Getting active

How would you improve your school playground?

- **Playground patrols** – pupils who look out for problems such as bullying.
- **School gardens** – growing flowers or even vegetables to eat.
- Learn new playground **games**, or raise money to buy more playground **equipment**.
- **Outdoor art projects** – mosaics, murals or sculptures.
- **Friendship bench** – where pupils can go and talk to someone if they feel lonely.
- Put more **seats** in the playground for lessons outdoors and sitting at playtime.
- Make a **wildlife area** and grow plants that birds and butterflies like.

FACT: Markethill school in Aberdeen, Scotland set a WORLD RECORD in their playground when 202 people ‘hula-hooped’ continuously for 2 minutes.

Playground

Welcome to the playground. It’s my favourite part of the school because we get to do what we want. Our School Council often discuss the playground and we have a lot of ideas about how to improve it. Can you see what the problems are?

I have no one to play with. There’s not enough space to play football! Ouch! Ha ha!

There’s not enough space to play football! Ouch! Ha ha!
Getting active

**Dining room**
This is our dining room - I love it here because I like eating. When the pupils don’t finish their lunch, I get the leftovers.

- I miss my chips!
- Sigh! Packed lunch again.
- I’m hungry! I had to queue for ages.
- It’s noisy in here!

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**How would you improve the dining room?**

- Start a healthy tuck shop serving **snacks** at morning break.
- Do a **survey** to find out what food pupils like.
- Get all the pupils to drink **milk** and eat **fruit** every day.
- Have different year groups queuing at separate times to reduce the queues.
- **Breakfast club** for pupils who don’t eat before they come to school.
- Talk to the cook about **menu ideas** for special occasions.
- Make the dining room more interesting and relaxing with **music**.
- Healthy eating **campaign** with assemblies, posters, lessons and other events.

**FACT:** The Government gives each primary school 45p per pupil to spend on lunch.

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**I’m hungry! I had to queue for ages.**

**It’s noisy in here!**
How would you improve your school toilets?

- **Do a survey** asking people what they think about the toilets.
- **Go and find out exactly what the problems** are e.g. how many toilets don’t work.
- **Talk to the caretaker and cleaners** about improving the toilets.
- **Write** to local businesses asking them to decorate or donate equipment for the toilets.
- **Run a campaign** encouraging pupils to treat the toilets better.
- **Decorate** the toilets by adding colour or pictures.
- **Find out costs** then write to the headteacher asking for **money** to improve toilets.

FACT: The government now wants adults to listen to pupils’ ideas when new schools are built. Find out more at www.bsf.gov.uk

Toilets

Hold your breath - these are our toilets, and they don’t smell too good. We have quite a few problems with toilets as you can see. Some pupils say they hang on until they get home, but that’s not good because you can’t concentrate in lessons if you’re bursting to go!
How would you improve your classroom?

- Have some lessons outside.
- Make or buy artwork to brighten up the classroom.
- Have activities like games in the lessons.
- Change the position of desks so it’s easier to learn.
- Organise trips to learn more about subjects like history and geography.
- Try different books to see which ones pupils prefer.
- Have bottles of water for pupils, which helps your brain work.
- Observe lessons in other classes to see different teaching styles.

**FACT:** By the end of year 6, you will have spent 7200 hours in the classroom!
Although there’s plenty to sort out inside the school, we also look at areas outside school that affect pupils. Everyone travels to and from school every day and we want to make sure it’s safe. We also want pupils to get exercise and learn about road safety.

**How would you improve the road outside school?**

- **Find out** how pupils travel to school and if they feel **safe**.
- Organise a **Safe Routes to School scheme**, encouraging pupils to walk or cycle safely to school.
- Start a ‘**Walking Bus**’ where groups of pupils walk to school together.
- Run a ‘travel safety’ **campaign** where pupils learn about getting to and from school safely.
- Ask the local council for funding to buy **storage** for bicycles.
- Organise cycle **training** for pupils who want to come to school by bike.

**FACT**: 40% of primary pupils are driven to school – that’s almost twice as many as 20 years ago.
This is our town, and when pupils aren’t at school they need places to go and things to do which are fun and safe. Our School Council can help by finding out what pupils think and giving ideas to the people in charge.

**Local Community**

**What could we do in the local community?**

- **Visit town hall** to see what the local council do, or invite a councilor to visit the school.
- **Set up after school clubs**, with sports, music and arts.
- **Ask the library** to get more books and facilities for children (PC games, DVDs, music).
- **Ask the cinema** and other local businesses for discounts or free entry for children.
- **See if local sports stars** will come to the school or donate prizes for raffles.
- **Ask the council** to provide more for children to do (football goals, skateboard ramps).
- **Find out where children feel unsafe** and take your ideas to the police.
- **Encourage pupils and their families to recycle** at home.
- **Ask the local Health Service** to provide health information to pupils (diet, drugs, exercise).
Getting active

School environment

Our Council wants to help keep the school looking nice. We also want to reduce waste and reduce the impact on our environment. This can also save the school money and improve our health.

Litter
We could go and see how much litter there is around the school. We can also check where the worst areas are and what types of litter we find. It might not be the pupils’ fault if other people are using the school in the evenings or weekends.

Recycling
Can we reduce the amount of paper we use? Can we use both sides before throwing it away, and do we need to print so many copies of things? Can we re-use envelopes?

We can find out about our local recycling scheme and start collecting paper, glass and plastic. How much waste is produced from our packed lunches? Even things like apple cores and banana skins can be used to make compost.

Energy
There are lots of ways to reduce the amount of energy we use. This could be by using heating, hot water, lighting, TVs and computers more carefully.

Water
We can make sure people turn taps off properly, or change the type of taps we use.

Transport
We could look at the way we get to and from school and see if we can reduce traffic jams and pollution. There are more ideas on page 53.

School Grounds
How does our school look? We can ask pupils to take photos of their favourite and worst parts. We can also make the school entrance look nicer and more welcoming for visitors. What about classrooms, corridors and the playground?

To find out how your school can be one too, see www.eco-schools.org.uk

When we have looked at all these things, we hope to become an Eco-School.
One of the best things about our School Council is that we raise money for charities. Organising fundraising events is fun, and we get to support good causes too.

We raise money in lots of different ways, and some are easier than others.

Opposite are some of the different things we have done.

- Non-uniform day
  Pupils pay £1 to not wear their uniform, or wear fancy dress for the day.

- Bring & Buy sale
  Pupils can bring things to sell, like unwanted games or CDs. You can also sell things like cakes, which pupils have made.

- Sponsored silence
  The teachers’ favourite! Pupils ask friends and family to sponsor them to keep quiet for the whole of lunchtime. You can be sponsored to do anything: walk, run, hop, sing, skate…

- Games competition
  Organise a games competition at lunchtime or after school. You could get sponsored to see how many penalties you can score or baskets you can shoot in 10 minutes.

- Quiz show
  Run a quiz in the style of your favourite TV show, and have prizes for the winners. Each class could play, and the winners go into a ‘grand final’ at lunchtime.
Getting active

Which event?
This will depend on how much time you have, what help you need and where you are going to have it.

Who does what?
You will need a team to organise an event. Certain people will have key roles, but everybody can have a part to play in making the event a success.

Key roles
Project managers make sure everything is running smoothly and help everyone get their jobs done.
Publicity managers create posters, leaflets and anything needed to let people know about the event.
Promoters get the word out and make sure everyone knows about your event.

When, Where and Why?
It’s important to choose a date that doesn’t clash with other big events like school outings or plays. Make sure the place where you have the event is suitable and pupils can get there easily. Finally, don’t forget why you are doing it. Which charity will you choose, and how will you let people know where their money is going?

Get some help
There will be people who can help you by giving you equipment or helping out on the day. You could also ask people to donate things that can be used as prizes for competitions. The best ways of asking for help is either to write a letter or make a phone call. Remember making contact might get you almost anything!
Getting active

Writing letters

You should be brief and try to keep your letter to one page if possible.

Use their title e.g. Mr/Mrs unless you know them well.

A good headline will get their attention.

Say why you are writing.

Make it personal. Make the person feel like you are writing only to them.

Tell them what’s in it for them.

Download guide to writing letters from www.schoolcouncils.org

St Dereks Primary School
34 Hill Road
Fulchester
F04 2LR

Mr B Smith
Smith’s Bouncy Castles Ltd
18 High Road
Fulchester
F02 9JL

Date

Dear Mr Smith,

ST DEREK’S NEEDS YOUR HELP!

On March 28th, pupils at St Dereks Primary school are running a day of fundraising activities, to raise money for cancer research. We would like students to have a bouncy castle which pupils will pay to take part in, and having a bouncy castle would be fantastic because everyone loves them.

Would it be possible for us to hire one of your bouncy castles at a special rate so that we can raise funds on the day? Fingers crossed for some sunny weather! We could also promote your bouncy castle at our upcoming events such as the school fete, and parents would hire from you for birthday parties!

If you are able to support this event, we would be very happy.

Yours sincerely,

James, Raj, Aleesha
St Dereks School Council

Making phone calls

Using the phone is the quickest way of contacting people, but it can be scary. Before you call, write down any details you need to remember so you can look at them while you talk.

1. If possible have the name of the person you need to speak to.
2. Always start by telling them who you are and why you are calling.
3. Be clear about what you are asking for.
4. If you have agreed anything, repeat this to make sure they understand.
5. When you finish the call, remember to thank them.

Hello, can I please speak to Mrs Kelly, the Catering Manager.

My name is Raj from St Dereks School Council, and I’m calling about our school dinners.

Would you be able to come to a meeting with our School Council so we can tell you our ideas for improving school dinners?

Just to confirm, you will be coming to the school to meet us on Wednesday May 14th at 12.30pm.

Thank you for your time Mrs Kelly, and I look forward to meeting with you.

St Dereks Primary School
34 Hill Road
Fulchester
F04 2LR

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Yours sincerely,

James, Raj, Aleesha
St Dereks School Council

Download guide to writing letters from www.schoolcouncils.org
Bullying

Although St Dereks is quite a friendly school, we still have some bullying. Pupils can be nasty or hurt each other and we need to find ways of stopping it.

We wanted to find out more about bullying at our school, so we did a survey. We asked all the pupils to fill in a questionnaire.

Have you ever been bullied?
- Yes
- No

How many times?
- Once
- 2-5 times
- More than 5 times

Where did it happen?
- In the classroom
- In the playground
- In the corridors
- Journey to/from school
- In the toilets
- Somewhere else

Who were you bullied by?
- A boy
- A girl
- A group of boys
- A group of girls
- Mixed group

Did you tell anyone about it?
- Staff member
- Family
- Friends
- No one

Did you report it?
- Yes
- No

Did you see other pupils being bullied?
- Yes
- No

Have you any ideas how we can stop bullying?

We found that most bullying happens in the playground, and people are most likely to tell a friend about the bullying.

We did some research on the internet and found out about playground buddies. These are members of the School Council who are on duty in the playground during morning break and lunchtime. They get special training and if people need someone to talk to they can listen.

The buddies wear a special badge so people know who they are, and they have a ‘buddy bench’ where pupils can sit down to talk or play a game. Our team of buddies takes turns so each day there are four buddies on duty.

After having the buddies for one term, we will ask pupils what they think about them. We hope the buddies will make people feel they have someone to talk to and feel safer in the playground.

We might not be able to stop all bullying, but we can make sure anyone who gets bullied knows they are not alone.
Reasons why people misbehave

- When I was bored in class.
- When I was hungry.
- When I couldn’t understand a lesson.
- When our team lost the football match at lunchtime.
- When my mum told me off before school.
- When my friend wouldn’t lend me her pencil sharpener.

When someone misbehaves, they will usually get told off and sometimes sent to stand outside the headteacher’s office. Sometimes they have to stay inside during lunchtime or help pick up litter in the playground.

Types of bad behaviour

- Being rude or swearing.
- Arriving late to a lesson.
- Damaging property.
- Not doing homework.
- Missing school without a proper reason.
- Disrupting a lesson.
- Fighting or shouting at people.
- Not wearing your uniform (if your school has one).

Ideas to improve behaviour

- Points for good behaviour, with a prize when you get a certain number.
- Badges or stickers which pupils can wear when they behave well.
- Certificates for good behaviour.
- Lunchtime clubs or playground games for pupils who are bored.

Are there any behaviour issues that your School Council could look at?
Classroom rules Key Stage 1
- We listen carefully.
- We work quietly.
- We are polite and friendly.
- We tell the truth.
- We always do our best.

Classroom rules Key Stage 2
- We listen carefully and follow instructions.
- We show respect for others, treating them as we would like to be treated.
- We work quietly without disturbing our classmates.
- We look after our own belongings and keep the classroom tidy.
- We tell the truth.
- We do our best at all times.
The DfES Innovation Unit works with everyone in schools to find new ways to improve learning. We look for ideas from all the schools in England as well as businesses and other organisations which do things in interesting ways. We want to help schools to keep getting better and for learning to be exciting for every single pupil. If you want to find out more about our work, please visit our website www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/innovation-unit. There’s a special section for you that tells you all about our work and how you can send us your own ideas.
Being on the School Council is an important job, and it isn't easy!

This handbook will help you by explaining:

• Why we need School Councils
• How to be a School Councillor
• How to run a School Council

It will also give you lots of ideas for projects like raising money, improving behaviour and sorting out the toilets!

Join the pupils and staff of St Dereks Primary as they show you how their Council has made a difference both inside and outside of their school.


Supported by

School Councils UK provides training and resources to support pupil participation.

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