

Children's Rights and Responsibilities



May 2002



SCHOOL	→	St. Elizabeth's Primary School, South Lanarkshire
FOCUS	→	The School Council and Policy Making

Initiatives or projects in place to encourage the development of rights and responsibilities, education for citizenship or active pupil participation in decision-making.

The very active, pupil elected, St Elizabeth's School Council, which consists of class representatives, an executive council, a chairperson and minute secretaries. The council has developed a pupil friendly Rights & Responsibilities code based on the UN Convention and on the format of daily school life. Current developments include the School Council's participation in influencing school policy in areas such as:

- School meals – these were changed after a general vote
- Playground helpers
- Discipline Policy – this now has a detention clause formulated by the School Council
- The School via the Council will contribute to the National Education Debate

How these initiatives are being monitored and evaluated.

- Council Meetings are minuted and representatives distribute to each class, to the school notice board and to the local councillor.
- The school development plan reflects policy changes, especially in relation to discipline
- The playground helper addresses each monthly Council Meeting to enable evaluation of playground issues
- South Lanarkshire Council Catering Service will meet with the School Council twice yearly to monitor the menu update

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What are some of the biggest challenges faced by teachers or young people in implementing the initiatives or projects?

Time in the busy school curriculum to:

- release representatives from class
- disseminate Council feedback to classes and parents
- assimilate class suggestions and to discuss classroom issues with appropriate class representatives

What has worked well?

- The School Council has contributed to and maintains a very positive ethos
- The timetabled meeting on the first Wednesday of every month
- The school menu adoption through Council discussions
- The playground helper role in P7 has equipped children with skills and responsibility that can be applied to their future
- The detention policy formulated by the Council has reduced indiscipline. Children do not like being 'reprimanded' by their friends

What did not work & lessons learned?

The P7 pupil acting as the Nursery representative felt that the Council agenda did not relate to nursery life and she resigned

Future plans?

To enlist the Nursery Nurse as the Nursery representative.