Pupil Voice Policy

Responsibility: Alex Morris   Date: December 2025

Date to be reviewed: December 2028

INTRODUCTION

The term 'pupil voice' refers to ways of listening to the views of pupils/ students and/ or involving them in decision making. Villa Real School's approach to pupil voice aligns with statutory duties under the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice (updated September 2024). We ensure that pupils and students are actively involved in decisions affecting their education, as required by national guidance.

PURPOSE AND AIM

At Villa Real School we believe that pupils/ students should be active participants in their own learning and that their opinions should be heard and valued both in school and the wider community. We therefore actively seek ways to engage pupils and students and encourage them to make a contribution.

There are a wide range of approaches used across school to support pupils/ students of all ages and abilities to engage in pupil/ student participation and promote pupil voice:
- School Council
- Peer mentoring
- Pupil/ Student contribution to Annual Review and termly REAL Targets
- 1:1 therapy
- Student led enterprises
- Buddy System
- Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC)
  - Use of symbols e.g. Aided Language Displays, Pragmatically Organised Dynamic Display books (PODD), AAC books, PECS books
  - Use of technology e.g. switches, tech talkers, high tech communication aids with full vocabulary symbol sets e.g. PODD
  - Signing e.g. Makaton, Tactile Signing for Sensory Learners (TaSSeLs)
  - Use of braille
- 'Voice of the Pupil' resources
- Active Listeners
- Philosophy for Children
- Thinking Schools
- Kidsafe
- Talk and Draw
- Girls' Group

Digital and Online Safety

Where technology is used to support pupil voice, such as online surveys, virtual councils, or communication aids, we promote safe and responsible use of digital platforms. Staff ensure compliance with our online safety policy and teach pupils how to use these tools securely and respectfully.

Therapy

Therapies (OT, Music, Speech and Language and Physiotherapy) form an integral part of a pupils'/ students' education at Villa Real School. Where appropriate, pupils/ students are asked to provide input into target setting by identifying their own priorities for improvement and discussing the impact of this work. This allows pupils and students to work on areas they value and increases motivation.

Pupil meetings

All pupils contribute to their EHCP Annual review in the most appropriate manner. They are included in TAFs where appropriate. Pupils are also included in medical risk assessments where they can meaningfully contribute.

Behavioural approaches

Management of behaviour forms an integral part of a pupils'/ students' education at Villa Real School. Distressed behaviour is often a response to an inability to communicate a want or a need. Pupils/ students are 'given a voice' through a range of resources such as 'yes' and 'no' cards, traffic light cards, talking mats, 'help' and 'time out' cards, as well as various resources to show different emotions e.g. emotion barometers. Pupils/ students are encouraged to use a socially acceptable way of expressing themselves, which allows them to use their individual voice. Self-regulation strategies are the corner stone of our policy, and highlighted within the individuals' arousal curves. The 4cs of Philosophy for Children also give a key focus on collaboration and caring.

The Curriculum

Embedded into the curriculum are teaching and learning opportunities where pupils/students are asked to consider and share their own opinions. They have the opportunity to plan their own activities within a topic remit and to share work with the rest of the school in assemblies. Pupils/students are encouraged to reflect on their own learning and identify future goals in collaboration with teachers and support staff. This is enhanced by the use of enquiry and questioning as part of Philosophy for Children and Thinking Schools approaches.

Extra-curricular clubs are held weekly, the half termly theme is open to suggestion from pupils/ students e.g. gaming, netball, art, music and movie clubs.

School Council/ Sports Leadership/Diana Award

This range of councils promote democracy, leadership and mutual responsibility throughout the school and beyond. Class/ Key Stage representatives meet termly to provide:
- A positive forum for pupil voice
- Structured opportunities for leadership dialogue
- Pupils/ students with an insight into democracy

- A forum for pupils/ students to instigate change in respect of elements of school life, e.g. school meals, social areas, outdoor equipment
- A forum for pupils/ students to instigate change in the world outside of Villa Real School
- A feeling of self-worth and mutual respect for pupils and students
- A sense of being a good citizen and having a positive impact on the world

Whole School Approach to Pupil/ Student Involvement
Staff understand the importance in involving pupils/ students in all aspects of their education and learning. Pupil/ student views are valued and time is always given to seeking out and listening to the views of individuals and to taking these views into consideration in any decision-making. Pupils/ students routinely give their own contributions to their annual Education Health Care Plan review meetings, termly REAL targets and take a central role in transition planning.

Charity events and fundraisers for the school and for local and national charities (e.g. Children In Need) are planned in collaboration with pupils/ students, thus giving them ownership and pride in what they achieve. Opportunities for peer mentoring and support are available through Kidsafe, 'Buddy system and Girls' Group.

Monitoring and Evaluation
The impact of pupil voice is monitored annually through feedback from pupils, staff, and parents. Outcomes are shared with all stakeholders to demonstrate how their input shapes school decisions. Pupil voice is monitored by the school governors and inform future improvements to pupil participation strategies.