

Trust Student Council Conference at Saltash Community School on 22nd May 2024



Executive Summary

- All schools were represented well. Excellent maturity and focus led to a productive debate. Thanks to the Saltash council members and Saltash staff for this.
- Discussion 1 – Group agreed on the importance of Rights of the Child including:
 - o Respecting yourself is crucial because it promotes mutual respect.
 - o Lack of respect from others makes it difficult to respect them in return.
 - o Everyone has the right to express their opinions.
 - o Equitable treatment is essential; it's better for everyone to be treated equally rather than favouring one person.
- Rights will be improved through.... Better use of student councils, aligned to British Values. Conducting an annual student survey which student council present back to the Head.
- All students supported rewards systems. House systems supported. Points better where they have real currency or a real perk (such as early lunch). A cap on numbers to keep their value.
- Pupil's feelings of identity and ownership would be improved by... Clearly defined agreed rules and behaviour system showing stages (like diamond rules in Dobwalls). Also, greater consistency and virtual tour of the school on the website. SECRET skills used to motivate.
- Dobwalls now have their Bronze award Rights Respecting Schools, the others in process.

Attendees

Mr Evans, Miss Frances, Olivia, Evie, Billie, Ava, Neythen, Luna, Eden, Arthur, Yasmin, Lucca, Charlie, Alfie, Logan, Brandon, Sam, Anoushka, Harriet, Megan, Orlando, Joe, Fleur, Erin, Aeryn, Jacob, Millie, Cody and Charlie.

1. Introductions

- Mr Evans introduced himself and Miss Frances to the group. He outlined the timetable for the day's activities.

2. Warm-Up and Icebreaker Activities

- Miss Frances led the group in warm-up and icebreaker games to engage the students.

3. Treasure Hunt

- Students participated in a treasure hunt designed to collect letters that spell out the word "RIGHTS".
- Emphasis was placed on the importance of rights being respected at school.
- Kothman was victorious!

4. Discussion on Rights

- House teams were asked to discuss the meaning of "Rights" and provide examples.

Key Points from discussions:

- Respecting yourself is crucial because it promotes mutual respect.
- Lack of respect from others makes it difficult to respect them in return.
- Everyone has the right to express their opinions.
- Equitable treatment is essential; it's better for everyone to be treated equally rather than favouring one person.

5. Break Time

- The group took a break and enjoyed pasties.

6. Debate Preparation and Lesson Drop-Ins

- Mr Evans introduced the debate preparation session, noting that it would be more of a discussion rather than a formal debate.
- Reading materials were circulated by Miss Frances for context and to help the students start their preparation.

Topics for Consideration

Student Rights:

- Definition and protection of student rights.
- How student rights are currently protected.
- How they could be better protected at school.

Rewards Systems:

- Evaluation of the effectiveness of reward systems at each school.
- Discussion on how reward systems function in the school and suggestions for improvement.

School Identity:

- Exploration of the school's identity, including house systems and values.
- Consideration of how to respect everyone's rights within the school community.

- How to build school identity.

The group then split into two activities:

- Some students went on a tour.
- Others began their debate preparation.

7. Debate Session

- Mr Evans thanked the groups for their productive round table discussions observed during his tour around the room.
- Mr Evans explained the format for the debate session, with all students seated in a circle according to their schools.

Chairs: Charlie and Joe.

Debate Procedure:

The chairs would ask each school to comment on the three topics posed earlier:

1. Student Rights
2. Rewards Systems
3. School Identity

Schools were encouraged to either agree and extend or present counterarguments to the points raised.

Note Taker: Cody was responsible for taking notes during the discussion.

Student Rights

- Trewidland: Emphasised the right to free expression, stating it is a valuable right but acknowledged limits.
- Landulph: Agreed with Trewidland but noted there are limits to free speech.
- Liskeard: Highlighted issues with toilet access and the use of toilet cards and sanctions.
- Saltash: Added that there are restricted times for toilet use, aligning with Liskeard's concerns.
- Trewidland: Reiterated the importance of having your voice heard.
- Other rights discussed included the right to education, the right to be respected, school holidays, the right to vote, right to express yourself, right to be safe and not subjected to war, right to be cared for, and the right to be looked after.

Suggestions for Better Protection of Rights

- Use of student councils.
- Aligning with British values.
- Presenting concerns to Head Teachers.
- Conducting and refining student surveys to allow for additional comments.

Rewards Systems

- Landulph: Described a house point system with a party for the winning house and personal rewards for when your personal shape is full on the classroom wall.

- Trewidland: Mentioned Dojo points with weekly rewards. Tokens for team colours awarded if students are seen demonstrating school values, leading to rewards.
- Dobwalls: Discussed team colours and tokens awarded if students are seen demonstrating school values, leading to rewards. Reward systems should not be taken too far e.g. rewards cannot be too ambitious (students choosing school trips etc.).
- Looe: Mentioned house systems and platinum rewards.
- Liskeard: Highlighted the merit system with certificates awarded (Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum) and extra rewards from some teachers. Liskeard would like a house shop, similar to Saltash rather than the certificates, or lunch passes, food rewards (pizza, donuts), Rubik's cubes etc. Students feel more privileged and rewarded and feel they are being noticed.

Suggestions for New Rewards

- Looe: Have a house point shop with sports equipment but would like more rewards that can be used outside of school. Positive views on the Year 7 team building day at Adrenalin Quarry.
- Saltash: Have a 'Golden Ticket' lunch pass which works well. There is a cap on how many can be awarded each time.
- Liskeard: Improved recognition for students with high merit points.
- Dobwalls: When a student reaches 50 Dojo points, receive a lunch pass or a small break. They would also like 'external prizes'.
- Landulph: Introduce a lesson skip (once a term) that can be used before or after a break or lunchtime.
- Liskeard: Would like to improve the house system. It is now only used for sports day.
- Saltash: Explained they run lunch clubs such as karaoke club, library quizzes, inter-house sports events each term to give students the opportunity to earn more house points

School Identity - if I went to your school how would I know what your school is all about?

- Dobwalls: Diamond rules displayed in every classroom.
- Looe: School motto displayed in school reception. The behaviour system is also displayed, showing the stages but noted that some students abuse it to get out of lessons. Saltash agree with this.
- Liskeard: School values displayed around the school.
- Landulph: School values display board at school.
- Trewidland: Displayed Dojo points and values in classrooms.
- Saltash: Banners and posters promoting values, motto and houses displayed across the school.

What would you change to make it better?

- Trewidland: Emphasised the importance of consistency.
- Dobwalls: Discussed SECRET Skills, highlighting how these motivate the students.
- Looe: Mentioned the introduction of the new school website, including a virtual tour by the Head Teacher initiated during COVID-19.

8. Rights Respecting Schools Presentation

- Mr Evans introduced Saltash students who would present on Rights Respecting Schools (RRS) and gather ideas from the other schools.

Key Points:

- That the programme is created by UNICEF, consisting of 42 rights.
- Emphasis on the collaborative nature of the programme within the school community. Schools can sign up for training on the UNICEF website.
- The programme has four stages: Bronze, Silver, Gold and Sustaining Gold.
- The process can take several years.

Benefits of Becoming a Rights Respecting School:

- Highlighted the importance of starting by understanding students' perspectives on lessons.

Landulph advised they have their Bronze Award and started by discussing one or two of the rights in their assemblies and were invited to give feedback.

Challenges Set by Mr Evans:

- Achieve Bronze by Christmas 2024.
- Students to deliver an assembly to the entire school on RRS, providing leadership experience.

Final Remarks

Miss Frances: Emphasised the importance of student involvement in driving change.

Mr Evans: Thanked everyone for their input throughout the day and the Saltash students for their presentation.

Conference closed at 12.50 p.m.