

BIRKENHEAD SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

Learner Responsiveness Policy

AIMS

The college aims and is committed to:

- ♦ work in partnership with its learners, engaging and empowering them in shaping their own experience.
- ♦ a Learner Involvement Policy and Strategy which focuses on facilitating student input in the decision making processes of the college.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the policy and strategy are to ensure:

- ♦ that the college offers structured opportunities for learners to have direct involvement in assessing and shaping their own learning experience, which the college believes will have a significant and effective impact on developing the college's quality improvement processes, increasing student success and developing our students as effective citizens in the wider community.
- ♦ that all learners, individually and collectively, have an entitlement to participate in the co-production of their college experience and in the evaluation of their teaching and learning through the processes outlined in this document.
- ♦ the college gains better quality information to inform decision making
- ♦ the college engages learners in participating in reviewing their experience and achievements.
- ♦ that at all levels in the college, there is a commitment to provide the appropriate resources to enable these processes to work, embedding learners in decision making and evaluation procedures in the college.
- ♦ effective systematic involvement of learners, in reviewing the processes and mechanisms that impact on them, provides a rich source of valuable feedback.
- ♦ learners are supported to provide this feedback and to have a structured input into college decision making will help us raise the quality of what we do.
- ♦ an inclusive culture is fostered, where no individuals or groups of learners are excluded and where principles of equality and diversity inform all learner involvement activity.

PROCESSES

Developing Learner Involvement includes:

1. Involving learners in formal representation:

- a) The college sees a vibrant and well supported **Student Council** as a key driver in promoting and delivering increased learner involvement. Through the Student Council learners can have a direct line of communication to Senior Management and the Principal.

The college is committed to investing in the profile of the Student Council to enable it to better represent the views and priorities of learners.

The Student Council will:

- ◆ Have regular meetings, attended by a member of Senior Management (including the Principal)
 - ◆ Publish information on college events and issues on Moodle
 - ◆ Have resources committed to it to enable it to function well
 - ◆ Should reflect fully learner's views and be a compelling advocate for those views
 - ◆ Have representatives on the Governing Body
 - ◆ Work closely with a student liaison officer, who will provide support to enable them to carry out their function and organise events.
- b) The college will have two **student governors**. We will work to ensure that these learners receive appropriate help and training to enable them to fully represent the views of learners on the Corporation.
 - c) Student representation on cross-college groups, e.g. equal opportunities, computer users group.
 - d) Student input to staff interviews.

2. Involving learners in surveys, focus groups and consultation events

The college uses a variety of methods to collect learner views. These include:

- a) A cross-college induction questionnaire (for students new to the college) is carried out in October. An analysis of the survey results is made available on Moodle and is posted in tutor bases and highlighted by tutors. Action resulting from any issues arising is similarly publicised. Significant issues may be followed up by a focus group of learners to obtain more detailed information.
- b) A leavers cross-college questionnaire (for all A2 and pre-advanced learners) is carried out in January. An analysis of the survey results is made available on Moodle and is posted in tutor bases and highlighted by tutors. Action resulting from any issues arising is publicised via tutors, on Moodle and by poster. Significant issues may be followed up by a focus group of learners.

The college does use core questions from the **National Learner Satisfaction Survey** in its own questionnaires and will use questions from the **Framework for Excellence**,

when these have been finalised. Learner views are also noted through the complaints procedure (see below) and through informal conversations they have with tutors.

- c) The views of learners who leave their course / the college before completing their studies are sought. This is via an exit interview. This feedback is discussed regularly by Senior Management.
- d) Learner views / suggestions on the enrolment procedures are gathered by a focus group during the first half of the Autumn term.
- e) Learner views / suggestions on pastoral support are gathered by a questionnaire and/or focus group(s).
- f) Learner views / suggestions are gathered by focus groups on cross-college issues.
- g) A learner suggestion box will be used as a further option for gathering views and ideas.
- h) The college will also explore the option of using an open forum with the Principal.
- i) The college will explore the option of using a web cam / diary room to access learner views
- j) The college will explore the option of “shadowing a learner”.
- k) The college will explore the use of on-line solutions for rapid learner response to single issues. It will also explore the use of SMT cluster focus groups for this purpose.
- l) Student lunches with governors are popular and governors enjoy meeting and seeking the views of learners. The college will ensure that a wide range of learner groups are invited and will consider “recording these events” and any significant issues which are discussed.
- m) The college will work to ensure the “**you said this we did this**” protocol applies to all views gathering activities.

3. Developing learner involvement – subjects

This section covers learner feedback to curriculum areas. The methods used are:

- a) End of course questionnaire – the college will ensure that the questionnaire provides useful feedback from learners, incorporating the needs of the Framework for Excellence. Results will be discussed at a subject meeting. Any major issues arising from the survey will be followed up by a focus group and / or actioned and that action fed back to the students before they leave college. Questionnaire responses are used as evidence for strengths and areas for improvement in subject SARs.
- b) The college will explore the introduction of a subject induction survey. This will take place towards the end of the learner’s first few weeks on the course and results analysed and discussed at a team meeting. Action resulting will be fed back to learners.

- c) The college will explore the option of learners being represented at appropriate / relevant subject team meetings.
- d) Each subject / curriculum area will operate focus groups. These are chaired by a neutral person. Information on learner views are fed back to staff and learners. Actions taken are also described / explained to learners. Focus group reports are used as evidence for strengths and areas for improvement in subject SARs.

Learners are also fully involved in monitoring and planning their own learning through the development and updating of Individual Learning Plans (through tutorials with their personal tutor) and in subject / course learning planning, which incorporates the use of Target Minimum Grades (TMGs) and the college reporting system.

4. Handling individual learner concerns / complaints

Although most learner concerns are handled by tutors and are resolved informally, the college formal complaints system is well developed and publicised to learners through Moodle, the college website and via posters in tutor bases. The detailed procedures are available in another document. Formal complaints are fully documented and logged and a report is produced for SMT and governors annually.

5. Involving learners in college self-assessment

- a) Feedback from learners from questionnaires in subjects and from subject-based focus groups is used as evidence for strengths and areas for improvement in subject Self-Assessment Reports (SARs).
- b) The college will work to ensure that learner involvement in this process is strengthened and that learners are provided with feedback on how their views have influenced subject action plans.

6. Creating a culture of learner involvement

The college has a set of core values, of which “encouraging participation and equality of opportunity for all learners” is really important. To ensure that this is the case, the college supports a culture of learner involvement.

Crucial the development of this culture is commitment throughout the organisation from governors and senior managers down. A member of SMT will take the lead on learner involvement and oversight of the learner involvement strategy.

The college and learners will work together to:

- ◆ Make learner involvement an explicit item on college meeting agendas
- ◆ Make learners aware of this strategy and how they can contribute to its success.
- ◆ Provide appropriate training for staff, in encouraging and responding to learner involvement and learners.

7. Measuring and reporting on impact

- a) This learner involvement policy / strategy will be monitored annually and reviewed bi-annually

- b) The responsiveness strand of the **Framework for Excellence** and the CIF will provide key points of reference.

Examples of outcomes against which this learner involvement strategy will be assessed include:

- ◆ The college can demonstrate how learner feedback is used to identify issues and produce actions to resolve them
- ◆ The college can demonstrate how learner feedback is used to identify and spread good practice
- ◆ Learner surveys consistently give high levels of overall learner satisfaction
- ◆ Learner representatives have an increasing impact on college self-assessment, development and in promoting college events.
- ◆ Learner representatives report high satisfaction with the impact their roles are having
- ◆ High levels of engagement across all learner groups have triggered improvements.
- ◆ Self assessment content and actions to improve performance can be linked to documented learner views
- ◆ Learner views are recorded in the college Self-Assessment Report.