

Netherhall School

An Ambitious, Caring Community



Student Voice Policy

Adopted by Netherhall School Governing Body

On August 2023

Signed:  **Neil Watt, Chair of Governors**

Date by which the procedure was last reviewed: August 2023

Anticipated review date: August 2024

Equality Act 2010

Our school is committed to equality both as an employer and a service provider. We welcome our general duty under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. In addition, we recognise our specific duties to publish information every year about our school population; explain how we have due regard for equality; publish equality objectives which show how we plan to tackle particular inequalities and reduce or remove them.

We recognise our duty to ensure no-one experiences harassment, less favourable treatment or discrimination because of their age, any disability they may have, their ethnicity, colour or national origin, their gender identity or reassignment, their marital or civil partnership status, being pregnant or having recently had a baby, their religion or belief, their sexual identity and orientation.

We also welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion and British values.

Rationale

At Netherhall School, we place students' best interests at the centre of our decision-making. Students themselves are capable of expressing their best interests very articulately. We therefore take the views and opinions of our students seriously, and seek to provide students with the opportunity to express their views and to be heard by staff. As a result, student voice can be an important way of gaining feedback and information which can help the school to:

- decide on future actions for school improvement;
- exercise democracy;
- engender a sense of individual and collective responsibility;
- reinforce a sense of ownership;
- develop the notion of community.

Involving students in decision making has many benefits. Fundamentally, it is about recognising how much we value our students and the role they play in our school, and acknowledging the fact that, in many areas of school life, they are the experts and have the most current and relevant experience. After all, this is their school.

Student voice:

- encourages students to become active participants in a democratic society;
- helps students to recognise their importance in the school community and the contribution they can make to it;
- ensures students actively contribute to achievement and attainment.

Scope: We seek students' views on a wide range of areas of school life. These may include:

- curriculum;
- homework;
- assessment;
- safeguarding;
- behaviour and attitudes;
- personal development;
- SEN provision;
- pupil premium;
- leadership and management;
- extracurricular opportunities and enrichment;
- recruitment of staff.

The list is not definitive; student voice will also be sought on any other relevant aspect of school life, like for example in the past, the school uniform, school catering, PE kit, etc.

Approach: Student voice may take different forms:

Involving individual students: Netherhall School aims to provide all students with strong pastoral and academic support, involving a focus on individual student needs. They have the support of their teachers, form tutors and heads of year, who are the main points of contact in school. Regular dialogue takes place between students, staff and parents. Students and parents always have the opportunity to contact tutors, heads of year or any member of staff to provide feedback.

Student questionnaires: these allow the school to ask large cohorts of students for feedback.

Student Council: our school council consists of elected representatives from all year groups. Elections for the school council take place at the beginning of the academic year. To ensure that every students' voice is heard, each year group has its own year council; this is run by Mr Bailey, Deputy Headteacher, and there are two representatives from each tutor group. In addition to this, the school council also meets with disadvantaged students: SEND, PP and CLA representatives; with boys, with girls and with single gender groups: LGBTQ+, to ensure that all students have a forum in which they are able to voice any views they may have to further enhance the excellent experience they have during their time at Netherhall School. The student council takes place at least once every half-term. The minutes are collated and relayed by the Deputy Headteacher with a responsibility for student voice at the first SLT meeting at the start of each new half-term; thus, ensuring there is a direct link between student voice and SLT and that student voice is directly incorporated into school improvement. Minutes of the student voice aspect of the SLT meeting are provided to heads of year and the respective tutors by the Deputy Headteacher to feedback to their respective year group councils and tutor groups with the actions that will be taken in response to students' requests.