

RRSA & RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS



There are many ways in which Rights Respecting Schools promote, strengthen and celebrate positive relationships as a result of their knowledge of and commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This list is a starting point, rather than a checklist, to help spark thinking with colleagues and possibly learners too. As your school develops its Rights Respecting practice you will innovate and go beyond the ideas shared here.

Charters: Rights based charters can help to open a dialogue around individual articles. Children, young people and adults discuss how they wish to frame and structure working together based on respect for one another's rights. Usually developed as a whole school approach in secondary settings and class based in primary and nursery schools, the negotiation process of establishing the charter models collaboration, democracy and respect for the views of others. Many schools also go on to develop charters for other areas such as playgrounds or lunch halls. Please see our [charter guidance](#) for further information on how to develop rights based charters in your setting.

Restorative practice: This impactful approach - where the focus is on repairing relationships rather than being punitive - can be strengthened by introducing the language of rights and respect into the conversations. Instead of framing conversations simply on feelings and perceptions, questions can be gently explored about the impact of words and actions on the rights of the other person, and looking forward, how future actions and attitudes might be more respectful of the rights of others.

Reflection time and written reflections: Some children and young people will need, on occasion, an opportunity to review, reflect and reset. This can be an ideal time to bring in rights language. Some schools shift the narrative from what children did 'wrong' or why something was a negative choice, to a conversation or written reflection about the impact of that choice on a child's rights and the rights of others. Even in situations where a young person requires extended personalised support away from their classroom, this can be 'rights driven' if it focuses on education and learning, safety, best interests and respect for the views of the child.

Beyond the classroom: Ideally, strong relationships, founded on mutual respect for rights, should be modelled and encouraged across the entire school. Consider training about rights for the wider staff team, especially those who interact with children and young

people regularly. In some schools, children have been involved in developing and leading this training. Lunchtime supervisors, for example, can find it really powerful to be able to praise children for respecting rights and to framing conversations around respect for rights when things go wrong. Many schools have created lanyards with cards containing key sentence starters or rights phrases for use by playground staff or play leaders. We would encourage member schools to make use of our [e-learning platform](#), which can be used by all school staff, to support development in this area.

Peer Mediators: It can be powerful to have children and young people trained to support their peers with resolving disagreements and finding safer ways to play together. This can be enhanced by linking the approach to children's rights. As part of their training, peer mediators could be encouraged to make rights explicit in their role. For example, in setting up their dialogues, they could mention the importance of everyone's right to have their voices heard and views respected. They could refer to rights including; the right to play, to be safe and protected from harm and to non-discrimination.

Celebrating Positive Relationships: Many schools nominate pupils as 'Rights Respector of the Week/Month/Term' with appropriate recognition or link awards to relevant articles. Some schools give pupils an option as to whether they would like public praise or something more discrete. In secondary settings this might take the form of praise points or postcards home. In some schools students nominate adults as 'Duty Bearer of the Week' with a public name check from the headteacher. This can reinforce the different roles that children and adults play in ensuring that rights are respected.

Parents and carers: As with all rights respecting work, it is important to keep families involved. Try to find ways of sharing how your school supports positive relationships through shared respect for everyone's rights. Website content, regular communications such as newsletters and introduction sessions for new parents can all support this, alongside the praise ideas mentioned above. When schools need to engage parents and carers in response to a child's attitudes and actions it can be useful to frame the conversation around rights. This can help to depersonalise the situation and help those concerned to see that it's not about 'rules' and 'compliance' but rather, relationships and respect. Some parents will need guidance on how to respond to their children when they talk about rights at home. It can be useful to support parents to understand that rights need to be balanced and to give tips on how to respond if their child. For example, if a child insists that they will not go to bed as they have the right to play.