

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Dignity Assessment

Introduction

It can be difficult to know where to start when you are at the beginning of your journey towards realising children's human rights in your school.

As part of our Dignity in School programme we have developed a simple Dignity Assessment that can be used with both adults and children. Using the assessment together will give children an opportunity to talk about their experiences and make a real impact on the direction your school takes towards rights-based practice.

“ I want to have a
voice. ”

- Pupil at Stoneywood School

Aims of the activity

By completing the Dignity Assessment with children and adults in your school you will be able to confidently identify areas of strength when it comes to children's human rights and areas where you might need to commit a little bit of time and energy.

By completing the assessment activity you can gain insight from children on the following three areas of rights-based practice:

- Relationships - how we all relate to each other in school.
- Teaching and Learning - how children can become active participants in their learning.
- Planning and Policy - how children can help shape the direction and culture of the school.



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Activity Breakdown

Using the Dignity Assessments as your foundation means engaging all adults in the school with the adult version and as many children as possible with the children's version.

All adults means every adult, whatever role they hold in your team, from teaching staff to support roles.

The best results will come from working with all children in a year group. The assessment is designed to work with P5-7 pupils. If you cannot work across entire year groups, we suggest you select children randomly to ensure the results are fair and honest.

We recommend using the assessment individually, or in pairs. A class teacher, PSA/Learning Assistant or a member of senior leadership can facilitate these discussions. Each assessment should take around 10-15 minutes. We understand this is a major commitment of time, our experience tells us that this is a good investment and will significantly inform your rights journey.

Using the Dignity Assessment effectively involves the following steps:



Read this resource



Work with children and adults to choose what you want to change



Work with children and adults to gather results



Problem-solve together as a team



Explore your findings



Share your practice

What you need

In order to run this activity, you will need the following:

- Copies of the Dignity Assessment for Children - this can be found at the end of this resource.
- Copies of the Dignity Assessment for Adults - found at the end of the resource.
- Pencils and rulers.
- A copy of the template Results Spreadsheet to collate your results. [link]

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Using the Children's Assessment Tool

Working in pairs with an adult (10-15 mins)

1. Explain the task. You can use the 'script' below as a guide.

“ We want to find out a few things from you about life at school. To do that we are going to work through this Dignity Assessment together. There are 18 statements in total, we will read them one at a time. For each statement I want you to tell me how much you agree or disagree with that statement. We are going to be doing the same thing with a lot of children in school.

Once we have finished we will all work together on making some changes in the school to make sure it is the best possible place it can be for everyone. There are no right or wrong answers, and you don't have to agree with your friends. This is all about what you think and all your answers are valid. ”

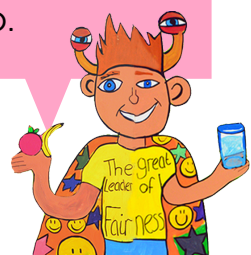
2. Explain the scale.

The scale contains five points: Strongly agree/Agree/Neutral/Disagree/Strongly Disagree.

I am going to read a statement with you and you need to tell me if you agree or disagree. But more than that, you can tell me if you have very strong feelings on the statement by telling me that you strongly agree, or you strongly disagree.

The best flavour of ice cream is chocolate.

Children can then respond and have a chat about why they responded that way. Use as many example statements as needed for children to understand. You can do this work with the whole class before you start or explain it as you go.



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3. Explain 'neutral'. The concept of 'neutral' on the scale can be a bit harder for children to grasp. It is worth spending a bit of time explaining what we mean by 'neutral' before beginning the assessment.

Ask the children what they think 'neutral' means, explain that 'neutral' is the feeling that you don't agree or disagree, that you are in the middle of possible opinions. This doesn't mean 'I don't know', it just means that you don't feel one way or the other on that statement.

Use the example below as a way of exploring 'neutral'

Dogs make better pets than cats.

In this statement some children might feel neutral because they don't want or have pets, or they actually prefer rabbits or hamsters.

4. You are ready to go!

- Work with the children on their own or in pairs, while this takes time it allows children to get your full attention and not feel under pressure or overly influenced by peers



Top tip

Using a ruler allows children to follow where they are on the page easily and helps keep focus.

- Read each statement to the child and give them time to think and respond.
- Let the children know what will happen next, make sure there is space built in to give them feedback on their responses, how they were used and what actions the school will take next.
- If children would like to elaborate on some their answers give them space to do this. Take notes of what they say. These quotes can be really powerful in driving change.

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Using the Adult's Assessment

Individual adult responses (5-10 mins)

A copy of the questions for the adult assessment can be found at the end of this resource.

Below are our top tips on sharing the questions and using the assessment in your school:

- Include every adult in school. Not just teaching staff. All adults in school are duty bearers when it comes to children's rights and should be involved in the process.
- Provide information. Hold an input for staff to let them know what you are doing, why you're doing it and how their contribution will make a difference in school.
- Ensure anonymity. Ask for roles, not names. This will allow you to establish patterns amongst staff while ensuring that no-one can be identified by their answers.
- Encourage honesty. The assessment only works if adults are honest. Make sure adults know the questions are a safe space to share their opinions and feed into the direction of the school.
- Promise feedback. Tell all the adults that they will receive a report on the findings from the tool, as well as understanding the children's responses from their assessments.



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Exploring your findings

Once you have completed your assessments with children and adults you will be left with a lot of raw data and quotes.

We recommend sorting your responses and ranking the statements in order so you can see which areas you need more support in. Match up children's quotes with the statements to get a fuller picture of what is happening in your school.

Use our downloadable template to help you sort your responses.



Template response
spreadsheet

What Next?

Once you have explored your findings you should have a good idea of the areas of strength in your school and the areas that may need a bit more support. What you choose to do next will depend on those areas you want to focus on.

Suggestions for what to do next:

- Set up a group of adults and children to problem solve your results together.
- Draw up a plan for how you would like to respond to the assessment.
- Feedback to everyone who took part, letting them know the results and what you will do next.
- Explore the Dignity in School hub for inspiration and resources that might support your next steps.

“We all have ideas and they're different and we can bring them together and make it better.”

- Pupil at St. John's RC Primary School

Dignity Assessment: Children

Your Class _____

	How much do you agree with these statements?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I like being in school.					
2	I enjoy learning new things.					
3	I feel like I have a choice in what I am learning.					
4	Adults in school teach me how to sort out problems and arguments.					
5	Adults in school would help me if I was bullied.					
6	I have friends at school.					
7	Adults in school shout.					
8	I feel anxious or upset when adults shout.					
9	I worry when my teacher talks to my parent/carer.					
10	Adults in school are kind.					
11	Children in school are kind.					
12	I feel safe at school.					
13	I worry about my learning.					
14	I can express my ideas and opinions at school.					
15	My ideas make a difference at school.					
16	Adults in school are interested in me.					
17	I feel welcome at school.					
18	I learn about my rights at school.					

Dignity Assessment: Adults

Your Role _____

	How much do you agree with these statements?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I have a good understanding of children's human rights and the UNCRC.					
2	I listen to children.					
3	I support children to learn about their rights.					
4	I support children to solve problems and arguments.					
5	I am interested in the lives of children outside of school.					
6	I support children to make choices about their learning.					
7	I value children's opinions.					
8	I demonstrate children's rights-based practice.					
9	I am concerned that taking a children's rights-based approach will undermine discipline and my authority.					
10	I am concerned that taking a children's rights-based approach will be an additional burden.					
11	There is a culture in the school that allows children to share their views and impact on school policy and planning.					
12	There is a value in developing children's participation in school in relation to learning, relationships and school policy.					
13	An explicit commitment to making rights real for children can bring real benefits to everyone in school.					
14	I would benefit from more training around children's human rights.					
15	I feel I have a role to play as an advocate for children's human rights.					