



## 10: Involving and Consulting Children

**Jesters, and all its members of staff, are committed to the principle of involving and consulting children whenever decisions are made within the Club that affect them.**

Jesters believe that actively promoting the participation of children in decision-making processes is beneficial to children, staff and the Club as a whole.

Jester's commitment to involving and consulting children stems from the 'listening to children' provisions set out in Articles 12 and 13 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. These state that:

- A child's opinion should be taken into account in anything that affects them.
- Children should have information disseminated in a way that enables them to make choices and decisions.

For children, involvement and consultation helps them to develop new skills such as negotiating, sharing and understanding the perspectives of others. It helps them to understand how decisions are made, and recognises that their opinions are important.

For both staff and Jesters, there are multiple benefits of such an approach such as improved behaviour, a relationship with children based on partnership, a more cohesive environment and activities and decisions that children feel a sense of ownership over.

The Club Manager and staff will work with children to draw up a charter that will set out the expectations and responsibilities of Jesters, the staff team and the children in respect of consultation and involvement. Parental involvement in drawing up and implementing the charter will also be encouraged.

All children will be listened to and consulted actively. This will take a number of forms, including:

- Listening to what they say in speech and other forms of communication.
- Observing body language and behaviour.
- Drama and role play.

- Through play and creative expression and the use of visual aids.
- Via regular group based discussions and Q and A sessions.
- Questionnaires and other regular feedback on activities.
- Notice boards that carry important information about activities in Jesters.
- Regular children's meetings, between children and staff, discussing Jesters activities and any other relevant topics.

Age, maturity and the type of decision being made will determine the extent and nature of children's involvement. However, the emphasis should always be strongly in favour of involving children.

Consultation and involvement will be regularly monitored and acted upon so that children are able to see that their input has led to visible outcomes. Jesters and its staff will also be clear about what decisions children will be involved in and attempt to offer clear explanations if and when consultation and involvement is deemed inappropriate.

