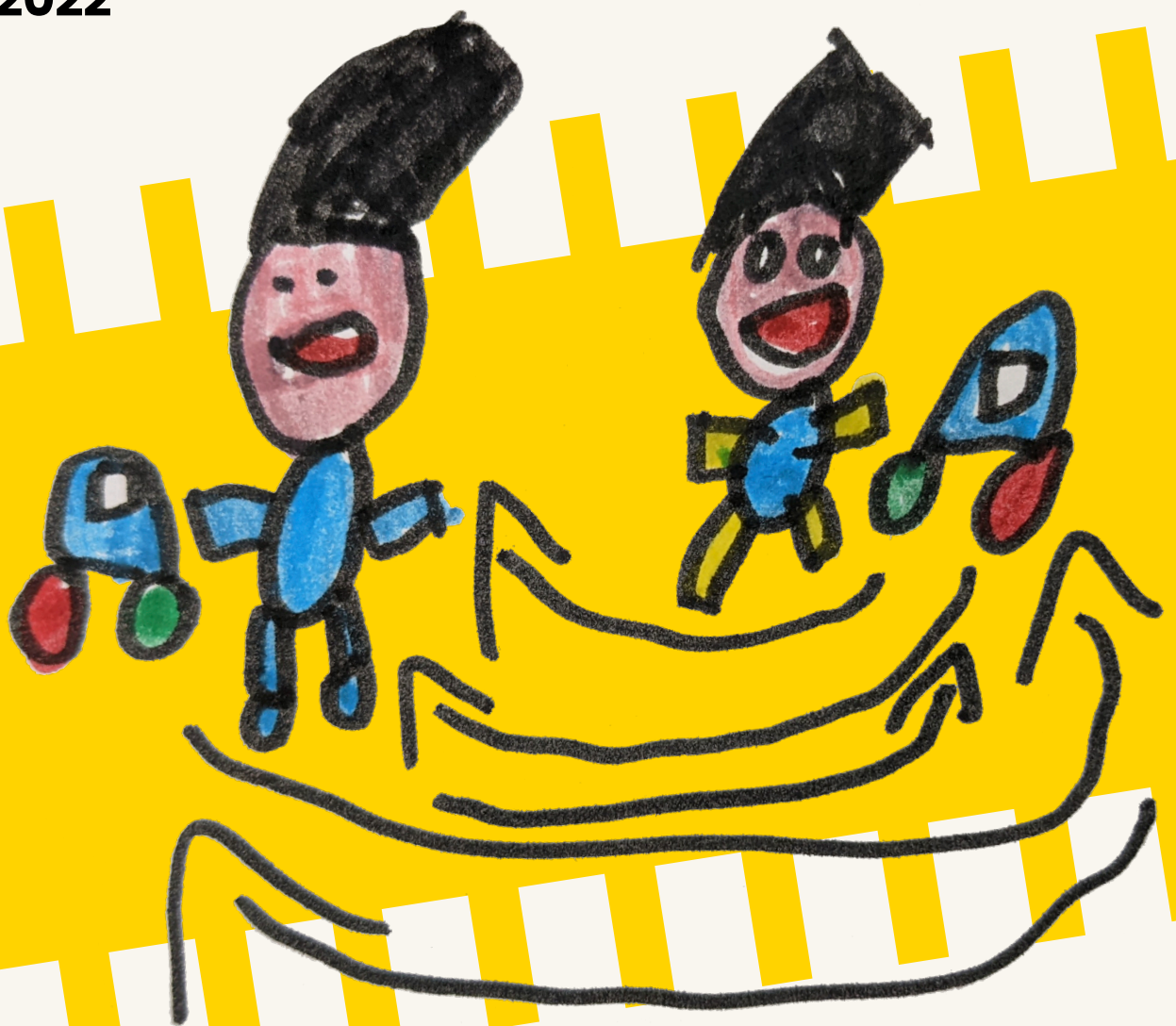


Dignity in School



**A Children's Parliament Project
Prospectus
July 2022**



**Children's
Parliament**

**GORDON COOK
FOUNDATION**

Contents

- 3 Introduction**
- 4 Why school matters when we think about childhood, and when we think about rights**
- 5 Dignity in school: the story so far**
- 8 Dignity in school: the next phase**



INTRODUCTION

The Dignity in School project is focused on supporting and enabling primary schools to be the heart of human-rights practice we know they can be.

Our project comes as Scotland sees incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots Law, and we are keen to support schools to be active in ensuring incorporation is meaningful to them.

Dignity in School is concerned with the realisation of children's human rights, day-to-day, when children go to school and as they learn.

Our work is not about publishing more packs, it is about pedagogy. We are keenly interested in the method and practice of teaching. We know if we support teachers and other adults in school to reflect, to think about the relationships they have and want with children, with families and with each other, if they grasp the opportunity that UNCRC incorporation presents to change hearts and minds, they can produce their own creative approaches. In doing so, they and their school become repositories or hubs for human rights practice.

Because we are interested in lived experience our project is present in schools, getting alongside children and adults in the teaching and learning environment. While working with partner schools the project is also outward facing. We want to capture learning, amplify good practice and co-produce a suite of resources, prompts and inspirational stories that will create a momentum behind our shared commitment to making rights real for our children – this has become our **Dignity in School Hub**, which will continue to grow as the project grows.

In this prospectus we will tell the story so far and describe the project as it will now develop.

As we deliver our Dignity in School project we acknowledge the support of our funding partners, the Gordon Cook Foundation and Scottish Government.



WHY SCHOOL MATTERS

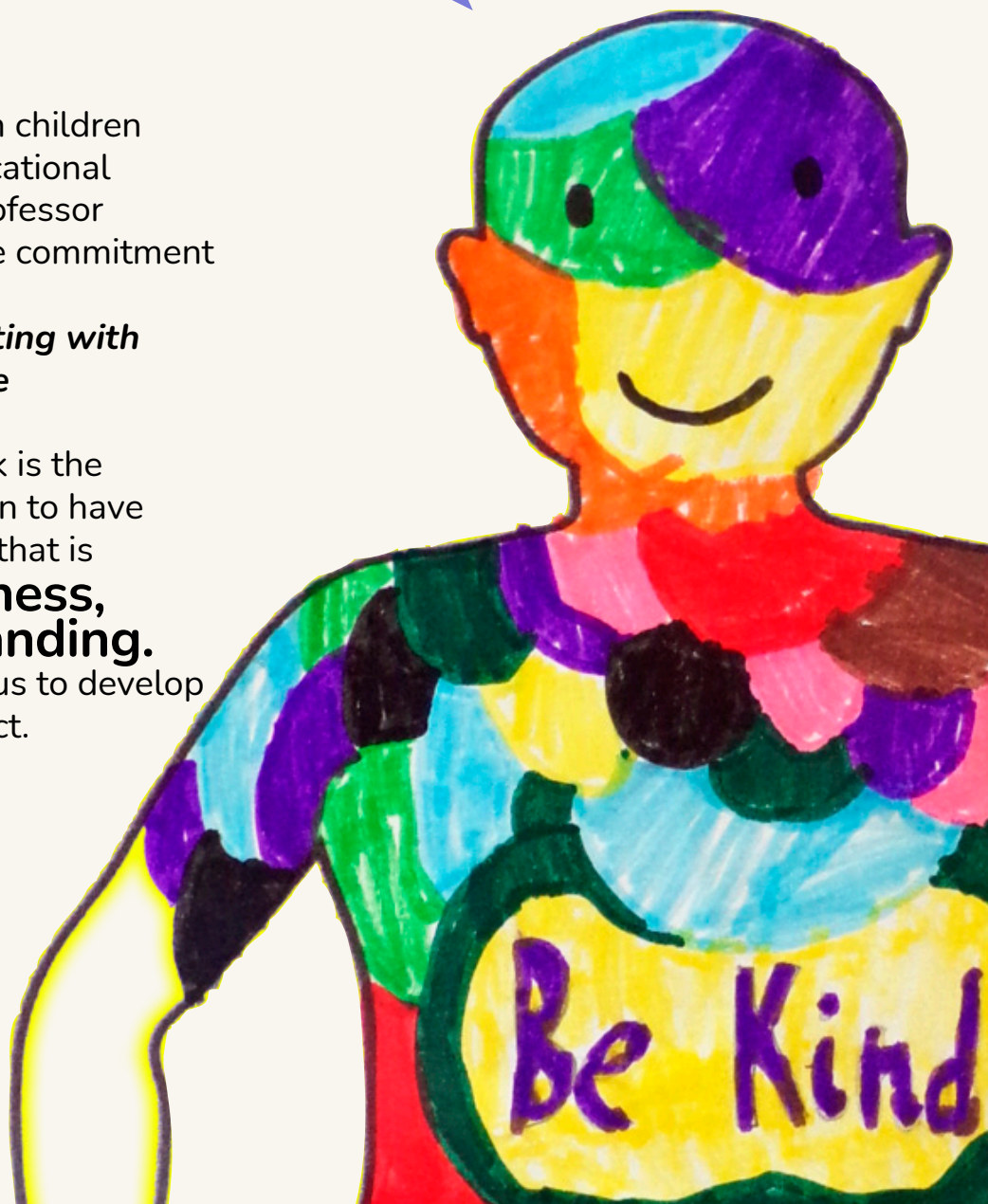
Children's Parliament has a long-standing interest in the educational experience of our children. We acknowledge parents and carers as the child's first and foremost educator, but we know that a positive experience of school is an essential component of a good childhood.

In 2016, we published
School Should be a Joyful Place

In 2017, we published our work in which we addressed attainment as a human rights issue
Doing Our Best

In 2022, we consulted with children on their views of their educational experience on behalf of Professor Kenneth Muir as part of the commitment to Education Reform
Education Reform: consulting with children and young people

Consistent across this work is the expressed desire of children to have an educational experience that is characterised by **happiness, love and understanding.** Knowing this has inspired us to develop the Dignity in School project.



DIGNITY IN SCHOOL: THE STORY SO FAR

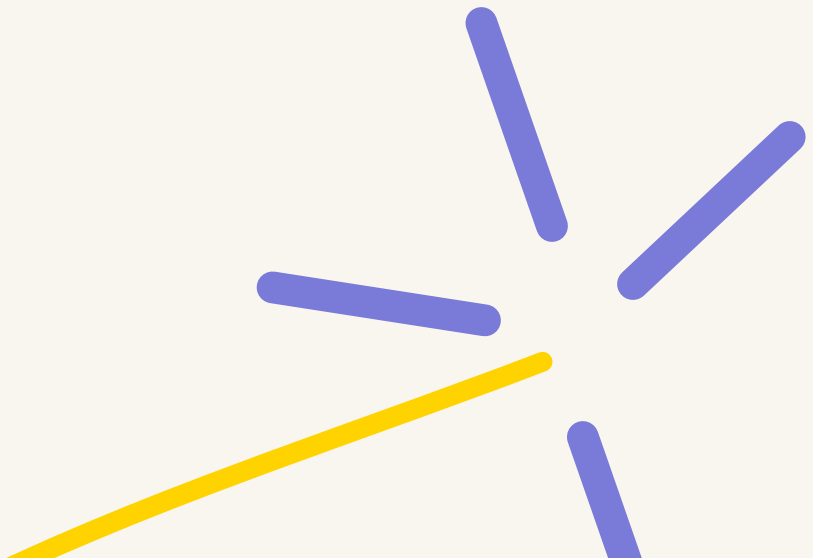
The school year 2021/22 saw us develop an initial project with two partner schools, St Johns RC Primary in Edinburgh and Stonewood Primary in Aberdeen. We are immensely grateful to all the adults and children who helped us with what was essentially a proof of concept – helping us to test questions such as:



How do we bring our Children's Parliament rights-based approach to the school environment?

Will notions of human dignity be understood and helpful when reflecting on school life?

Through the lens of children's human rights, will our partner schools identify issues or areas of development that will impact on teaching and learning and the experience of school?



Where do we start?

Before identifying learning from our first year, it is helpful to rewind somewhat and reaffirm that the premise for this project is that a rights-based culture in school can be built if we consider interpersonal relationships, school policy and the curriculum. To consider each with a rights lens Children's Parliament adopts an approach to rights incorporation called the 4 Es – these are engage, explain, encourage, and enforce. The usefulness and benefits of the 4 Es approach comes from:

- Firstly, paying attention to creating awareness, with an approach that is optimistic and excited, we start to offer opportunities for dialogue which include all kinds of views, hopes or worries about what being a school committed to human rights might mean (thus engagement).

- Then we create a new kind of discourse between rights-holders (children) and duty-bearers (adults) so that they can hear from each other and consider the practical benefits of a children's human rights-based approach (explain).
- Then we guide and support every individual within the school community to build on what they already do that enhances rights and human dignity and change practices or policies that do not (encourage).
- When these three initial Es are addressed successfully the fourth – enforcement – becomes self-fulfilling, so rather than feel like an imposition there is an application of the increased awareness, understanding, learning and optimism achieved, and we see movement toward the lived experience of a rights-based culture within school as schools understand and use the tools provided.



What happened in our first year?

The work in St. Johns RC PS and Stonewood PS began with an assessment of where both adults and children felt their school was at in terms of day-to-day experiences. A set of statements were drafted and became our initial **Dignity Self-Assessment Tool**. This is a self-assessment tool that can be used with both adults and children in school to help identify strengths and areas that need more support when it comes to the realisation of the experience of human dignity for all and rights-based practice.

While undertaking an analysis of what was reported, whole class workshops for children and continuing professional learning opportunities for adults were offered. These brought everyone up to speed in terms of the Children's Parliament approach to building basic knowledge and understanding of children's human rights.

In each school a bespoke programme was developed and supported so that the school journey towards realising children's human rights was fit for their environment and circumstances. The job of our Dignity in School team was to take learning and develop content for our Dignity in School Hub that would have meaning and be impactful and inspirational for others. This means that in the current iteration of the Hub there are prompts, resources and ideas that schools can use, and case studies that capture the learning from new rights-based approaches that our year one partner schools adopted.

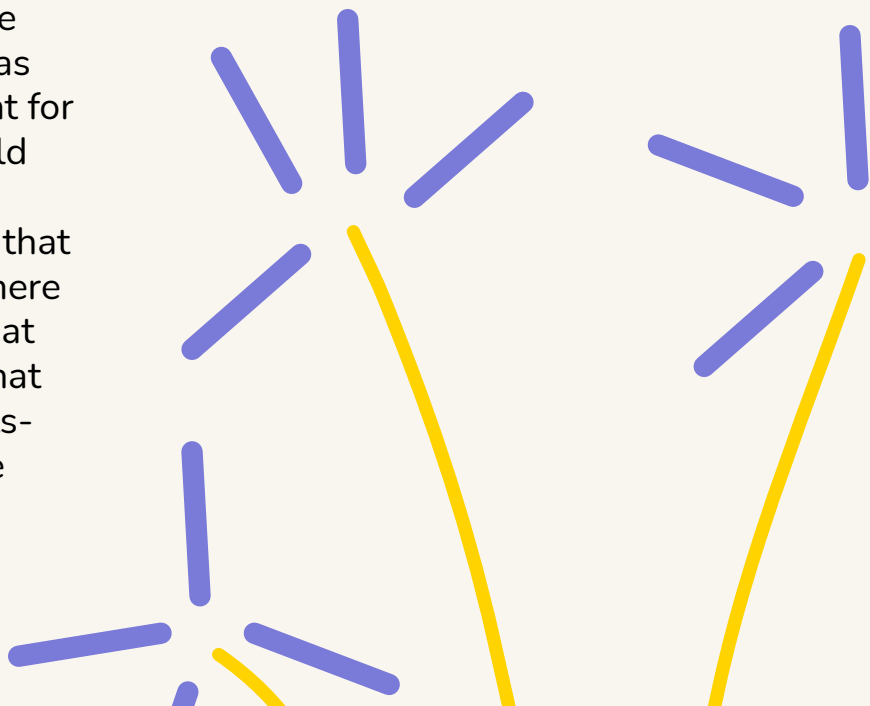
For example, there are a number of **Learning Kits** about positive relationships and others focused on health and wellbeing.

Our **Case Studies** explore how our year one partner schools considered aspects of relationships and learner voice/participation.

Our learning from year one, the testing we have undertaken about key elements of the approach, means that we are now in a position to grow the project. This means keeping our foundation in school-based practice but growing the outward facing Hub and adult capacity building offer, so that primary schools across the country can engage and get alongside us in the drive toward ensuring every primary school aged child experiences and understands their rights.

All the work and progress we have made during year one of the project is here:

Dignity in School
The Hub: A home for rights-based practice



DIGNITY IN SCHOOL: THE NEXT PHASE

With proof of concept, and our understanding of the positive impact that our Dignity in School project can have to inspire schools to begin their human rights journey, we will work with new partner schools in Dundee and Clackmannanshire. We will support their progress and further develop our current hub into a national Dignity in School Hub, an online training offer and continuing professional learning resources.



The approach

So that we remain practice and practically focused, in each local authority we will work with a Spotlight primary? School and a number of Satellite Schools in the same cluster to deliver Dignity in School.

The Spotlight Schools will see our team work alongside children and adults, using our Dignity in School Self-Assessment Tool to start, and identifying how our team can support the project the school seeks to deliver. The work will inspire new content for our Hub.

In the Satellite Schools we will have a lighter touch, supporting and advising on emerging rights-based practice as well as providing access to any training/CLPL opportunities available. Again, learning can be shared on the Dignity in School Hub.

We will develop different models of support depending on the needs of

individual settings. This will allow us to explore with colleagues which approaches and models are most effective in achieving our aspiration of supporting schools to be hubs of children's human rights practice.

In each wider locality we will look to build the capacity of other professionals surrounding these schools - public and third sector - to create a network of professionals who are knowledgeable and passionate about children's human rights; building the capacity of professionals who provide wraparound support for children and adding to the growth of our national offer through the Dignity in School Hub and online training platforms.

The work in our chosen local authority areas will support the growth of the national offer to schools and education professionals. Including signposting, resources and continuing professional learning opportunities.

Timeline

August to December 2022:

We will establish the team and build relationships with our new partner schools. Some early work will engage with children and adults in our Spotlight Schools and the cluster of Satellite Schools around them.

January to December 2023:

A full calendar year of engagement with our partner schools in Dundee and Clackmannanshire, development of the Dignity in School Hub and a growing reach for our national capacity building offer. Toward the latter part of the work new localities will be identified for the next year's programme.

January to December 2024:

A full calendar year of engagement with our partner schools in our new settings. While meeting their needs and reflecting their interests, the Dignity in School Hub and the national capacity building offer becomes wider and deeper, reflecting the ongoing journey our education system is taking in terms of continued UNCRC implementation.

January to August 2025:

Reflecting the responsive and creative nature of the project, the focus of these months will be identified in preceding months.

The Dignity in School team

Our team consists of:

- A **Project Lead** with responsibility for management of the project on a day-to-day basis, building our CLPL opportunities of adults and in school, and for Dignity in School staff support and supervision.

- Two **Project Workers** who will facilitate the delivery of the project, both face-to-face and any digital elements. One of the Project Workers will lead in our Dundee cluster, the other in our Clackmannanshire cluster.

- A **Project Worker** with a Capacity Building role working at local authority level to support professional learning with adults in wraparound services, growing the work nationally over time.
- A **Digital Support Worker**, a part time post, making sure everything we produce and publish is of high quality as we build the Dignity in School Hub.

Overall management and support for the team and their work is held by our **Programme Manager** (UNCRC Implementation/Education).

For more information on our Dignity in School project

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