



HOW VOTESFORSCHOOLS SUPPORTS SMSC & BRITISH VALUES

At the heart of our work is an understanding of the need to be able to demonstrate to external partners how VotesforSchools supports the requirements set by these bodies.

Criteria	School Self-Evaluation/VotesforSchools Commentary
The proprietor/school actively promotes the fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.	Using VotesforSchools as a whole-school package means the active and consistent promotion of British Values. The vote centres on (largely British) issues every week, from free school meals to the press, to our attitudes towards the refugee crisis. VotesforSchools explicitly promotes British Values in action through the voting itself, which is central to the programme. Schools then receive the results of each vote two weeks later, and are provided with a breakdown of the gender and age group votes across the UK as well as specifically in their school. The weekly Curriculum Guides also identify which criteria from the British Values curriculum (as set out in the Government's Guidance on promoting British Values in schools, November 2014) the VoteTopic has met.
Enable voters to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem, and self-confidence.	VotesforSchools encourages and empowers voters to have a voice; the resources give them the tools to “be heard” on personal issues or when they see others in risky situations. The resources’ consistent and quality approach also ensures that every voter has access to and can engage in discussion around British Values and can develop their critical thinking. VotesforSchools fosters lifelong skills: engagement in democracy, making your voice heard, articulating your opinion, listening to others and decision-making.

<p>Enable voters to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England.</p>	<p>Through weekly topics, voters are given the skills and tools to identify what is right and wrong. Topics on issues such as county lines, alcohol, and extremism allow voters, through current and relevant issues, to understand the role of the law in civil society.</p> <p><i>This is also supported by the additional resource packages provided by VotesforSchools: My World, My Choice and My Body, My Choice.</i></p>
<p>Encourage voters to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated and to society more widely.</p>	<p>VotesforSchools exposes voters to different scenarios both in the UK and beyond. As a result, they develop a sound understanding of their wider community and global issues, as well as the ways in which they can use their democratic right to make their voices heard and enact positive change. Using The lessons and assemblies also provide voters with safe and suitable ways to make a difference nationally, locally, or within a school setting, and encourage young people to be agents of change.</p>
<p>Enable voters to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England.</p>	<p>VotesforSchools regularly works alongside expert organisations in developing weekly VoteTopics. For example, the resources for COP26 and children’s rights (2021) were created in collaboration with UNICEF, with support from several other key stakeholders in both the environmental and youth voice sectors. Through their participation, voters are impacting on national policy, understanding that their voice is heard, and seeing that voting is how to bring about change in our democratic system.</p>

<p>Further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling voters to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures.</p>	<p>VotesforSchools gives teachers the confidence to present topics and actively encourage voters to have differences of opinions. It also models objective and unbiased arguments, demonstrating to voters that any opinion is valid but should be supported with informed evidence. VotesforSchools resources expose voters to a diverse range of topics, and within these is an opportunity for them to make ethical and moral decisions. By looking at different sides of any debate, they develop skills of tolerance, empathy and understanding.</p>
<p>Encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.</p>	<p>A vital part of VotesforSchools' mission is to embed the skills that, through debate and discussion, provide young people with tolerance, empathy and understanding: these are the skills that they use to respect diversity. Alongside these skills, VotesforSchools specifically covers topics that align with the Equalities Act 2010, such as Black History Month, Inter-Faith Week and Pride Month.</p> <p><i>This is also supported by the additional resource packages provided by VotesforSchools: My World, My Choice and My Body, My Choice.</i></p>
<p>Encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England.</p>	<p>VotesforSchools is not just teaching voters about democracy, but immersing them in it on a weekly basis. By voting, young people experience democracy and the power that their voice can have in bringing about change. VotesforSchools provides weekly feedback to schools about how the votes every school has submitted have been used to make a difference. In turn, this reinforces good habits of democracy for the future.</p>

<p>Precludes the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school.</p>	<p>VotesforSchools resources provide staff with objective, fact-based arguments to help them debate and discuss current and topical issues. This puts staff in a confident position to present relevant and unbiased facts on a diverse range of topics. The use of VotesforSchools ensures there is an inclusive and unprejudiced approach to discussing sensitive subjects.</p>
	<p><i>More information on this can be found in our VotesforSchools & Political Impartiality in Schools Guidance document.</i></p>
<p>Takes such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of voters - they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views.</p>	<p>VotesforSchools resources come with an assurance that all issues are presented in a balanced way, with equal breadth and depth given to all sides of the argument. Overtly political issues – such local or general elections – make particular use of insights, information, and ideas from a range of sources across the political spectrum to ensure voters are equipped with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions independently.</p>
	<p><i>More information on this can be found in our VotesforSchools & Political Impartiality in Schools Guidance document.</i></p>