

# Children's Rights Policy

## Clarity Independent School

Bridge Barn Farm  
Woodhill Road  
Sandon  
CM2 7SG

***Clarity Independent School is committed to safeguarding...***

*"Our school is committed to our whole-school approach to safeguarding, which ensures that keeping children safe is at the heart of everything we do, and underpins all systems, processes and policies...We promote an environment where children and young people feel empowered to raise concerns and report incidents and we work hard in partnership with pupils, parents and caregivers to keep children safe."*

Clarity Safeguarding Policy September 2024

**Written by Debbie Hanson**

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## Rights Respecting School Policy Statement

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (updated 2000) contains 54 articles and was ratified by the UK in 1991. Clarity Independent School has identified the following articles from the UNCRC as being of particular relevance in formulating this policy:

**Article 1:** Everyone under the age of 18 has all the rights in the Convention.

**Article 2:** The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, sex, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.

**Article 3:** The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

## Rationale

Human rights for all human beings are recognised and described in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and are strengthened and broadened for children and young people in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989).

UNICEF has developed a global scheme to help schools adhere to the values and principles of the UNCRC – the Child Friendly School. UNICEF’s model of a Child Friendly School is simple - schools should operate in the best interests of the child.

In the UK this scheme is the Rights Respecting School Award. The Award seeks to put a children’s rights approach at the heart of a school’s culture and ethos. In a rights respecting school, pupils learn that they have rights, what these rights are and learn how to be rights-respecting by learning that rights are universal.

Adults in the school recognise their responsibility to model rights-respecting language and behaviour and put them into practice in every aspect of the life of the school, from how the school is run and the extent to which pupils are involved in this, to what is taught and how pupils and teachers relate to each other.

## Purpose

To provide a sustainable rights-respecting environment which ensures:

- All children feel safe at school
- All children feel valued as individuals



- All children have high levels of well-being and emotional resilience
- All children engage both with their own learning and with the school community
- All children are active global citizens

## Whole School Approach

Rights are universal and cannot be taken away: the main responsibility for ensuring that all children enjoy their rights lies with adults. All rights are equally important.

At Clarity Independent School:

- We adhere to and teach the Fundamental British Values across all school activities: Democracy, Rule of Law, Respect and Tolerance, Individual Liberty.
- All decisions are taken in the best interests of the children
- Children are given opportunities to lead aspects of school life
- Children are given opportunities to develop their knowledge and awareness of how they can have a positive impact on the world, now and in the future
- Children are encouraged to think critically, ask questions, express their opinions and learn how to learn
- Children are helped to master the essentially enabling skills of writing, reading, speaking, listening and maths, the general knowledge and skills required for living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, including useful traditional knowledge, the values of peace and democracy, and the acceptance of diversity.

## Leadership Responsibilities

- Learn about the UNCRC
- Respect UNCRC Article 29 (goals of education) - education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full
- Regularly monitor the implementation of this policy and evaluate the impact of the rights-respecting approach



- Develop and sustain a school policy, which gives an insight into the UNCRC and the work we do in the school
- Ensure parents are informed about rights e.g. through parents evening, the website and parent letters
- Ensure relevant policies are underpinned by the UNCRC when reviewed
- Ensure curriculum planning expectations incorporate a rights-respecting focus
- Ensure assemblies focusing on rights are carried out every half term and all other assemblies/ collective worship are linked to articles in the Convention
- Ensure displays are used to help children, adults and visitors learn about rights
- Ensure all displays in the communal areas of the school are explicitly linked to the UNCRC
- Develop and sustain systems that provide a platform for students to express their views in an honest and open way incorporating personal views and the collective views of peers.
- Inform the wider community about the UNCRC e.g. via links with other schools and the local church
- Work with other schools and communities, to share good practice
- Ensure that global citizenship and sustainable development guided by the principles and values of the UNCRC is a priority
- Ensures that curricular content responds to the learning needs of individual children as well as to the general objectives of the education system and the local context and traditional knowledge of families and the community

## **Staff responsibilities**

- Learn about the UNCRC
- Respect UNCRC Article 29 (goals of education) - education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full
- Provide an educational understanding of the UNCRC
- Model Rights Respecting language e.g. rights, respect, limiting, prioritising



- Ensure children's opinions and thoughts are sought, encouraged and respected in all aspects of the school's work.
- Encourage children to discuss rights-respecting issues that the world is facing and to make links between children in other countries and themselves.
- Teach e.g. Newsround, First News frequently and link events to UNCRC articles (as well as ensuring children know where in the world the event is taking place!)
- Develop a rights-respecting class charter (see rights-respecting charters section) as soon as possible in the autumn term every year and make reference to this on a regular basis.
- Use the principles of a rights-respecting charter throughout curriculum and social learning opportunities.
- Make links to the UNCRC throughout the curriculum in planning and general discussion
- Plan at least one Rights-Respecting School lesson every half term linked to any subject as appropriate and ensure the RRS lesson objectives are identified on the half termly planning overview
- Ensure mid-term planning makes clear in the Rights-Respecting School & Global Awareness curriculum area, what activities will be taught which reflect a focus on this area
- Mentor children in nominated roles of responsibility to share knowledge and provide a representative voice for themselves and their peers.

## Children's Responsibilities

The children's responsibilities are to:

- Learn about the UNCRC
- Respect UNCRC Article 29 (goals of education) - education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full
- Support and participate in whole-school activities
- Be actively involved in creating and following a class rights respecting charter
- Work with the staff and each other to create a Rights Respecting School

## Rights Respecting Charters

### Class Charters

Class Charters are created in a RRS charter lesson(s) as soon as possible in the autumn term and reviewed in the Spring term. They refer to rights and how they are respected by both children and adults in the class. The class charters are created in consultation between adults and children and identify the rights that are most relevant to the class together with the ways in which they will respect the rights. They must be displayed and be accessible to all. Each class charter must talk about children's rights and how they are realised/respected, not only by the children but how we, as adults, will also respect their rights. This is because Children are rights holders and adults are duty bearers. We have the main responsibility to ensure all children's rights are realised.

The charters have to be negotiated and agreed by the children and the adults in each class. They then become set guidelines so both the children and adults will know how to ensure the rights of all children are realised. The message of Growth Mindset and Restorative Justice is incorporated when deciding how the chosen rights will be respected (for example, using a mistakes board).

The lesson must start with a recap on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; this can be done by the class teacher or a child. Rights for the charters are selected from the UNCRC articles, a minimum of five, using the articles which the children think are most relevant. Class charters can be created by using a set of Wants and Needs cards as a discussion point about what rights are and which ones are the most relevant to class life.

The selected rights must have the relevant article number displayed. The display must also show the agreed actions (e.g. how the rights will be respected) and it must also show that everyone, children and adults, have agreed to the charter e.g. signed by all, hand prints, photos. The charter is regularly reviewed and agreed as a class. This is a good exercise when new children join the class, good for circle time or PSHE lessons.

Decide together as a class how to display the charter. The charters need to be displayed on a large display board where they can easily be seen, read and referred to from anywhere in the classroom. If a child, or adult, is not respecting a right then the charter should be referred to as a reminder of how rights are applicable to all. It is important to use the charter to acknowledge positive behaviour equally, if not more, than to acknowledge bad behaviour. This should continue throughout the school year, as stated in the Behaviour Policy.

Plans for the RRS class charter lesson and the charter displays are monitored by the Leadership Team.

The principles identified by the class charters will be used throughout the curriculum and social learning time to promote a Rights Respecting School.

## Voice of the Pupils.

It is vital for the successful running of the school that children get a chance to have their opinions heard (UNCRC Article 12). The school facilitates this in the following ways:

- Pupil Voice Box
- PASS assessment
- Anonymous Pupil Questionnaire (termly)
- 1:1 Wellbeing Sessions
- During relevant lessons and timetabled class transition time

The Pupil Voice Box is monitored weekly by the Deputy Head Teacher for anonymous suggestions from pupils, about improvements to daily school life and activities. Where feasible, these suggestions are actioned, or it is explained to pupils why a suggestion cannot be put into place unless a suitable alternative can be achieved.

The PASS assessment allows pupils to express themselves in relation to wellbeing in three main areas: themselves; their engagement with the curriculum; and their feelings about school. The results are monitored for patterns and progress to ensure that individual needs are being met.

The termly questionnaire has a Safeguarding focus that allows information to be gained about the pupils' experiences both in and out of school. This is monitored by the Deputy Head Teacher to see if targeted interventions and learning opportunities are needed to keep pupils safe and improve their wellbeing.

Pupils have the opportunity to participate in 1:1 sessions with a trained Wellbeing Therapist. This gives the pupils the opportunity to voice opinions about personal issues or issues affecting them in the school environment.

In addition to the above, selected pupils are nominated for positions of responsibility that could encompass a role of representing the pupil voice in a particular area. For example, the role of Head Boy who acts as a mentor for his peers and listens to their views before sharing those views with adults to accomplish change or support in a particular area.

This policy will be updated annually / every two years in accordance with relevant guidance and regulations.

Overall responsibility for this policy in **Clarity Independent School** rests with the Head Teacher, Debbie Hanson.



**Appendix 1. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is an integral part of what we do at Clarity Independent School:**

<b>School Ethos and Vision</b>	<b>Article 3 and 28</b>	<b>We have the right to an education</b>
<b>Healthy School</b>	<b>Articles 24 and 27</b>	<b>We have the right to the best possible health, nutritious food, clean water and a clean environment</b>
<b>Safeguarding</b>	<b>Articles 19, 21, 36, 39 and 37</b>	<b>We have the right to be kept safe</b>
<b>Developing thinking skills and habits of mind</b>	<b>Articles 28 and 29</b>	<b>We have the right to an education and to be the best we can be</b>
<b>Extra-curricular activities</b>	<b>Articles 15 and 31</b>	<b>We have the right to meet with friends, play and join with a variety of groups</b>
<b>Well-being and personal development</b>	<b>Articles 17, 23, 27, 33 and 34</b>	<b>We have the right to reliable information, play an active part in the community and a good standard of living</b>
<b>Parental support</b>	<b>Articles 5 and 7</b>	<b>We have the right to be cared for by our parents or another adult if we are in care</b>
<b>Anti-bullying, health and safety</b>	<b>Article 19</b>	<b>We have the right to be safe</b>
<b>SMSC / British values</b>	<b>Articles 13, 14 and 30</b>	<b>We have the right to express ourselves, think and believe what we want</b>
<b>Restorative practices</b>	<b>Articles 12, 17 and 36</b>	<b>We have the right to be heard, kept safe and given reliable information</b>