

Background:

UNICEF defines peace education as:

“the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about the behaviour changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create conditions conducive to peace, whether at a personal, interpersonal, inter-group, national, or international level.”

The aim of the Wales Peace Schools Scheme is to create a network of schools in Wales who are actively embedding a peaceful ethos as well as learning and activities related to peace into their everyday lives. Peace Schools will aim to be places where:

- Everyone feels safe, respected and valued
- There is a school ethos based on cooperation, respect for difference and problem-solving
- Peace is a common thread in learners’ everyday lives – in the way they learn and live together
- The curriculum contains opportunities to learn about and reflect upon stories of peacemakers – from Wales and beyond
- Learners are encouraged to be critical active citizens of Wales and the world



The scheme is aimed to be flexible so that schools can develop their own vision and plan, and involve the whole school community – staff, pupils and parents alike - in creating, adapting and refining activities and events that reflect their circumstances. At the same time, to be meaningful, the scheme needs to have a tangible effect on school life – in the way that staff and pupils live and learn together. For this reason, criteria have been developed so that schools know what outcomes they are working towards and can evidence how these have impacted positively on pupils’ knowledge, attitudes and skills and on the school community as a whole.

Schools can become a Peace School on two levels.

To become a **Level 1** Peace School, schools should fulfil criteria under 4 headings:

1. Leadership and management
2. Whole school ethos
3. Learning and the curriculum, and
4. Pupils as active local and global citizens

To achieve a **Level 2** award schools can further develop projects which enhance pupils' learning and skills, develop the school as a peaceful community and actively involve learners in projects as active and critical local and global citizens.

How do we become a Peace School?

Schools wishing to become a peace school should first fill in an expression of interest form, available from the Welsh Centre for International Affairs (WCIA). At the start of their journey, schools undertake a **baseline questionnaire** with staff and pupils to ascertain how peaceful their school community is in terms of awareness, behaviours and learning. Once this is completed, a **steering group** should be established (which should include at least one member of the Senior Management Team and two pupils) to formulate an **action plan** as to how your school will attain Peace School status. This plan should be discussed with a member of staff at the WCIA.

Once your plan has been approved, you can spring into action! As you take forward actions, just note them against the criteria on your **progress sheet**, ensuring that you collect **evidence** as you go along, and note **how the actions have made a difference (outcomes)**. Once your form is complete, submit it to the Wales for Peace team for approval. An annual awards ceremony will be held at which Peace School will be recognised

What support can we expect?

Education staff at the WCIA will support you in terms of answering queries and pointing you to materials that can be of help as you implement your scheme. As the scheme grows, we will also aim to create networks of schools who can support one another.

What benefits are there for our school?

Becoming a Peace School will enable schools to fulfil the four purposes of the curriculum as defined in 'Successful Futures', the review of the curriculum in Wales undertaken by Professor Graham Donaldson CB (February 2015), in that it will enable pupils to develop as:

- Ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- Enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- Ethical informed citizens of Wales and the world, and
- Healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

Particularly in developing Level 2 of the scheme, schools will be encouraged to involve learners in creative and enterprising projects which will enable them to develop an understanding of Wales' history and of their role in their local community and as global citizens. Peace Schools will be able to develop their own peace emblem and statement, which can be used to promote the school community to stakeholders, including Estyn. For further information contact janeharries@wcia.org.uk.

