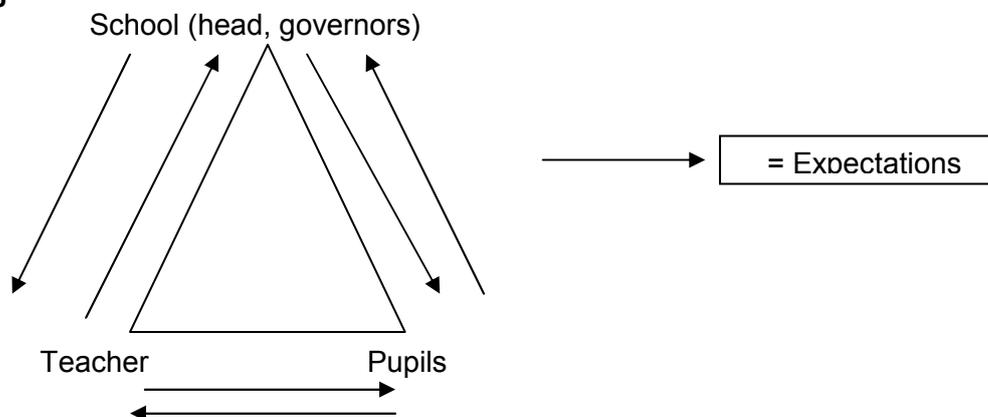


Contracting With A Class – A Brief Outline

- Creating a positive, working partnership that enables the adults to teach, the pupils to learn and everyone to feel and be safe in a respectful environment.
- Aiming for the rules and expectations to be produced in partnership with pupils – as opposed to being something ‘done unto’ them

3 cornered contracting



Key points:

- Notice the arrows in *both* directions *and* on each side – getting the most out of the time together in the classroom is dependent upon a range of expectations from different people. Spend time teasing this out
- Acknowledging the Big Power – ie the Head and governing body – they have the ultimate say in the school. There are also other Big Powers – esp the government; also eg examination boards. This helps the teacher to place his/her expectations within the bigger picture. (Another key party is parents)
- Avoid the temptation to focus solely upon the base of the triangle – raise awareness of the Big Power and the bigger picture
- Aim for a degree of balance when exploring expectations between staff and pupils – what do the pupils need from staff in order to get the most out of the lessons?
- Explore how reasonable people’s expectations are – contracting will often require a party saying ‘No’
- Contracting is a *process* – not a one-off activity. The discussions may well result in some form of written contract (can be a useful visual aid) – but effective contracts are revisited.

Key questions:

- **Why are we here together?** – and who determines this?
- **What are we going to be doing together?** – the types of activities – which aspects are negotiable and non-negotiable? Again, who determines this? Which types of activities do pupils prefer eg kinaesthetic, discussion-based etc etc. What particular challenges do some of these present if they are to go well?
- **What could jeopardise/sabotage us fulfilling our purposes?** – what gets in the way of you learning to the best of your ability? (in terms of what you do, what others do); what can get in the way of me teaching to the best of my ability; AND how are we going to minimise the likelihood of this happening?
- **How will we give recognition** when people keep to their side of the deal and fulfil their responsibilities? (What would be meaningful for pupils (and reasonable for the adults)
- What will be the **consequences** for not doing so?

The 5 'R's - Rights, Responsibilities, Rules, Routines & Relationships

Some staff have found it useful to base their classroom contract around the notion of rights, responsibilities, rules and routines. These are all grounded in an acknowledgement that for things to go well in the classroom, there needs to be positive, respectful relationships.

What are the fundamental **rights** for all in this classroom?

Eg Everyone has the right to learn (for staff, to teach)

Everyone has the right to be treated with respect

Everyone has the right to be safe and to feel safe (physically and psychologically)

With these rights come **responsibilities** – and this opens up the way for further discussion – what responsibilities do I have?

How can these responsibilities be worked out? – **rules** are an important part of any community/group .

Aim for between 6-7 rules – eg covering key areas such as movement, noise,

Word them positively – avoid 'Don'ts

Routines

- habitual activities that contribute towards creating the positive, safe learning environment eg routines related to entering the classroom, getting equipment out, what to do when a pupils have completed a task

The Scaling Tool (NB More information can found in the Resource Library under 'Solution-Focused Thinking')

This provides a useful structure for framing the contracting discussions – and for subsequent reviews of it.

Using a scale from 1 to 10:

"If 10 is that we have created the best classroom possible, what would that look like?"

- *What will you be doing?*
- *What will I be doing?*
- *What will I see in your books?/folders? What will be happening during discussion-based times? Experiments?"*
- *What do you need from one another to get things, perhaps not at 10, but as close to as possible?*
- *What can you do to contribute towards this?*
- *What do you need from me?*

The scale can be used at any subsequent point eg if there is too much noise in a lesson:

"Where would you place things on the scale at this point in time, especially bearing in mind the noise levels?"

"We've agreed our 'working noise' rule – what will you do differently to move things further up the scale? What positive things will you keep doing?"

Whole lessons can also be reviewed during the plenary in relation to the contract and scaling:

"Where would you put this lesson on our scale?"

"What tells you it is at 'x' rather than 1? How do you know? – what have you seen/heard/experienced?"

"What has been particularly helpful (in terms of how others have behaved)?"

"What have you done/what are you doing to contribute to this?" "What are those around you doing?"

"What could you do to help it to move to 'x' + 1?"

"What could other people do to help it to move to 'x' + 1?" (mentioning no names!)

"What would you like to see happen in the next lesson we have?"