



**UNICEF UK  
RIGHTS RESPECTING  
SCHOOLS AWARD:**  
A quick guide





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## About UNICEF

UNICEF is the world's leading organisation working for children and their rights. Every child, no matter who they are or where they live, has the right to grow up safe, happy and healthy.

UNICEF UK raises funds for UNICEF's emergency and development work around the world and advocates for lasting change for children worldwide. This includes working to change government policies and practices that restrict child rights in the UK and internationally.

We are a UK registered charity, supported entirely by voluntary donations. We do not receive any money from the UN.

For more information, please visit [unicef.org.uk](https://www.unicef.org.uk)

# Introduction

This is a short overview of UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA).

For more information on developing a strong RRSA profile and its impact, please see [unicef.org.uk/rrsa-goodpractice](https://unicef.org.uk/rrsa-goodpractice)

For further information on RRSA, including training, support and assessments, resources, and how to register, please see [unicef.org.uk/rrsa](https://unicef.org.uk/rrsa) or email [rrsa@unicef.org.uk](mailto:rrsa@unicef.org.uk)

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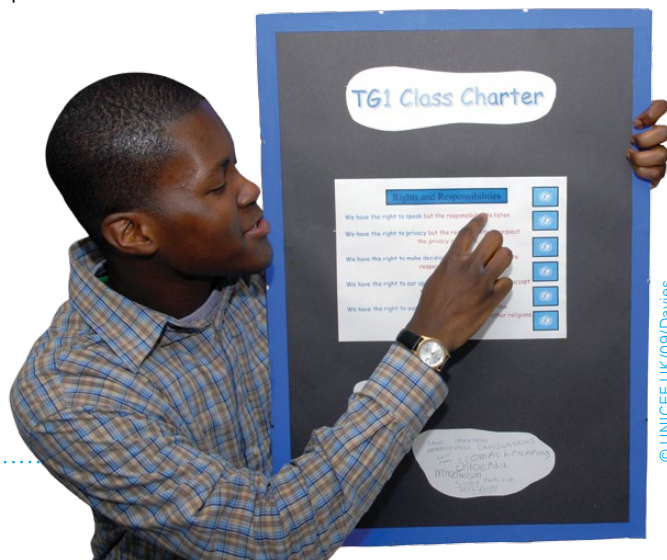
Listening to children is critical in the facilitation of [RRSA] work, letting them take the lead and giving power to their voice, which can make a real difference.”

Headteacher

## What is the UNICEF UK Rights Respecting Schools Award?

The UNICEF UK Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) is based on principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation. The RRSA seeks to put the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child at the heart of a school's ethos and culture to improve well-being and develop every child's talents and abilities to their full potential. A rights-respecting school is a community where children's rights are learned, taught, practised, respected, protected and promoted. Young people and the school community learn about children's rights by putting them into practice every day.

We work with primary schools, secondary schools, schools for children with special educational needs and pupil referral units across the whole of the UK to promote a child rights-based approach and to share good practice in improving outcomes for children and young people.





“

RRSA offered a more positive and preventative approach to addressing challenging behaviour that encouraged mutual respect and empowered children.”

RRSA coordinator

# How does my school become a rights-respecting school?

**To achieve the UNICEF UK Rights Respecting School Award, schools are required to implement four evidence-based standards.**

- **Rights-respecting values underpin leadership and management**
- **The whole-school community learns about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**
- **The school has a rights-respecting ethos**
- **Children are empowered to become active citizens and learners.**

Full accreditation is achieved by an external assessment process, whereby evidence is collated to show that the four standards have been met. To help your school implement the RRSA effectively, it has been broken down into three stages. Your school's initial commitment to final assessment at Level 2 can take up to four years.

## Recognition of Commitment

The headteacher and school leaders commit to becoming a right-respecting school. Children and young people work alongside adults to decide how to develop a whole-school rights-respecting approach. The school submits electronic evidence to show the development of a baseline and action plan.

### Level 1

The school implements the action plan and makes good progress towards embedding the values and principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into its ethos and curriculum. Assessors visit the school to accredit progress.

### Level 2

The school has fully embedded the values and principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into its ethos and curriculum across all areas of the school. Assessors visit the school to establish that the Convention is embedded.

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Developing a [rights-respecting] approach in the school is a mindset; it's not to do with time.”

RRSA coordinator





“

A rights-respecting school has a different agenda. Rights-respecting schools have children at the core of what they are doing, they work so that every child's experience is a good one, no one is left behind.”

Principal

## What impact does it have?



[unicef.org.uk/RRSA-evaluation](https://unicef.org.uk/RRSA-evaluation)

### On the school

- RRSA is not an initiative, but instead provides an overarching set of values that improve the climate for learning and within which other initiatives can sit
- A deeper and more cohesive way of working
- Improved relationships with pupils and a reduced hierarchical divide between staff and pupils, due to a common rights-respecting language.

### On children

- Improved self esteem and feelings of being valued and listened to
- Increased levels of respect for each other, leading to improved relationships with other pupils and with staff
- A sense of security as rights-respecting language and behaviour is used consistently throughout the school
- Improved attainment and attendance, and a reduction in exclusions
- An understanding and respect of religions, cultures, beliefs and abilities different to their own
- A wider and deeper understanding of the world in which they live.

### On adults

- Strengthened collaborative working
- Increased consultative approach with other adults and pupils
- A sense of ownership in developing an approach that meets the needs and aspirations of the school as a whole
- A sense that the whole school is working towards a common goal, leading to feelings of empowerment for both staff and pupils
- A platform is developed for parental engagement and discussion.

For more information on impact, please see [unicef.org.uk/RRSA-evaluation](https://unicef.org.uk/RRSA-evaluation)



Student-teacher relationships have become a lot easier, we can communicate with the teachers a lot easier – in lessons, you have the confidence to put your hand up when you don't understand."

Secondary school pupil



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[unicef.org.uk/  
RRSA-training](https://unicef.org.uk/RRSA-training)

## Training and support

UNICEF UK Professional Advisers provide support and training to individual schools, clusters of schools and local authorities to implement the RRSA.

Our Professional Advisers deliver regional or school-based training for schools, make in-school support visits and work in partnership with local authorities.

We also provide guidance materials, developed by Professional Adviser and rights-respecting schools, and curriculum resources through the RRSA Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Access to the VLE is free to all registered schools.

For our training brochure, please go to [unicef.org.uk/RRSA-training](https://unicef.org.uk/RRSA-training)



[unicef.org.uk/  
RRSA-resources](https://unicef.org.uk/RRSA-resources)

## Resources

UNICEF UK has developed a full range of teaching resources to support teachers in developing work on children's rights and global citizenship.

For our complete list of teaching resources, please go to [unicef.org.uk/RRSA-resources](https://unicef.org.uk/RRSA-resources)





It has strengthened the links between areas of the curriculum and made learning more meaningful, giving pupils and staff a reason to learn, encouraging deeper learning."

Headteacher

## How much does it cost?

We are a UK registered charity and are supported entirely by voluntary donations to fund our vital work for children and their rights. We do not receive any money from the UN.

We work hard to keep our costs as low as possible and will charge only for the cost of running the RRSA service with no element of profit.

A one-off fee of £200 is required at registration to cover the cost of central support provided to your school during the full course of your rights-respecting journey.

For information on cost of training and assessments, please go to [unicef.org.uk/RRSA-cost](https://unicef.org.uk/RRSA-cost)



[unicef.org.uk/RRSA-cost](https://unicef.org.uk/RRSA-cost)

## How to get started

Once you have registered, we will be in touch to support you with the initial steps.

To register your intent to become a rights-respecting school, please go to [unicef.org.uk/RRSA-register](https://unicef.org.uk/RRSA-register)



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