

Young people's report

AMPLIFY!

How to maximise young people's voices through your secondary school council.

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Comisiynydd
Plant Cymru
Children's
Commissioner
for Wales

We want every young person in Wales to know about their rights, and to experience their rights.

All young people have rights. They are written in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

One of the rights says that all young people should have a say in the decisions that affect them.

This means that all young people need to have the chance to share their views and be listened to.

In Wales, every secondary school must have a school council. This is one of the ways young people can have their say on what happens in school.

What we did and why?

In 2018 we asked almost 7000 children and young people to tell us if they felt they were getting all of their rights.

One of the things we learned is that children in primary schools, and special schools, felt **more able** to have their say in school than young people in secondary schools.

Our team, and our young people's advisory panel, decided it was important to find out what could make more young people feel like they were having their say in secondary school.

We did this by doing more surveys and meetings with pupils, teachers, and governors, and other groups across Wales.

What we found out

1. School councils are seen as an important part of all schools, and have made some great changes, like changing uniforms/menus, and making more sports and activities available.
2. Young people in secondary schools find school councils less valuable than children in primary schools. They feel less able to take part and have their say on decisions than children and young people in other types of school.
3. Being able to have their say, and feeling listened to, is good for young people's wellbeing.
4. Not all young people feel like they have the same chance to take part. For instance, young people who are LGBTQ+, disabled young people, and young people who are Black, Asian, or from an ethnic minority don't always feel like they have the same chance to take part.
5. Young people who aren't as confident with their school work or with their friends don't have the same chance to take part either.
6. Many young people feel that their school council isn't a part of anything bigger, and doesn't link up to other parts of the school community.
7. Pupils are not always chosen for the school council in a way that is they think is fair, or in a way that meets the rules schools should follow.
8. There could be better links between governing bodies and school councils. Every school has a governing body and their job is to make decisions about how the school is run. They consider all aspects of the school, like the rules pupils have to follow, and how the school spends its money. But not many

governing bodies explain their decisions to their school council. And not all secondary school governing bodies follow the rules that say that two pupils should be a part of the governing body.

Go to [our top tips](#) for giving more young people a say in school