

## National Discussion on Education – Scottish Youth Parliament Response:

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### **Who We Are**

The Scottish Youth Parliament - [www.syp.org.uk](http://www.syp.org.uk)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the basis for the Scottish Youth Parliament's (SYP's) vision, mission and values. In particular, SYP embodies Article 12 of the UNCRC, which states that young people have the right to express their views freely and have their opinions listened to in all matters affecting them. As a completely youth-led charity, the words and sentiment of Article 12 have profound importance for our work.

### **Our Vision**

The Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) is the democratic voice of Scotland's young people. Our vision for Scotland is of a nation that actively listens to and values the meaningful participation of its young people. Our goal is to make this vision a reality, in order to ensure young people in Scotland grow up loved, safe and respected, and able to realise their full potential.

### **Our Mission**

SYP is a rights-based charity, with members supported by all of Scotland's 32 local authorities and 11 National Voluntary Organisations. SYP's mission is to provide a national platform for young people to discuss the issues that are important to them, and campaign for changes to the nation that they live in. We support our members in their work by training them, supporting their personal development, and empowering them, using a youth work ethos. Our democratically elected members listen to and recognise the issues that are most important to young people in every community across the country and ensure that decision-makers listen to their voices.

### **Our Values**

- Democracy - We are youth-led and accountable to young people aged 14 to 25. Our democratic structure and the scale of our engagement across Scotland gives us a mandate that sets us apart from other organisations.
- Rights - We are a rights-based organisation. We are passionate about making young people aware of their rights and ensuring that local and national governments uphold their rights.
- Inclusion and Diversity - We are committed to being truly inclusive and work tirelessly to ensure policymakers and politicians hear the voices of young people from every community and background in Scotland.
- Political Impartiality - We are independent from all political parties. By working with all stakeholders, groups, and individuals who share our values, we deliver the policies that are most important to young people.

## **Our Approach**

As a youth-led organisation, we are constantly seeking the views of our MSYPs and other young people to ensure our policy positions represent their views as clearly as possible. This means that we have numerous opportunities to collect qualitative and quantitative data on a variety of issues underneath the umbrella of education. To ensure our response can accurately reflect the views of our members and the young people they represent, we pulled our information from various sources.

### **Group discussions**

Using materials from the National Discussion workshop ideas and through new ideas created to suit the audience of MSYPs, two MSYPs, Fraser Cronin MSYP for Stirling and Deputy Convener of SYP's External Affairs, UK, and International Committee and Ellie Craig MSYP for Glasgow Cathcart and SYP Trustee, worked with SYP staff to design and deliver group discussions at SYP's National Winter Event on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> November. Two 1.5 hour long group discussions were held with around 15 and 10 MSYPs in attendance respectively. The group discussions included three activities:

- A traffic light activity to determine what elements of Scottish education Members felt should be: green - kept as they are; amber - updated or improved; or red - got rid of or fundamentally shifted.
- A priorities pyramid to look at what the things need to change for the future of Scottish education and how important they are to young people.
- A debate on 'if you had to pick one thing' to determine what Members felt the most important thing was to improve the future of Scottish education.

### **Ken Muir report research**

To prepare SYP's response to the Ken Muir Education Reform consultation in December 2021, SYP worked with Together the Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights and Children's Parliament to research the views of children and young people on education reform. For young people aged 12-18 at school or at college a toolkit for an adult known to them to hold a workshop and a self-completion online survey were created. 394 secondary school aged children and young people engaged with the toolkit designed for them and 3,889 12-18-year-olds responded to the online survey.

Findings from this research are included in SYP's National Discussion response, but the full findings can also be [viewed here](#).

### **The SQA Learner Panel**

SYP is working in partnership with The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) to provide a series of monthly learner panels. The panels are an opportunity for young people to feedback directly to the SQA and have their voices heard in decisions which affect them directly. The SQA provide the learners with transparency while taking comments on board and setting actions. There are currently over 25 young people who sit on the panel who are mostly of learner age. The panel is youth-led so the panel members choose the focus topics and undertake their own consultations. Some key themes explored by the panel so far are assessments, the curriculum, equality, education recovery and reform.

Summaries of the learner panel discussions were also used to feed into this response.

## Our recommendations in summary

1. **Rights-based approach** - A rights-based approach to Scottish education was identified by the young people we consulted with as the most important principle the future of Scottish education should be built upon. To achieve this, **decision-makers should embed the vision of article 29 of the UNCRC into the system to give young people an education that fully develops their personality, talents and abilities.** Decision-makers should also recognise that UNCRC rights are interdependent and so build an education system that protects, respects, and fulfils all young people's rights including their:
  - a. Article 12 right to share their views and for those views to be taken seriously
  - b. Article 24 right to the best possible health
  - c. Article 31 right to relax, play, and take part in a range of cultural and artistic activities
2. **Meaningful participation of young people in decision-making on education** - Decision-makers must improve on previous practice to embed article 12 respecting meaningful participation within education systems, to overcome power imbalances in embedded cultures. Support for this work is available through SYP and other youth organisations who have expertise in meaningful youth participation.
3. **'Skills-based' approach that prepares young people for the future** - Young people told us that too often does not develop the skills they need to thrive as young people and succeed in later life. SYP advocate for an education system that addresses this by changing the system of assessment, changing the definition of a 'successful learner' to move away from the expectation that all successful young people go to university, and by updating the curriculum to include teaching on skills young people might need in later life.
4. **Continuous improvement** - The principle of continuous improvement must be embedded. Young people highlighted that consultation with them needs to be continuous, and shouldn't happen every 20 years when the system has seemingly failed but throughout to make ongoing changes and updates to the system in line with best practice.
5. **Mental health support** - Schools and places of education should feel like a place where learners can go and feel safe. By supporting young people to have the best possible mental health the system would ensure they are going to be better prepared for learning.
6. **Active participation of seldom-heard groups** - Young people from seldom-heard groups are too often excluded from decision-making and participation and should be actively reached out to by decision-makers.
7. **Climate education** - education provided to young people on the climate crisis, environmental awareness, and living sustainably needs to be improved to prepare them for the changing world.
8. **Value of youth work** - The role of youth work is critical and it should be protected from funding cuts. Young people told us that when they have more opportunities to try different activities individuals can explore what they enjoy and in return learn more about themselves, their own needs and develop their individual skills through the activities they enjoy most.

## 1. What kind of education will be needed by children and young people in Scotland in the future?

After extensive consultation with young people through workshops, surveys, and the SQA learner panels (our full approach is detailed in the summary file attached) young people told us that first and foremost **the future of education should be one that protects, respects and fulfills all of young people's rights, especially those under the UNCRC.**

The rights-based approach required to achieve this was discussed in both of our National Discussion workshops with MSYPs. When asked to 'Choose one thing that is needed for the future of Scottish education' two out of four groups selected a rights-based approach. The topics chosen by the other groups also highlighted elements of a rights-based approach. They highlighted that the future of education should protect, respect and fulfill children and young people's rights relating to education: their UNCRC article 28 right for every child to have an education and article 29 right to an education that develops every child's personality, talents, and abilities to the full. Article 29 also says education should build a child's respect for other people and the world around them. In particular, they should learn to respect:

- their rights and the rights of others
- their freedoms and the freedoms of others
- their parents
- the identity, language and values of countries— including their own.

UNCRC rights are also interdependent and MSYPs in their discussions identified other rights that must be respected by the education system in Scotland. Including:

- **Article 12** - The right for children and young people to have their views heard and taken seriously. As a general principle of the UNCRC, article 12 (alongside articles 2, 3, & 6) underpins how the UNCRC should be interpreted and put into practice. Article 12 in action means decision-makers listening to the views of young people and acting to incorporate those views into all decisions that impact young people. This applies at all levels of decision-making including both the collective voice of young people as a group and the individual views of each young person in the education system. An education system based on the views of children and young people not only respects their article 12 right, but also better addresses the needs of the learners it aims to serve. This is because young people are able to identify the problems in their education and input into developing solutions, they are more likely to support and invest in.

Respecting, protecting, and fulfilling article 12 of the UNCRC means embedding the process of meaningful participation of young people. We outline how to achieve this in education in our response to question 2.

- **Article 24** - The right to the best possible health. Young people reflected that their education has a significant impact on their right to health, particularly the mental health impact of education. Mental health and wellbeing are not seen as equal to academic achievement, and this is something young people have been highlighting for some time, especially during the pandemic. There is often not enough support within their schools as they were not prepared for the number of students seeking mental health support. With a backlog of CAMHS referrals, a lot of students have been left

trying to manage their stress, anxiety, and pre-existing mental illness or health issues on their own. This policy from our 2020-2025 manifesto 'From Scotland's Young People' - which was developed through consultation with around 10,000 young people - shows a practical solution young people have put forward to improve mental health provision in the public sector, including in schools.

*“There should be mandatory training for those working in education and health care settings on how to identify mental health problems and provide support for all young people, especially those most at risk.” Overall 89.4% agreed.*

- **Article 31** - The right to relax, play, and take part in a range of cultural and artistic activities. Young people also reflected that their education has a significant impact on their UNCRC article 31 right. The future education system should encourage and support young people to take part in extracurricular activities where they choose to and to ensure young people have free time to use as they choose.

A second key recommendation from the young people we consulted on the future of Scottish education was that it must prepare them for the rest of their lives in the modern and changing world.

MSYPs in our national discussion workshops agreed that the current 'knowledge-based system' encouraged young people to remember specific information to pass exams. The young people we represent think the system should do more to help develop the skills young people will keep throughout their lives. This system would also encourage young people to make more meaningful choices on what they do after education, and not place certain outcomes, such as university, above more vocational choices, such as apprenticeships.

MSYPs recognised that this was included within the rights-based approach described above, but felt that it needed singled out to emphasise the difference that exists between this and the current system.

## 2. How do we make that a reality

To make a rights-based approach a reality there are a few key principles SYP would strongly encourage decision-makers to embed into the future of Scottish education. To clarify, The Scottish Human Rights Commission defines a human rights-based approach as *“A human rights based approach empowers people to know and claim their rights. It increases the ability of organisations, public bodies and businesses to fulfil their human rights obligations. It also creates solid accountability so people can seek remedies when their rights are violated.”*

Some key principles the young people we consulted with highlighted:

- An education that ensures children and young people and the people who work with them know about children and young people's rights and what they can do when they are concerned their rights aren't being upheld.

- An education that respects, protects, and fulfills all young people's rights including their UNCRC article 28 and article 29 rights relating to education.
- A system that values the views of young people, respecting their article 12 right to share their views and have their views taken seriously. Practical to this is decision-makers and adults that work in education understanding young people's rights and the processes of meaningful participation required to gather young people's views - as well as being aware of power imbalances in the system and how those should be navigated to genuinely ensure young people are at the centre of decision-making.

SYP will be publishing a participation framework designed by young people in *The Right Way* project to support decision-makers to meaningfully include young people in their work. We would encourage education decision-makers to engage with this resource to understand what goes into creating meaningful participation, however the one point we would highlight is that by involving young people in the development of your participation processes they will meet the needs of the specific group of young people involved, so SYP would strongly encourage decision-makers to practice this approach. We also discuss more detailed approaches to meaningful participation in response to question 5.

Creating an education system that prepares young people for their futures and develops their full potential is very closely related to a rights-based approach. A number of SYP policies give practical ideas from young people to help develop this education system.

SYP Policy comes from the collective voices of Scotland's young people. Our policy originates from our manifesto *From Scotland's Young People*, Members' Motions and Committee Motions which are voted upon by the MSYPs, and consultations with groups of young people on specific issues.

First, young people felt that the current exam system encourages them to memorize things for the short term, rather than learn skills that will be with them for life. Young people told us they would like to see skills development incorporated alongside examination grades; continuous assessment - which learners have told us they mostly prefer, with over half (54%) of respondents in our #HaveYourSay survey last year believing continuous assessment would be less stressful and give them better grades; and other means of demonstrable attainment.

Second, a number of policies address improving PSHE education and broader education on life skills across their learning, which young people raised during the National Discussion workshops as a priority, with one young person saying they felt PSHE lesson times were not always properly utilized. Policy suggestions include:

'The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that education for young people on revenge porn and sexting, and support services for those affected by these issues, should be improved.' - Members' Motion, passed with 81% agreement

The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) in schools should help young people speak out about abuse without stigmatisation, to bring about a culture change to end physical punishment against children.

‘The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that every young person should learn about politics in secondary schools across Scotland, including teaching about political systems and voting, to ensure that they have the best start for engaging in politics.’ - Members’ Motion, passed with 89% agreement

‘The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that every school pupil in Scotland should have access to a form of Work-Based Learning.’ - Committee Motion by SYP’s Education and Lifelong Learning Committee, passed with 97% agreement.

Third, the young people we spoke to felt the future education system should change the definition of what a ‘successful learner’ is by recognising achievements outside of just academic attainment. They would like to see life skills built into different subjects and want teachers who help learners gain knowledge around subjects, not just get them through their exams. Learners would prefer to have access to a much broader general education, so they have the basics covered, and then be allowed to choose specialist subjects that they are interested in afterwards. They also feel that building work experience into the curriculum would help to level the playing field and build confidence and contacts. The introduction of essential skills like basic first aid into the curriculum, learners agreed, would give young people the opportunity to save lives and gain invaluable skills. This policy demonstrates young people’s support for this specific learning, but the life skills they should develop is, of course, not just limited to first aid.

‘The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that the Scottish Government should introduce comprehensive first aid training as a compulsory part of the education curriculum.’ - Members Motion, passed with 84% agreement.

### **3. How can every child and young person’s individual needs be supported and addressed in the future**

SYP believes that a young person’s individual needs will be supported and addressed by treating each learner as an individual and taking a personal approach to learning. It is critical to make sure that the specific needs of each young person is addressed in all areas of education because some young people have different needs but all young people have the same rights to an education that develops their full potential.

To ensure this, young people in both our National Discussion workshops pointed out the importance of adequate school supplies as essential. This is about ensuring that all children have the supplies they need to learn. For example:

One MSYP mentioned school building facilities, and how they don’t enjoy going to school because of how old and inundated their buildings are. Their toilets are so ‘disgusting’ that they will try to avoid going to the toilet during the school day, and the rest of the school is falling apart. They talked about how this can influence school attainment because people are put off turning up to school because of this lack of facilities.

The young people's discussion also led onto the topic of class sizes and how they recognize if class sizes are too big for teachers then they are not able to deliver the teaching that is needed to support the needs of each pupil. This is important because there have been studies that have linked class size directly to student outcomes, increasing class size can directly hurt the individual needs of young people, so there should be a shift towards smaller class sizes.

Furthermore, MSYPS agreed that choice and independence in their learning was the second thing to note when it came to individual needs being supported and addressed. It was common to hear amongst the groups that they often found that schools pushed learners towards university specifically. Ensuring that learners were aware of what was on offer other than University would mean that learners would be able to choose the right path for them for their future. One MSYP suggested that more employers could come into schools to discuss the options that they offer to learners after school, and more people could be fully informed about employment opportunities such as apprenticeships. If this is made clear from early on in a young person's education then this would allow individuals to know what subjects to choose, and what level of qualifications they need. This was discussed by learners in our Learner Panel in November when MSYPs highlighted that they often didn't know what subjects they needed and were taking the 'standard' ones of Maths and English. If more information is given, then learners are more informed and can make their decisions on what they need for the future.

Finally, and critically, young people have regularly told us that education is about a lot more than just school. The role of youth work is critical. Young people mentioned that ensuring there is a wide variety of extracurricular activities is important for individuals. They found that when you have more opportunities to try different activities individuals could explore what they enjoy and in return learn more about themselves, their own needs and develop their individual skills through the activities they enjoy most.

Critical to this is the role of youth work in providing young people with opportunities for an education that develops all of their skills and personality. SYP's Manifesto policy on youth work calls for investment in youth work and protection from budget cuts, which young people told us is essential to a well-rounded education system.

*Local youth work should be invested in by national and local government and protected by law from budget cuts. Manifest - passed with agreement of 75%*

#### **4. What is one thing that needs to stay and why?**

It is important to take note that young people are generally quite disappointed with the education system as it is.

One element of Scottish education that regularly came up within the workshops was the principle of continuous improvement. The young people were aware that the Scottish Government has education projects that aim to include the voices of young people, for example this consultation, which is welcome. The young people we consulted highlighted that this consultation with young people needs to be continuous, and shouldn't happen every 20



years when the system has seemingly failed but throughout to make ongoing changes to the system. It would mean that education systems wouldn't have to be scrapped but instead the future system should be adaptive and flexible and should match with what the young people, the learners, needed and wanted. The system should continue with the principle of engaging with young people's voices, but adapt to ensure they are included throughout and uphold the principles of meaningful participation outlined in our responses to questions 2 and 5.

Secondly, the young people we consulted made note of the teachers they have experienced. Descriptions such as 'compassionate', 'passionate', and 'committed' were used when a number of young people said this type of teaching needs to stay. In the context of a rights-based approach an adult who advocates for children and young people's rights and makes them feel supported in school is critical. This can mean that they are more likely to feel supported throughout their education and develop throughout it. However, it is important to take note that the young people were also aware that teachers are often stretched which means that these 'compassionate', 'passionate', and 'committed' teachers are not able to be fully dedicated to each pupil, which the young people agreed was no fault of the teachers, but instead of the demands the system places on them.

Thirdly, the young people believed that flexibility needs to be kept within the Scottish education system. One MSYP highlighted that the Advanced Highers that they took in sixth year were very helpful and allowed them to prepare academically for the first year of university, and how the transition was better because of this. MSYPs also were positive towards the fact that you can retake exams or take exams at a time that suits the specific learner. For example, one young person spoke about how they failed Maths but the Scottish system meant that they could come back next year and re-sit, and meant that they could still go to university or college to do the subject they wished.

## **5. What are the most important priorities for a future Scottish education system?**

As one of the activities during our National Discussion workshops, MSYPs were asked, in groups, to select the most important priority for the future of Scottish education and debate why they thought that was the case. The four breakout groups for this activity selected:

- A rights-based approach to education (selected by two separate groups)
- The meaningful participation of young people in their own education
- A skills-based education system that prepares young people for later life

We outlined the details of a rights-based approach and a skills-based education in our response to questions 1 & 2, but have highlighted them again here to emphasise that the young people we consulted with felt these were key priorities for the national discussion.

While we also addressed the meaningful participation of young people in education in questions 1 & 2, here we will elaborate more on the practicalities of making that a reality. Some key features of meaningful participation include:

- A systemic approach to involving young people from the earliest possible stage of decision-making. To help support this, SYP use models of participation to map the

elements that are required to create meaningful participation and highlight the Lundy Model of participation as a rights-based model that education decision-makers should adopt.

- Feedback loops to ensure young people remain involved and informed throughout the decision-making process. Feedback loops ensure that young people remain engaged in participation and provide accountability that ensures adults act after consulting with young people.
- Make participation inclusive and accessible and actively reach out to seldom-heard groups. How to achieve this might vary depending on the group or groups of young people involved but understanding their needs and addressing them is essential. Young people from seldom-heard groups are too often excluded from decision-making and participation and should be actively reached out to by decision-makers.
- Adapt practices, meetings and resources to ensure they are 'youth-friendly'. This might include removing the use of jargon, amending meeting times, shortening resources such as meeting papers or surveys, or bigger things like how meetings are run.
- Take action where possible to ensure that the views shared by young people in the process leads to results where possible.

One example a learner shared with SYP was that their school often does school surveys every 6 months to a year on gauging learner satisfaction around the school and the curriculum in place. It allows both teachers and learners to have a say in how their learning is developed, with these changes taken onboard. A collaborative approach to designing learning is a good start to developing a trustful and symbiotic relationship between schools, teachers, learners, and agencies.

## **6. How can we ensure that everyone involved in education in Scotland has a say in future decisions and actions?**

The aim of the education system should be based in article 29 of the UNCRC, which focusses on developing children and young people's potential. Fundamentally, for that to be met children and young people's article 12 right to share their views and to have those views taken seriously needs to be protected, respected, and fulfilled.

We have outlined some of the key elements of the meaningful participation of young people in decision-making in our response to question 5.

However, we are concerned that the reality of the current system does not yet feel like all stakeholders in education are living up to the standard outlined in article 12 and the meaningful participation advice we mentioned above, or that they have this ambition for the system. We see evidence of power imbalances in the system which mean that, even when young people have a "seat at the table" their voices can get crowded out by more powerful ones. It is crucial to ensuring young people have a say in the future of education is challenging processes and attitudes that don't allow this to happen throughout education institutions.

A reflection from a member of SYP's learner panel said:

*'[An MSYP] is the only YP on the [SQA's] National Qualifications group and he doesn't get listened to. I know a few people who have told me they don't feel heard by the SQA when discussing these things. I mean for example the word "assessments", they're just exams.'*

And another member said:

*'We have gave up our time for them to instead take the constructive criticism just get defensive and not want to change. I really value the organisations we work with who actually care what we think.'*

## **7. How can children and young people be cared for and supported in the future? (ie. Physical and mental well-being)**

As detailed in our response to question 1, a rights-based education includes protecting, respecting, and fulfilling young people's UNCRC article 24 right to the best possible health. This includes both physical and mental health.

Young people have told us that the impact of school on their mental health can be significant, and that current support is not adequate. One young person said of the future education system "Children need to be supported to feel safe and ready to learn. Prioritising health and wellbeing.

On mental health, young people told us that some schools would prioritise and consider mental health up until exams and one young person said they felt their mental health was seen as something 'we can deal with this after exams'. So, the mental health of young people in education is too often seen as secondary to academic attainment instead of valuing both.

Mental health was something that continuously came up in discussion in the workshops as well, with MSYPs stressing how important the young people found it. It is important for schools to feel like a place where learners can go and feel safe. If the mental health of a young person is supported, then they are going to be better prepared for learning. In the October Learner panel, an MSYP brought up how schools can be one of the best places for support for young people as this is where they spend most of their time. Teachers regularly see the same pupils and can often see signs of bad mental health. A suggestion following this in the National Discussion workshops was that some schools have monthly check-ins. If this was used in more schools then it could give teachers and pupils the space to discuss mental well-being and attainment, especially around exams sessions when it can often put extra pressure on young people.

To illustrate this, an MSYP said:

*'The education system should be [but isn't] putting assessments second to young people's wellbeing'*

As well as this, SYP policy supports the idea that outdoor learning and residential centres are an integral part of learning but are also beneficial to mental health and wellbeing:

*'The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that outdoor learning and residential centres are an integral part of children and young people's education and development, and are beneficial to mental health, wellbeing, and attainment. SYP calls on the Scottish Government to put in place additional funding to support outdoor education and activity centres to ensure that this vital work can continue.'* Passed with 96% agreement.

Education settings are also important settings for ensuring young people have the best possible physical health. One young person said there needs to be focus on people who are 'not that into sport', pointing out that their physical health should be upheld too. Another MSYP suggested using different sports and giving young people choice to make sure it is always fun for those involved.

Another key element to supporting young people's physical and mental wellbeing is upholding their right to food - which is also one of SYP's current campaign priorities. Our recent survey of over 800 young people found:

60% of young people didn't know or were unsure of what help and support is available in their local community if they needed help accessing food. One young person told us that "I know there will be help and support in getting food but it's not advertised at all and is hard to find"

And only 20% of young people told us they felt there was no stigma attached to asking for help to access food. A respondent told us "I think if I had to access a food bank I would feel like I would have failed and would feel deep shame. I know that I shouldn't but there's 100% a stigma about it."

Education settings are crucial to upholding young people's right to food acknowledging that young people often spend a lot of their time in those settings. Upholding young people's right to food also improves physical health and concentration in school.

## **8. How can the right of every child and young person to have opportunities to develop their full potential be achieved in future?**

Throughout our response, we have advocated for a rights-based approach to education, rooted in articles 28 & 29 of the UNCRC and acknowledging the interdependence of children and young people's rights by ensuring the system respects, protects, and fulfills all of these rights.

To further evidence the benefits of a rights-based approach and the support it has from young people and MSYPs, below are practical SYP policies supporting our calls.

*'The Scottish Youth Parliament recommends that rights education should be made mandatory, included in teacher training, and teach about rights including the UNCRC, the Human Rights Act and the European Convention of Human Rights, to empower young people to be human rights defenders.'* - Policy recommendation from the Young People's Rights Review

Children and young people's rights apply to all young people and the right to non-discrimination underpins the rest of the UNCRC alongside the other general principles. Despite this, too often young people from seldom-heard groups have their rights negatively impacted. Some SYP policy to improve Scottish education to reflect the experiences of black, indigenous and people of colour is:

*'The Scottish Youth Parliament calls on the Scottish Government to reform the education curriculum to more accurately reflect the experiences of BAME individuals; and to ensure their historical influence on Scottish society and culture, as well as Scotland's role in the slave trade and colonisation, is an integral part of the Scottish education system.'* - Members' Motion, passed with 86% agreement.

Additional to this, SYP policy on supporting learners with additional support needs is:

*'The Scottish Government and Councils should invest in more support for and awareness of learners with Additional Support Needs.'* - 'From Scotland's Young People' manifesto statement passed with 85% agreement in November 2020

And finally, highlighting that education can be a very different experience for young people who are LGBTQIA+ says:

*"There should be a dedicated fund for initiatives to educate, prevent and address LGBT bullying and discrimination in schools."* Manifesto statement passed with 74% agreement

## **9. How can children and young people be helped to learn about our changing world, so they feel able to positively contribute?**

We provided evidence for an approach to education that develops young people's skills for life in our answers to questions 1 and 2. However, further to that, young people told us that they felt their education needed to prepare them for the changing world, including through practical education on things like personal finance (banking, mortgages, taxes, etc...), writing CV's and applying for jobs.

However, a point regularly highlighted throughout SYP's work with young people and raised in our National Discussion workshops was that young people felt they needed improved climate education in schools. During COP26 in Glasgow, SYP outlined our priorities, including education on living sustainably. In our education reform survey, around 55% of young people agreed their education helps them to develop respect for the natural environment, with nearly a third of respondents neutral about the statement.

Young people we consulted for our Pack it up, Pack it in campaign in 2020 told us they think individuals should play a role in reducing the amount of waste in Scotland. But they need to be supported to do it. That's why we believe the education provided to young people on the climate crisis, environmental awareness, and living sustainably needs to be improved. We believe decision-makers should take a human rights-based approach when implementing the 'Learning for Sustainability (LfS) Action Plan', by meaningfully including children and young people in the design and delivery of LfS programmes. We also believe the Climate Change Act Key Household Climate Change Behaviours should be taught about in school, such as in

Personal, Social and Health Education and Home Economics, to ensure young people understand their relevance and benefits.

**10. Do you have any other comments that you would like to provide about a vision for the future of Scottish Education?**