

# Considering pupils' views

## Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is:  
29 March 2010

Your comments must reach us by that date.

**THIS FORM IS NOT INTERACTIVE. If you wish to respond electronically please use the online or offline response facility available on the Department for Children, Schools and Families e-consultation website (<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations>).**

The information you provide in your response will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations, which allow public access to information held by the Department. This does not necessarily mean that your response can be made available to the public as there are exemptions relating to information provided in confidence and information to which the Data Protection Act 1998 applies. You may request confidentiality by ticking the box provided, but you should note that neither this, nor an automatically-generated e-mail confidentiality statement, will necessarily exclude the public right of access.

**Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.**

Name Lucy Thorpe  
Organisation (if applicable) NSPCC  
Address: Weston House  
42 Curtain Road  
London  
EC2A 3NH

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation please contact us via email: [pupilsviews.consultation@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:pupilsviews.consultation@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk)

If you have a query relating to the consultation process you can contact the Consultation Unit on:

Telephone: 01928 794888

Fax: 01928 794 311

e-mail: [consultation.unit@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:consultation.unit@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk)

Please mark an X in one box below that best describes you as a respondent.

<input type="checkbox"/> Primary School staff (please specify role in box below)	<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary School staff (please specify role in box below)	<input type="checkbox"/> Member of staff from other Educational Establishment i.e. nursery etc
<input type="checkbox"/> Governor	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent or carer	<input type="checkbox"/> General public
<input type="checkbox"/> Child or young person	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Organisation / Association (please specify in box below)
X Voluntary Sector organisation/charity	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify in box below)	

Please Specify:

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) is the UK's leading charity specialising in child protection and the prevention of cruelty to children. The NSPCC aims to end cruelty to children in the UK over future generations. In pursuit of our vision we will:

- create and deliver services for children which are innovative, distinctive and demonstrate how to enhance child protection most effectively
- provide advice and support to ensure that every child is listened to and protected.
- provide advice and support to adults and professionals concerned about a child and if necessary take action to protect the child
- work with organisations which work with children to ensure they effectively protect children and challenge those who do not
- campaign for changes to legislation, policy and practice to ensure they best protect children
- persuade everyone to take personal responsibility for preventing cruelty to children
- inform and educate the public to change attitudes and behaviours towards

children

- use our statutory powers as necessary to protect children.

### **NSPCC Strategy for involving children and young people**

The NSPCC has been committed to children and young people's participation in services, activities and governance since 2002. The NSPCC believes that safe and appropriate involvement of children and young people creates more effective services, activities and governance. Children and young people make a valuable contribution toward meeting NSPCC strategic objectives and furthering the aim of ending cruelty to children. The NSPCC is fully committed to the principles of the UNCRC, which we have adopted.

### **Our response**

In order to inform our response to the consultation questions, the NSPCC consulted with fifteen of the young people who make up our *Talk to Trustees* (TTT) participation group. The Talk to Trustees (TTT) group is a group of 18 young people aged 11 to 19 years old who meet three times a year to provide their views to NSPCC Trustees.

### **Additional comments**

In general, we consider that the proposed regulations are too narrow. The NSPCC considers that pupils can and should be consulted on a far broader range of topics. For example, the duty to consult with pupils should be extended to include functions relating to well-being, community cohesion, behaviour and discipline, educational achievement, safeguarding and special educational needs provision. Pupils should also be consulted about significant decisions which affect them such as proposed school closures and mergers, and proposed sales of school playing fields. Pupil views should also be used to inform school policies such as sex and relationships education and collective worship.

Q1) Do you feel it is appropriate for schools to invite and consider pupils' views before revising equality policies or schemes in the area of race, disability and gender equality?

If you feel it would be inappropriate it would be helpful if you could explain your reasons why you feel schools should retain the discretion on whether or not to consult.

X	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Sure
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Comments:

The children and young people we spoke to believe that it is important that they are consulted on policies and schemes relating to race, disability and gender equality. They felt that consulting with pupils about equalities policies and schemes can open up dialogue about equality issues and lead to better understanding and less discrimination. Young people think that by asking for pupils' views, schools will be promoting better understanding within the school, and by talking about these issues pupils will be more open-minded and more respectful of others.

With specific regard to race equality, the children and young people we asked all agreed that it was important they were consulted, but were clear that the consultation method that schools use would be important. Some children and young people had concerns about the maturity of their fellow pupils and being able to get sensible answers, and also spoke about how they wouldn't like it if they were just asked to fill in a form.

With specific regards to disability equality schemes and accessibility plans, the children and young people we spoke to felt that consulting them on these schemes and plans would increase their awareness about issues facing disabled young people, including the need for fair treatment. The young people felt that they should be given the opportunity to learn about the subject of disability before being consulted with as this would help them give a more informed view. One young person said that everyone should know about the rights in the Disability Discrimination Act so that they can respect them, and that this should be done early on so that young people keep the respect going through their life.

Q2) Do you feel it is appropriate for schools to invite and consider pupils' views before making changes to the times of school sessions?

If you feel it would be inappropriate it would be helpful if you could explain your reasons why you feel schools should retain the discretion on whether or not to consult.

Yes	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Sure
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Comments:

The majority of the children and young people that we spoke to thought that it was really important for schools to consult with pupils before changing the timings of school sessions. One young person said, "it isn't good to make changes around pupils' lives without the pupils being able to have a say on what will affect them. It's not fair".

Other children and young people felt that whilst it was very important that they be consulted, they understood that the final decision shouldn't be down to them. Some children and young people also spoke about how important they felt it was for their parents or carers to be consulted as well. This was because they knew it could have implications for childcare and because they were worried about the wider impact it could have on their family life.

3 Do you feel it is appropriate for schools to invite and consider pupils' views before agreeing their curriculum policy?

If you feel it would be inappropriate it would be helpful if you could explain your reasons why you feel schools should retain the discretion on whether or not to consult.

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

The response from the group of children and young people was very mixed, with slightly more young people feeling that they did not need to be consulted on the curriculum policy. However, many of the young people consulted did not have a clear understanding of what constitutes a school's curriculum policy. This would have to be clearly explained to pupils before effective consultation can take place.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

**Please acknowledge this reply X**

Here at the Department for Children, Schools and Families we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

X Yes  No

All DCSF public consultations are required to conform to the following criteria within the Government Code of Practice on Consultation:

Criterion 1: Formal consultation should take place at a stage when there is scope to influence the policy outcome.

Criterion 2: Consultations should normally last for at least 12 weeks with consideration given to longer timescales where feasible and sensible.

Criterion 3: Consultation documents should be clear about the consultation process, what is being proposed, the scope to influence and the expected costs and benefits of the proposals.

Criterion 4: Consultation exercises should be designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people the exercise is intended to reach.

Criterion 5: Keeping the burden of consultation to a minimum is essential if consultations are to be effective and if consultees' buy-in to the process is to be obtained.

Criterion 6: Consultation responses should be analysed carefully and clear feedback should be provided to participants following the consultation.

Criterion 7: Officials running consultations should seek guidance in how to run an effective consultation exercise and share what they have learned from the experience.

If you have any comments on how DCSF consultations are conducted, please contact Donna Harrison, DCSF Consultation Co-ordinator, tel: 01928 794304 / email: [donna.harrison@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:donna.harrison@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk)

**Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.**

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 29 March 2010

Send by post to:

Considering pupils' views  
Consultation Unit  
Area 1A  
Castle View House  
East Lane  
Runcorn  
Cheshire  
WA7 2GJ

Send by e-mail to: [pupilsviews.consultation@dcf.gov.uk](mailto:pupilsviews.consultation@dcf.gov.uk)