

**STUDENT INVOLEVMENT STRATEGY**

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# Introduction

The Student Involvement Strategy has been developed and agreed following a period of engagement with student representatives.

The purpose of this strategy is to set out the commitment from both the college and student body to provide and engage in opportunities to be heard, to be valued and to be empowered to influence change, Student contribution and self-advocacy are promoted at all times and are integral to the college provision.

Ensuring [representation](#_Representation) and [participation](#_Participation) through a range of forums we seek to work in partnership to include, inform and consult with students to develop their knowledge and skills enabling them to make informed choices and value to viewpoint of others.

By providing timely feedback the college commits to help create an environment of open [communication](#_Communication). A [Student Voice Map](#_Appendix_7_–) has been created to provide a quick reference to opportunities available.

Publishing this strategy provides a guide to all members of the college community which will support each individual to engage and promote the student voice.

# Representation

## Student Representative Group (SRG)

The central vehicle for student voice at RNC is our student representative group (SRG). Promotion of this group begins before students start at college. At our annual new student conference, student ambassadors share their RNC journey and impress on the new cohort of student the value of getting involved in the SRG, and the direct impact that their voice and contribution has on improving the quality of the provision.

Elections to the positions of chair and student governor take place within the first half term. The SRG asks for expressions of interest from students for representation on a range of college committees. Representing the student cohort on a college committee provide a direct link to the SRG and feedback is required following each committee meeting. The SRG also aims to ensure that each tutor group is represented amongst its membership so that feedback can be provided via tutorials following each SRG meeting.

SRG meetings take place generally on a fortnightly basis; attendance at the SRG is open to all students. Regular meetings are student-led and the Principal and Director of Student Support Services attend by invitation. Minutes of meetings are shared with the wider student cohort.

The chair of the SRG attends the SMT meeting each half term, having the opportunity to directly address all members of the SMT in regard to anything relevant to their areas of responsibility.

## College Committees

### Safeguarding

RNC places great emphasis on the need to include all College members on college committees. The participation of a student representative is vital on this committee as they can bring a student outlook on the policies and procedures that we use, they can also raise issues around safeguarding that may have been raised by others. We recognise that the student voice is vital in achieving this aim. For further information see [Appendix 1](#_Appendix_1_-).

### Eco-committee

FEE Eco-Campus is a growing phenomenon, which encourages young people to engage in their environment by allowing them the opportunity to actively protect it. It starts at the committee level, expands to the college and eventually fosters change in the community at large. Through this programme, young people experience a sense of achievement at being able to have a say in the environmental management policies of their college, ultimately steering them towards certification and the prestige which comes with being awarded a Green Flag. For further information see [Appendix 2](#_Appendix_2_-).

### ESQAC

RNC places great emphasis on the need to continually improve the quality of provision and services provided. Our aim is to provide the highest quality of education and training to our regional, national and international communities of students and customers through continuous improvement of our standards and performance. We are committed to meeting the needs of all our stakeholders by providing excellent teaching, learning opportunities, support and facilities. We recognise that the student voice is vital in achieving this aim. For further information see [Appendix 3](#_Appendix_3_-).

### Health & Safety

Health and Safety are paramount in all College functions and activities. The principle purpose of the Health and Safety Committee are the promotion of the health, safety and welfare of all persons when on RNC premises and of staff and students when engaged upon activities relevant to the RNC purposes. Ensuring the student voice is represented on this committee is vital in achieving this aim. For further information see [Appendix 4](#_Appendix_4_–).

### Prevent

As part of the ethos the College has considered the Prevent Duty and the importance of collaborative working between college staff, students, local authorities, police, other educational institutions, policy makers and health providers to identify, detect and safeguard vulnerable people throughout the organisation.

Complying with the Prevent duty includes promoting and exemplifying British values i.e. democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, tolerance and mutual respect and different faiths and beliefs. The student representative on the Prevent Committee plays a key role in this.

For further information see [Appendix 5](#_Appendix_5).

### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

EDI is at the heart of all RNC activities. RNC does not tolerate unfair treatment on the grounds of gender, marital or parental status, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age or any other factor. It is the EDI steering group’s remit to ensure that EDI continues to be at the centre of what we all practice at our college. For further information see [Appendix 6](#_Appendix_6).

## The National Student Voice

Students have the opportunity to contribute at national level with a range of lobbying and campaign activities and events. These may include:

* contributing to responses to consultations
* engaging with the media both as an ambassador for RNC and on their own behalf
* meeting with VIP guests to the College to discuss specific areas of interest (e.g. funding, EHCPs, mental health)
* participating in workshops and forums with other charities
* occasional opportunities to meet with local, regional and national politicians, including at Westminster.

## Natspec Student Parliament

The Student Voice Parliament was launched by Natspec, in partnership with the National Union of Students who work to gather and promote the voice of students from Natspec colleges and to achieve a number of goals. Some of these are to:

* ensure the voice of students is heard and valued at a national level,
* help students from different colleges talk to each other about issues that are important to them; such as access to services, funding, transport, curriculum, future opportunities, sex and relationships and discrimination,
* give students experience of travelling to other places, working at a national level with partner organisations to use their voices and influence decision makers,
* allow students the opportunities to demonstrate their passion, skills and abilities and to become agents of change

When education commitments allow members of the RNC SRG are supported to attend Parliament meetings which take place at different host college throughout the country.

## National Union of Students

[[1]](#footnote-1)The NUS Disabled students’ campaign exists to represent, and extend and defend the rights of disabled students. They are an autonomous campaign, which means they are led by disabled students in their governance and decision-making processes.

They work to positively impact disabled students’ lives and towards freedom from oppression for disabled people. They do this through campaigning, activism, research, and training which they deliver with the input of disabled students.

Each year the RNC SRG maintain links and works with the NUS disabled student's campaign via the Natspec Student Voice Parliament and seeks to continue individual contact with the NUS Disabled Student Officer.

# Participation

## Student Ambassadors

Student Ambassadors role is to act on behalf of the College to support other students throughout the year but with an initial focus on helping and supporting new students as they settle in to college. Acting as a Student Ambassador provides the opportunity to gain valuable transferable employability skills which will be of interest to future employers. The tasks given to Student Ambassadors vary dependant on individual areas of interest. However, in general terms Student Ambassadors are asked to…

* Attend a short training programme to prepare them for the role.
* Help out at a New Learner Conference
* Meet regularly with the scheme co-ordinator
* Meet and greet new students over the arrival week
* Help plan Induction Week
* Help during Induction Week as requested for example with induction sessions, supporting staff and students
* Continue to support students into the first year of their studies.
* Refer student mentees with particular issues to an appropriate member of staff
* Represent the College in a positive manner

## Student Governor

The College is overseen by the Board of Governors. Each year the student cohort elect a Student Governor.

Governors contribute to the development of the core strategic aims of the College and provide oversight on its activities. They have the welfare of the College at the forefront of their minds and are committed to the provision of a quality educational experience. To be able to do that they require a student to attend their meetings to ensure that student views on developments and plans are taken into account.

The Board meets five times a year and the sub group for Education and Training meets three times a year. The student Governor is required to attend as many of these meetings as possible. Governors are keen to hear the views of students. However, the Student Governor is not put on the spot to contribute to any discussions unless they choose to do so.

## Surveys

We survey students to gain feedback on various aspects of college life, including programme areas which influences curriculum planning and overall satisfaction levels. Links to surveys are sent out via an all student e-mail so are received individually. Results and actions from these surveys are discussed at ESQAC and SRG and are reported on in the annual self-assessment process.

## Pulse surveys

A new element to Student Voice activities; Pulse surveys will be introduced in September 2019. A pulse survey is a quick and frequent survey carried out weekly, it helps create an environment of open communication, and encourages students to feel motivated to share suggestions and make recommendations for improvements.

Using survey monkey to set up; pulse surveys can take seconds to complete and therefore are not onerous for the student; it gives the opportunity for improved engagement in student voice activities.

## Tutorials

Group tutorials take place on a weekly basis and each are encouraged to have a member who regularly attends the SRG meetings. Most tutor groups also include a member of the Student Ambassador team, who lead on issues such as mental health awareness and exam stress.  The tutorial meeting provides a channel for information sharing between students – group members share activities they are involved in and use the tutorial as an opportunity to invite other students to join in and try new things.

Members of tutor groups are encouraged to participate actively in sessions, for example, by suggesting topical issues for discussion and sharing their current priorities and concerns.  They are invited to share advice and to support each other with issues arising if they feel happy to do so.

## Student tracking activity

The Student Tracking activity takes place on an annual basis as a source of quality assurance evidence/feedback. A number of students (with their permission) are paired individually with a member of staff who accompanies them to observe their timetabled sessions throughout their college day. In addition the student is interviewed informally about their response to the sessions as well as about other aspects of their daily experience at RNC.

It offers an excellent opportunity for staff to experience the college day as the students do and also provides an opportunity for students to feedback directly on their experiences. The finding are discussed at with the ESQAC and SRG.

## Marketing and Events

There are numerous opportunities throughout the year for students to play a key role and to be involved in events both directly representing the college and by volunteering to work with partner organisations. This enhances the College profile with coverage by local and national media within news and article publications as well as television coverage at national level.

For student the benefits are wide ranging in terms of personal and social development; for this strategy students have provided words and quotes to demonstrate this which have been detailed in the [intended impact](#_Intended_Impact) section.

Events may be internal by supporting open days, conducting tours and participating in various awareness days by providing content and quotes for social media channels; these include Mental Health, Braille Day, Religious Events, Rare Disease Days and Sight Loss Days. Student also have the opportunity to write blogs about their journey and experience of visual impairment and RNC, this has included topics such as; specialist v. mainstream education, VI sport and coping with sight loss.

Events and consultation work which benefit the local community include for example partnership with Hereford FC, National Trust and Hereford PCT supporting these organisations with accessibility and becoming disability friendly.

At national level this has included being interviewed for television and news stories, volunteering with a number of organisations including British Blind Sport, Victa, Athletics England and the Association of Colleges.

## Fundraising

RNC promotes charitable fundraising activities by both staff and students. The RNC Fundraising team are on hand to help with ideas, inspiration and will make sure all legal requirements are met when raising charitable funds for the college. Students are free to fundraise for any cause they wish, although materials promoting other causes are not permitted in public areas of the campus. From running a marathon to organising a cake sale, all funds will help support RNC. It costs us over £6Million a year to keep the college running, all income generated will go towards improving the student experience.

# Communication

## SRG e-mail & notices

Managed by the chair and/or vice-chair of the student this method of communication is used to request feedback and open dialogue for discussion at SRG meetings; remind the whole student body of meetings arrangements, send out minutes and promote opportunities for engagement.

## ‘Open Door’

While the SRG provides a channel for the collective voice of students, the college is just as keen to hear individual student views. Individual students are encouraged to meet with Managers, Directors or the Principal at any time to make a suggestion or to raise a concern. Commencing in September 2019, to facilitate this a weekly lunchtime ‘Open Door’ session will be offered by members of the Senior Management Team. If appropriate issues identified will be discussed at the next SRG meeting.

##  ‘You said, we did’

Each half term the SRG and members of the senior management team collate actions and activities that have taken place as a direct result of student feedback; these will be shared with the wider student cohort via notices and tutorials. The aim of this is to ensure that all students are informed of how the college is responsive to the student voice.

# Intended Outcome – ‘So what?’

The intended outcome of this strategy is that the platforms provided ensure student contribution and self-advocacy are promoted at all times and the resulting collaborative working leads to continuous improvement of the college provision with the student voice as the driver of change.

It is recognised that effective communication is key and all methods are utilised, it is important that the college continues to explore additional ways in which the whole student cohort receives feedback and information resulting from student voice activities. The question, *‘Does the college act on your views?*’ features in one of the annual surveys.

# Intended Impact

The intended positive impact for the provision is that student voice platforms:

* influence decision making in all aspects that affect the student experience
* curriculum planning is better informed and influenced by the perspectives that matter most
* improvements in facilities and overall quality of provision
* leads to reduction in formal complaints
* the student voice sends a powerful message to stakeholders

The intended positive impact for students is that through engagement and being active citizens, they develop skills which are transferable and will benefit them throughout their personal and professional lives. These may include:

* self-advocacy
* commitment
* responsibility
* working with others
* independent thinking
* problem solving
* tolerance
* negotiation
* to debate and be an active listener
* public speaking
* interview techniques
* qualifications
* democracy
* tolerance
* organisation
* time management

“As Chair of the Student Representative Group, I have been heavily involved with the Student Voice at RNC. I value the opportunities I have had to utilise and develop my communication and organisation skills, and to actively engage in college life, so as to ensure that my voice, and the voices of all students, are heard and are a key part of decision-making on committees in all areas of the college. I have also had the opportunity to represent RNC to perspective students, which has enabled me to clearly communicate the positive impact of the Student Voice in College, and to promote student participation in groups and committees.” – Kelsey Trevett, SRG Chairperson 2018/19

# Appendix 1 - Safeguarding Committee

The Committee meets every half-term and the meetings usually last for approximately one hour.

Members of the Committee include: Director of Student Support Services, Lead Designated Safeguarding Manager (Chair), and Human Resources representative, Teacher in Charge of IT, Commercial Director, Nurse Representative, Facilities Manager and all other Designated Safeguarding Managers as well as student representation.

Specific responsibilities and activities include:

Reviewing and recommending changes to Policies and Procedures related to Safeguarding, including HR Policies and Procedures.

Contributing towards continuing development of safeguarding training resources, including safeguarding resources for students.

Reviewing any safeguarding issues raised by College departments and student body for action and agreement.

Discussing changes to national safeguarding frameworks and legislation and ensuring RNC policy, procedure and practice reflects this.

Reviewing the actions and agreements that arise from the Prevent Sub-Group.

Discussing specific student safeguarding issues and resolutions (Student rep not included in these discussions).

As part of this committee the student representative is the direct link in providing feedback to the student cohort via the SRG.

Examples of activities the student representative may be asked to undertake:

Contributing towards ongoing development of Policy, Procedure and student guidance re Safeguarding.

Bringing to the Safeguarding Committee any student issues or suggestions regarding Safeguarding.

Discussing with SRG and the student body any other issues that may relate to Safeguarding and need further action or review.

# Appendix 2 - Eco Campus Committee

The Eco-Campus programme is an ideal way for RNC to embark on a meaningful path towards improving the environment in both the college and the local community while at the same time having a life-long positive impact on the lives of young people, their families, college staff and local authorities.

The Eco Campus committee usually meets on a fortnightly basis which could be deemed time demanding for the student representative although these meetings are generally for less than an hour.

Member of Eco Committee include: Teacher of Biology(Chair), College Principal, Estates and Facilities Manager, Business Ethics teacher, other staff members including from tP4 team, Baxter Storey, marketing team, as well as student representatives who take on roles such as vice chair, public relations officer (PRO) and student rep group link. As per the guidance from FEE Eco Schools, there have to be as least as many students as staff in any eco meeting to be quorate.

Specific responsibilities and Eco Campus Committee activities include:

Introducing new ideas to improve the environmental sustainability of the college

Reviewing the college’s environmental impact (in terms of: Waste and Litter, Energy, Water, Biodiversity, Climate Change, Food and Transport)

Keeping an action plan up to date (including an entry on the QIP)

Monitoring and measuring progress towards planned targets

Linking Eco-Campus activities to curriculum work

Informing and involving the wider community with the programme and the themes

Producing and regularly review an Eco Code which represents the college’s commitment to the environment

As part of this committee a student representative is the direct link in providing feedback to the student cohort via the SRG.

Examples of activities the student representative may be asked to undertake:

Undertaking aspects of the action plan

Developing ideas and actions to help the college become more environmentally sustainable

Reviewing achievement of actions resulting from Eco Committee activity

Being an environmental ambassador and encouraging the student cohort to engage in surveys/ eco based activities

Contributing to tutorials regarding eco based activities

Apply for the Green Flag award and be prepared to escort visitors from the FEE Eco Campus review team around the campus showing off the various different things which have improved since the introduction of the programme.

Working with SMT to update college environmental (and other) policies to reflect the work of the Eco Committee

# Appendix 3 - Education and Skills Quality Assurance Committee

ESQAC meets on a fortnightly basis and therefore is a more demanding position for the student representative

Member of ESQAC include: Director of Student Support Services (Chair), College Principal, Directors of Learning and Curriculum, Student Progress and Teaching Quality Lead, TALO coordinator, MIS Manager, as well as student representative/s.

Quality, with its two central tenets of proving and improving, is at the heart of all RNC activities in order to enable success and potential to be fully realised. Quality processes are set with rigour to support educational and strategic intent and are supported by a range of indicators to both monitor quality and assess improvements. The college has an overarching Quality Assurance Framework based on an annual calendar of activities.

Specific responsibilities and ESQAC activities include:

Annual Self-Assessment Report (SAR) based on the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework

Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

Teaching & Learning Observation

Student Feedback via survey, tutorial and focus groups

Peer Review and Development

Staff Performance Management Reviews

Workforce Development

MIS Review and Development

Residential Standards which include the national minimum standards and the Social Care Common Inspection Framework

As part of this committee the student representative is the direct link in providing feedback to the student cohort via the SRG.

Examples of activities the student representative may be asked to undertake:

Contributing to and reviewing the content of the SAR

Undertaking aspects of the QIP

Reviewing achievement of actions resulting from QA activity

Being a quality ambassador and encouraging the student cohort to engage in surveys

Reviewing student related policies

# Appendix 4 – Health and Safety

H&S meets on a termly basis and therefore is a less demanding position for the student representative.

Member of H&S include: Director of Finance and Resources (Chair), Director of Learning and Curriculum, Governor, Residential Manger and Head of Medical Services; Residential Manager and Head of Safeguarding, union representation and representation from all campus building areas which includes The Hive, Bistro, Residential Halls, thePoint4, the Chapel Arts as well as student representative/s.

Specific terms of reference for this committee:

1. To consider and advise on College policies for health, safety and welfare, both statutory or otherwise and monitor and review their effectiveness

2. To review forthcoming legislation and assess its implications and where necessary to recommend the establishment of rules governing any hazardous work activity or class of operations

3. To promote health and safety training in the College at all levels and to ensure that appropriate emergency procedures are in place

4. To receive detailed reports of investigations into all reportable accidents, dangerous occurrences and cases of reportable diseases to consider the effectiveness of any action taken to prevent future similar accidents

5. To receive a list of all other recorded accidents or occurrences and to consider the effectiveness of any remedial action taken to prevent future similar incidents

6. To consider reports of formal audits of College work places and activities and such other reports as may be submitted

7. To request formal inspections of work places as the Committee thing appropriate and to receive reports of such inspections

8. To consider and keep under review building work which may be needed to conform to good health, safety and welfare practice

9. To keep under review communications and publicity relating to health, safety and welfare in the College and where necessary to recommend any improvements or changes

10. To consider reports and factual information provided by inspectors of the enforcing authority under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, or any other relevant enforcement authority and to establish and maintain effective links with such persons

11. Consider relevant health, safety and welfare matters raised by members of the committee and the College community

12. Note the appointment and consider the activities of safety representatives as required by the relevant legislation.

As part of this committee the student representative is the direct link in providing feedback to the student cohort via the SRG.

Examples of activities the student representative may be asked to undertake:

To promote Health and safety throughout the student cohort

Contributing to and reviewing health and safety policy and procedure

Consider the impact on students any new measures which may substantially affect health and safety, e.g. introduction of new technology, new equipment or working procedures.

To take up general matters affecting the health, safety and welfare of the students they represent by informing relevant committee members of any reported concerns regarding health and safety.

# Appendix 5 - Prevent Committee

The Committee meets termly and the meetings usually last for approximately one hour.

Members of the Committee include: Director of Student Support Services, Lead Designated Safeguarding Manager (Chair), Director of Learning & Curriculum, Student Progress and Teaching Quality Lead and a representative from non-student facing directorate.

Specific responsibilities and activities include:

Promote, implement and monitor the College’s responsibilities under the Prevent Duty to all students, staff, Governors and visitors at the College.

Reviewing and maintaining the RNC Prevent Strategy in line with current legislation and guidance.

Reviewing and actioning requirements identified in the Prevent risk assessment

Leading the promotion and embedding of British Values throughout the 24hr curriculum

Researching and ensuring up to date training resources, including Prevent resources are accessible to both staff and students.

Ensure that the College promotes a culture of non-bullying, non-harassment and non-discrimination.

In partnership provide support for students who may be at risk and develop appropriate sources of advice and guidance.

Ensure that students and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in preventing violent extremism and radicalisation.

Reporting to the Safeguarding Committee

As part of this committee the student representative is the direct link in providing feedback to the student cohort via the SRG.

Examples of activities the student representative may be asked to undertake:

Contributing towards ongoing development of Policy, Procedure and student guidance for the Prevent Duty and related policies.

Research and work collaboratively to support the embedding of British values

Discussing with SRG and the student body any other issues that may relate to Prevent and need further action or review.

# Appendix 6 - Equality, Diversion and Inclusion Steering Group

The EDI steering group meets on a termly basis and therefore is not a statutorily demanding position for the student representative.

The steering group is currently co-chaired by a member of the teaching team and the HR Manager. Other members include the: Principal, Director of Curriculum and Learning, Director of Student Support Services and representatives from the student cohort, residential support services, transitions team, MIS, Nursing team, facilities team, human resources and teaching.

Specific responsibilities and EDI activities include:

* Review Policy on an annual basis, based on changes to EDI Framework
* EDI Log that all staff can contribute to
* Contribute towards evaluation of Policy and Single Equality scheme
* EIA assessment on all policies and procedures
* Induction
* Contribute to Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)
* Student and staff feedback via survey, tutorial and focus groups
* Workforce Development – everyone is asked how their CPD contributed to good practice in EDI at RNC.
* Review how of EDI is recognised in lesson planning

As part of this committee the student representative is the direct link in providing feedback to the student cohort via the independent student EDI Group and the SRG.

Examples of activities the student representative may be asked to undertake:

* Liaise between EDI Steering Group, and Student representative groups
* Being an EDI ambassador and encouraging the student cohort to engage in surveys and EDI focused activities.
* Bring student identified issues to the Steering Committee
* Suggests ideas for development of EDI practise
* Provide a lead for students on EDI activity and projects
* Discuss EDI with external inspectors if requested

1. <https://www.nus.org.uk/en/who-we-are/how-we-work/disabled-students/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)