Newton International Academy, Barwa

Philosophy for Children (P4C) Policy (EYFS & Primary)

An International Community of Learners, Striving for Excellence and Celebrating Success

Approved by: Senoir Management Team
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NEWTON INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY | BARWA

Our vision, mission and values:

Vision: An international community of learners striving for excellence and celebrating success.

Mission: We aim to provide the highest quality of education possible for students of all abilities. In doing so, we aim to positively encourage each student to achieve academic excellence at their level, enjoy creative diversity, develop critical thinking skills, and become lifelong learners and responsible citizens.

Values

Rationale

At Newton International Academy, we recognise the importance of developing critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration in our pupils. In a rapidly changing world, equipping pupils with 21st Century Skills is essential for their success in both academic and personal pursuits. Philosophy for Children (P4C) provides a structured framework for fostering these skills through enquiry-based learning, encouraging pupils to engage in meaningful discussions, question assumptions, and explore diverse perspectives. By creating a safe and supportive environment for dialogue, we aim to enhance pupils' confidence, self-esteem, and ability to articulate their thoughts and ideas.

Aims

Our aim is to instil a sense of collaboration, a caring attitude, critical thinking skills, and a creative approach to problem-solving in our pupils.
By providing enquiry-based activities through Philosophy for Children (P4C), we encourage pupils to ask questions and find solutions through discussion. P4C strengthens pupils' listening and speaking skills, enhances their reasoning abilities, and boosts their self-esteem. During P4C lessons and mini-enquiries, we aim to create an environment where pupils have the freedom to ask questions and explore diverse perspectives.

Objectives

Our objective is to develop the 4C's in our pupils:

- Caring: Listening (concentrating) and valuing (appreciating) others' experiences and values.
- Collaborative: Responding (communicating) and supporting (conciliating) by building on each other's ideas and shaping common understandings and purposes.
- Critical: Questioning (interrogating) and reasoning (evaluating) by seeking meaning, evidence, reasons, distinctions, and sound judgements.
- Creative: Connecting (relating) and suggesting (speculating) by providing comparisons, examples, criteria, alternative explanations, or conceptions.

Structure of P4C

P4C is included in the timetable as a stand-alone lesson, replacing one English lesson. One P4C lesson per week is scheduled by the Class Teacher in the Primary School, while mini-enquiries may occur in other lessons.

P4C Lesson Process

P4C lessons will generally follow this standard process:

1. Introduction: The Class Teacher introduces the topic or outlines the goal of the inquiry.
2. Warm-up: Often a game to engage pupils.
3. Grouping: Managing groups to ensure all pupils can contribute.
4. Stimulus: A common, central, and contestable stimulus. Initially, anything engaging can be used, but as pupils gain confidence, links to the curriculum can be beneficial. Stimuli may include stories, pictures, music, video clips, statements, objects, and poems.
5. Thinking Time: Time for reflection on the stimulus. Silent thought may be challenging and should be developed over time; think-pair-share can be effective.
6. Sharing of Ideas: Pupils share their initial thoughts with the class.
7. Question Making: In groups of 4 or 5, pupils discuss the stimulus and formulate questions, choosing one to present to the class.
8. Airing of Questions: Questions are prominently displayed and discussed, with links made and ambiguities clarified.
9. Question Choosing: A variety of voting systems can be employed, such as blind voting (eyes closed) to eliminate peer influence or omnivote (multiple votes allowed) to avoid pupils only choosing their own question.
10. First Words: The group whose question is voted for explains their rationale.
11. Dialogue/Discussion: The dialogue is opened to the class, where the facilitator challenges, clarifies, and encourages pupils to focus on the question, constructively agreeing or disagreeing with peers to enhance understanding.
12. Last Words: A chance for pupils to express final thoughts on the discussion, allowing those who haven't contributed to engage.

13. Process Reflection: Pupils reflect on their participation and how they can improve in future sessions.

Not all enquiries will strictly follow this process, as it may vary according to the class's ability level and the topic.

Implementation in Different Key Stages

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage 1

Using P4C in Early Years and Key Stage 1 allows pupils to recognise the value of their ideas and those of others. They learn that they do not always have to be right and can learn from different perspectives. Activities build their confidence to speak without fear of being incorrect, encouraging them to think before speaking and to provide reasons for their thoughts.

Lower Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2, pupils develop confidence in discussing their opinions and sharing views on societal issues. They learn to be respectful by taking turns and using appropriate language during discussions. This fosters an environment where disagreement is handled with respect, promoting clarification rather than confrontation. Pupils are encouraged to display empathy when discussing serious issues.

Upper Key Stage 2

In Upper Key Stage 2, we focus on developing both speaking and listening skills. Pupils are given opportunities to state their views and respectfully defend their positions. They also reflect on their views and may adjust them based on alternative perspectives. We teach pupils to:

- Disagree respectfully.
- Build on ideas using appropriate vocabulary.
- Express opinions clearly and empathetically.
- Participate confidently in group discussions.
- Reflect on their views.
- Formulate questions and develop a sense of curiosity.

Each topic provides various opportunities to enhance speaking skills and listen to diverse viewpoints. P4C offers a platform for teachers to meet National Curriculum statutory speaking requirements innovatively.

Key Principles of P4C

The key ingredient in an enquiry is the desire to seek understanding beyond mere information gathering. Once pupils engage in this process, sharing views, listening to others, and considering the 4C's of P4C, they reflect on their learning. The practice of reflection enables pupils to reevaluate their views while considering opposing beliefs. Our aim is to encourage critical thinking and develop the verbal skills necessary to articulate opinions.

Teachers can enhance this process by asking appropriate questions. Ten key elements that can be introduced when questioning pupils include:

- Questions: What don't we understand here? What questions do we have about this?
- Hypotheses: Does anyone have alternative suggestions or explanations?
- Reasons: What reasons support this? What evidence exists for believing this?
- Examples: Can anyone provide an example or a counter-example?
- Distinctions: Can we make a distinction here? Can anyone define this?
- Connections: Is anyone able to build on that idea or link it with another?
- Implications: What assumptions lie behind this? What consequences does it lead to?
- Intentions: Is that what was really meant? Is that what we're really saying?
- Criteria: What makes that an example of X? What truly counts here?
- Consistency: Does that conclusion follow? Are these principles consistent?

Role of the Facilitator

The facilitator plays a crucial role in guiding discussions by:

- Questioning: Asking insightful questions to focus the enquiry.
- Reasoning: Requesting reasons or evidence to support arguments and judgements.
- Defining: Clarifying concepts through connections, distinctions, and comparisons.
- Speculating: Generating ideas and alternative viewpoints through imaginative thinking.
- Testing for Truth: Evaluating evidence, examples, and counter-examples.
- Expanding Ideas: Sustaining and extending lines of thought and argument.
- Summarising: Abstracting key points or general rules from multiple ideas or instances.

Expectations

The expectations at Newton International Academy are as follows:

- P4C is utilised as a generic teaching and learning tool to deliver various aspects of the curriculum.
- A cross-curricular approach is encouraged.
- P4C is used to embed the values of Newton International Academy where possible.
- Planning is conducted each term using the standard medium-term plan template.
- Planning should be annotated.
- Class Teachers are not required to strictly follow the medium-term planning.
- Class Teachers should use the standard session recorder to document P4C enquiries.
- Class Teachers must maintain a P4C folder to file session recorders, resources, and planning.
- A variety of stimuli should be employed in lessons.
- P4C lessons are to be timetabled weekly, ideally in one of the first four lessons of the day.
- The 'NIA Way...' vocabulary is to be used to help develop key vocabulary.