriate pedagogic relationship between pupils and teachers and other members of staff, is also potentially highly problematic.

The NASUWT believes that governing bodies should always use their powers to exclude pupil governors when the issues listed above are being discussed. Staff governors should ensure that pupil governors are not invited to attend sections of governing body meetings where issues of the type described above are being discussed.

**A copy of this publication translated into Welsh
is available on the NASUWT website.**

ADVICE

NASUWT school leaders are advised to evaluate existing or new policies against the six principles the NASUWT has identified.

Securing effective practice in student voice should involve consulting and seeking to agree student voice policies with the NASUWT and other school workforce trade unions.

The NASUWT Workplace Representative has a key role in seeking to ensure the six key principles set out above are applied in the assessment of any student voice proposals and in ensuring that appropriate representations are made to school management and governors on any proposed or existing systems.

Individual teachers will need to be vigilant in safeguarding their own professionalism and should question and resist, with the support of the Union, practices that run counter to the NASUWT's principles.

Where it is not possible to secure appropriate approaches to student voice or pupil participation activities at school level consistent with the NASUWT principles, support should be sought from the relevant NASUWT Local Association Officers, National Executive Members or the NASUWT Regional/National Centre.

Contact details can be found in the NASUWT diary, on the NASUWT website www.teachersunion.org.uk or by telephoning: 0121 453 6150 (England), 028 9078 4480 (Northern Ireland), 0131 523 1110 (Scotland), and 029 2054 6080 (Wales).

APPENDIX

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 28

1. States Parties recognise the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:
 - (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;
 - (b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;

- (c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;
 - (d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;
 - (e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.
2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.
 3. States Parties shall promote and encourage international co-operation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

Article 29

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:
 - (a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
 - (b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;
 - (c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilisations different from his or her own;
 - (d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;
 - (e) The development of respect for the natural environment.
2. No part of the present article or article 28 shall be construed so as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject always to the observance of the principle set forth in paragraph 1 of the present article and to the requirements that the education given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State.



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