



What is a Rights Respecting School?

At Whittleigh Community Primary School, we are working towards achieving the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award. UNICEF is the organisation working specifically for children and their rights. Its mission is to campaign for the protection of children's rights in order to meet children's basic needs and empower them to realise their full potential.

UNICEF UK believes that these values should be embedded in the ethos and curriculum of our schools, and provides a framework in order to accomplish this. This is the purpose of the RRSA (Rights Respecting School Award). In a rights respecting school, children learn about their rights. Children learn to associate rights with needs and distinguish between their rights and 'wants'. They learn that if they have rights, they need to respect the rights of others.

Why are children learning about their rights at school?

In signing the UNCRC all Governments have a responsibility to make both children and adults aware of these rights. There are 42 rights of a child (articles) in the convention covering things such as; children having the right to education (article 27) and children have the right to be protected at all times (article 19).

What is meant by 'rights'?

These are not the same as 'wants'. Rights are the basic human needs and values that apply or should apply to everyone.

Does the UNCRC talk about responsibilities?

Yes, children's rights are inherent, however, by knowing that they have rights they also learn that they should respect the rights of others and have responsibilities towards them.

For children: the responsibility to respect the rights of others.

For parents: to respect and provide for the rights of their children.

For governments: to support families and to respect and provide for the rights of children.

What about children's respect for the rights of others?

Research has shown that when children are taught in school about their rights and responsibilities under the UNCRC, they are more respecting of the rights of others. Children who have learnt about their rights and responsibilities have :

- a better understanding of what it **means** to have rights and responsibilities
- a more positive attitude to school
- better relationships with their classmates and teachers
- higher self-esteem
- an increased awareness of how to be a global citizen

What have we done so far?At the start of the new school year, each class created their own class charter using the model of 'Rights and Responsibilities'. For staff, the year began with an Inset Day which included an introduction to UNICEF's work and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We focused on ways in which to introduce this subject to our pupils. The Governing Body were also introduced to the award. Assemblies in both KS1 and KS2 have a regular focus on Rights and on the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Award is split into 3 parts: A Recognition of Commitment, Level 1 award and Level 2 award. The Rights Respecting Schools Award is not a 'quick win' achievement but rather is about embedding a particular vision in the fabric of the school. The aim is that within the next three years we will achieve the RRS award in its entirety. We believe that having a knowledge of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (which stems from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), learning about one's own rights and responsibilities and having a growing awareness of global responsibility are important for the wider curriculum.

How can parents support their child to learn about the Convention at home?

- Take the time to ask your child what he/she has learnt recently regarding children's rights and responsibilities.
- Discuss the ideas learned in class, and try to think of examples from your own experiences, or from the media, of rights being respected or denied.
- Discuss how your child or your family can promote respect for rights, or help those whose rights have been violated.

- Model using rights and responsibility language with your children.
- Ask your child's opinion on children's rights.