

**Aberdare Community  
School  
Ysgol Gymunedol  
Aberdâr**



**Listening to Learners  
Policy**

Date Adopted	<b>27<sup>th</sup> September 2023</b>
Signature of Headteacher	<i>Lucretia Morgan</i>
Signature of Chair of Governors	<i>Mama</i>
Date to be reviewed	<b>September 2024</b>

At Aberdare Community School, we believe that pupils and their views are central to the work that we do as a school. Our learners represent our core purpose and are also a key source of evidence of achievement, attitudes and wellbeing. Their beliefs and opinions about our school help to drive improvement.

The United Kingdom is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Article 12 states that 'the child who is capable of forming his or her own views has the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child'. The purpose of the school council is for young people to talk about things that relate to their school, their education and any other matter that concerns them.

The importance of 'listening to learners' as part of the school self evaluation process is emphasised in the Estyn Common Inspection Framework. Learners have a right to express a view on how well their needs are being met as well as a clear entitlement to influence the services that affect them. Therefore, we have developed an effective and inclusive school council - Y Senedd Aberdâr - to meet these requirements.

An effective school council can:

- make schools more inclusive and better places by bringing together pupils, staff, the senior management team, and the governing body;
- provide a formalised channel of communication between pupils, the senior management team and the governing body;
- provide a sounding board for the senior management team and governing body;
- offer an organised and representative way for pupils to express their opinions;
- help pupils develop and practise life skills such as communication and improve their understanding of the perspectives and opinions of others;
- give pupils opportunities to take responsibility and to share ownership of problems and their resolution; and
- help improve mutual understanding between pupils, staff, senior management and governors.

In addition, school councils demonstrate a commitment to engage with pupils and to value their contribution. By doing so they can help:

- improve behaviour and attendance;
- improve standards of achievement as pupils and staff work together in a participatory process;
- enhance some aspects of the curriculum such as PSE;
- provide evidence of 'taking account of the views of pupils' in line with Estyn inspection requirements; and
- facilitate changes in the school environment and provision, and in relationships with the local community.

School Councils (Wales) Regulations 2005 made it a requirement for all schools in Wales to have a school council, and laid down specific requirements which schools must follow. These are the basis on which Aberdare Community School operates its Listening to Learners policy.

The full school council meets once every half term and holds additional year group and sub-committee meetings as required. Each meeting is attended by representatives from every year group in the school and the member of staff leading the school council.

Feedback from these meetings is shared through assemblies, via the School Council noticeboard, form tutor time, as well as the digital screens around the school building.

We also provide opportunities for pupils to contribute through student surveys and various focus groups within the school. Individual departments have their own pupil voice initiatives where views are expressed about teaching and learning. SLT also carry out termly pupil voice activities with learners according to the school self-evaluation calendar.

In addition, pupils can also contribute through the school council sub-committee meetings; Eco and Healthy Schools Committee, International committee, Mental Health and Wellbeing Committee, Teaching and Learning Committee and the Equalities Committee. These committees meet once every half term.

The school should make sure that a young person can meet regularly with the Governing Body and the Head Teacher. As such, representatives from the school council are invited to attend termly Governors' meetings.

Any pupil in Year 13 can apply to be Lead Learner by a formal letter of application. They will then be interviewed by the Deputy Headteacher in charge of wellbeing and the Headteacher. On appointment they will become members of the school council (in addition to the elected members from that year group).

Representatives on the school council are elected by a vote amongst their peers. Any pupil wanting to get involved with the school council will be entitled to put their names forward and then peers in their form/year will be allowed to vote for them.

The headteacher and the school Governing Body have a duty in law to think about and take seriously any issue that the school council bring to them; they must also make a response to any issue that is raised.