

Votes for Schools Policy

The Kassia Academy



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Rationale

At The Kassia Academy, we are committed to promoting pupils' personal development, citizenship understanding, communication skills and preparation for life in modern Britain. The use of the Votes for Schools programme supports these aims by providing structured opportunities for pupils to discuss topical issues, express their opinions and engage in democratic processes.

The programme contributes significantly to the school's Personal Development, PSHE, SMSC and British Values provision and supports the development of respectful, informed and articulate young people.

The aims of using Votes for Schools are to:

At The Kassia Academy we intend to promote pupil voice and active participation using a proactive median to encourage learners. We develop learners' understanding of democracy and citizenship and therefore encourage respectful discussion and debate. It helps support the development of oracy and communication skills which are predominantly delayed with the cohorts we receive through a myriad of reasons. We use it to support and increase awareness of current affairs and wider societal issues to also promote critical thinking and independent opinion. At Kassia it supports pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and reinforces the school's ethos and values of respect, inclusion and tolerance.

Curriculum Links

Votes for Schools supports and enhances nearly all areas of curriculum in some way and another of its cycles and the following curriculum areas:

- PSHE
- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)
- Citizenship
- SMSC Development
- British Values
- Safeguarding
- Oracy and Communication
- Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health

Weekly topics are selected to ensure they are age-appropriate, relevant and sensitive to the needs of learners.

Delivery

Votes for Schools sessions are delivered weekly across both key stages at Kassia. And can be used to supplement PSHE lessons or curriculum enrichment opportunities. Sessions typically follow a structured format. The starting point is an introduction to a relevant current issue or topic. Gathering and encouraging exploration of different viewpoints looking at pros and cons. The learner's then move on to a structured class discussion and debate, encouraging tolerance of other learner's views. It allows them opportunities for pupils to share opinions respectfully in an open forum style. Voting activities to gather pupil views, as though it was an official elective vote. Staff facilitate discussions in a supportive and inclusive manner, ensuring all pupils feel safe and respected when contributing.

Inclusion

All Votes for Schools sessions at The Kassia Academy are delivered in line with the school's safeguarding procedures and values. Staff remain mindful of:

- Learners' emotional wellbeing
- Sensitive or potentially triggering topics
- Protected characteristics and equality duties
- Appropriate language and respectful discussion

The programme is fully inclusive and adapted where necessary to meet the needs of pupils with SEND, SEMH needs and communication difficulties. This also ties in with the delivery across subjects of British Values as follows:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect
- Tolerance of different faiths and beliefs

The programme also supports pupils' SMSC development by encouraging reflection, empathy, moral reasoning and understanding of diverse perspectives to make Kassia pupils the best version of themselves they can be.

Monitoring

The impact of Votes for Schools is monitored through the pupil voice activities and the development of the issue through different perspectives. Lesson observations and learning walks/climate walks also support delivery with CPD from Steplab also supporting the structured sessions. Participation and engagement levels with completed sessions where they required different ways of recording. We also use pupil voice to see how it affects behaviour and wellbeing feedback from staff and learners. Leaders review the effectiveness of the programme regularly to ensure it continues to meet the needs of pupils and supports the wider curriculum intent.

Roles and responsibilities

At The Kassia Academy we ensure the programme aligns with the school's ethos and curriculum intent, we also monitor implementation and impact. At Kassia the emphasis is always on delivering sessions professionally and sensitively and promote respectful discussion and discussion and participation, following safeguarding procedures at all times.