



*Mission statement: Inspiring learning, developing character, building futures.*

## **Student support policies and procedures**

### **Student voice policy**

Aim:

- To strengthen teaching and learning and responsiveness to individual need;
- To strengthen student participation and representation;
- To create a culture of student voice and democracy.

Policy authorisation:	Senior Leadership Team (SLT) & Student Council
Date of policy update:	April 2019
Date of policy review:	Every 2 years (April 2021)
Policy author	Deputy Principal

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
1. Introduction	3
2. Scope of the policy	3
3. Benefits of student voice	3
4. Mechanisms of student voice	3
5. Sharing progress, improvements and changes	7
6. Creating a culture of student involvement	7
7. Review of the student voice policy	7
8. Reporting and monitoring	7
9. Other related policies	7

## **1. Introduction**

The Blackpool Sixth Form College is committed to involving students in its decision-making. Blackpool Sixth firmly believes that embracing student views and offering an opportunity for students to have direct involvement in assessing and shaping their own learning experience will have a significant impact on maintaining excellent provision and increasing student success. Student participation and representation bring to life the British value of democracy.

## **2. Scope of the policy**

This policy is applicable to all staff employed by the college and all students enrolled at the college.

## **3. Benefits of student voice**

There are many benefits of effective student voice to Blackpool Sixth and to the students.

### **3.1 To students:**

- improved participation, retention, achievement and progression
- better feedback on the students' experience informs quality improvements
- students become empowered, more self-confident and motivated
- students learn the British value of democracy
- students have the opportunity to become directly involved in social action for the benefit of others
- services and facilities are improved to better meet the needs of students
- identification and sharing of good practice
- promotion of an environment of mutual respect
- enhanced CV for entry into higher education or employment with training

### **3.2 To college:**

- improved participation, retention, achievement and progression
- students who are more expert and independent
- better quality information about the students' perspective so improvements can be made
- better decisions about resource allocation and investment
- students who feel more involved, see college as a place where they belong and are motivated to put something back into the college
- enhanced college reputation within the community

## **4. Mechanisms of student voice**

### **4.1 Involving students individually**

Blackpool Sixth aims to create an ethos that fosters dialogue with students, enabling them to take a full and active part in their learning experience in a way that delivers success. A focus on individual student needs is at the heart of our college's Pastoral Mentor and Progress Review systems. Students receive an average of four 1:1 reviews with their Pastoral Mentor. This includes a minimum of three 1:1s for Route3 and Lower Sixth and a minimum of two 1:1s for Upper Sixth. Students also have a formal

progress review during the academic year.

The main focus of 1:1s and formal progress reviews is to assess progress against individual targets and to tailor students' individual learning and progression plans (ILPPs) to meet their own personal needs and objectives.

Students who receive a significant amount of Additional Support have at least two support reviews each year where they have the opportunity give feedback on their progress and support.

## **4.2 Involving students collectively**

College has a range of established routes through which students are engaged in a variety of quality processes across the college.

### *4.2.1 Student Directors*

Two students each year are selected to become college directors through a formal application and interview process; one student is selected from Lower Sixth (L6) or Route3 (R3) and the other from Upper Sixth (U6). It is usual that a L6 Student Director continues in role as they progress from L6 into U6, thus providing consistency on the Governing Body and allowing the more experienced Student Director to mentor and support the new student.

Student Directors receive director training and induction and participate fully in Corporation and Standards Board meetings and the annual conference. The U6 student also sits on the Finance and Administration Committee. At the end of each year the Governing Body receives an annual report. The responsibility for the recruitment of Student Directors lies with the Principal.

### *4.2.2 Student Council*

The Student Council is composed of a mixture of Route3, lower and upper sixth students, selected via an interview panel comprised of the the Student Council Co-ordinator and senior members of the student council. In order to be selected for interview, students are required to complete an expressions of interest form to the chair and vice chair of the council, detailing their reasons for wanting to join the council and outlining the qualities they feel they could bring to the council.

The whole council meets on a weekly basis and has four main functions:

- i) Firstly, to act as ambassadors of Blackpool Sixth at a variety of internal and external events such as college open evenings.
- ii) Secondly, to act as a mouthpiece and representative body for the whole student population. A formal council report is submitted to the SLT termly, and issues arising are communicated via the Assistant Principal - Academic to the SLT.
- iii) Thirdly, the council actively engage in fundraising and raise awareness.
- iv) Fourthly, each Student Council member is encouraged to participate in a work shadowing exercise of a Leadership Team member, and in a limited number of cross-college management meetings. Their role here is to contribute student opinion to issues arising in such meetings or during the work shadowing exercise.

### *4.2.3 Pastoral Mentor Representatives*

Every student within college is assigned to a Pastoral Mentor group. Each Pastoral Mentor group has the opportunity to elect a representative to pass their views on to the Pastoral Leads. The Pastoral Leads, who lead the Pastoral Mentor/Life Links programme, facilitate half termly meetings with the representatives, which are also attended by members of the Student Council. Feedback from these meetings is disseminated to appropriate college managers, including SLT, for consideration and, where appropriate, action taken.

Issues emerging and resulting actions / responses are fed back to Pastoral Mentor Representatives at the following meeting and feedback is given to the whole student body during Life Links sessions.

### *4.2.3 Student ambassadors*

Our student ambassadors provide feedback on the events that they support, such as open events.

### *4.2.4 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment*

Students are routinely involved in the quality assurance of teaching, learning and assessment via our recruitment drives. For example, when interviewing potential new teaching staff, students take part in 'micro-teach' sessions, and are asked to give feedback on the quality of the teaching session, as a means to assess each candidate. Additionally, during departmental reviews of teaching, learning and assessment conducted by the college, students are also invited to complete a survey regarding the planning and delivery of lessons, regularity and meaningfulness of assessment, teacher responsiveness to individual need and support with progression to their next steps.

### *4.2.5 Compliments, concerns and complaints*

The compliments, concerns and complaints policy, managed by the Deputy Principal, is a written channel of feedback to the Leadership Team and to the Directors. Complaints may be informal or formal (written) in nature and the process for responding to complaints is detailed in this policy.

### *4.2.6 Student groups*

Student groups (such as the LGBT+ group), set up and led by the students for the students are another channel of communication. A member of staff facilitates each group and liaises with a member of the Leadership Team to ensure views are shared and acted on.

### *4.2.7 The Torch Bearers*

This group is open to any student or member of staff with an interest in special educational needs and/or disability (SEND). The Torch Bearers meet once per term to share views about issues regarding young people with SEND. The Head of Student Support has responsibility for this group.

### *4.2.8 Strategic Equality Committee*

This cross-college group is composed of the Principal, Deputy Principal, representatives from the Leadership Team, college middle leaders, staff and student representatives from the Student Council. This group meets termly to provide strategic oversight of all matters of an equality and diversity nature. Issues are cascaded via each representative.

### *4.2.9 The college magazine*

The college magazine is led by a group of students supported by a member of staff. The magazine is a mouthpiece for student views and news.

#### *4.2.10 Alumni*

There is regular and active engagement with former students who are encouraged to comment on their experiences at Blackpool Sixth and maintain their connection with the sixth form. A prime purpose of the alumni engagement is to provide a means for former students to reflect on their study pathways and career development and to share their insights with current students and staff. Former students often visit the sixth form to speak to current students and staff about their careers. There is a display of particularly notable alumni in the foyer and further alumni profiles are produced for display elsewhere in the college and for use in publications.

### **4.3 Student satisfaction surveys**

Student surveys are formally reported on to SLT and the Directors, as well as being fed back to all curriculum and cross college areas and students.

#### *4.3.1 Marketing survey*

A survey researching student views on the impact and reach of the college's pre-enrolment marketing is run in October each year (first one was delivered in October 2016).

#### *4.3.2 Annual student survey*

The annual student survey takes place each March. This survey asks specific questions about student satisfaction on a range of college issues and provision. A formal report is generated for SLT by the MIS department. Results of the surveys and any additional actions are communicated to staff and students subsequently.

The online survey is organised by the Deputy Principal and is completed during Pastoral Mentor sessions and covers questions relating to topics such as: teaching and learning, equality and diversity, safety and progression.

#### *4.3.3 Support department surveys*

These take place as needed throughout the academic year and enable support departments to survey students about the quality of their service/function.

#### *4.3.4 Ofsted learner view survey*

This is emailed out to colleges in the autumn term; there are 9 questions. These questions are incorporated into our own annual student survey and the ShOW survey and focus groups. For this reason, the students only complete this survey when the college is notified of an Ofsted visit.

## **5. Sharing progress, improvements and changes**

Each department creates poster material ("You said, we did") which communicates what the college has done about student feedback. This is also shared in Life Links sessions, in the "Weekly" and on the

student voice calendar on the student portal. A mid year and end of year report is presented to SLT and the Directors.

## **6. Creating a culture of student involvement**

Vital to the success of a meaningful student voice policy are the skills of staff and the readiness of staff to engage in the process. The college's vision for student involvement includes the developing of a culture where staff listen actively to the views of students and students listen actively to the views of staff. In this way meaningful dialogue can take place.

The college offers employment opportunities to students in departments such as MIS. This gives us yet another perspective on student views on how the college functions as an employer.

The college contacts students who have left to endeavour to improve its service wherever possible.

In addition, the SLT regularly invite students to talk with them directly in groups, or as individuals, giving a strong lead in creating an open culture.

## **7. Review of the student voice policy**

The Deputy Principal will review the student voice policy every 2 years. The Student Council will input into the review.

## **8. Records and monitoring**

A report is presented to SLT and the Directors mid year and at the end of the academic year.

## **9. Other related policies**

- ShOW (QA of teaching, learning and assessment) policy
- Pastoral support policy
- Compliments, concerns and complaints policy
- Equality policy