

Learner Participation

Learner participation (LP) is about children and young people having their voice heard when decisions are being made that affect their lives and being actively involved in the decision-making processes. This principle needs to be reflected in the culture and ethos of the whole school community and the systems that govern it.

The form that this participation takes, be it a **school council**, **pupil parliament** or **focus area committees**, does not matter. Participation can happen in many ways and the following award has been designed to allow for this variety of forms. What is important is that the structure is one that allows all children and young people to have their say and to be able to feed their ideas and opinions to a representative group who operate on behalf of all learners.

Whichever **Learner Participation Forum** you choose to operate within your school or college, for the purpose of these criteria, it will be referred to as a **LPF** and the pupils involved in it as **Representatives**.

This award is for **Learner Participation** across a range of education institutions; primary and secondary schools, academies and post 16 colleges. The children and young people in those institutions will be referred to as **learners** and the institution a **school**. The award can be applied across all Key Stages as it is awarded for **Learner Participation** and not project outcomes.

Learner Participation Awards

Assessment is over 4 levels; Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum and covers 4 key themes; LP procedures, LP links within the school, LP links beyond the school, LP projects

A school can attain Gold in its first year of registration so long as they have evidenced all criteria for Bronze and Silver.

The award is given at the end of the academic year for the work of the outgoing forum. The schools registration will remain 'live' for the following academic year and the school can either apply for re-accreditation at the same level with supporting evidence of activities over the year, or apply to progress to a higher level by providing supporting evidence. Platinum can be achieved after Gold has been held for a year.

The accreditation window is open from February half term to the last Friday before May half term. Successful schools will be notified after May half term and the awards presented shortly thereafter. Schools submitting evidence after this date, during the remainder of the academic year, can still achieve accreditation, but unfortunately will not be able to attend the award ceremony, which is organised to take place mid-June in New County Hall, Truro.

LP Procedures

	Bronze Award	Silver Award	Gold Award	Platinum Award
Voting	Representatives are voted for anonymously by all learners	Every learner has been taught what a manifesto is and has had guidance on how to write a one	Candidates present their manifesto to the whole school for consideration before LPF elections	Manifestos have considered the School Development Plan and the Learner Voice Questionnaire.
Equality	All representatives are equal and have the same chance to put forward their ideas	Older representatives support younger representatives in their participation in LPF matters	Older representatives act as Peer Mentors for Learner Voice and lead on whole school participation	Older representatives can demonstrate how they have widened participation during their time in office
Meetings	Whole LPF meetings are held at least once every half term	Whole LPF meetings are held at least once a month	LPF meetings are held at least once a month, with sub-group meetings in between	LPF meetings are held at least once a month, and sub-group meetings are held weekly to work on Focus Areas
Roles	The learners are working towards holding officer positions on the LPF	Officer positions are held by the representatives on the LPF	Officers lead assemblies giving information to the whole school about their roles	Officers provide an annual report to the school on their projects that year before a Learner Voice Questionnaire is circulated
Agenda	Learners have a say in the agenda of the LPF	The LPF agenda is mostly set by learners, in agreement with staff	Interested parties can be invited to attend a LPF meeting to put forward their ideas for a project	Agenda items are set and agreed by representatives and are available for comment from the whole school prior to a LPF meeting
Constitution	Ground rules have been established for the LPF	A written constitution, which has been agreed by all representatives, is in place	The constitution is displayed in every classroom	The constitution is embedded into all activities involving learner participation
Reporting	Representatives report back matters relating to LPF to the school and seek their opinion on LPF matters	Different methods/styles are used to discuss/report issues in the LPF and to gather the opinions of the whole school	The Learner Voice Questionnaire gathers opinions of learners on the effectiveness of the LPF to be used to develop an annual effectiveness report	The Learner Voice Questionnaire results in an Action Plan being drawn up to develop representatives practices the following year which is reported to the school community

LP Links within the School				
	Bronze Award	Silver Award	Gold Award	Platinum Award
Link person	A Link Person is appointed to support the LP and provide feedback to staff	The whole school community has a clear understanding of the role of the Link Person in relation to the LP	The Link Person will network with partner schools and share 'Best Practice'	The school is a Supporting School, and will assist learners and Link Persons from other schools to evidence partnership working
Communication	All matters discussed in LPF meetings are feedback to all classes via the class representatives. Class views are then gathered and recorded for reporting back next LPF meeting	There are different systems in place for all learners to report their opinions to the LPF	There is an opportunity to invite a guests to meetings to raise topics of concern – this can be organised on a rotational bases across the year groups	Classes are split into Focus Groups to discuss the agenda 'Focus areas' and feedback to the class representatives
Participation	Learner skills in participation are being developed within the curriculum	Learner skills in participation are being developed through class discussion of agenda items	Learner skills in participation are being developed by involving pupils in staff appointments	Learner skills in participation are being developed by contributing to School Policies
SMT	Senior Management support the ethos of the LP	The Senior Management support the LPF, and there are ways for them to report and respond to the LPF	The LPF is involved in contributing to the discussion of the School Development Plan	The LPF is involved in contributing to the actions of the School Development Plan
Time	An appropriate time and place is allocated for LPF sessions	A regular timetable of meetings is planned in advance and displayed appropriately	Designated timetable time is given to LPF activities	Designated timetabled time is given during the academic year the for whole school to contribute to LPF projects
Staff	All staff are aware of the LPF and their role in relation to it	All staff and governors receive training about LP	The LPF has clear links to the governors and their meetings	A governor is appointed to attend all LPF meetings

LP Links beyond the School			
Bronze Award	Silver Award	Gold Award	Platinum Award
Parents and governors are aware of the existence of the LPF	Parents and governors are regularly informed about the role of the LPF and its work	Parents and governors are invited to certain meetings to learn more about what the LPF does	Local councillors/MPs have attended LPF meetings and have provided some input into their activities
The Link Person is engaged with their Healthy Schools Delivery Advisor and receives LP training	The LPF has links to local schools, including secondary schools, which are supported by their Healthy Schools Delivery Advisor	The LPF has shared 'good practice' with other schools	The school is a Supporting School, and will assist learners and the Link Person from other schools – evidence of supporting at least 2 other schools during the academic year
The LPF is making links with the wider community	There are opportunities for communication between the LPF and the wider community	The LPF is actively involved in the local community	The LPF reports on projects undertaken with the local community

LP Projects				
	Bronze Award	Silver Award	Gold Award	Platinum Award
Information	There are opportunities for the LPF to communicate with the rest of the school(e.g. a notice board, in assemblies)	The LPF contributes to the newsletter, to inform all members of the school community about its work	The LPF have a designated area on the school website	The LPF promote their work through relevant media outlets
Budget	The LPF keeps a financial record and reports on it	The LPF has a treasurer	The LPF can show that it has achieved financially viable projects	The LPF is given a designated budget each year for LPF activities

Learner Participation Projects and shared decision making activities this academic year:

LP Procedures - Good Practice	
Voting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once the candidates have stepped forward the whole school takes part in a secret ballot • Manifestos could be anonymous – keeping the identity of the candidate a secret so representatives voted for on the strength of their manifesto not on their popularity • Votes are counted by learners under the supervision of the Link Person • Results are announced in an assembly
Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opinions to be sought from all representatives • Younger representatives to be supported with commenting on agenda items by having discussions before meeting to discover their views • Learner Voice could be a Focus Area with representatives continuously working on gathering opinions from all learners in the school in a variety of different ways • Every learner in the school chooses a Focus Area Committee to participate in discussions during class meeting times and have comments fed back to LPF
Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated timetable time should be given for LPF meetings • Class meetings to play a regular role in structure of the week • There is a designated LPF meeting room which representatives have access to during break and lunchtimes • LPF meeting room becomes the 'Hub' of Learner Voice
Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a Chairperson, Vice-chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer • Each of the Focus Area Committees has a Focus Area Lead • Training on the Role and Responsibilities of each officer position is given to representatives • The whole school is aware of the Role and Responsibilities of each officer position
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Areas could be key agenda points for discussion each meeting • Additional agenda items will appear as the need arises • As projects develop opinions from the whole school should be sought to be included in the meeting • Minutes to be kept, with details of: Item, Comment, Actions (these should be allocated to person, be time bound and measurable) • Minutes available for whole school to read
Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This sets out the roles and responsibilities of the LPF, the rules it will follow, aims of the LPF, rules for representatives and how they get to office and how long they remain and administration procedures • Re-enforces the democratic structure of the LPF • Demonstrates that the LPF is a worthwhile institution
Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open and transparent communication • Whole school can comment on LPF matters • LPF is working for and on behalf of peers • Annual appraisal of work of the LPF available for whole school community

LP Links within the School - Good Practice

Link person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This can be a teacher, TA, Governor or enthusiastic parent • They are there to facilitate the meeting not to run it • They have a clear understanding of how the LPF should be run and the roles and responsibilities of the representatives • They have contact with LPFs in other schools • They initiate joint projects and offers support to other LPFs
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All matters discussed in LPF meetings are communicated to the whole school • Comments boxes are available in every class base • Email accounts have been set-up to communicate with the LPF • Create your own school app for communicating with LPF • Involve learners as Learning Detectives/Roving Reporters on matters within school
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners and staff are aware of Children’s Right’s (UN Convention for the Rights of the Child) • Whole school focus on skills needed for communication: listening, being able to say what they think, negotiation, body language • Networking with other school to find how they listen to learners • Research National Children and Young People’s Participation Standards (www.cymru.gov.uk) • Create your own Children and Young People’s Participation Standards and display in every classroom • Have a Participation Policy in place • Include participation as a standard in your school’s reporting systems
SMT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a named member of SMT to champion Learner Participation • Member of SMT regular guest at LPF meetings • Involve LP in the School Development Plan(SDP) and the annual Self Evaluation Form(SEF) • SMT consult with LP on major developments – e.g. school uniform, new buildings and facilities
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocating designated timetable time demonstrates the importance that the school places on learner participation to both learners and staff • Create Drop-down days with a LP focus • Establish LP assemblies as a regular feature
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train all staff on the Role and Responsibilities of the LPF and their role in facilitating it • Have a designated Governor on LPF • Have Associate Learner Governors

LP Links beyond the School - Good Practice

- LP activities are regularly reported on in school newsletter
 - LP activities are on the school website
 - Parents/Governors attend the annual reporting of LP activities assembly
 - Ask local MP to inspire a LP project
 - Ask parents to inspire a LP project
- The school is engaged with Health Cornwall offers
 - LP is involved with generating evidence for a Healthy Schools Award
 - Joint LPF meetings are held either by other LPFs visiting the school or skype meetings
 - When at Gold Level the Link Person supports other schools to achieve Bronze/Silver
 - When at Gold Level the Link Person supports officer training in other schools at Bronze/Silver
- LP has researched community initiatives
 - LP has a community initiative as a Focus Area
 - Fundraising is undertaken by LP to support a community issue
 - Members of the local community are invited to LP events

LP Projects - Good Practice

Information

- LP activities are reported on in the school prospectus
- LP activities are reported on in annual Self Evaluation Form
- LP activities are reported to OFSTED
- LP is commented on in all reporting systems to parents

Budget

- The role of the LPF is valued by the school and this is demonstrated by the LPF having an annual budget for projects
- The financial report of the LPF is included in school budget reports
- The financial report of the LPF is communicated to the school and the wider community
- The LPF are involved in whole school budgetary matters