

Politics awareness session

notes kindly put together by Kirsty, Churston Ferrers

There are 1.3 million 16-17 year olds in England & Wales, and 48,000 in Northern Ireland.

The Labour Party were elected with the manifesto pledge to reduce the voting age by the next general election.

The Conservatives, Democratic Unionist Party and Reform are opposed to this.

One key way we can engage young people in politics is by identifying how politics affects them. Key areas to highlight could include:

- Staying in education until 18
- Education being free of charge until age 18
- Being able to learn to drive at 17
- Being able to marry at 16/18
- Being able to drink alcohol at 18
- Receiving a National Minimum Wage from age 16, with rates increasing at 18, 21
- How many exams are taken and which subjects are compulsory
- Freedom to use a mobile phone and social media (under-16 ban rejected)
- The rate of student loans for university
- What is deemed a criminal offence or legal
- Whether new houses are built in a local area
- The quality of public transport such as buses and trains.
- Food labelling to ensure that allergens are highlighted.
- The cost of items in shops.
- Opening hours of shops, nightclubs and restaurants.
- The NHS, hospital waiting times, waiting lists, GPs and dentists.
- Freedom and restrictions on travel abroad.
- Limitations on living abroad.

An idea for the library could be creating a display with images representing all of these scenarios, highlighting how politics affects young people.

Nearby, a display of books on political figures, history or current affairs could be useful, together with a list of useful websites.

Online options to explore if creating a library lesson on politics:

Vote for Policies

<https://voteforpolicies.org.uk/survey/>

Although the website is not continuing, their 2024 survey will stay active, which is a great way to help students identify policy over party

New National Curriculum from Sept 2028

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-curriculum-to-give-young-people-the-skills-for-life-and-work>

- Citizenship will be compulsory for primary
- Core enrichment, to include civic engagement and life skills

Full Fact

<https://fullfact.org/>

Excellent website for fact checking, offering courses and a Government Tracker, which works through manifesto promises to see what's being delivered.

An excellent exercise on their website is to look through news reports and see whether they were genuine or not, which really helps with information literacy and knowing the difference between misinformation (false or inaccurate information which spreads without fact checking) and disinformation (false or inaccurate information which is spread intentionally in order to deceive, manipulate or harm):

<https://fullfact.org/latest/>

BBC Bitesize

A short but excellent article with an accompanying quiz about fake news to highlight the difference between mis- and disinformation.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z3hhvj6>

Democracy Classroom

A great website seeking to promote and inform young people about democracy, containing plenty of lessons plans:

<https://democracyclassroom.com/>

Electoral Commission

Some excellent resources regarding democracy and young people:

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/resources>

YouGov

The YouGov website can offer a snapshot of the most important issues facing people in the UK, Results can be filtered by age and topic.

<https://yougov.com/en-gb>

Who Can I Vote For

A great way to check whether there are any elections coming up in our locality:

<https://whocanivotefor.co.uk/>

Devon School Library Service Politics Booklist

<https://devoneducationservices.co.uk/our-services/teaching-and-learning/school-library-service/booklists-and-class-readers/>