



Denying
child rights
is wrong.
Put it right.

RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL AWARD STEERING GROUP GUIDANCE

Creating a steering group is one of the first, and important steps towards becoming a Rights Respecting school. The size of the steering group (usually around 10-15 people in a secondary school but probably smaller in a primary school), where and how often it will meet is decided by each school, but there should be regular meetings, at least once every half term, which should be set in advance during the action planning process.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STEERING GROUP

The steering group leads guides and informs the activities of the whole school so that it achieves the RRSA and becomes a Rights Respecting School.

Its work is underpinned by the following principles:

- It has the support of the headteacher, governing body and senior management team from the outset
- It has the influence and ability to drive forward change.
- It represents a cross section of the school community
- The group ensures that working towards the RRSA is not a 'teacher only' initiative
- Children and young people are involved beyond the membership of the steering group
- It is underpinned by Article 12 of the UNCRC

THE ROLE OF THE STEERING GROUP

- To take the lead in developing and delivering the school's RRS action plan
- To ensure that the whole school is aware of the Rights Respecting Schools Award
- To provide a link between children and young people, teachers, senior management team, governors and the whole school community
- To regularly feedback to the school community about progress, including to the SMT, governors, staff and parents.

FORMING THE STEERING GROUP

The steering group can be:

- a completely new working group specially formed to work on the RRSA
- a working group or sub-committee of an existing school council, with additional adults and children and young people from within the school community
- developed from another school 'action group' e.g. Healthy Schools, Fair Trade, Eco School committee



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MEMBERSHIP OF THE STEERING GROUP

In deciding membership, schools should consider:

- who is representative of the school and community?
- who will ensure that change can happen?
- who is best placed to inform the process?

The Steering Group should include:

- A high proportion of children and young people who represent different year groups and reflect the diversity within the school
- At least one member of the Senior Management Team
- Other teachers (with key roles in school, or with a level of knowledge, influence and enthusiasm in this area)

The following possible members should also be considered:

- Non-teaching members of staff e.g. office or lunchtime staff
- A governor
- A parent
- A member of the local community who is involved in the school (for example police, health workers, local faith leaders)
- Representatives from other school groups e.g. Eco-School, Fair Trade, Amnesty International

WHAT THINGS SHOULD THE STEERING GROUP DO?

Focus group interviews (pupil-led)

- Prepare the focus group interview format so that questions are asked in familiar language
- Support interviewers in discussing and agreeing how to run the focus group and present the results to others (e.g. SMT, governors, staff meeting)
- Share and discuss the findings of the focus groups

Action planning

- Decide how the focus group findings should feed into the baseline audit
- Identify from the audit and the focus groups what the priority areas are and what actions can be taken
- Write and regularly update the action plan and identify any actions needed
- Agree and decide how the steering group can monitor and evaluate actions (what systems already exist in school?)
- Be involved in the self evaluation leading up to assessment



Training and awareness raising

- Produce guidance and information for teachers, children and young people, parents etc
- Coordinate regular training sessions to develop understanding of the RRSA for teachers and students
- Discuss with curriculum coordinators and subject leaders how they can incorporate UNCRC into their lessons.
- Hold sessions for parents or governors to explain the UNCRC and the RRSA

Other Steering Groups tasks can be:

- Developing peer education about the RRSA and the UNCRC
- Informing the school community about the RRSA and the UNCRC
- Researching
- Consulting
- Collecting and recording evidence
- Publicising
- Networking throughout the school and with others
- Keeping in contact for advice and support with your local UNICEF Education Officer