

# What does good pupil support look like?

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## Engagement Pack

For those working directly with children and young people with additional support needs



# Introduction

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Children in Scotland has been asked by the Scottish Government's Pupil Support Staff Working Group to lead engagement work with children and young people relating to pupil support staff. Whilst it will specifically focus on the vision and values identified by the working group, it is part of a wider Scottish Government consultation relating to pupil support staff in Scotland.

From our work supporting the Inclusion Ambassadors, we know how important pupil support staff are to children and young people with additional support needs. They can be key to ensuring their rights to education are met.

This engagement pack has been produced to support direct engagement with young people in order to share what good pupil support staff and good practice might look like. In doing so it will ensure children and young people are heard through this engagement process, in line with Article 12 of the UNCRC.

The intention is to further develop our understanding of what is important to children and young people with additional support needs and how best to support them on their educational journey. Using this pack will allow the children and young people you work with to explore, reflect, discuss and contribute their views to wider Scottish Government and Education Scotland work to develop a Pupil Support Staff Framework.



## **What do we mean by pupil support staff?**

For the purposes of this project the term 'pupil support staff' is generally applied to all staff in school settings directly involved in the learning and teaching process and the wellbeing of children and young people.

# Using this engagement pack

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We hope this pack facilitates engagement with children and young people who have regular contact with pupil support staff to inform further work and developments in this area.



**We want to hear from children and young people who:**

- Are aged 5-18 years who have an additional support need
- Have a range of experiences, good and bad
- Have regular engagement with pupil support staff to support their learning.

## How it works

We have prepared a series of activities and questions for you to explore with the children and young people you work with. We would recommend completing at least one, though please feel free to complete as many as you wish.

The activities have been designed to act as a guide. Feel free to adapt to suit the needs of your group. In addition, you may wish to use other engagement activities to tell us what the young people you work with think.

The activities can be adapted for use in a number of ways and for either face-to-face or virtual sessions.

We recommend the work is conducted in groups, allowing for a range of views and experiences.

Outputs or recording of activities may take various forms, depending on the activity and the young people involved. We welcome all forms of feedback from word documents or written responses, to more visual representations such as artwork or short films

## Sharing your work

Please send all responses, outputs and feedback to Chris Ross at Children in Scotland.  
Email: [cross@childreninScotland.org.uk](mailto:cross@childreninScotland.org.uk).

## What will happen with what you tell us?

Responses will be collated and analysed by Children in Scotland. We will prepare a short report based on the findings that identifies what children and young people with additional support needs want from a pupil support assistant.

All responses will be anonymous. Information from the different groups who respond will be synthesised rather than discussed individually.

Our report will then be used to inform further engagement work being done with professionals by Education Scotland. We will share this final report with you and prepare a short summary video that can be shared with the children and young people that you work with.

## Data protection - please return this page

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Please confirm you are happy for us (Children in Scotland) to hold the materials and associated documentation completed as part of the Pupil Support Staff project.

We will use this consent as the legal basis for holding this data.

We will use this data solely in relation to the project work on behalf of the Scottish Government's Pupil Support Staff Working Group.

Data will be held securely by us in line with our privacy policy. Access our privacy policy at: <https://childreninscotland.org.uk/privacy-policy>. You can also find out about your data protection rights and how to exercise them on this page.

Feedback and activity output will be used to inform a report for this stage of the Pupil Support Staff project. However, all information will be anonymised and we will not share any identifiable data.

We will hold all information received on our systems for a maximum of 6 months. All information provided as part of the CYP engagement work will be deleted by 30 November, 2022.

**I am happy for Children in Scotland to retain my data and information provided as part of my participation on the Pupil Support Staff project.**

**Signed**

**Date**

# Background Information

To help us understand who has been involved in the engagement work, along with your completed activities, please answer the following questions. This will help inform our reporting and data analysis.

- How many children and young people did you work with?
- What age bracket do the children and young people fit into?
- What local authority / authorities are the young people based in?
- What additional support needs do the young people you worked with have?



Please include this information in any feedback or output provided to us as part of the project. Alternatively, complete the sheet below and return.

Please complete a separate form for each group you are engaging with.

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## Total number of participants

Number of children and young people in the participating group \_\_\_\_\_

## Age range of participating children and young people.

If all of the young people are in one age bracket, please tick. If the young people are representative of different age groups, please identify how many in each age range.

5-7yrs	8-10yrs	11-13yrs	14-16yrs	17-19yrs

## Geographic representation

Please identify all the local authority areas represented in your group.

## Diversity of needs

Please identify the additional support needs of your group.

# Activities

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss how to adapt activities to suit the young people you work with, please contact Chris Ross at Children in Scotland via email: [cross@childreninscotland.org.uk](mailto:cross@childreninscotland.org.uk).

## Activity: Support Staff Qualities

Using the word cloud, ask pupils or young people to pick out words that would describe a good member of pupil support staff? Is there anything missing?

**Alternative:** If the word cloud is inaccessible, qualities identified on the word cloud could be made into flash cards.

**Additional:** As an additional step, as a group agree three of the qualities and identify why they are important. Key points could be recorded as a poster or in a short film.



## Activity: Agree or Disagree

Below is a series of statements about pupil support assistants. Pupils or young people could respond in a positive or negative – thumbs up / thumbs down cards, red/green cards or a simple show of hands for those who agree / disagree.

After people have voted on each statement, please discuss and record how many people in the group agreed or disagreed, and why.

1. The pupil support staff should know me well
2. The pupil support staff should understand what support I need and want.
3. The pupil support staff should be able to recognise how I am feeling.
4. The pupil support staff should be able to help with my learning.
5. The pupil support staff should be able to find different ways to support me.
6. The pupil support staff should be able to challenge me.
7. The pupil support staff should be able to relax and have fun with me.
8. I get enough time with pupil support staff.

## Activity: How I feel when I get the rights support

We know that not having the right support can make things hard. We also know how having the right support can really help.

Ask young people to share how they feel when they are working with a good pupil support assistant? Can they explain why this is?

## Activities (cont.)

### Activity: A perfect day

Pupils should consider a school day that has gone really well. You have had the chance to work with your favourite support assistant for the classes you needed them for.



- How would they have greeted you?
- What would you have spoken about and why?
- How would your school work have gone?
- How would you feel during the day?

You could make a comic strip or do a recording of your answers. Alternatively, you could write down key points or key words for each question.

### Activity: Headteacher for a day

Encourage young people to imagine they are the head teacher for a day and get to make decisions about what support looks like. What would they do?

Some things to think about could be more chance for 1-1 support, more time together or more support assistants in schools.

Ideas could be presented as a poster that shows what this school would look like.

Was there agreement, or disagreement, on some areas? What are the top three ideas and why are they considered to be the most important?

### Activity: Head, Heart and Hands

We know pupil support staff need different skills to do their job. This activity helps identify what pupils think makes a good pupil support assistant by focusing on their knowledge, ability to connect and their actions.

Create a head, heart and hands template poster or as a mindmap. Think about what good pupil support staff should know (the head), how they should act (the heart) and what they do (the hands).



**Head**  
=  
**Knowledge**



**Heart**  
=  
**Qualities**



**Hands**  
=  
**Actions**

Are there some of these that are more important than others?

## Activities (cont.)

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### Activity: Reflective questions

We know young people might feel more comfortable discussing things or answering questions away from a group. These reflective questions might provide a helpful focus.

- How would you describe a good pupil support assistant?
- What qualities does a good support assistant have?
- What sort of things does a good pupil support assistant know?
- How does a good pupil support assistant make you feel?
- If you could change something about the support you get what would it be? Why?



Whilst we are keen to focus on the positives, identifying what good support looks like, it is also important to acknowledge and address the times when pupils have not felt like their support needs have not been met. This exercise will help to identify some of the things that are not working or that pupils do not like and how this could change.

### Activity: When things don't work out

We know that sometimes things don't always go right. Ask pupils to consider when there has not been the support that they have needed, or support has not been provided in the way they would have liked. What did they not like? What could have made it better? What needed to change?

This might be best displayed as a visual representation. Young people could create a poster with themselves (or a stick person) in the centre. On one side, list things pupil support staff do that isn't well liked. On the other, consider and record some things that could be done to change this.