

Pensilva Primary School

Emotional Health and Wellbeing – Criterion 5

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Healthy School Validation	2002

Pensilva Schools is a rural primary school set on Bodmin Moor in a village between Bodmin and Liskeard. The school has approximately 160 children. Sue Robbins is the Healthy Schools Co-ordinator at the school and tells us about the process.

Identification of Need

After completing the audit we realised that the children at our school did not have a formal platform to raise their views about the school or suggest improvements and innovations. We thought that we could address this by introducing a School Council. We decided to focus our Healthy Schools Initiative on Emotional and Social Wellbeing. We wanted the School Council to be a democratic body to which each child at the School had access.

Implementation of change

The staff met to decide on the format of the School Council. It was suggested that each child should be able to represent their class at least once each year. The meetings should be held once each half term, chaired by the headteacher, with six representatives from each of the six classes, from reception to Year 6 in attendance.

Issues which each class wished to be raised at the School Council would be discussed at the weekly Circle Time meeting prior to the Council meeting. The head would set an agenda which would be discussed at the council, minuted, published and circulated to all members of the School Community. On the day following the school council meeting the head, during assembly, gives feedback about the issues raised.. This provided an opportunity to explain why some things could not be done, so broadening the children's understanding of factors affecting decision making.

Outcome

We found that the children raised some valuable issues that we had not been aware of. The children developed valuable speaking and listening skills showing an awareness of argument and reasoning. Children from Reception to Year 6 were able to voice their opinions in a sympathetic and empathetic environment. The children were able to see change generated from their wishes and given information to enable them to realise why not everything they wanted could be achieved.

Changes recommended and implemented by the School Council include:

Locks on the toilet doors.

Rota for school dinner order so that each class has the opportunity to have first choice of the menu.

Improved communications between LSA's and children.

Improvements for playtime games and suggestions for play areas once present building works have been completed.

Children have responsibility for reminding their peers about safe places to play.

Provision of 2 boxes of skipping ropes – 1 for each playground.

Access to water – drinking fountains in playgrounds and corridor, own bottles inside.