



# Children and Young People's Participation Principles

## Children, young people and adults will work together

- ✓ Leading to joint learning and achievement.
- ✓ Opportunities to work and learn together should be created and valued.

## Children and young people can decide what they become involved in – nothing is off limits

- ✓ Children and young people have the opportunity and choice to get involved at any and all levels of decision making.
- ✓ Children and young people should be involved in the decision making process from the initial planning stages.
- ✓ Activities should be fun, creative and suit a range of skills, abilities and interests.

## Children and young people will be treated in an open, honest, sensitive and valued way

- ✓ Clarity must be provided about the rationale and aims of what adults are trying to achieve.
- ✓ Children and young people should be aware of how much influence and power they have.

## All children and young people should have the same opportunity to become involved

- ✓ Everyone should be valued equally and opportunities offered fairly.
- ✓ Extra support to participate should be given to those who need it.
- ✓ All discrimination should be challenged.
- ✓ Participation should be accessible and welcoming to all.

## Children and young people are encouraged to develop their ideas, participate and take action

- ✓ Children and young people's perspectives are their reality.
- ✓ Adults should enable children and young people to take action themselves on issues they want to address or things they want to achieve, in a way that works for them.

## Organisations should be structured to allow children and young people to become involved in their work

- ✓ If children and young people are prevented from getting involved by an organisation's structures, the organisation should be challenged.

## Children and young people will be involved and informed about all aspects of the work

- ✓ Clear communication is needed.
- ✓ The effects of participation on decision making will be fed back in a timely, clear and honest way.

## Children and young people will have their efforts recognised, celebrated and rewarded

- ✓ Contributions need to be given equal value and respected alongside those of other participants.
- ✓ Children and young people should benefit from the process of being involved.

## Children and young people are entitled to training and the support needed to make a positive contribution

- ✓ Children and young people may want training and empowerment before they feel able to contribute.
- ✓ Children and young people have different needs to adults - these needs should be recognised, acknowledged and provided for.

**Involving Children & Young People not only allows them to make a difference, but will significantly contribute to improving the organisation. Organisations must cultivate the right conditions to ensure that the benefits of children and young people's participation are maximised.**

*Malcolm Newsam, Director of Children's Services*

*On behalf of Bedfordshire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership*

