

Student participation in educational decision-making: a route to wellbeing and beyond

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Part 1: Children's Participation as a human right



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Article 12(1)

UN Convention On the Rights of the Child

States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child,

the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.”



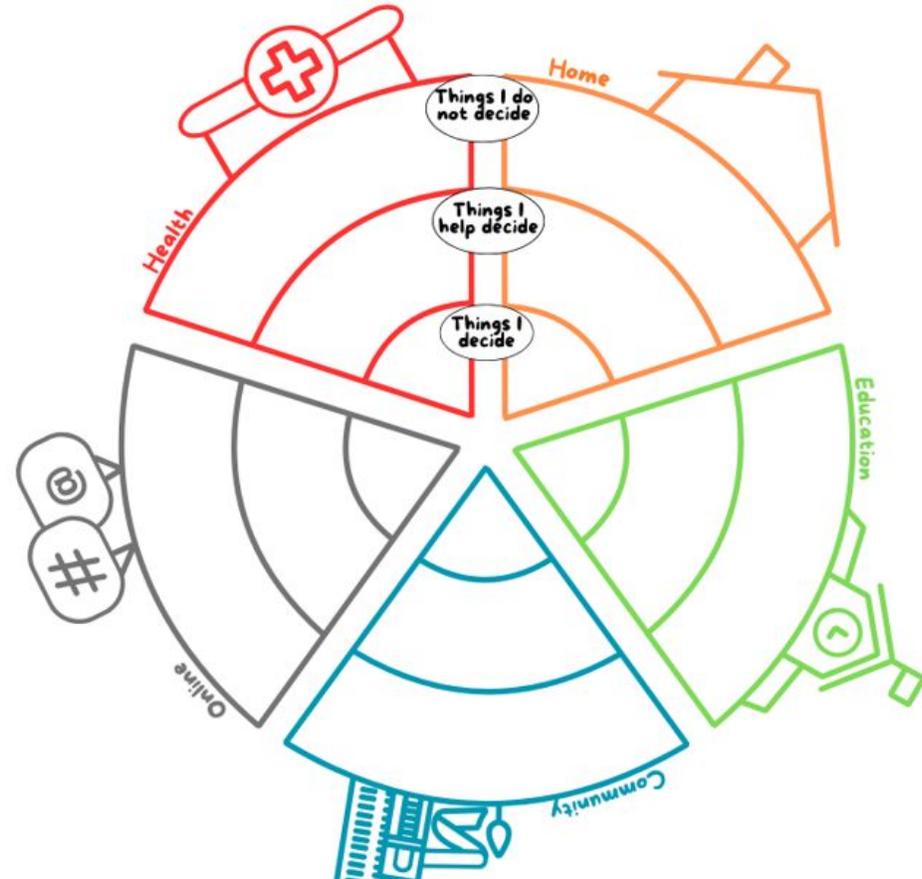
Article 7 (3) UNCRPD

States Parties shall ensure that children with disabilities have the right to express their views freely on all matters affecting them, their views being given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity, **on an equal basis with other children, and to be provided with disability and age-appropriate assistance to realize that right.**

Which decisions?

My Decision Wheel

Write and draw about decisions in your life





**A right of individuals
and
A right of groups of
children**

A right in itself and a means of realizing all other rights



Part 2: The benefits of child participation



**What difference
does it make?**





Child
protection

The impact on all aspects of education



Legal
Complying with the law

Moral
Affording dignity, equality and respect

Democracy
Learning through experiencing it

Inclusion
Understanding what children need from their perspective

Wellbeing
Enhancing a sense of belonging

Pedagogy
Providing more interactive learning

Curriculum
Making it relevant and engaging

Pastoral care
Keeping children well

Safeguarding
Protecting children from harm

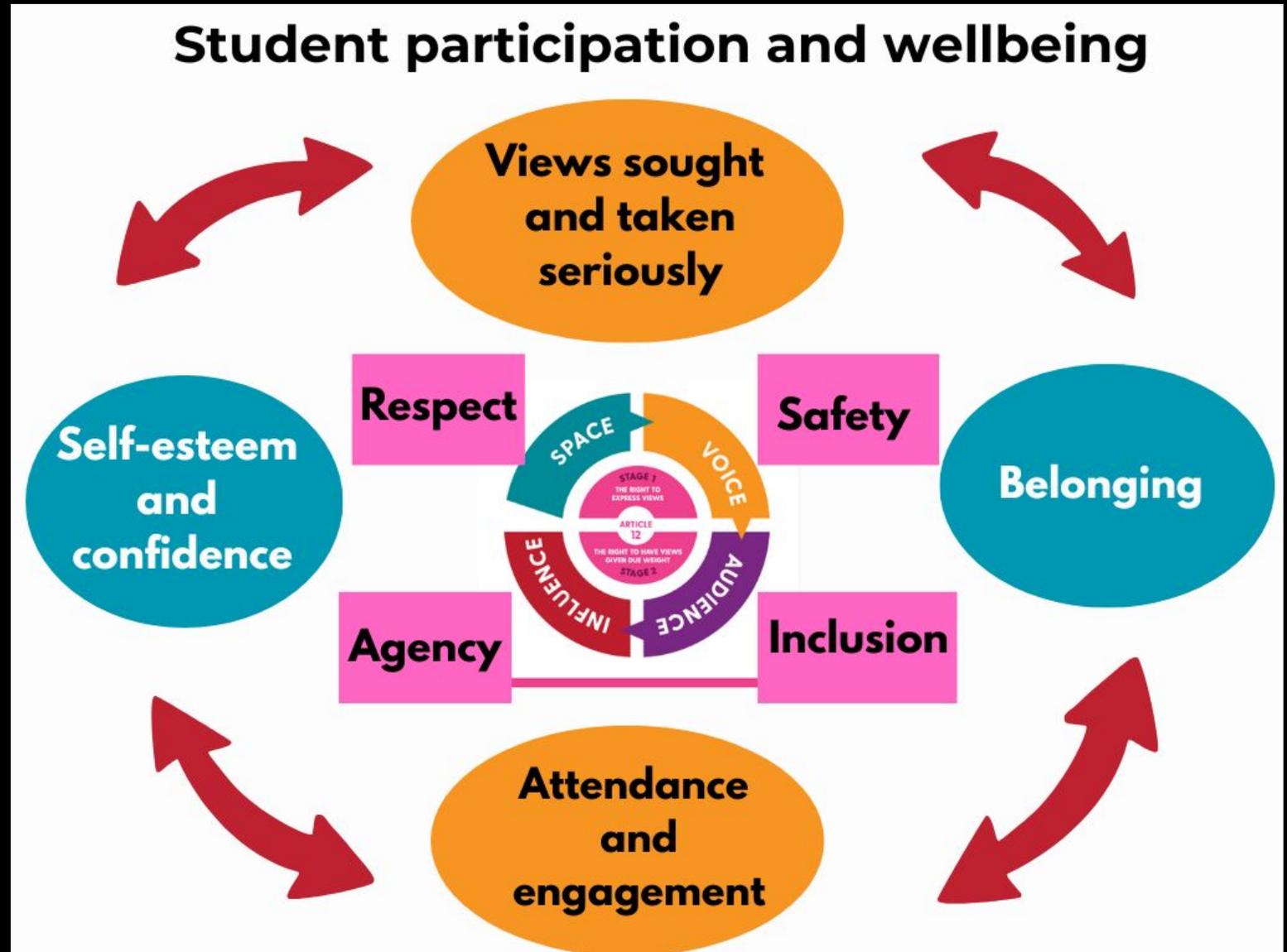
Attendance
Understanding what is needed to encourage regular attendance

Behaviour
Emphasising positive approaches

Personal development
Developing skills through participation

Attainment
Engaging and doing better academically

a virtuous
circle



Participation and well-being

‘Merely allowing students to express their opinions without having any impact on decisions and choices that are made is not enough to promote their wellbeing at school...if students express their opinions and then perceive that their opinions are not listened to or seriously considered when making decisions, then their wellbeing is not improved..

Anderson, D. L., Graham, A. P., Simmons, C., & Thomas, N. P. (2022). Positive links between student participation, recognition and wellbeing at school. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 111, 101896.

Part 3: The Lundy Model



... for Voice Inclusive Practice ...
[qut.edu.au](http://www.qut.edu.au)



the Lundy Model
ceforum.org



Laura Lundy on Twitter: "This is the ..."
[twitter.com](https://twitter.com/lauralundy)



del? Th...



Human Rights Law - Th...
blog.eera-ecer.de



WSA Enabling Student Voice ...
headstartkernow.org.uk



safety in violence research ...
our-voices.org.uk



What does Article 12 require?

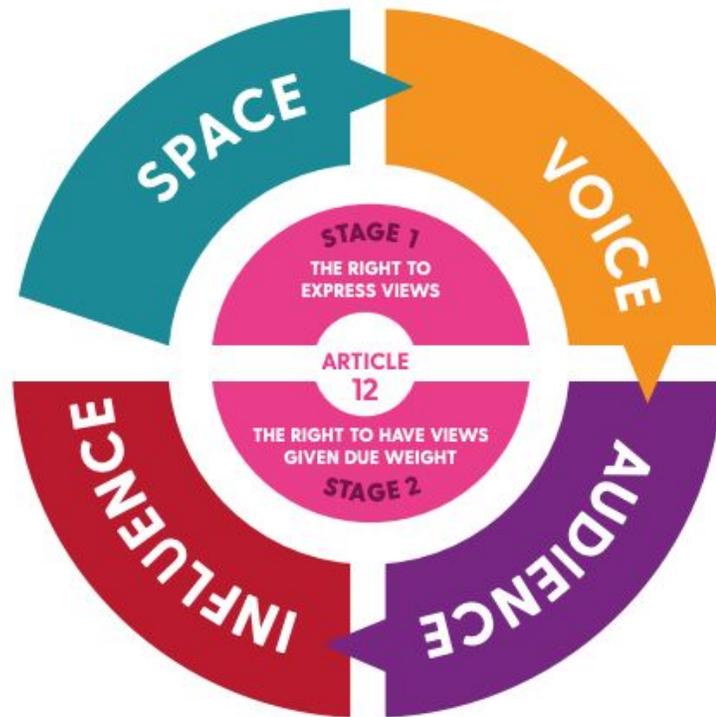
The Voice of the Child/
Student Voice?

The Right to be Heard?

The Right to Participate?

"Each of these abbreviations is an imperfect summary and can potentially undermine its implementation." Lundy 2007

This model provides a pathway to help conceptualise Article 12 of the UNCRC. It focuses on four distinct, albeit interrelated, elements. The four elements have a rational chronological order.

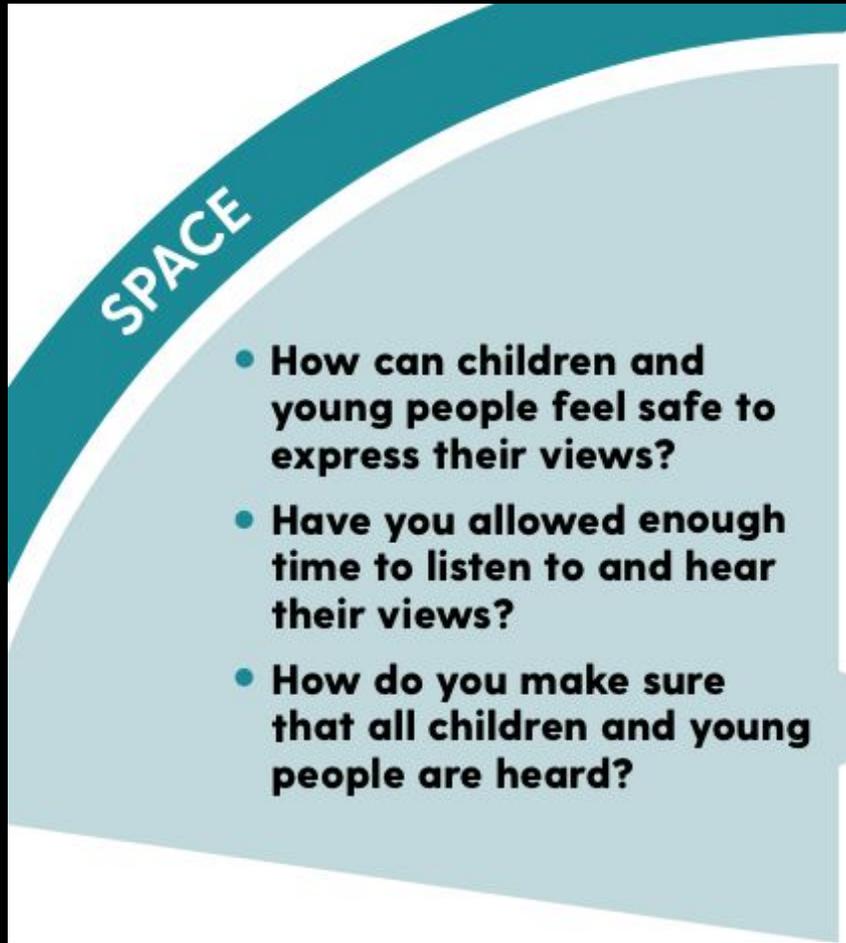


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- **SPACE:** Children must be given the opportunity to express a view
 - **VOICE:** Children must be facilitated to express their views
 - **AUDIENCE:** The view must be listened to.
 - **INFLUENCE:** The view must be acted upon, as appropriate.

- **Prostor (Space):** Dětem musí být vytvořena bezpečná a inkluzivní příležitost k vyjádření jejich názorů.
- **Hlas (Voice):** Děti musí mít možnost své názory zformovat a vyjádřit, přičemž je důležitá dobrovolnost a volba formy komunikace.
- **Publikum (Audience):** Názory dětí musí být vyslyšeny relevantními osobami s rozhodovací pravomocí přes oficiální komunikační kanály.
- **Vliv (Influence):** Názorům dětí musí být přikládána náležitá váha a děti musí dostat zpětnou vazbu o tom, jak byl jejich příspěvek využit.



SPACE



Actively created

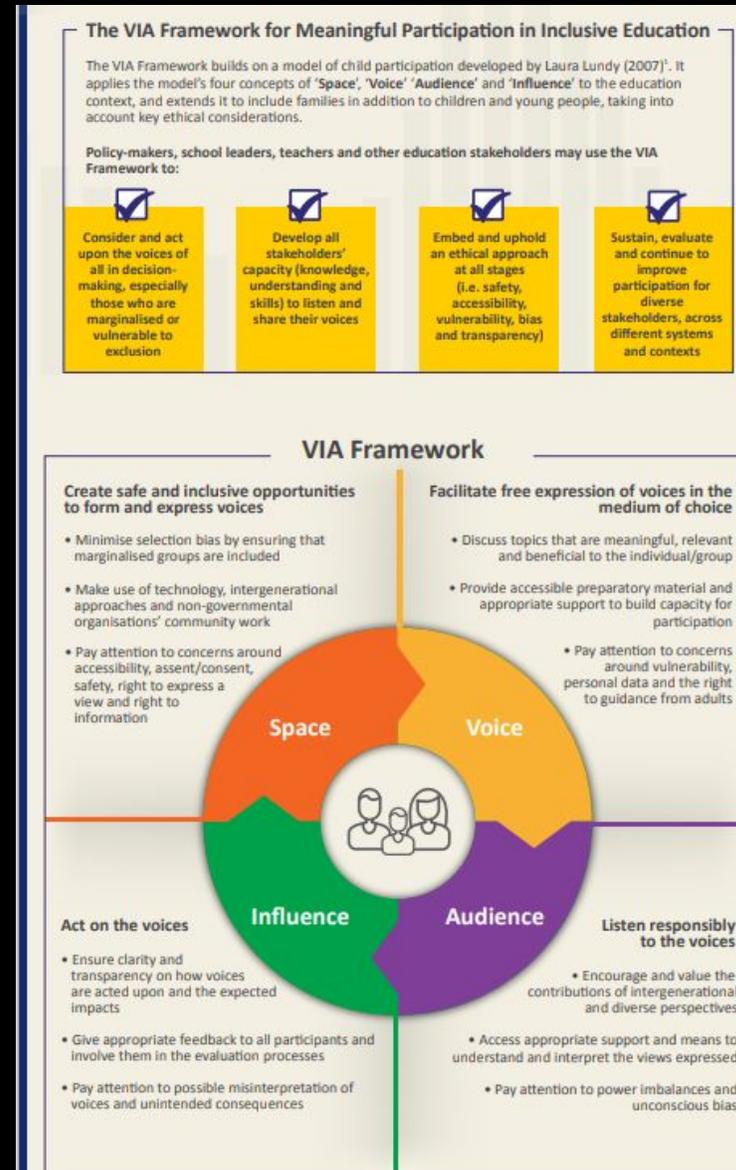
Safe

Inclusive

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education: Voices into Action



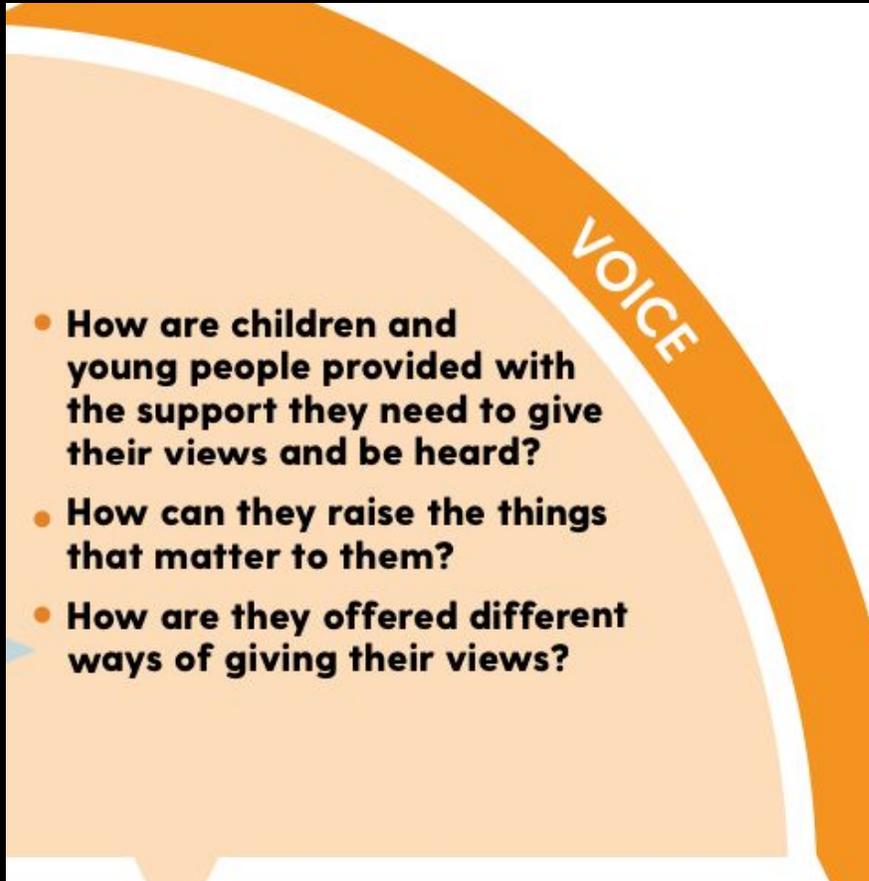
Voices into Action: Including the Voices of Learners and their Families in Educational Decision-Making



How can you include
'all children?' ...



VOICE



Voluntary

Choice in mode of expression

Supported to form and express views



EMPOWERING
CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN MALTA

Subject

Reason for contacting us...

Leave Audio Recording



Upload a Video



Send us a Drawing or a Picture



Give us your opinion

Share your thoughts here...

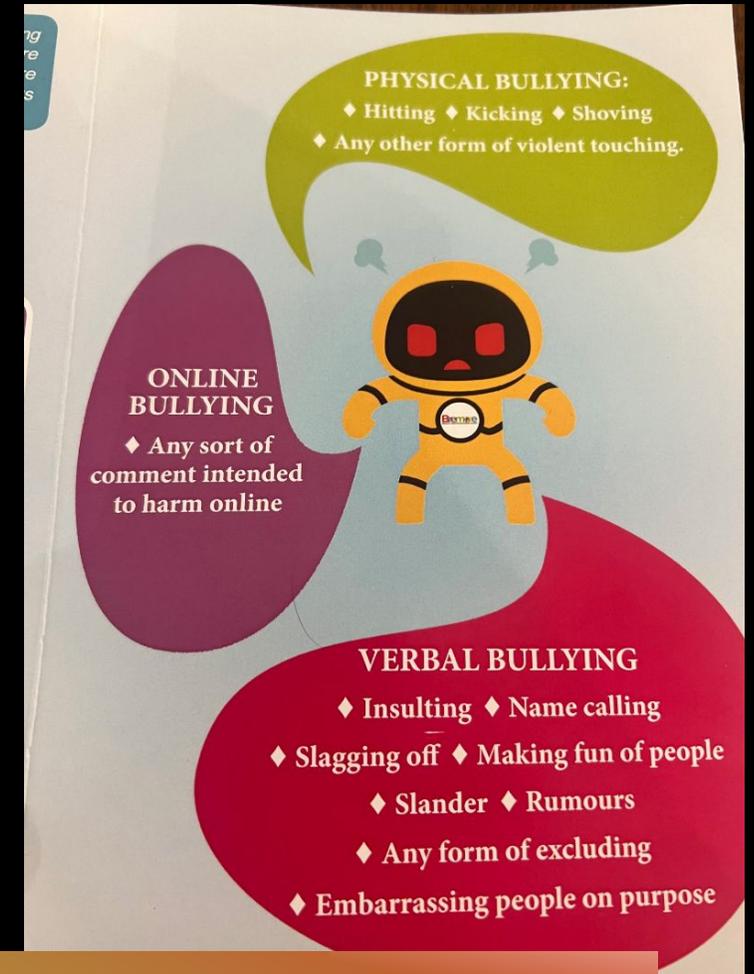
Submit Your Ideas



Emotional Support Chat



The right to Information is a pre-requisite



AUDIENC E

- How do you show that you are ready and willing to listen to children and young people's views?
- How do you make sure they understand what you can do with their views?

AUDIENCE

Active listening

All relevant
decision-makers

Formal channels of
communication

St. Aidan's

Community School

SPOTLIGHT

Programme

Student

Perspectives

On

Teaching &

Learning

In

The

Educational Space

*...where learners
are teachers
& teachers
are learners...*

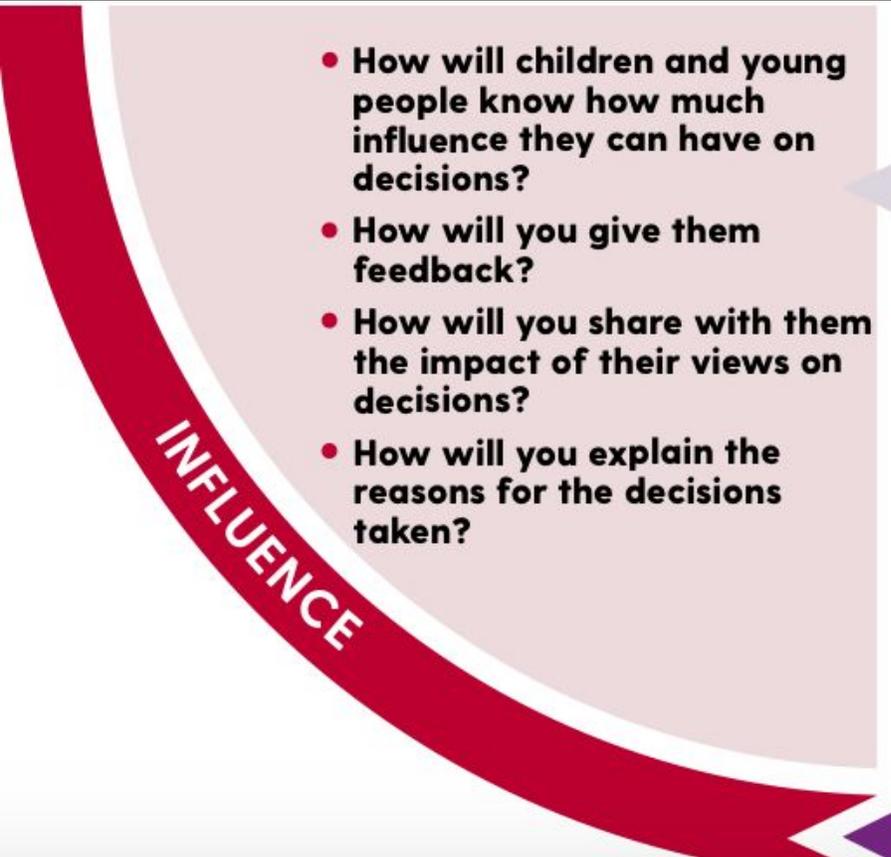


INFLUENCE

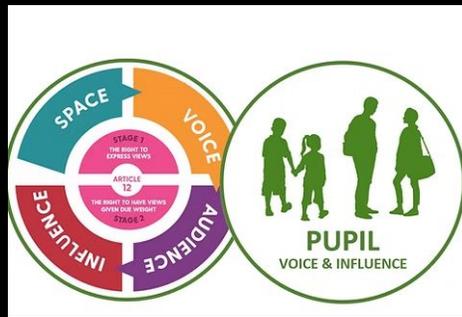
Realistic

Transparent

Feedback and follow-up

- 
- How will children and young people know how much influence they can have on decisions?
 - How will you give them feedback?
 - How will you share with them the impact of their views on decisions?
 - How will you explain the reasons for the decisions taken?

Thrive Trust: Pop up Parliaments and Voice Dashboards



Ireland's Department of Education: Student Participation Unit

Five recommendations

That the department builds on its understanding

01

This means that the department trains its staff so that they understand the need to ensure the participation of children and young people and that they understand how best to do so.

That the department develops its processes

02

This means that the department will have ways to support the participation of children and young people.

That the department communicates with children and young people

03

This means that the department communicates regularly with children and young people about what is happening in the department and the ways that children and young people have shaped this.

That the department promotes good practice

04

This means that the department promotes good practice in student participation that is happening internally in the department, in schools and by others involved in education.

That the department holds itself accountable

05

This means that the department develops ways for it to check that it is doing the work that it said it would.

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Making It Happen

The Department of Education will make the changes that the expert group advised. We have developed 50 actions that we are going to take over the next two years to do this. We have provided some of these actions below.



That the department builds on its understanding

01

- Staff who work in the department will be told how important it is to listen to the views of children and young people when developing department policy.
- Staff who work in the department will be trained so that they know how best to listen to the views of children and young people.
- The department will set up child and youth advisory groups to help it with its work to listen to the views of children and young people when developing policy.

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Part 4: Putting it into practice



Evaluation Checklist

This checklist is a guide for the self-evaluation and external evaluation of policies, plans, services, programmes, governance, research and legislation at national, local and organisational level.



Everyday Spaces Checklist

This checklist is designed as a guide to help you ensure that children and young people have a voice in decision-making. It can be applied to many everyday situations including those that occur in classrooms, childcare settings, and youth and sports clubs, as well as to activities conducted as part of youth projects, games, arts and creative initiatives.

do not use this checklist for developing policies, plans, services, programmes, governance, research and legislation – use the Planning Checklist on page 18.

please make sure that the ways you involve children and young people in decision-making are age-appropriate and accessible for all, whether in person or online.



Checking with children that they felt that their voice was listened to

Children and Young People's Online Feedback Form (for groups)

Boy Girl Other I don't know Age ____

Tick the number of stars you would give to everything below. Five stars is the best.

SPACE	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
I have been listened to from the start					
I felt comfortable giving my opinions					
I felt safe giving my opinions					
A lot of different voices were included					

VOICE	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
I got the chance to give my opinions					
I got enough information to help me give my opinion					
I got support to have my voice heard					
I understood what was being discussed					
I could give my opinions whatever way I wanted					
I had enough time to talk					

AUDIENCE	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
I know who wants to hear our opinions					
I know why they want the opinions of young people					
They were honest about what they would try to do with our opinions					

INFLUENCE	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
I know where our opinions are going next					
I know how we will be told about what happens to our opinions					
I think what we said today will be taken seriously					

Were you able to get onto the platform?

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Was it easy to use?

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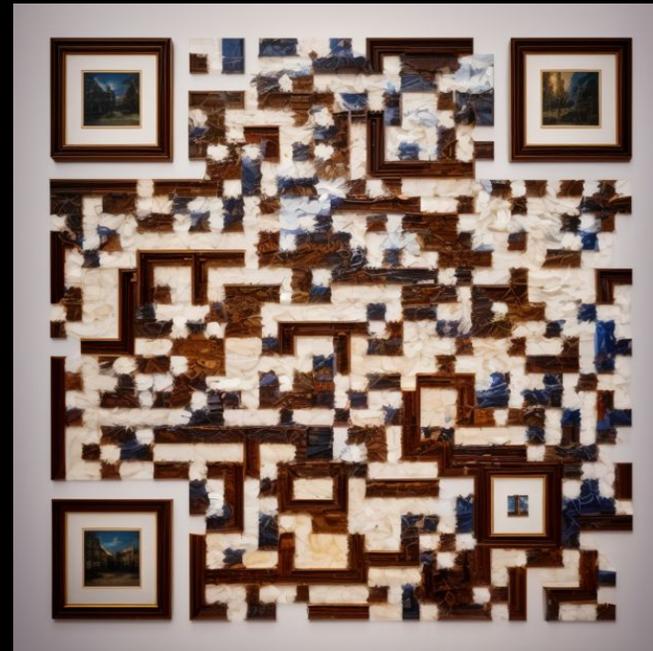
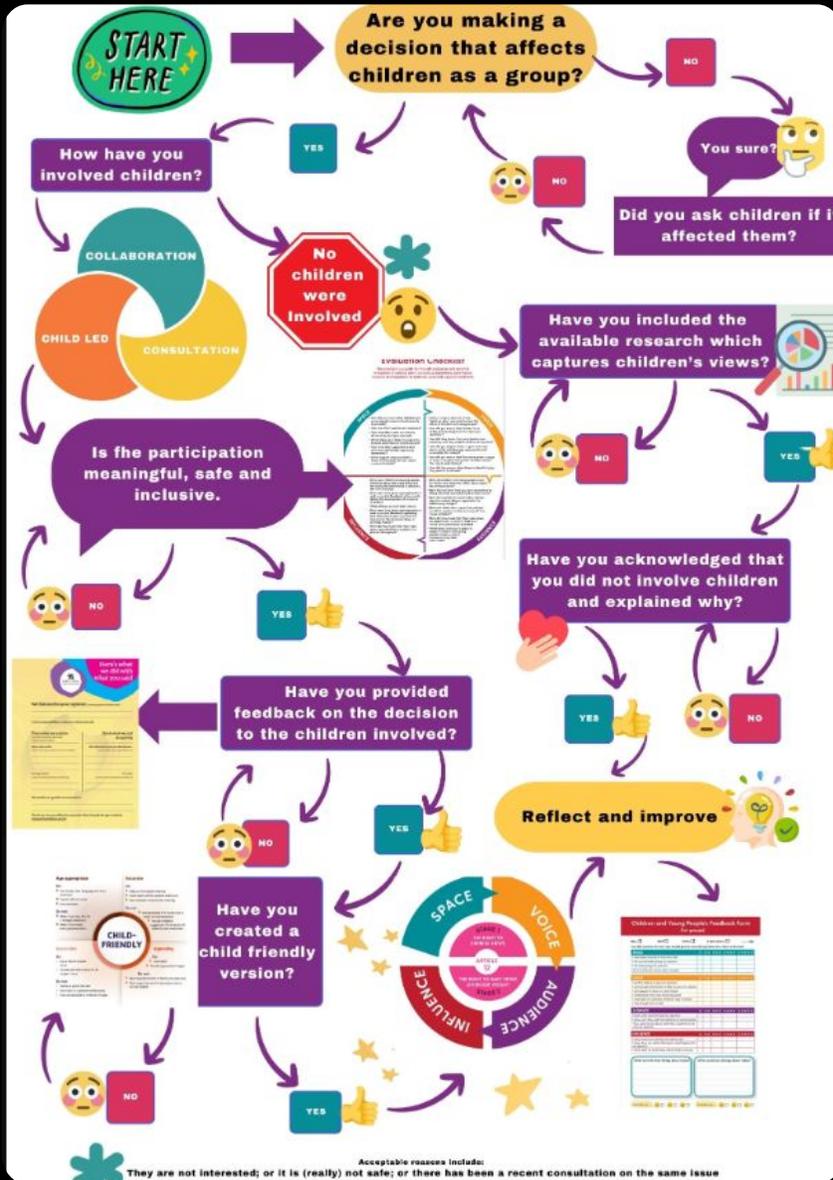
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The ONLINE SPACE was...   

Scan the QR to read the accompanying blog:



*“It’s not the gift
of adults. It’s
the right of the
child”*

(Lundy 2007)

