

02 Getting Involved in the Wider Community

What is the wider Community?

All school councils will spend time discussing and dealing with issues within the school such as food, behaviour and facilities. Some are also concerned with things happening outside the school gates, as these will affect pupils who are themselves part of the wider community.

The wider community includes people who may not be directly involved with school, such as:

- Families of pupils
- Local residents
- Local businesses
- Other local schools
- Care Homes
- Community groups
- Police
- Local Council
- Member of Parliament

We can also look at the community in terms of issues, especially those concerning pupils. These include crime, transport, leisure facilities and the environment.

Why bother with getting involved?

In all areas, schools play a central role in their community and those within and outside the school can benefit from working together. The citizenship curriculum reflects the importance of schools engaging with the wider community, and many ideas for projects can be found within the schemes of work.

The reputation of a school will be enhanced through its pupils' involvement in community projects, and pupils can benefit from obtaining qualifications such as ASDAN awards, Millennium Volunteers or CSV.

How can the School Council help?

Effective school councils act as the mouthpiece for the whole school.

The school council can create a community subcommittee. This

smaller group, a few members of the council as well as interested students from rest of the school, will take the lead on developing how to get involved with the community.

Getting the picture:

A good place to start is asking people in school who they see as making up the community; and where in that community they would like to get involved.

Some ways this could be done is through class council meetings, assemblies and suggestion boxes, questionnaires or online polls. The school council can ask people from the community to run assemblies or talks to give people ideas.

Examples of issues to get people thinking are:

- Swimming pool or cinema too expensive
- Poor bus service, especially in the evening
- Bad street lighting
- Police harassing groups of young people
- Young people being treated unfairly by shopkeepers
- Fear of crime creating no-go areas
- Taxi drivers refuse to pick up young people

Putting ideas into action:

Once the subcommittee has decided what they want to achieve, they can make contact with relevant people. Writing letters on school council headed paper are a polite introduction, asking for a meeting to explore the areas where you can work together.

Some organisations such as the police may have a person dedicated to schools and education for you to contact. Research online will normally help you find the right person to talk to.

You may wish to ask members of the community to support the school. This can be done in a number of ways:

School Councils UK

108-110 Camden High Street,
London NW1 0LU
0845 456 9428
info@schoolcouncils.org
www.schoolcouncils.org



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Activity Guide

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- Collecting supermarket vouchers, drop off points for vouchers in doctors surgeries, child care centres or community clubs.
- Volunteers to help pupils with aspects of teaching and learning in school or homework clubs.
- Appeals for help with school facilities and equipment- check the school development plan for ideas about what is needed.
- Volunteering for community projects (many of these, e.g. Millennium Volunteers, need you to be over 16 years old)

As with all school council projects, effective meetings and action points mean that people know what they have to do, when they have to do it and how to do it.

Keep in Mind:

- To keep your link teacher up to date on all events. Don't forget that teachers, senior management, parents and governors should be consulted too.
- Its fun to be active! Find something you really care about in your area and make a difference – whilst having enjoying yourself and helping others.

The school can support the community in the following ways.

- Fundraising for local causes.
- Raising awareness in school, through newsletters or lessons- working with staff to find relevant curricula cross over with community projects.

Useful Contact Details

Volunteering	www.yearofthevolunteer.org (2005) www.timebank.org.uk
Neighbourhood schemes	www.bbc.co.uk/dna/ican www.communitymatters.org.uk
Other schools	School Councils Network. www.schoolcouncils.org
Members of Parliament	www.locata.co.uk/commons SCOTLAND www.scottish.parliament.uk/msp WALES www.wales.gov.uk/who/constit_e.htm NORTHERN IRELAND www.niassembly.gov.uk
Care Homes	www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/hss/index.asp
Local Council	www.nameofcouncil.gov.uk
Residents groups	www.tpas.org.uk www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk
Police	www.police.uk
Connexions	www.connexions-direct.com (England Only)
Local Initiatives	Regional Coordination Unit www.rcu.gov.uk
Healthy Schools	www.lhsp.org to get local contacts
Awards	www.millenniumvolunteers.gov.uk www.asdan.co.uk
Funding	www.awardsforall.org.uk/ www.volunteering.org.uk