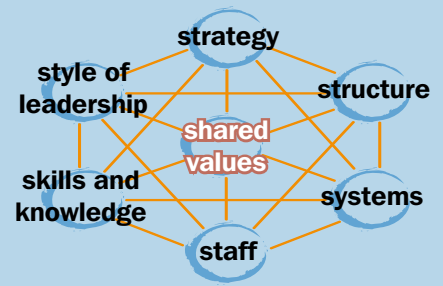


# PARTICIPATION IN YOUR SCHOOL OR COLLEGE: FOR students, **by** students



Hear by Right



[www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright](http://www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright)



## what do you think student participation is about?

**“Students taking an active interest in something in their school or community” – Amy, 14**

**“Students being a part of school run initiatives, like the school council, to get students heard” – Karimah, 16**

**“Working with teachers to make learning better” – Andy, 13**

**“Getting involved rather than taking a back seat; If you don’t like something, do something about it!” – Jerome, 17**

**“Doing things to make a difference” – Ian, 12**

## DEFINITION:

Student participation is a basic right of all students and young people. It’s about all of the above quotes and is all about us, as children and young people, taking an active and meaningful role in our school, college and/or community and sharing in decision making to help make things better for children and young people.

# what the government says:

The Department for Education and Skills says that participation is about encouraging students to:

- become more active participants in their education, including planning and evaluation of their own learning; and
- participate in creating, building and improving services to make them more responsive to their needs ...”



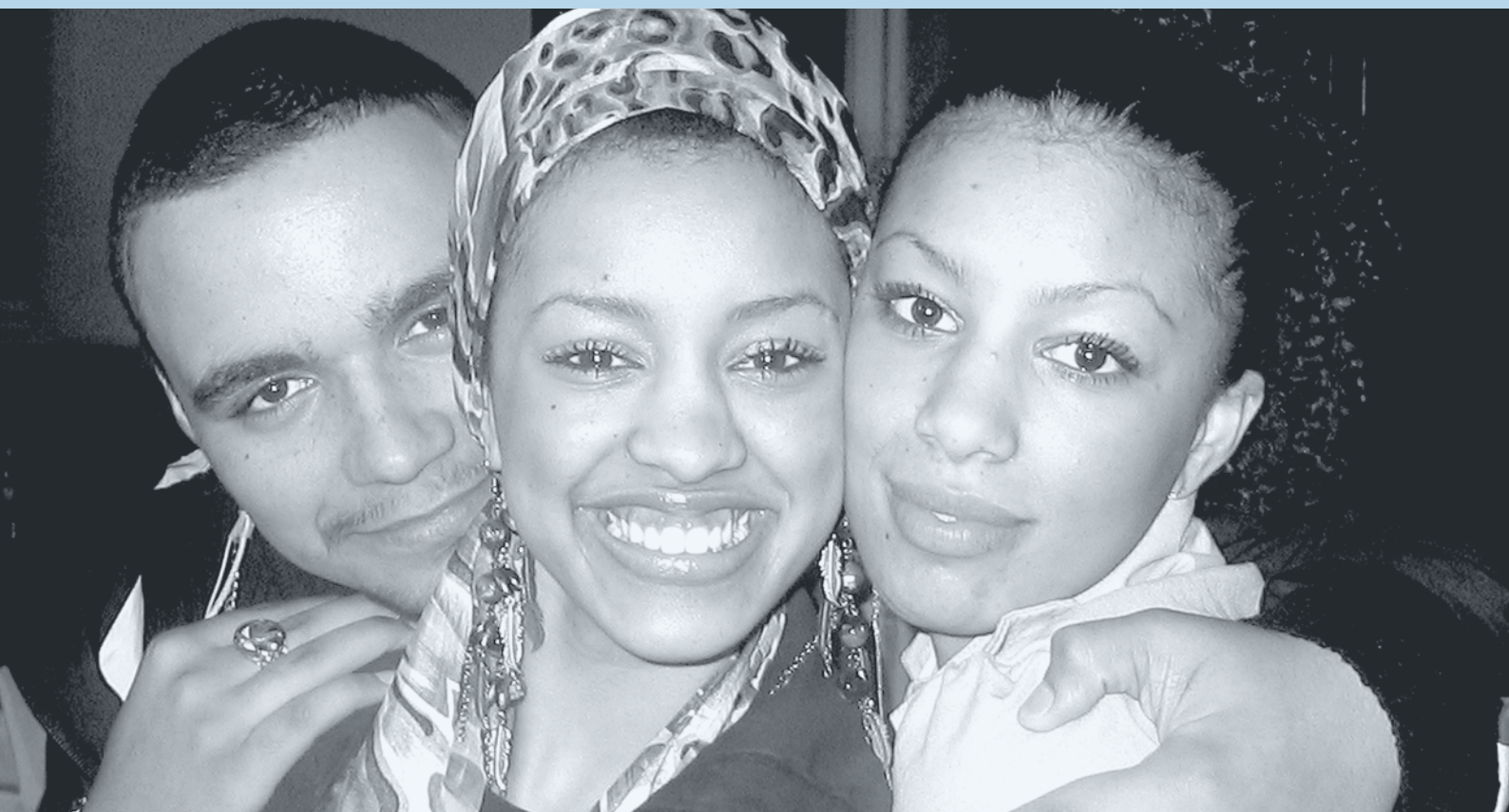
It's not just something the government wants to encourage us to do, we actually have a **RIGHT** to participate! In 1991, the British government signed up to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 12 states:

***“Children have the right to express their views freely on all matters affecting them and to have these views taken into account.”***

# so what's in it FOR me?

Besides all the great improvements you'll be able to make in your school or college (like the examples in this leaflet) participation gives you the chance to:

- practise active citizenship;
- boost your confidence;
- develop communication skills; and
- create positive relationships with teachers and other staff.



# what kind of things can we do?



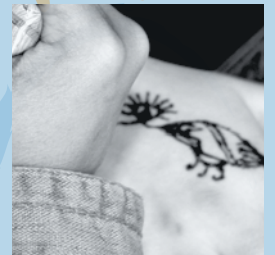
In science, my class didn't like using textbooks. We found them hard to read and didn't learn much from them, and preferred to do worksheets and activities. We spoke to our teacher, who let us do a survey of what activities people feel they learn the most from. We now help to plan lessons and have more of a say about what happens in class.

In my school we have a peer-mentoring scheme. All year 7 and 8 students are linked with a year 9 or 10 student, who they can talk to about any problems. We've found that bullying happens much less now, because students feel like they can talk to someone about what is going on.



In my school we started up a Multi-Media company, which is part of the school, but is entirely run by students. We have control over everything, and feel like we have real responsibility for it.

GCSE art students in my class felt that we did not have the right equipment to do what we wanted in our artwork. We spoke to the school council, who organised a meeting for us with our art teachers. We told them what we thought, and worked with them to look at the budget and think about how we could raise money for more equipment. We helped them order new equipment, and raised money for new paints and canvasses.



Our school gave parents a survey to fill in on what they did and didn't like about the school. The student council thought that students should be allowed to have their say too, so they campaigned for a student survey to be done. The head teacher agreed, and the school carried out a student survey. Students responses were listened to carefully, and some important changes were made, like the library is now open longer.

In my school, students carry out research on things like homework, and what makes a good lesson. We give presentations of our recommendations to teachers, and they add these to the school improvement plan.



# sounds great, but where do we start?

**You don't have to do it alone! – participation is all about working with adults (like teachers) and different organisations that can help you to get involved.**

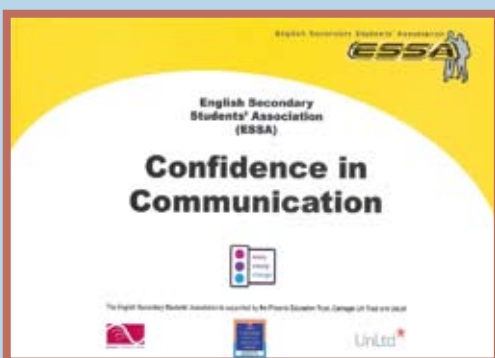
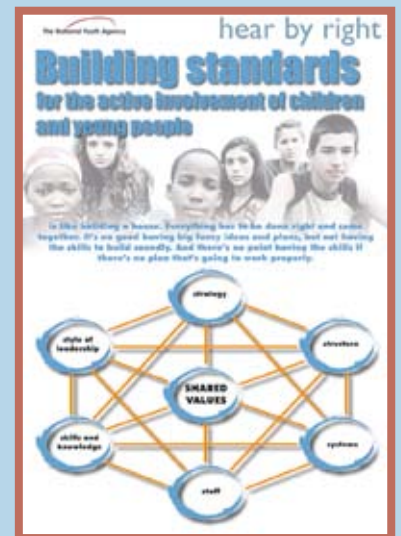


## hear by Right

A great place to start is for your school to use the *Hear by Right* participation standards framework. This has been produced by The National Youth Agency for schools and other organisations to assess and improve the level of student participation. It's about everyone, including teachers and students, working together.

The leaflet *Building Standards*, written by young people, explains how the framework of *Hear by Right* works. You can get involved using the Mapping and planning tool, which is designed to help your school map its current level of student participation and then develop a plan to improve it. Students can provide and assess the evidence for the 'map' and help to prioritise and deliver the 'plan'.

For more information on how *Hear by Right* can help you, get hold of the *Hear by Right Building Standards* leaflet, or see the website for more information – [www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright](http://www.nya.org.uk/hearbyright)



## confidence in communication

The English Secondary Students' Association (ESSA) is an organisation that's all about promoting student participation, and student voice. ESSA provides training, resources, and networks for students to develop their ideas about participation.

As young people we have great ideas about how our schools and communities can be improved, but sometimes it's hard to figure out how to accomplish this, or who can help. ESSA has developed the *Confidence in Communication* toolkit, which is full of fun, interactive activities to give you the skills to participate in your school. For more information, or to join ESSA for free, log on to [www.studentvoice.co.uk](http://www.studentvoice.co.uk)

## Participation Works

Participation Works is a gateway to the world of children and young people's participation. With just one click, access a comprehensive source of information on policy, practice, training and innovative ideas. [www.participationworks.org.uk](http://www.participationworks.org.uk)



Hear by Right



department for  
**education and skills**  
creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence

The National Youth Agency