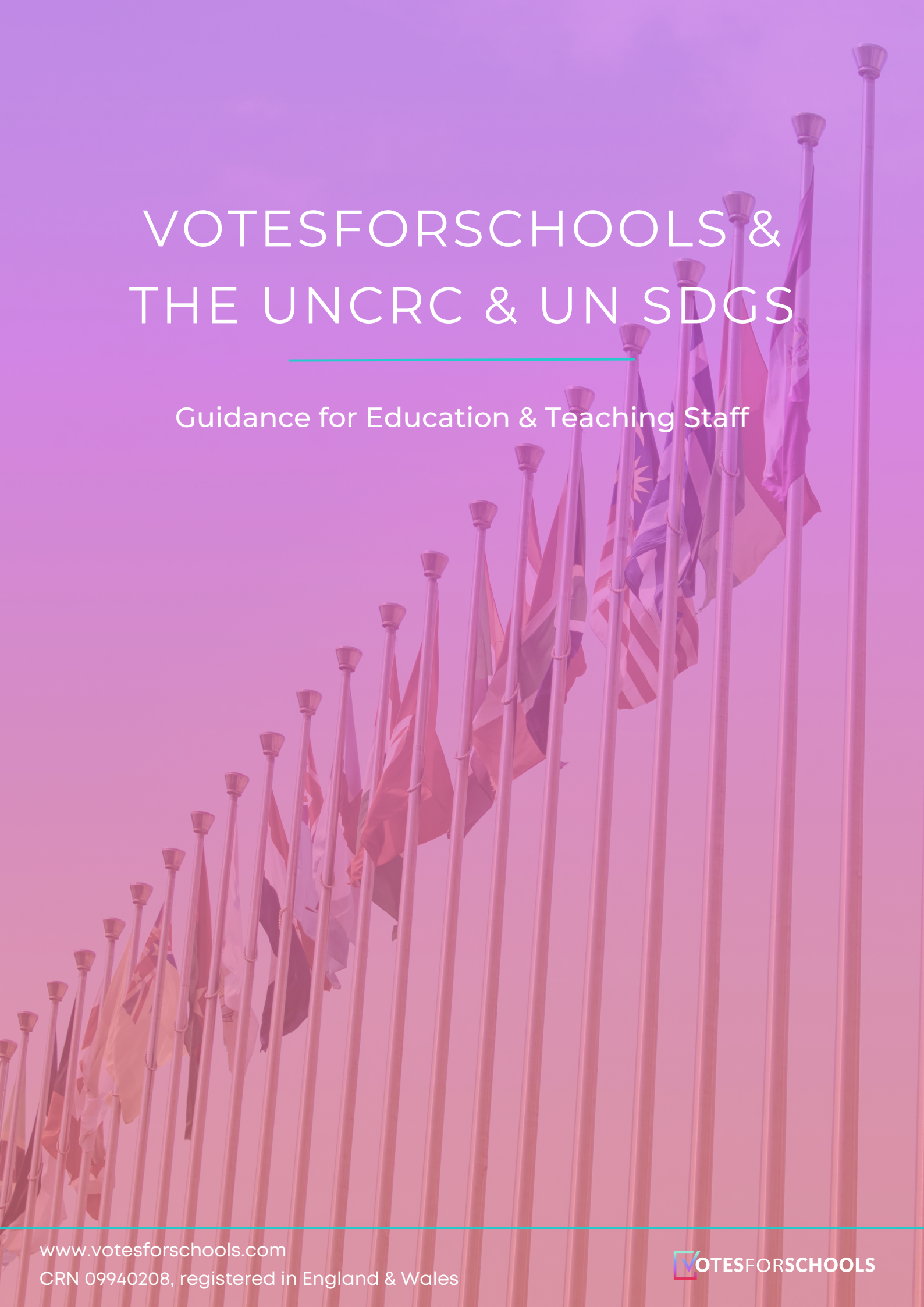




VOTESFORSCHOOLS & THE UNCRC & UN SDGS

Guidance for Education & Teaching Staff

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All weekly VoteTopics are mapped to articles from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). This mapping can be found in each VotePack. Use the contents to explore the criteria for each curriculum area.

For the purposes of this document, pupils/students are referred to as "voters", and educational settings are referred to as "schools".

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For more information on the UNCRC, visit [UNICEF's website](#), and for more on the UN SDGs, visit the [UN's website](#).

Each week, we also map to a range of other curriculum areas, and all VoteTopics correspond to one of our 9 Key Themes. You can find out more about these on your Teacher Dashboard.

WHY MAP TO THE UNCRC & UN SDGS?

Each of our weekly VoteTopics is mapped to an article from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). The UNCRC articles are instrumental in upholding the rights of and responsibilities towards children worldwide, while the Goals are an essential framework for collective action towards global sustainable development.

THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

UNICEF outlines the UNCRC as follows:

“The Convention has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child’s life and set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. The convention is universal—these rights apply to every child and the convention entitles every child to claim them. It also explains how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights.”

Given VotesforSchools’ core focus on reflecting real-life issues, it is a logical progression that the resources and programme as a whole would promote children’s rights and emphasise the binding nature of the Convention. We include an article from the UNCRC each week to help voters familiarise themselves with what they should expect for themselves and their peers. While the article chosen is the one most relevant to the topic for discussion, a number of other rights will be supported and promoted each week.

VotesforSchools can also support schools in gaining Rights Respecting Schools accreditation from UNICEF. Find out more in our RRSA guidance document.

THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The UN describes the 17 UN SDGs as follows:

“An urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.”

Schools have a role to play in upholding and promoting the SDGs, and VotesforSchools supports them in this. We map topics to the SDG that is most clearly connected to each discussion, while recognising that the Goals are interconnected; most topics support progress towards several SDGs. The real-life nature of the weekly resources helps align VoteTopics with the SDGs, which may otherwise feel abstract or “too big” for voters to conceptualise. Through discussion, critical thinking, collaboration and voting, voters are encouraged not only to learn about global challenges but also to consider different perspectives, make informed decisions, and recognise their potential to contribute to positive change locally, nationally and even internationally.

Taking education specifically, the UN identifies Education for Sustainable Development as an integral part of quality education and a key enabler of sustainable development. In particular, Target 4.7 calls for voters to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including through sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, global citizenship, peace and appreciation of cultural diversity. VotesforSchools supports this aim by enabling voters to explore complex issues and reflect on the consequences of choices. As a result, they participate meaningfully in conversations about the future they want to help create.

UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (UNCRC) ARTICLES

Art 1 **Definition of a Child:** “A child is any person under the age of 18.”

Art 2 **No Discrimination:** “All children have all these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what language they speak, what their religion is, what they think, what they look like, if they are a boy or girl, if they have a disability, if they are rich or poor, and no matter who their parents or families are or what their parents or families believe or do. No child should be treated unfairly for any reason.”

Art 3 **Best Interests of the Child:** “When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. All adults should do what is best for children. Governments should make sure children are protected and looked after by their parents, or by other people when this is needed. Governments should make sure that people and places responsible for looking after children are doing a good job.”

Art 4 **Making Rights Real:** “Governments must do all they can to make sure that every child in their countries can enjoy all the rights in this Convention.”

Art 5 **Family Guidance as Children Develop:** “Governments should let families and communities guide their children so that, as they grow up, they learn to use their rights in the best way. The more children grow, the less guidance they will need.”

- Art 6** **Life, Survival & Development:** “Every child has the right to be alive. Governments must make sure that children survive and develop in the best possible way.”
- Art 7** **Name & Nationality:** “Children must be registered when they are born and given a name which is officially recognized by the Government. Children must have a nationality (belong to a country). Whenever possible, children should know their parents and be looked after by them.”
- Art 8** **Identity:** “Children have the right to their own identity – an official record of who they are which includes their name, nationality and family relations. No one should take this away from them, but if this happens, Governments must help children to quickly get their identity back.”
- Art 9** **Keeping Families Together:** “Children should not be separated from their parents unless they are not being properly looked after – for example, if a parent hurts or does not take care of a child. Children whose parents don’t live together should stay in contact with both parents unless this might harm the child.”
- Art 10** **Contact with Parents Across Countries:** “If a child lives in a different country than their parents, Governments must let the child and parents travel so that they can stay in contact and be together.”
- Art 11** **Protection from Kidnapping:** “Governments must stop children being taken out of the country when this is against the law – for example, being kidnapped by someone or held abroad by a parent when the other parent does not agree.”

- Art 12** **Respect for Children's Views:** "Children have the right to give their opinions freely on issues that affect them. Adults should listen and take children seriously."
- Art 13** **Sharing Thoughts Freely:** "Children have the right to share freely with others what they learn, think and feel, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms other people."
- Art 14** **Freedom of Thought & Religion:** "Children can choose their own thoughts, opinions and religion, but this should not stop other people from enjoying their rights. Parents can guide children so that as they grow up, they learn to properly use this right."
- Art 15** **Setting Up or Joining Groups:** "Children can join or set up groups or organisations, and they can meet with others, as long as this does not harm other people."
- Art 16** **Protection of Privacy:** "Every child has the right to privacy. The law must protect children's privacy, family, home, communications and reputation (or good name) from any attack."
- Art 17** **Access to Information:** "Children have the right to get information from the Internet, radio, television, newspapers, books and other sources. Adults should make sure the information they are getting is not harmful. Governments should encourage the media to share information from lots of different sources, in languages that all children can understand."

- Responsibility of Parents:** “Parents are the main people responsible for bringing up a child. When the child does not have any parents, another adult will have this responsibility and they are called a “guardian”. Parents and guardians should always consider what is best for that child. Governments should help them. Where a child has both parents, both of them should be responsible for bringing up the child.”
- Art 18**
- Protection from Violence:** “Governments must protect children from violence, abuse and being neglected by anyone who looks after them.”
- Art 19**
- Children Without Families:** “Every child who cannot be looked after by their own family has the right to be looked after properly by people who respect the child’s religion, culture, language and other aspects of their life.”
- Art 20**
- Children Who are Adopted:** “When children are adopted, the most important thing is to do what is best for them. If a child cannot be properly looked after in their own country – such as living with another family – then they might be adopted in another country.”
- Art 21**
- Refugee Children:** “Children who move from their home country to another country as refugees (because it was not safe for them to stay there) should get help and protection and have the same rights as children born in that country.”
- Art 22**
- Children with Disabilities:** “Every child with a disability should enjoy the best possible life in society. Governments should remove all obstacles for children with disabilities to become independent and to participate actively in the community.”
- Art 23**

- Art 24** **Health, Water, Food, Environment:** “Children have the right to the best health care possible, clean water to drink, healthy food and a clean and safe environment to live in. All adults and children should have information about how to stay safe and healthy.”
- Art 25** **Review of a Child’s Placement:** “Every child who has been placed somewhere away from home - for their care, protection or health – should have their situation checked regularly to see if everything is going well and if this is still the best place for the child to be.”
- Art 26** **Social & Economic Help:** “Governments should provide money or other support to help children from poor families.”
- Art 27** **Food, Clothing, a Safe Home:** “Children have the right to food, clothing and a safe place to live so they can develop in the best possible way. The Government should help families and children who cannot afford this.”
- Art 28** **Access to Education:** “Every child has the right to an education. Primary education should be free. Secondary and higher education should be available to every child. Children should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level possible. Discipline in schools should respect children’s rights and never use violence.”
- Art 29** **Aims of Education:** “Children’s education should help them fully develop their personalities, talents and abilities. It should teach them to understand their own rights, and to respect other people’s rights, cultures and differences. It should help them to live peacefully and protect the environment.”

- Art 30** **Minority Culture, Language & Religion:** “Children have the right to use their own language, culture and religion - even if these are not shared by most people in the country where they live.”
- Art 31** **Rest, Play, Culture, Arts:** “Every child has the right to rest, relax, play and to take part in cultural and creative activities.”
- Art 32** **Protection from Harmful Work:** “Children have the right to be protected from doing work that is dangerous or bad for their education, health or development. If children work, they have the right to be safe and paid fairly.”
- Art 33** **Protection from Harmful Drugs:** “Governments must protect children from taking, making, carrying or selling harmful drugs.”
- Art 34** **Protection from Sexual Abuse:** “The Government should protect children from sexual exploitation (being taken advantage of) and sexual abuse, including by people forcing children to have sex for money, or making sexual pictures or films of them.”
- Art 35** **Prevention of Sale & Trafficking:** “Governments must make sure that children are not kidnapped or sold, or taken to other countries or places to be exploited (taken advantage of).”
- Art 36** **Protection from Exploitation:** “Children have the right to be protected from all other kinds of exploitation (being taken advantage of), even if these are not specifically mentioned in this Convention.”

- Children in Detention:** “Children who are accused of breaking the law should not be killed, tortured, treated cruelly, put in prison forever, or put in prison with adults. Prison should always be the last choice and only for the shortest possible time. Children in prison should have legal help and be able to stay in contact with their family.”
- Art 37**
- Protection in War:** “Children have the right to be protected during war. No child under 15 can join the army or take part in war.”
- Art 38**
- Recovery & Integration:** “Children have the right to get help if they have been hurt, neglected, treated badly or affected by war, so they can get back their health and dignity.”
- Art 39**
- Children Who Break the Law:** “Children accused of breaking the law have the right to legal help and fair treatment. There should be lots of solutions to help these children become good members of their communities. Prison should only be the last choice.”
- Art 40**
- Best Law for Children Applies:** “If the laws of a country protect children’s rights better than this Convention, then those laws should be used.”
- Art 41**
- Everyone Must Know Children’s Rights:** “Governments should actively tell children and adults about this Convention so that everyone knows about children’s rights.”
- Art 42**
- How the Convention Works:** “These articles explain how Governments, the United Nations – including the Committee on the Rights of the Child and UNICEF - and other organisations work to make sure all children enjoy all their rights.”
- Art 43+**

UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (UN SDGS)

- 1 **No Poverty:** “End poverty in all its forms, everywhere.”
- 2 **Zero Hunger:** “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.”
- 3 **Good Health & Wellbeing:** “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.”
- 4 **Quality Education:** “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.”
- 5 **Gender Equality:** “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.”
- 6 **Clean Water & Sanitation:** “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water & sanitation for all.”
- 7 **Affordable & Clean Energy:** “Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.”
- 8 **Decent Work & Economic Growth:** “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full productive employment and decent work for all.”

- 9 Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure:** “Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.”
- 10 Reduced Inequalities:** “Reduce inequality within and among countries.”
- 11 Sustainable Cities & Communities:** “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.”
- 12 Responsible Consumption & Production:** “Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.”
- 13 Climate Action:** “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.”
- 14 Life Below Water:** “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.”
- 15 Life On Land:** “Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.”
- 16 Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions:** “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.”
- 17 Partnerships for the Goals:** “Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.”