

As some of you may recall, the County Council last year held a very successful Debating Competition for primary schools in North Yorkshire.

This took the form of a regional heat in each of the seven District Council areas with the winners of each heat then progressing to a County Final held in the Council Chamber at County Hall. We are therefore inviting all North Yorkshire primary schools to consider submitting an entry for this year's competition.

Those schools who have participated in past competitions, at both regional and County level, have given very positive feedback about their involvement in the event and its value to the children and young people who have taken part in the debate. Participation also contributes towards the delivery of the National Curriculum for English including the statutory requirements to "participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates" and in the development of reading and writing skills in the preparation and research they have to undertake to prepare for the debates.

The competition is aimed at teams of a minimum of six children in Years 5/6 who debate a pre-determined subject before a judging panel. Points are awarded for delivery/presentation, content, facts and questions/answers.

In terms of time commitment, the regional events are held at a local venue (usually District Council offices) starting at 10.00 am until noon and are timed to ensure that children are back in school in time for lunch.

The dates for the 2018 regional heats are:

- 09 March 2018 - Hambleton
- 12 March 2018 - Selby
- 14 March 2018 - Scarborough
- 16 March 2018 - Harrogate
- 19 March 2018 - Craven
- 20 March 2018 - Ryedale
- 23 March 2018 - Richmondshire



The County Final will be held at County Hall, Northallerton Friday 15 June and concludes with a buffet lunch and presentation ceremony. Press coverage is actively sought for all events.

Those schools wishing to submit an entry for consideration should ensure that

- They are able to field a team of six pupils who are currently in either Year 5 or Year 6. For small schools, a mixed team representing local alliances can compete.
- The team has two children who will present the debate and four to ask questions (each speaker having two minutes followed by four minutes for questions from any of the schools present)
- Are likely to be available on the relevant date above (i.e. your local District Council area)

The topic for this year's competition will be:

Is social media a danger to children?



We are also keen to link into any such local debating arrangements which may have been set up in your area by other organisations such as Rotary Club etc. If you already participate in such an event, please let us know and we will make contact with the organisers to see whether a joint competition would be of benefit.

If you wish to enter a team, please email me via Leith.McRobert@northyorks.gov.uk including your school name and DfE number and the contact details of an appropriate person within the school with whom we can be in touch. We need expressions of interest by no later than **Friday 2 February 2018**. Should interest in the competition exceed the number of places available we will need to find some fair process way to select interested schools. We will do this early to avoid unnecessary preparation work.

I do hope you will give serious consideration to your school's participation in this great initiative - who knows, we might find a great public speaker or politician of the future!