

Cynghorau Ysgol Cymru School Council Wales

Secondary School Survey for 2017-2018

February 2019

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Summary and findings

In Wales, school councils have been a statutory requirement since 1st November 2006.

Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Training and Education in Wales inspects schools on their implementation of the regulations and effectiveness of pupil participation.

We held a survey for the academic year 2017/2018 and received returns from 104 secondary schools. This is an overall return of 50.49% from all 206 secondary or all through schools in Wales.

The survey was conducted through statutory Freedom of Information requests to all 206 schools. Thank you to all those who responded.

References below to secondary schools in Wales or pupils in Wales only include those who responded to our request (104).

When conducting this survey we found that,

1. Nearly all secondary schools in Wales have embraced participation and involve students in decision making.
2. Many secondary schools in Wales are compliant with the required number of meetings per academic year.
3. Many secondary schools in Wales are compliant with the requirement to allow the school council to appoint at least one member to the governing body as an associate pupil governor.
4. All secondary schools in Wales are compliant with the requirement to have at least one member of staff at meetings of the school council.
5. A majority of secondary schools in Wales have consulted at least once with their school council on the School Development Plan as required by the Education (School Development Plans) Wales Regulations 2014.
6. A majority of secondary schools in Wales, who use detentions outside of the school session time, have indicated that the policy of the school that detentions outside of the school session time form part of the measures available to the school has been promoted and communicated to parents as required by the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Participation

Pupil participation across Wales clearly embedded into every day school life and nearly all secondary schools in Wales have a school council.

Out of an available 97,937 pupils in Wales, there was 2,552 students elected to the school council in 2017/2018 (2.6%).

The number elected varied from school to school with the average being 24 students per school council. On average there was 932 pupils enrolled in every school with an average percentage elected at 2.5%.

Congratulations to **Maesteg Comprehensive School** who won the award for 'Highest number of elected pupils' with 104.

Meetings are a core part of participating in the life of the school council. By law, each school must hold a minimum of 6 meetings per school year. Out of the 104 schools who replied, 81 schools (77.8%) held 6 or more meetings.

The number of meetings varied massively from school to school with the average being 9 meetings per school council. The highest number of meetings was 60 and the lowest was 2.

Congratulations to **Hawthorn High School** who won the award for 'Most meetings in an academic year' with 60.

Represents all

A key element of a successful school council is that its membership is representative of the school who elected it. While we did not gather metrics on the gender and year group split of school councils, we did compare the number of elected student's vs the number of students on roll.

Congratulations to **Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn** who won the award for 'Most representative council' who achieved a representative rating of 12.36%

Another key element of representation is transparency. After looking at the responses from the 104 schools who responded, we looked at the transparency of their websites and information relating to their school council. While no metrics were gathered on this, a minority of schools chose to publicise on their website about their school council agendas, business and membership.

Congratulations to **Newtown High School** who won the award for 'Most transparent council'.

As part of the School Council Regulations, a secondary school in Wales must allow the school council to nominate up to 2 of their members from years 11-13 to be an Associate Pupil Governor. The governing body must also accept this nomination and has no right of veto.

Out of the 104 schools who replied, 89 (85%) of them had at least one student who was an associate pupil governor.

Consultation

A school can either embrace or ignore pupils but a successful school will build in pupil participation into their core functions such as development planning, self evaluation, teaching & learning and student wellbeing.

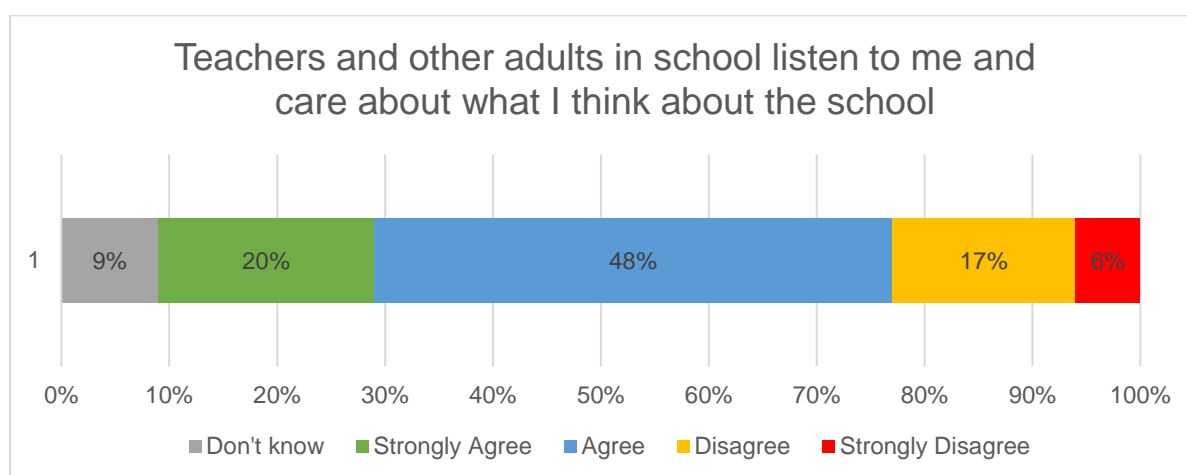
Schools in Wales are required by Regulation 9(b) of The Education (School Development Plans) (Wales) Regulations 2014 to consult with registered pupils at the school when preparing or revising a school development plan.

We found that 71 out of the 104 schools (68%) who responded had consulted their school council at least once regarding their school development plan.

Inspectorate

Estyn is a crown body established under the Education Act 1992 to inspect schools, pupil referral units and further education institutions in Wales. It is led by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales.

In core secondary school inspections conducted¹ in the academic year of 2017-2018, learner questionnaires are completed by a randomised percentage of the school. Estyn found that the question 'Teachers and other adults in school listen to me and care about what I think about the school' received a 68% positive rating².



Estyn also published a report into pupil participation in 2016 which they state that "Nearly all schools inspected between September 2013 and July 2016 fully comply with the school council regulations."³

It is very positive to see a large percentage of learners across Wales that agree that their secondary school listens to them and takes on board their suggestions as young people.

It is also encouraging to see that nearly all schools have reached compliance with the regulations but more work needs to be done to highlight to the ones who do not comply and to ensure they receive guidance and advice to resolve this. It is somewhat disappointing that after 10 years since the Regulations were in force that some schools are still not compliant.

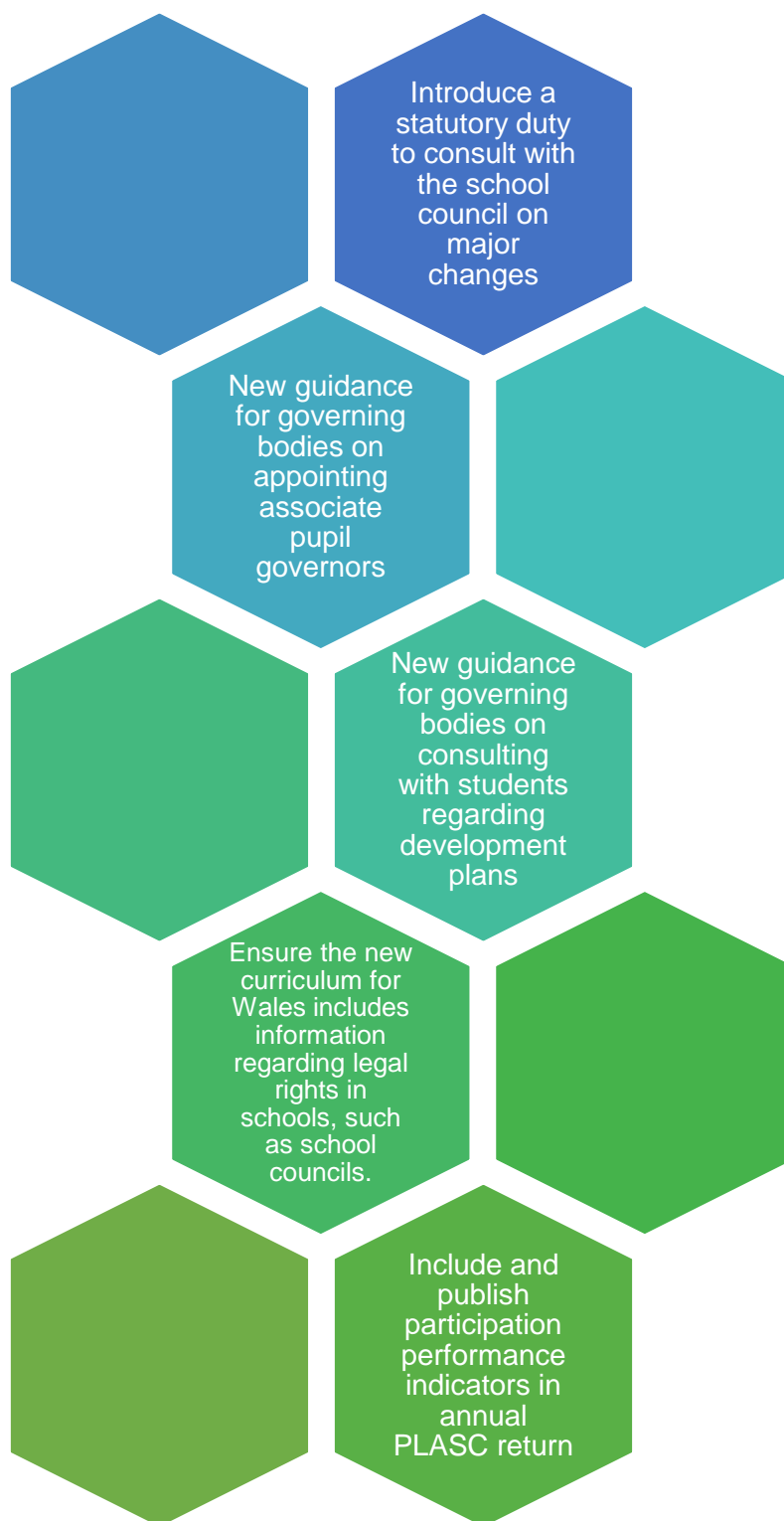
¹ Inspections conducted in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005

² <http://data.estyn.gov.wales/learner-and-parent-views>, Filtered by 2016-2017, Secondary, Learner, All and All

³ <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/Pupil%20participation.pdf>, Page 14 (Section 18)

Recommendations

School Council Wales, in light of the findings in the survey, call on the Welsh Ministers to;



Introduce a statutory duty to consult with the school council on major changes

We feel based on the data presented in this survey that while some schools do consult with their school council on major changes, teaching and learning and wellbeing this is not applied consistently enough across Wales.

We are defining major changes as a change in school category, change in sixth form provision, federation of the school⁴ and changes to school session times.

We are calling on the Welsh Ministers to amend the School Councils (Wales) Regulations 2005 to introduce the following;

Consultation by school and governing body

7A.—(1) The head teacher of a school, or Governing Body, must ensure that the school council has the opportunity to be consulted on major changes which apply to the school.

(2) “major changes” meaning any functions exercised under—

- (a) Part 3, Chapter 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013,
- (b) Part 3, Chapter 5 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013,
- (c) Sections 31A to 32C of the Education Act 2002.

New guidance for governing bodies on appointing associate pupil governors and consulting with students regarding development plans.

From the data collected in this survey, we feel that more schools should have associate pupil governors and feel that governing bodies and schools do not understand the statutory requirement to have them. School Council Wales have recently published guidance on associate pupil governors which can be found [here](#).

Further to this, the Welsh Ministers should advise and update guidance to schools and governing bodies that when making or revising School Development Plans that registered pupils at the school should be consulted⁵.

Ensure the new curriculum for Wales includes information regarding legal rights in schools, such as school councils.

We feel that pupils do not understand the requirements for a school to have a school council, to meet 6 times a year and to reply to any request from a school council. The new curriculum is a perfect opportunity to educate and remind students of these rights.

⁴ Now provided for pursuant to Regulation 6(3)(c) of The Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2014

⁵ Regulation 9 of the Education (School Development Plans) (Wales) Regulations 2014 (2014 No. 2677 (W. 265))

Include and publish participation performance indicators in annual PLASC return

In formulating this survey we found that some secondary schools decided not to respond to our Freedom of Information request for the information.

In light of this, we are calling on Welsh Ministers to;

- a) Amend the annual PLASC return to require information to be submitted relating to;
 - a. The number of students who were democratically elected to the school council,
 - b. The number of meetings held for the previous academic year to which the return applies,
 - c. The number of staff members who are appointed to supervise meetings of the school council,
 - d. The number of pupils elected as associate pupil governors,
 - e. The number of times that pupils had been consulted on the school development plan.

The Welsh Ministers could then use the appropriate data to examine and review the participation standards in schools against the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 and the National Participation Standards.

FOI Query

Below is a copy of the FOI query sent to schools.

Dear Sir/Madam

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, please can you provide me with the following information concerning your school:

SCHOOL COUNCIL (AS ESTABLISHED UNDER THE SCHOOL COUNCIL (WALES) REGULATIONS 2005)

- 1/ The name of your school council.
- 2/ The number of meetings held in the past academic year (2017/2018).
- 3/ The number of students elected in the past academic year (2017/2018) to the school council.
- 4/ The number of staff assigned to the school council in the past academic year (2017/2018).
- 5/ The number of students appointed by the school council to be Associate Pupil Governors in the past academic year (2017/2018) (required pursuant to Regulation 7(1) of The School Council (Wales) Regulations 2005).

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

- 5/ How many times during the past academic year (2017/2018) has the school council been involved in the publication of the School Development Plan (required pursuant to Regulation 9(b) of The Education (School Development Plans) (Wales) Regulations 2014).

STUDENT CONDUCT AND LEARNER TRAVEL

- 6/ How many searches of pupils have been conducted in the past academic year (2017/2018) (Searches of students for violent weapons pursuant to Section 550AA of the Education Act 1996).
- 6/ How many detentions during the past academic year (2017/2018) have been held outside school session time (after school detention).
- 7/ (If the previous answer is above 0) How many times during the past academic year (2017/2018) has the decision of the headteacher that after-school detentions form part of the behaviour policy been published (required pursuant to Section 92(3)(d) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006).
- 8/ How many times during the past academic year (2017/2018) has the statutory learner travel code been promoted to students (The learner travel code was established by the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008).

Please send me the data requested in the form of an Excel spreadsheet or as a csv file using the template provided.

If you need any clarification then please let me know.

Many thanks for your assistance and I hope you have a lovely Christmas,

Data

While we are not publishing the entire return from every school, we have collated some general statistics.

Number of schools surveyed	206
Number of FOI returns	104
Number of pupils included in return	97,937
Number of elected pupils in return	2552
Number of meetings in return	1037
Number of assigned staff in return	237
Number of associate pupil govts in return	192
Number of times SDP consultation in return	105
Number of pupil searches in return	373
Number of detentions outside session in return	19,796

Local Authority Breakdown by FOI response

(The number of schools who responded within the local authority area)

Isle of Anglesey	2
Gwynedd	4
Conwy	6
Denbighshire	4
Flintshire	9
Wrexham	4
Powys	8
Ceredigion	5
Pembrokeshire	2
Carmarthenshire	9
Swansea	8
Neath Port Talbot	3
Bridgend	5
The Vale of Glamorgan	1
Rhondda Cynon Taf	5
Merthyr Tydfil	2
Caerphilly	5
Blaenau Gwent	1
Torfaen	3
Monmouthshire	3
Newport	5
Cardiff	10

Total = 104

Local Authority Breakdown by pupil participation ratios

(The combined ratio of elected student's vs on roll of the schools within the local authority area)

Flintshire	36.39%
Powys	35.25%
Ceredigion	25.28%
Cardiff	25.11%
Gwynedd	23.16%
Carmarthenshire	19.95%
Rhondda Cynon Taf	17.60%
Wrexham	17.11%
Bridgend	16.63%
Newport	16.63%
Swansea	14.98%
Denbighshire	13.55%
Merthyr Tydfil	12.35%
Conwy	11.95%
Caerphilly	11.62%
Neath Port Talbot	9.95%
Monmouthshire	9.42%
Torfaen	5.58%
Isle of Anglesey	5.45%
Pembrokeshire	4.23%
The Vale of Glamorgan	1.55%
Blaenau Gwent	0.97%