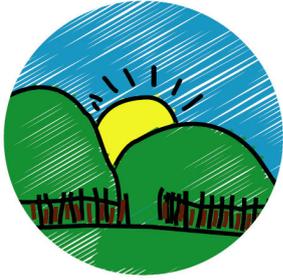


# Ysgol Greenfield School



"Opening doors to the future"

CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL MERTHYR TUDFIL

MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## GREENFIELD SCHOOL

### Pupil Participation

Wayne Murphy, Head Teacher.  
Rachel Faulkner, Deputy Head - Standards  
Carol Conway, Deputy Head - Wellbeing  
Gwyn Daniels - Assistant Head



**' Opening Doors To The Future '**

**' Agor drysau i'r dyfodol '**

Original Completion Date

Author

## **MONITORING THE POLICY**

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually unless change of circumstances or legislation requires it to be amended earlier.

Signed: ..... Date:  
.....

Headteacher

Signed: ..... Date:  
.....

Chair of Governors

**Review Date**

**Author**

## **Our Vision**

'To open doors to the future'

## **Our Mission Statement**

That children, staff, parents, carers and all stakeholders work actively in partnership to enable all pupils to realise and reach their full potential.

## **Aims**

- For pupils to operate as independent learners and thinkers
- To inspire a love for learning
- To provide a relevant curriculum for all
- For pupils to value themselves
- To foster a sense of belonging to a community

## **Our Values**

- We create
- We respect each other
- We try our best
- We are a team
- We learn from mistakes
- We celebrate each other's success
- We are polite and considerate
- We produce magic moments

We want every child to be safe and happy in our school. We believe that the key to this is for us all to have self-respect, respect for others and respect for property.

### **Everyone has the right to:**

- Feel safe, cared for and respected.
- Be able to learn to the best of his/her ability and to develop whatever skills he/she possesses.
- Be treated equally irrespective of gender, race, physical characteristics or any other factors.
- Learn and play without disruption.

### **Everyone is expected to:**

- Be responsible for their own behaviour
- Respect the rights of others
- Share our values

## **OVERALL PRINCIPLES**

Greenfield School values the views of all its members. This policy outlines how learning at Greenfield School is enhanced by exploring the thoughts and feelings of pupils within the school. Pupil Voice is embedded in all aspects of school life. We provide children with opportunities to contribute to school improvement because we believe listening to learners is fundamental to their wellbeing.

Our school aspires to enhance each child's self-esteem; providing a safe and secure environment in which they feel confident to take risks and strive to reach their full potential. Through recognising and celebrating achievement, we encourage every child to view themselves as a successful individual.

We believe that engaging our children in 'learning about learning' enables them to develop a deeper understanding of themselves as learners and therefore equips them with a greater capacity to learn. Our school ethos and the positive relationships established within our school community promote the value of learning and create a desire for children to become Lifelong Learners.

Greenfield School believes:

- Every child has an entitlement to personal, social and intellectual development and must be given an opportunity to achieve his/her potential in learning.
- Every child is unique in terms of characteristics, interest, abilities, motivation and learning needs.
- Education systems should be designed to take into account these wide diversities.
- All pupils, regardless of ability / disability have access to high quality and appropriate education.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

Traditionally, children have very little say in shaping their own educational experience. However, the importance of children's rights and their relevance to education has been increasingly recognised. This has led to a range of legalisation that has emphasised the importance of listening to children and involving them in decision-making. Within education, systems are being developed to consult with children about school life, learning targets and behaviour.

Involving all children is challenging both in principle and in practice. Yet, aside from any legal requirements; research and practice indicate that there are real benefits to be gained from pupil participation. Participation helps education to develop to meet changing needs. It can give children influence and an increased choice over the provision offered. It helps empower them, giving a sense of self efficacy, which raises self esteem. Ultimately, pupil participation can enhance the democratic process, enabling children to become active, responsible citizens.

Involvement of children and young people can easily become 'tokenistic'. There is a need for all staff to find ways to communicate effectively with a range of children. Participation is only meaningful within their context of an inclusive school where all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, properly differentiated curriculum, pupils need to experience a wide social circle and to encounter a broad range of peers with different strengths and perspectives. The success of participation, like the success of inclusion, depends upon the involvement of all teachers and staff working with a sense of common purpose to support the learning needs of all children.

The underlying vision of child-centred schools is of an education system that helps to create a democratic, people-oriented society that respects the differences and dignity of all beings.

## **KEY PRINCIPLES**

### **Entitlement:**

Children have a right to participate and to be listened to. When developing educational policy, local and central government must ensure that consulting with children is at the heart of all multi-agency planning.

### **Empowerment:**

All children need to feel that they are valued and important and can make a difference. Being consulted and allowed to make choices from an early age helps to develop emotional growth and self-awareness. Directly involving pupils in their education enhances their engagement and promotes active learning. This expands their horizons and increases the choices open to them about their future. It helps to ensure that the education they receive is relevant to their needs.

### **Equal opportunities:**

Consulting effectively with pupils is challenging for staff, particularly when communication with younger children, those with significant learning difficulties and those who have become disengaged from education for a number of reasons. In order to make this a meaningful task, attention must be paid to language so that young people understand what is available and can make informed choices. The curriculum needs to be properly differentiated and resourced to address pupil's individual learning patterns and interests. Alternative options needs to be properly resourced to allow each child, wherever possible, to fulfil his/her potential.

### **Raising Attainment:**

Pupil participation can help to raise academic standards. Progress is also supported by a curriculum that meets individual needs. Careful consideration should be given to pupil's groupings to ensure that those with learning, emotional, social or behavioural difficulties do not feel marginalised or de-motivated.

### **Protection:**

Promoting pupil participation is an important aid to their self-protection. Apart from parents and carers, it is staff in schools that are best placed to notice early signs of distress and symptoms of abuse. A recurrent theme of successive inquiries into abuse has been the failure to listen to children.

**Democracy:**

Involving pupils in decisions about their learning and the educational environment will help to prepare them for making important choices as adults. Giving more power to pupils can lead to more motivated and engaged children and less staff/pupil contact. Representative democracy is strengthened as young people gain greater skills in communication, listening, negotiation, and peaceful conflict resolution.

**Respect:**

Pupil Participation can only flourish in an environment where teachers and other staff have a shared sense of responsibility for supporting and learning from one another and where young people are encouraged to build collaborative relationships with their peers.

**PUPIL PARTICIPATION AIMS**

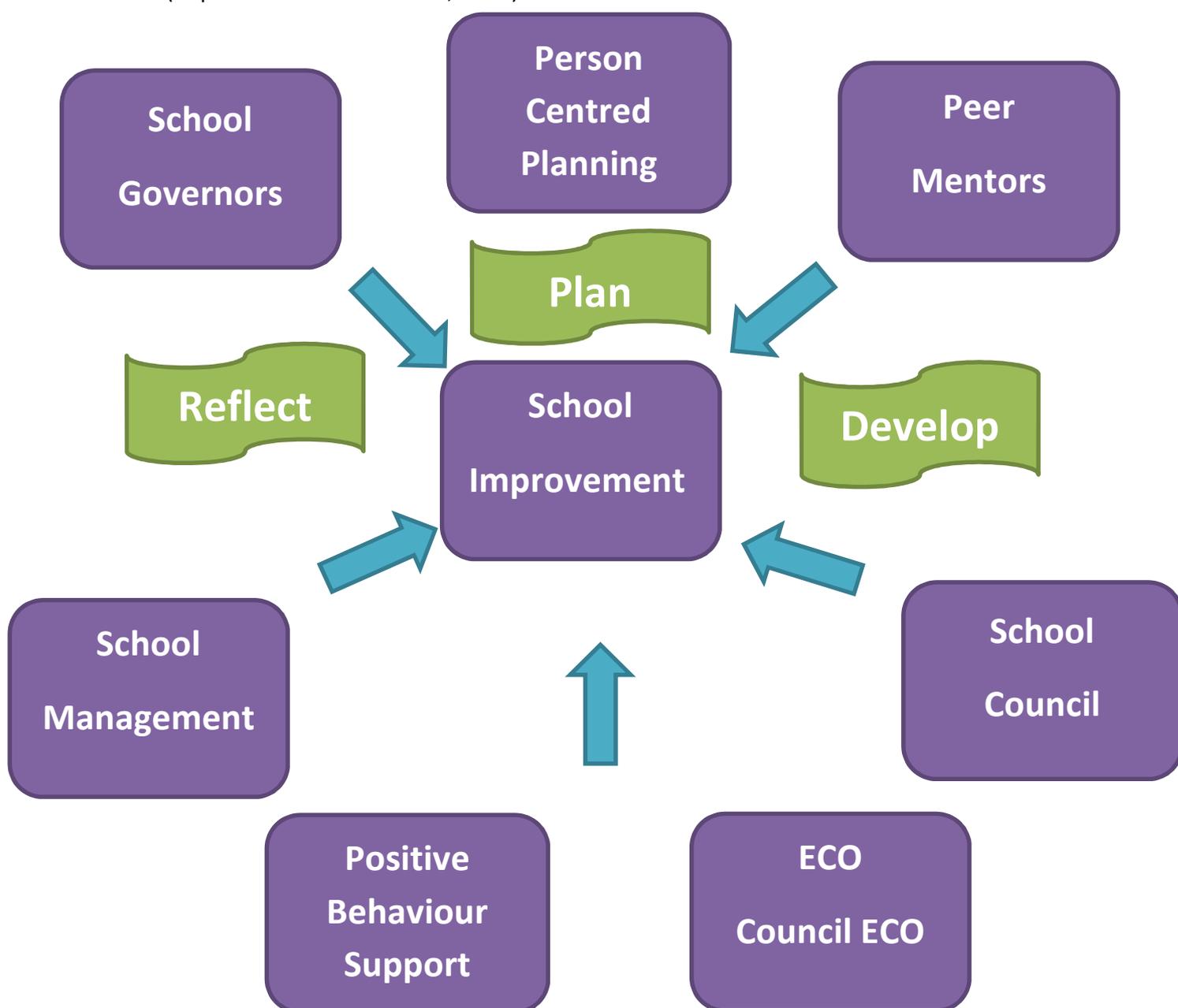
At Greenfield School we believe that we should:

- Regard the involvement of pupils in decisions about their education as essential to good practise.
- Include pupils in assessing and monitoring their own progress. This involves reducing barriers to participation, with attention to language and level of understanding. Pupils should be helped to set targets for their learning and behaviour and be provided with opportunities for on-going review and feedback.
- Foster a whole school ethos in which all pupils are valued and encouraged to express their opinions, and take decisions from an early age. Create structures and mechanisms for listening to pupils and responding to their views, and monitor their effectiveness. Develop constructive alliances between pupils based upon tolerance and respect of individual differences.
- Recognise that pupil participation can only become a reality in an environment where all staff are valued and involved in decisions affecting the school community.
- Relationships between adults should act as the model for the desired relationships between young people.
- Provide training and professional development to assist staff in developing models of good practise that support the inclusion of all pupils.
- Carefully prepare pupils when attending annual reviews so that they can fully participate, offering facilitation for those less able to cope with meetings. Create a positive climate where children and parents are made to feel welcome.
- Ensure that all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, properly resourced with a wide range of social opportunities. Put in place systems which allow pupils to have a greater say in the content of the curriculum and how it should be taught. For example the School Council
- Offer guidance and support to both new and experienced staff in managing diverse classrooms and in developing individualised learning programmes.
- Act as an empathic guide and advocate for the child equipping him/her with skills to respect different opinions and diverse cultures. This includes learning how to negotiate with others, and to make compromises when appropriate.
- Work in a partnership with parents

Collaborate with other agencies to ensure a 'holistic' approach. Exercise care and sensitivity when sharing information, in order to respect confidentiality without compromising the safety of the child. Help other agencies to recognise that there are usually educational implications when children are experiencing health or social problems.

*Pupils who participate in decision-making enjoy enhanced self-esteem and motivation, gain important personal, social and organisational skills, and become familiar with group and democratic processes. At the organisational level, pupil involvement in decision-making leads to better relationships, more relevant and effective policies, and better learning. In the best scenarios, pupils and adults work together as partners to ensure that their school provides the best possible learning environment for all. Pupils have an important part to play in helping their school to improve in every aspect of school life.*

(Pupil Voice Wales Website, 2010)



### **Greenfield Eco-Council**

Our school Eco-Council was set up with student representatives from each class throughout the school. The school's Eco Council meets regularly to formulate and then implement a school action plan for environmental improvement. Children discuss ways of improving their school environment from litter collection to establishing ways of conserving energy in the school. They also work alongside teachers, parents and governors to implement initiatives such as our school travel plan. Greenfield has received the Platinum Award for continued and outstanding work in the environment.

Eco-council members elect a Chairperson and Secretary who oversee the meeting format. Minutes are completed with agendas continuing student issues. This is a valued activity as it gives students a voice in a different setting where they are able to directly affect the sustainability of the school environment.

### **Greenfield School Council**

Our School Council provides pupils with the opportunity to express their views about school life in a forum where they will be listened to and action taken when appropriate. It will also enable them to actively participate in improving the school community. The School Council meets regularly to formulate and then implement a school action plan for improvement. Greenfield School Council is made up of a representative from each class. An election is held in September each year with any child who would like to stand for School Council being given the opportunity to present their manifesto. Elections are then made by secret ballot. A pupil may be elected to the school council for 2 consecutive years. (After a 1 year break they may stand again if they so wish.) A Chairperson and Secretary will be elected by school council representatives. During meetings a teacher representative will be present (non-voter).

School Council meetings are held regularly with each meeting following a set agenda, which includes addressing issues raised at the last meeting and bringing to the meeting any new suggestions. A School Council Suggestion Box is accessible to all pupils within the school if they would like to make suggestions or raise issues. Minutes will be taken at every School Council meeting. These will be displayed on the school council notice board. School council representatives will be given the opportunity to report back from meetings and discuss issues with their classmates at regular class meetings

### **Greenfield Peer Mentors**

Our School is participating in the Peer Mentoring scheme. We currently have 14 Peer Mentors across KS3 and Post 16 (this programme will be rolled out across the school in due course). The role of the Peer Mentor is to provide social and emotional support to other pupils, for example, if a pupil is struggling to develop friendships on the playground or has issues within the classroom setting then they know who their peer mentor is and can approach them to resolve any potential issues.

Pupils have received specialised training from the Peer Mentor organisation which focuses upon dealing with such sensitive situations.

### **Positive Behaviour Support**

Not all pupils who attend Greenfield School exhibit behaviours that challenge, however, where they do, Positive Behaviour Support will be an integral part of the young person's overall plan, integrated into their education planning and underpinning all aspects of their school life.

Support will be tailored to individual's needs and based on multidisciplinary assessments taking into account each individual's cognitive levels and communication needs and including effective functional assessment. It will be based within a person centred approach which focusses on the individual's quality of life.

### **Person Centred Planning**

At Greenfield School we believe in a future where everyone is valued and appreciated as an individual. A world where our pupil's get the support they need to thrive, in the community, in the work place and in their personal lives.

The Helen Sanderson Model of Person Centered Planning is the vehicle that we use in order to ensure that our pupil's voice is heard and this philosophy is threaded through all aspects of school life.

From One Page Profiles where the things that are important to and for our young people are identified, to our Person Centered Annual Review process in which the child / young person's views are paramount.

***Person Centered Planning and Positive Behaviour Support complement each other perfectly in taking forward the individual needs and views of our pupils.***

***Safety - Life - Growth***

## **OUR CURRICULUM**

**Involving Parents** - When beginning a project, a curriculum letter is made available to parents, sharing forthcoming learning opportunities. This letter encourages opportunity for children to discuss with their parent what they would like to learn. The children's responses are recorded on an outline shape (linked to the project, e.g. a house) and displayed in the classroom so they can be referred to throughout the project.

**Knowledge Harvest** - At the beginning of each project the children should experience an Entry Point, followed by a Knowledge Harvest. The Knowledge Harvest should be used as an

opportunity to elicit the children's existing skills, knowledge and understanding. Approaches such as: Thinking Maps, KWL grids, thought bubbles, etc, should be used to record what the children know and what they want to learn. Choices about HOW they want to learn should also be considered. This activity will usually be recorded in the children's project books or in some cases a class book. Ideas and questions generated from the Knowledge Harvest should be added to the class Learning Wall of questions or to ongoing project displays.

**Evaluating Learning** - Throughout a project and at the end of a project, children are given opportunities to evaluate their learning and reflect on the questions they raised at the beginning of the project. Questions and ideas may be added at various points during a project as learning takes place. Children should use AfL strategies, Thinking Skills, Habits of Mind, etc, to reflect on their learning (meta-cognition). Opportunities for children to evaluate their learning should be planned for and evident within their project books/class books.

## **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Pupil Voice is embedded in all aspects of our school life. We provide children with opportunities to contribute to school improvement because we believe pupil participation is fundamental to children's wellbeing and development as successful individuals and to the success of our school. Through pupil participation we encourage all pupils to think about their rights and responsibilities and those of others.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international human rights treaty that grants all children and young people a comprehensive set of rights. It sets out in detail what every child needs to have a safe, happy and fulfilled childhood regardless of their sex, religion, social origin, and where and to whom they were born. The Convention gives children and young people over 40 substantive rights, including the right to:

- special protection measures and assistance
- access to services such as education and healthcare
- develop their personalities, abilities and talents to the fullest potential
- grow up in an environment of happiness, love and understanding
- be informed about and participate in achieving their rights in an accessible and active manner.

## **EQUALITY STATEMENT**

### **OUR VISION FOR EQUALITY AND COMMUNITY COHESION**

*We seek to remove barriers to learning with imaginative curriculum delivery that will use the best of innovative educational practice and enterprise to transform learning and teaching. We seek to provide an inspirational learning environment based on a personalised style of learning. Learning is at our core and we believe it will broaden horizons, raise aspirations and enhance students' self-confidence as successful learners, both now and in the future. Students will have every opportunity to achieve*

*standards that match their potential and to gain successes as effective lifelong learners. We are committed to equality of opportunity and access for all our learners and to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equalities Act 2010. We further recognise the 9 protected characteristics as detailed in the Act. We will advance equality of opportunity between all learners and foster good relationships between all our learners and our stakeholders*