# Participation policy

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Introduction

The Royal Blind School is a grant-aided residential special school, providing Care and Education for children and young people with a visual impairment, many of whom have additional physical, sensory and/or learning difficulties.

Both day and residential placements are offered. Children and young people can attend on a full or part time basis; respite provision is also offered.

Purpose

Our participation strategy endeavours to build on the mechanisms already in place to increase participation with stakeholders, in order for them to become more involved in the planning and delivery of services by the Royal Blind School.

We want those involved who use our care and education services to have greater access to shared information and knowledge and to be empowered to positively influence decisions taken about the quality and future of our care and education provision.

Aims

It is the aim of the Royal Blind School that children and young people, parents and carers, staff, professionals and placing authorities should feel that appropriate information is shared with them and that their views are heard and valued.

The Royal Blind School currently offers a wide variety of opportunities for participation and consultation with all groups but would always seek to develop and improve upon our ability to encourage active participation.

The Royal Blind School’s Policy Statement

The Royal Blind School will:

- ensure that all staff understand their professional and contractual obligations to support children and young people through their care and education;
- endeavour to put into practice the underpinning principle that the needs of the child/young person must always be the paramount concern;
- ensure that all staff recognise the limits of their responsibilities in relation to the participation process;
- ensure that all staff understand their responsibility to work to the standards and procedures detailed in policies and procedures;
ensure that all policies and procedures are fairly and consistently implemented;

- ensure that children, young people, parents and carers, staff and professionals are appropriately and sensitively supported to express their ideas, views and concerns on a wide range of issues;

- ensure that all staff understand the limits to confidentiality and that these limits are communicated to pupils and parents/carers via relevant publications, during meetings etc.

- provide opportunities for all staff to develop their skills and knowledge;

- work closely with partner agencies in order to support participation

The Royal Blind School
Core values in relation to Participation

The Royal Blind School believes that its pupils have a right to dignity, privacy, confidentiality and safety and that these core values should underpin all aspects of the school’s work. In relation to its participation policy, these core values underpin the way in which the school:

- encourages participation from all relevant parties, whilst

- providing care and support for pupils;
- communicating with pupils in a manner that is appropriate to their individual needs;
- listening attentively to pupils views however expressed;
- promoting equality and diversity
- appropriately managing personal and sensitive data about pupils and their parents/carers.

Quality indicators for good practice:

- **Children and Young Peoples involvement**
  - continue to encourage and support children and young people to participate fully and meaningfully in their care and education and ensure they are treated with equality, fairness and respect.
  - continue to develop weekly young peoples meetings (care), termly meetings with the pupil representatives and the Head Teacher, meetings with the young peoples (residential) representatives and the Care Services Manager.
  - continue to develop the ongoing working groups and the Pupil Forum.
  - continue to ensure our children and young people are actively involved in their own learning and development and show increasing
skills as learners, receiving high-quality feedback that makes them aware of their progress and strengths as learners.

- **Parents and carers involvement**
  - continue to encourage and support parents and carers to participate in the care and education of their child (children).
  - maintain and develop parent and carer involvement at Parents Forum meetings, education and care reviews, parents day, family and friend’s days and to seek further opportunities for parents and carers to participate in the life of the School.

- **Staff involvement**
  - continue to encourage and support all school staff to participate in the running of the school and to be involved in decision-making, theme based working groups, and in the planning and the development of the School care and Education service.

- **Assessment, planning and review**
  - ensure that children and young people are able to participate in what ever way is appropriate to their ability and endeavour to seek their views throughout the duration of their education / care placement.
  - encourage parents and carers, staff, professionals and placing authorities to take an active part in our service assessment, planning and review.

- **Health and wellbeing**
  - Continue to promote a culture of wellbeing and encourage awareness of appropriate support for the health and wellbeing of our children, young people and School staff.

- **Quality assurance and development of services**
  - Encourage participation in the regular evaluation of the quality of provision for children and young people in accordance with national care and education standards and legislation, good practice guidelines and Royal Blind Quality Assurance Programme.

**Core principles for best practice:**

- Children and Young people’s active participation and their views are central to all aspects of the care and education we provide, as are those of parents and carers, staff and professionals.

- Children and young people’s needs and wellbeing are at the heart of all decision-making and planning processes.

- Information is presented in clear and child/young person friendly language that is age and culturally appropriate. Information is available in alternative formats on request.
Monitoring and evaluation

There are many processes (both formal and informal) which work together to ensure that children and young people, parents and carers, staff, professionals and placing authorities participate in the life of the Royal Blind School:

- regular meetings with children and young people;
- regular meetings with care, nursing and education staff;
- regular meetings which parents and carers are invited to attend;
- informal and social events to which parents and carers, social workers and others are invited to attend;
- the allocation of a support (key) worker/named person to every child and young person; (for residential pupils this will be a member of the residential care team)
- personal care and support plans for each child and young person (Care Plans) drawn up by the residential keyworker or named person;
- notes kept of all formal meetings;
- on-going monitoring and support for care, nursing and education staff;
- discussions with parents/carers, professionals and placing authorities (where appropriate);
- regular review of School, Care and Royal Blind policies and procedures;
- regular LAAC (looked after and adopted children) reviews where appropriate;
- regular education reviews
- regular transition reviews during their senior phase;
- regular multi-professional meetings
## Children’s Charter

The *Charter* is made up of 13 statements, which are presented as statements **from** children and young people **to** adults; these are:

- “Get to know us”
- “Speak with us”
- “Listen to us”
- “Take us seriously”
- “Involve us”
- “Respect our privacy”
- “Be responsible to us”
- “Think about or lives as a whole”
- “Think carefully about how you use information about us”
- “Put us in touch with the right people”
- “Use your power to help”
- “Make things happen when they should”
- “Help us be safe.”

### Conclusion

This participation strategy makes clear our strong commitment to keep all people with an interest in the Royal Blind School able to be appropriately involved in our work and reflects our positive view of participation in our School.