

Here at St Matthew's School, we strongly focus on the different rights children have.

In Wales, there are 54 different children's rights. Some of these include: the right to a name and nationality, the right to be protected from all forms of violence, including abuse and neglect and also the right to relax and participate in different activities such as sport, drama and music.

What is a right?

A right is something everybody should have, regardless of their age, gender or ethnicity. Everyone should know their rights and what rights they are entitled to and should also be protected.

There are five main rights that we focus on here at St Matthew's School.

The first right is: Article 2 - "no child or young person should be treated differently because of who they are, where they live, what they believe, the language they speak or if they are a boy or a girl".

At St Matthew's School we ensure that each pupil throughout the school treats everyone else the way they wish to be treated. We teach them the different impacts their actions may have on other children if they do not treat them with respect.

However, if this does occur, appropriate action is taken.

The second right: Article 6 - "children have the right to life, to grow up and reach your full potential".

At St Matthew's School, we make sure that every child gets treated as an individual and receives the best possible help to complete their work, making sure they understand what they are doing. This may include some children going out of class for an hour, to receive a one to one session with a qualified teaching assistant. When taken out of the class, the task is explained more in depth to the child/children, so they are able to understand and complete the task correctly. This then gives them an incentive to want to do well and reach their full potential. By doing this, their mental health is improved. This makes them feel a lot happier whilst at school, which would then improve their life at home.

The third right: Article 12 - "children have the right to say what you think in all matters affecting you and for your views to be taken seriously".

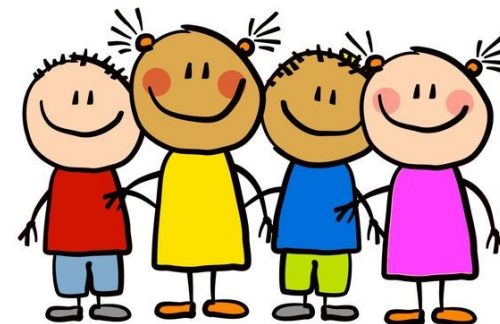
At St Matthew's School, every week, we speak to the children one by one and ask them if they would like to chat about anything in particular. This could include something that has happened with family members at home, stories they may have seen on the news or anything that may have happened in school or class. We as teachers take these views and opinions very seriously and if anything a child says that sounds alarming, it gets written down and it gets dealt with the right people. This makes sure that the children feel like they are being listened to, as some children feel they are not listened to properly because they are too young. However, here at St Matthew's School it gets taken very seriously, the opinions of ALL children matter.

The fourth right: Article 28 - "children have the right to an education".

At St Matthew's School, we ensure that all children have a right to education. This is regardless of their race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or age. We feel that it is important because it helps the children gain the essential qualifications to go on to further education when they are old enough and eventually onto work. This means that they are able to gain a high paid job to provide for their future family, which would improve their physical and mental health. The child's personality, mental and physical abilities reach their highest potential which then motivates them to improve in their school work.

Also at St Matthew's School, each child's education gets taken very seriously and is individual to the child. This includes making individual learning plans, which also gets sent home to the child's parent/carer so they are able to see the progress their child is making at school. By taking each child's learning individually, they are able to progress strongly in their school work and we are able to locate their strengths and weaknesses.

This is very helpful, as we can focus more on what they need to improve on, this improves their overall mark.



The fifth right: Article 31 - “children have the right to relax and play and take part in activities like sports, arts, music and drama”. At St Matthew’s School we make sure that all children are able to take part in different sporting activities, arts, music and drama. Every week, each class has a designated time slot for PE sessions. This ensures that each child is getting at least one hour of exercise each week. The school also has different sporting teams such as football, hockey, tennis and netball. There are a different variety of sporting activities, so there is something for everyone. There is a music teacher based within our school, each week she holds different music sessions. The children are able to learn different instruments such as the piano, violin, guitar and many more. They are also able to have singing lessons. There is a choir set up within the school and drama classes for the children to interact and express their feelings with others. There are different concerts every week in the school. This allows parents to see their children perform with their friends and it gives the children a chance to do something they enjoy and love. By doing this, the children seem happier and their work improves.



In 1945 the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These human rights apply to everyone, they all link together, they are compulsory and they are unconditional.

In Wales, there has been many major policy and legislation to children’s rights. This includes the adoption of the UNCRC, implementation of the 7 Core Aims, introduction of the (first) Children’s Commissioner and The Right Way.

At St Matthew’s School, we ensure that each and every child is made aware of the different rights they have and they have ‘duty bearers’ who also know about their rights. This helps them to access and experience the different rights they have.

IN WALES...

There are around 550,000 children, aged from 0-15 living in Wales. There are also 350,000 between 16-24.

There are different outcomes for children in areas such as health and wellbeing and educational attainment, especially if they come from a lower socio-economic background. Children who come from a socio-economic background have higher rates of infant mortality, air pollution where they live, not included as much in school, tooth decay and obesity. They also have lower levels of educational attainment at each Key Stage.

The legislation in Wales reflects the right to play on a statutory level. There has been a rise in sports participation among children. However, these positives are constantly under threat with local authority funding pressures, this means that sometimes the different play areas may have to close. The amount of screen time children spend such as being on their phone, ipad or PlayStation, raises a huge concern.

The topic of safeguarding in Wales is huge. It promotes the welfare of the child and protects them from abuse, harm and neglect. This also protects their health and development from being damaged, as it ensures that they receive safe care. By keeping children safe, it enables them to fulfil their full potential and have the best opportunities throughout their life. Child protection vital when it comes to safeguarding and promoting welfare. There are different strategies in place in order to protect children from significant harm.



The Welsh Government (2011), define bullying as a deliberate behaviour to physically or mentally hurt someone else. It is repeated over a period of time, and it is also very difficult for the person being bullied to defend themselves. Behaviour that relates to bullying is calling other people names, threatening them, displaying physical violence towards an individual, purposely excluding other people out of activities, and also cyber bullying.

In order to end bullying, teachers need to understand the different key elements. These are: how and why the bullying is taking place, children are learning and getting to grips with their personal identity and sense of self and also how important the peer groups are and the need of belonging.

To try and tackle bullying here at St Matthew's School, we locate the power dynamics within the class, keep referring to the curriculum to teach about diversity, teach the children who are being bullied different coping strategies and to report the behaviour straight away and also take away the power of the bully.

We also teach the children the power of friendships and to try and make friends where they can and always be friendly to others.



Participation

There are many different benefits of participation. It supports the development of the communication skills, helps grow confidence and self esteem, develop an understanding of the world and also enables active citizenship in the community.

Additionally, it gives the children some control and to make decisions for themselves. It also helps the adults understand and know the different issues that effect the children without just assuming.

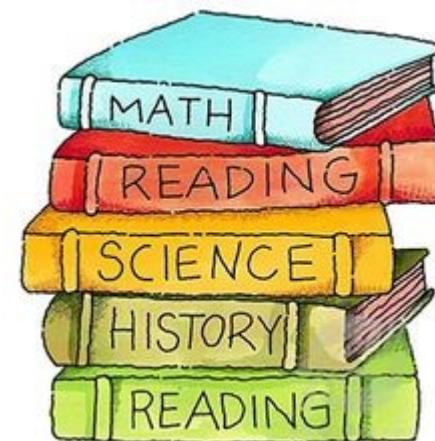
However, there are some barriers that may occur. One of these barriers is the view that children should be free and protected from responsibilities of the adult world. This is a barrier because children cannot be protected forever and there are some things you cannot hide from children. They still need to have some understanding of the adult world.

Another barrier is the misconceptions about participation. A happy medium has to be found by creating enabling conditions, to empower the child to express their views and opinions.

Some children in Wales do not think that their views and opinion are taken seriously enough to make a difference to the policies in Wales at a national, school or community level.

It is law that schools have to have a school council for the children and for the local authorities to have a youth forum.

Here at St Matthew's School, we encourage the children massively to participate and contribute. Whether it is in school or the community. We give children time and space to make independent choices for themselves and use their own initiative. We develop the children's agency over the time they are in school, we help and support them to develop their views and opinions. We also set aside a certain amount of hours each week so the children are able to openly discuss options and we as teachers and constantly listening and taking everything into consideration. This eventually leads us on to adapting and changing activities so that the children are involved and have a voice.



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