

Communicating with school staff and students

Overview

The activities support students in communicating with staff and students.

Learning intentions

- Students understand rights and responsibilities of student voice.
- Students develop confidence communicating ideas with other students and staff

Resources

- UN Convention of the Rights of Children:
<https://www.unicef.org.au/Upload/UNICEF/Media/Our%20work/childfriendlycrc.pdf>
- 'Communicating with staff and students' handout

Activity 1: Rights and Responsibilities

Instructions

- Read to students, Article 12, UN Convention of the Rights of Children:
'Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them and to have their opinions taken into account.'
- Invite students to comment on this statement: prompt questions might include:
 - Why do you think this right is needed? Can you think of situations when children might not experience this right?

Depending on available time and room resources, watch the Advocate for Children and Young People 'Child Rights Educational Video at <https://www.acyp.nsw.gov.au/child-rights-educational-resource>

Note: this video runs for 9minutes and include Child Rights (Articles 2, 3, 6 and 12.)

- Propose the statement, **We all have rights, but rights also come with responsibilities** and ask students to comment. They might like to use an example or share a scenario to explain.

- Give everyone a copy of the ‘Communicating with school staff and students’ handout to read.
- Ask students, ‘Based on our discussion,
 - are there any rights or responsibilities that should be changed or removed from the lists?
 - are there other rights or responsibilities that should be added?
 - are there situations when the rights or responsibilities might not apply?’ For example, students might suggest that a person’s age might impact on their rights and responsibilities.
- Expand the discussion to consider how ‘respect’ for others relates to our rights and responsibilities. Ask the students how respect can be displayed, for example, during student leadership team meetings. Students may comment about taking turns when speaking, actively listening, and addressing people by their name etc.

Activity 2: Role play

Instructions

Explain to the group the next activity involves role play to illustrate communication skills and the responsible use of their student voice.

- Choose two people to role-play the following scenario (don’t tell the rest of the group what the scenario will involve).
 - Student A role: is an excited student who has what they think is an amazing idea to have a “crazy sock day” - students wear crazy socks and donate a pair of socks to homeless people. They haven’t made a project plan for the idea, and haven’t made an appointment to see the deputy principal (or year advisor). They rush excitedly into the deputy’s office but become annoyed when the deputy principal asks questions and says he/she will think about it.
 - Deputy principal (or year advisor) role: the Deputy is in the middle of something important when student arrives. They can see they are excited but have trouble understanding what the proposal is about. They ask a few questions before saying they’ll think about it as there are 5 other fundraising activities on this term.
- Ask the student audience to comment about the scene: what did they notice about the student’s preparation and delivery of their idea?
- Choose two other students to role-play a second scenario:
 - Student B role: is excited about a proposal for a ‘crazy sock day’ to donate socks to the local homeless support centre. They have made an appointment to see deputy principal (or year advisor) and asked the front office to print a list of student led activities for the year. Looking at the school calendar, they can see some date options that don’t clash with school events. They have made a draft poster to advertise and have spoken with the

charity and front office staff about how to collect and bank the money. They arrive at the Deputy's office and when invited in, calmly outline their proposal.

- Deputy principal (or year advisor) role: listens, asks questions to clarify before saying they will think about it as there are 5 other fundraising activities on this term.
- Ask the student audience to compare their observations of this scene with the previous: what did they notice about the second student's preparation and delivery of their idea?

Debriefing questions

Discussion: What are the differences between the two role play scenarios? What actions did the second student do prior to presenting their proposal? Which student was aware of their responsibilities? What other information would be useful for presenting to the deputy principal?

Concluding comments

We all have rights such as having a say in decisions that matter to us, and along with our rights, come responsibilities. We need to be mindful of this when communicating our ideas or when working with others, including during our team meetings, or in our classrooms and across the school. Rights and responsibilities also apply in the wider community as well.

Along with the list on the handout and the additional rights and responsibilities discussed, we also have a responsibility to present our ideas as effectively as possible.

As student leaders, you will put a lot of effort into developing and refining ideas and planning projects. You owe it to yourselves to present these ideas as accurately and concisely as possible to maximise the chance of them being accepted and succeeding.

And even if you prepare your presentation or proposal as thoroughly as you can, you might still experience situations when the answer is 'I'm sorry we can't do that at the moment'. Remember to accept the decision respectfully and thank the person for their time – there's always the next project idea to pitch!

Communicating with school staff and students

Activity 1: Rights and responsibilities

Examples of rights	Examples of responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to be listened to and taken seriously• to be treated with respect• to respectfully express opinions and feelings• to respectfully ask for what you believe is fair• to ask for more information or clarification• _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to listen and take others seriously• to treat others with respect• to allow others to express opinions and feelings• to allow others to ask for what they want• to allow others to ask for more information• _____

Table for recording meeting outcomes

Item to discuss	Feedback / Outcome	Action