

Embedding children's rights across South Ayrshire schools

The implementation of children's rights has been incorporated within South Ayrshire Council and school improvement planning. Delivering children's rights work had been the responsibility of a Quality Improvement Manager but in 2022 South Ayrshire Council appointed a Children's Rights Development Officer part time, which was increased to a full time UNCRC and Equalities Officer (Strategic Lead) one year position in 2023.

Building a strategy

The Strategic Lead attends national meetings and shares information through weekly email bulletins to school contacts; they also update through the authority fortnightly bulletin and monthly professional learning newsletters. A Rights Authority Steering Group has been established to work on priority issues. A dedicated online space has been created to support the sharing of children's rights resources. The Strategic Lead supports the training of Rights Respecting Schools assessors and works with the Thriving Communities Team and services across the authority to build a wider strategy for the development of a youth voice process and a youth cabinet.

Professional learning and training

Professional learning sessions have been organised and delivered to early years, primary and secondary staff. Professional learning conversations have been organised to support staff with their UNCRC learning and Rights Respecting Schools accreditation journeys. Bespoke sessions have also been delivered to individual schools and clusters. At these sessions, school staff have been involved in evaluation activity of their whole school to consider the various practices and opportunities that they offer children and young people. This has allowed them to link their existing good practice to children's rights. This forms part of their self-evaluation process in relation to rights and identifies next steps for their improvement journey. Across the Regional Improvement Collaborative, work has started to develop and build a team of Rights Respecting Schools assessors. This will support sharing of learning and resources with a view to creating a wider Accreditation Assessor's network.

Impact of children's rights across schools

All South Ayrshire Council schools are part of the Rights Respecting Schools accreditation journey and gave positive examples of how rights were implemented across the curriculum and how pupils' views were gathered. Of the children and young people who were surveyed, almost all strongly agreed, or agreed, that they felt safe within school, and most felt that staff consider how they learn best, that their views were listened to and considered, and that they were treated equally.

Children's rights learning outcomes

Having staff with a specific UNCRC remit and a children's rights strategy has allowed South Ayrshire Council to support staff training in a children's human rights approach and work to ensure that children's rights are embedded in planning, strategies, and reporting.



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