

# Help Sheet

0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

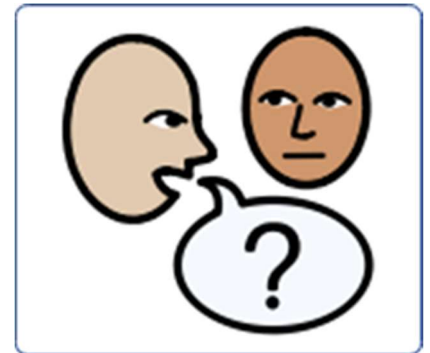
## Gathering Pupil Voice

### Why?

The 2015 Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice mandates that pupils' views on their educational experience should be sought and used to inform practice.

This is important because:

- it ensures that the pupil remains at the heart of discussions and planning for their needs.
- it informs what further support the child or young person may need and from whom.
- meaningful engagement, negotiation and interaction leads to more successful learning and positive social and emotional outcomes.
- it is an important element of developing a collaborative and inclusive environment.



### You will need:

- Time, ears and eyes are the main tools you need. Listen to hear, rather than listen to respond.
- Talking Mats are useful for pupils because they support language with a structured, visual approach.
- You can use art materials / playdough / Lego / puppets and toys / camera depending on your chosen method.
- Visual representation of the questions to be asked such as pictures, photos or symbols are useful.

### How?

Gathering student voice is an individual process; what works for one pupil may not work for another. For pupils with complex learning needs, creative approaches can be most effective.

Some ideas that may work are:

- Using a Talking Mat or other interactive visual resource for students to rate or sort symbols, pictures or words into categories.
- Using Lego / small world toys / modelling clay / collage materials etc to create a model of an 'ideal school' or 'ideal teacher'.
- Play a slideshow of photographs of the pupil at work throughout the year and watch it together. Record the pupil's responses to seeing themselves on screen.
- Incorporate the gathering pupil views for annual reviews into a PSHE Lesson where pupils interview each other.
- Use a 'worry monster' toy or puppet, for older children this could be made more age appropriate by replacing the 'worry monster' with an anime character or super-villain.
- Create 'a bag about me' containing a range of multisensory items that are meaningful to the pupil. Pupils can share the items of their bag with people attending the review.



### Things to note:

Communicating opinion is an important skill that requires regular opportunities for practice in order to develop. Pupil Voice is most meaningful, therefore, when embedded in daily classroom and school life.

### Reference / Evidence base – informed by:

Local Offer Tools for Schools, "Voice of the Child or Young Person", 2022 [Examples of ways to gather child or young person's views | Tools for schools \(local-offer.org\)](#)

Cameron, L and Murphy, J Talking Mats, A Resource to Enhance Communication. AAC Research Team, University of Stirling. [www.talkingmats.com](http://www.talkingmats.com)

Local Offer Tools for Schools, "Voice of the Child or Young Person", West Sussex County Council, 2023

[Promoting The Voices Of Autistic Children | University of Southampton](#), 2019