



St Paul's School
FOUNDED 1509

Hearing the Pupil Voice: Arrangements within St Paul's to listen to pupils

Author/reviewer responsible:	DHP	ISI Code:	7
Reviewed by:	HoMS, Ho8, various Exec	Date of last review:	08/23
Authorised by:	SM	Date of authorisation:	08/23
Applicable to:	SPS	Date of next review:	08/24

This policy is available on the Handbook page of the School Intranet and policies page of the School website and can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required; such requests can be made by email to policyquery@stpaulsschool.org.uk

The School recognises its moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued and to always consider the best interests of the child. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice. We operate within a culture of openness and recognise and accept that abuse can happen in any organisation.

1. Tutor groups

Boys meet with their Tutor groups and Tutor daily each morning for registration and on Friday afternoons each week. The Tutor group is a place where boys are encouraged to discuss all matters informally with other (usually including older) pupils and

their Tutor. Stated objectives of 'Tutor Time' that are consistent with the concept of listening to pupils include:

1. Creating a purposeful environment where uninhibited, respectful, non-hierarchical engagement with one another is promoted.
2. Tutors getting to know their tutees to enable them to tailor advices and support appropriately.
3. Promote inter-year socialisation and integration – building relationships.
4. Build a whole-school sense of community
5. Foster inclusivity. From this, create an environment of trust in which serious issues can come to light.

2. Captains of School and Pupil Leadership Team

An informal Pupil Leadership Team around the Captain and Vice-Captain of School is designed to allow U8th pupils to work together to ensure considered, successful and smooth operation in the many responsibilities senior pupils have within the school. This Team will look at year- long (and beyond) priorities as well as being a useful sounding board for the Captain of the School on other day-to-day matters.

Upon their election, prefects are invited to take on a number of leadership roles, or to put forward a form of leadership that they would wish to be involved in. These include:

- Mentoring the operation of the younger year fora
- Representatives with specific areas of responsibility (*whilst this list is likely to evolve, it might include, diversity, environment, sports, arts*).

ROLES AND FUNCTION

This informal leadership team:

- Seeks to represent the views of the pupil body as a whole.
- Takes the lead in school-wide pupil voice initiatives.
- Manages and coordinates the pupil voice bodies and mechanisms (including IT systems) across the school.
- Takes a supportive role with the work of the Year Fora (see below).
- Supports all pupils in having their voices heard.
- Reports back to the pupil body on the progress of initiatives, and any matters of concern that have been raised.

The Captain and Vice-Captain of School will meet weekly with the Surmaster and Head of Eighth Form on operational matters. This will be an opportunity to feedback on the day-to-day operations of their team, share important developments, discuss and agree strategy, discuss and lead the work of the Year Fora (see below). It is suggested that the Captain of School chair this meeting, with the Vice-Captain as secretary.

They will also meet regularly with the Head of Pupil Voice. This will allow them, in consultation with other prefects and staff leaders, to agree the agenda for subsequent Year Forum meetings and review feedback from the School Council. This will also allow Whole-School Consultations to be initiated and reviewed. The Head of Pupil Voice will act as a link between this body and the wider Pupil Voice structure to SMT.

SELECTION AND TRAINING

- Prefects. Staff and pupils are asked to recommend students; these recommendations together with a pupil's record of conduct and service across a number of school areas is taken into account in a meeting of senior staff.
- The Captain and Vice Captain of the school. Prefects selected in the first tranche are invited to submit an addition application for either Captain, Vice Captain or both. Pupils are then interviewed by the High Master, Surmaster, Deputy Head Pastoral and Head of Eighth Form.
- Membership of the informal Pupil Leadership team is voluntary, based on each individual prefect's desire to lead in different aspects of school life. Where additional committees run selection processes, these will be overseen by the relevant member of staff.

SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR EFFECTIVE STUDENT LEADERS

- Early in their tenure, the Captains of School will set their strategy for the upcoming year.
- In Autumn and Spring, the staff Head of Pupil Voice will consult staff leadership about areas they might wish for pupil consultation. These will be reviewed by the Captains of School and then circulated.
- At the end of each term, the Captain of the School will write a report on Pupil Voice giving a summary of actions and outlining next steps. This will be distributed via email, google classrooms and the intranet.
- Steps taken to ensure a high visibility for the Captain of School and prefect team, as well as to give their work appropriate status and value:
 - Introducing the Captain of School as part of a whole-school assembly.
- Photos of the team and information about their specific roles advertised on the intranet and on a designated board in the Atrium.
- Members of the Team to lead assemblies to all year groups at least once a year (if not more); regular virtual assemblies on relevant matters.
 - Via briefings shared in tutor times
 - Via their role with the different year-group fora (see below).

3. Formal Pupil Voice Structure: School Council and Year Fora

The School has a formal Pupil Voice structure, overseen and encouraged by the Head of Pupil Voice (who is line-managed by the Heads of Section). The structure comprises two layers:

- **Year Group Fora.** Each year group has an elected forum that will discuss matters arising and matters brought forward from the pupil body or by staff. Each Year Forum has eight members, each democratically elected, one from each House. Each meeting is attended by either the Head of Pupil Voice, a Head of Section or an Undermaster.
- **School Council.** Two members from each Year Forum will attend the full School Council. This body conducts any major whole school pupil consultations.

3.1 School Council

The School Council consists of two elected representatives from each Year Fora and is designed to pull together the feedback from pupils in all years. As such, the School Council is the body consulted when staff from various areas of the school are looking for student feedback. The meeting is chaired by the Captain/Vice Captain of the school.

ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

The School Council is uniquely placed as a cross-year council of students. The School Council:

- Provides an opportunity for pupils to raise concerns, questions and ideas from their year group and discuss actions with peers from all years in the senior school.
- Provides a mechanism for the Captain of the School to hear feedback from all years and pass feedback via Year Representatives to Year Fora.
- Takes a lead role in the communication and discussion of Whole School Consultation agendas and feedback as well as the feedback from other consultations.
- Is the body of pupils who will be consulted if staff are keen to get feedback on a specific area of the school (e.g. catering). The consultation meeting will follow school-wide communication and subsequent Year Forum meetings and thus allow School Council Representatives to lead informed discussion and offer feedback.
- Provides an opportunity for pupils to develop leadership skills by working with their peers.

SELECTION AND TRAINING

Pupils are selected from the Year Forum to represent their year at the School Council. These elections are run within the Year Forum, where pupils can put themselves forward for this additional role. Where more than two pupils put themselves forward, candidates will be asked to speak to why they would like the role and what they feel they can bring to the role and all members get to vote. There is also some precedent for rotating responsibility.

SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETINGS

School Council meetings will run less frequently than Year Fora meetings and are designed to pull together feedback. They will generally run twice half-termly. They are chaired by the Captain/Vice Captain of the School and attend by the Head of Pupil Voice who will be able to report to SMT.

3.2 Year Fora

Each Year Group in the school will be represented by a Year Forum that will meet regularly across the year. They receive mentoring from a prefect, who will also facilitate two-way dialogue between each year-group and senior pupil leadership. Year Fora will also be consulted by the Whole School Council (and send two members to attend it)

ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

- Each year group to have a Forum that represents comprised of 8 members, one from each House. These Year Fora:
 - o Represent the views of the pupils in their year group.
 - o Provide a forum for pupils to raise concerns, questions or ideas.
 - o Act as part of an ongoing dialogue regarding pupil voice initiatives, sharing the views of the pupils in their year group and updating their peers on the progress of initiatives.
 - o Widen opportunities for pupil leadership and participation in pupil voice.
 - o Help to prepare pupils for more senior leadership roles in the School.

SELECTION AND TRAINING

- Forum Members will be elected by their peers for a term of one year. To encourage a wider group of pupils to participate, pupils will not be permitted to hold these positions in consecutive years, unless they are the only candidate.
- Year Forum members will be given some preparation and training for their role. A clear job description will be produced, and some training delivered on running their individual meetings, their role in decision-making, and how best to feed information both up to the Pupil Councils and back down to their peers.

YEAR FORA MEETINGS

- The Year Fora will meet once a fortnight to discuss any issues arising from their year group. The relevant Head of Section or the Head of Pupil Voice will attend these meetings which will be lead by a pupil chair and secretary (assisted by a prefect mentor and the Head of Pupil Voice).
- Each Year Forum will have an assigned prefect who will mentor the group, and also provide two-way dialogue with the pupil leadership team.
- Before each whole-school consultation, all pupils will have a chance to meet with their Council Member and discuss the upcoming agenda. This will involve:
 - o School Council representatives feeding back from the School Council Meeting where the agenda will have been discussed. They will update them on the progress of initiatives, and talk them through the agenda for the upcoming meeting.
 - o Year Fora agendas are published in the intranet for all pupils to read. All pupils will be invited to feedback and share their ideas through a variety of mechanisms including, tutor discussions; google form questionnaires; meetings with representatives.
- Council Meetings will follow the above, and will aim to feed these discussions in to a whole year-group view.
- Following the Whole School Council meetings, there will be a meeting of the Leadership Team, which will aim to synthesize the views of the different year groups in to a

summary of the view of the whole pupil body. Minutes from this meeting will be published on the intranet. These minutes will also be taken to the next meeting of the SMT presented by the Head of Pupil Voice.

3.3 Direct Mechanisms

- Pupils are consulted regularly about various aspects of school life; including the biennial Whole School Consultation, but also direct surveys on various matters. The mechanism for school-wide consultation is usually a combination of tutor-based discussion based on circulated questions and a google form response. This feedback is then discussed through Year Forum and then School Council meetings.
- Pupils are also aware of their Year Forum members as well as the pupils from other years and the Captain and Vice-Captain of School. Information about pupil leaders is on the intranet and displayed around the school.
- For every day maintenance and site related reports, there is a 'Helpdesk' system. This system allows reports of (e.g. broken taps) to be reported and this is directed to a member of staff in a position to resolve the issue. As part of each Year Forum meeting, any such issues raised can be helpdesked.
- Pupils can anonymously contact the safeguarding team via the online safeguarding reporting platform Whisper.
- The school is looking to make the most of digital platforms and will continue to review what is available in order to enhance the functionality and effectiveness of digital tools.

4. Teachers

Teachers at St Paul's are expected to listen to pupils and to take seriously, and act appropriately on any concerns they may have. All teachers at St Paul's are given training in safeguarding and child protection as part of induction which is regularly refreshed, in line with Richmond Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) guidance. This includes guidance and advice on listening to children and what to do if a child wishes to disclose to a member of staff. All staff are required to read the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures, which provide further guidance in this area.

5. PSHE

The PSHE programme provides opportunities for boys to raise concerns, either via the forum of the class itself or specifically at the end of a class with the teacher or via the online feedback forms.

6. School Counsellors

Two professional counsellors are retained by the school to provide a confidential counselling service for any pupils at School who wish to see them. Pupils may make an appointment by seeing the School Nurse or booking via the Wellbeing pages of the intranet.

7. Independent listener for boarding pupils

Boarders at St Paul's are advised on arrival and reminded regularly of the provision of a school-designated 'Independent Listener'; a suitably qualified, vetted volunteer, who is not employed by the school, that pupils can raise concerns with. Contact details are provided to all boarders and made known on notice boards in School House.

8. School Chaplain

The School Chaplain is available to all pupils (and staff) of all faiths and none as a source of pastoral support. The Chaplain is trained alongside the Teaching Staff in safeguarding and child protection. Additionally, the Chaplain attends the school boarding house/s each week to give regular pastoral support. Pupils are able to book to see the Chaplain via an email address, or an office drop-in. The Chaplain also has a ministry of presence, proactively being available around the school, and noticing how pupils are acting, particularly being able to pick up on negative body language and ask if they are OK, and whether they need to talk.

9. Raising awareness of internal and external sources of support

The School makes clear to all pupils, via the homepage of the intranet and in assemblies, and advertised widely around the school, that if they are worried, they can seek support from a parent, a senior pupil or friend, their tutor or a trusted teacher, their Undermaster, a member of the pastoral leadership team, the DSL or any of the Deputy DSLs, a school counsellor, the Deputy Head of Wellbeing, the School Chaplain, Childline/NSPCC, the Samaritans.