

Student Council Constitution

The aims of The Student Council are to:

- Encourage students to act in a democratic manner by giving responsibility and empowerment to the student body as a whole, with regard to the running of the school.
- Foster a spirit of co-operation and community in the school as a whole.
- Provide a forum for students to voice concerns, discuss interests and make suggestions with a view to improving the school community.
- Give students the opportunity to make recommendations in connection with the running of the school.
- Liaise with the student body, the Staff, Management and Parents' Association where appropriate.
- Provide a forum for improved communication between students themselves, to achieve greater unity by addressing problems and celebrating achievements together.

The Functions of the Student Council are:

- Promote and maintain an open and understanding school environment
- Provide students with a forum in which to voice their opinions and to encourage them to take an active role in school life
- Maintain the Loreto ethos in the school
- Provide support for extra-curricular activities
- Foster a relationship with past pupils
- Provide opportunities for fundraising for school facilities and extra-curricular activities
- Identify and acknowledge problems in the school environment and to discuss appropriate action for change and/or improvement
- Provide opportunities for fundraising for Loreto Missions and other approved needy causes
- Encourage students to contribute to the school's local community
- Liaise with school authorities on a variety of issues such as: Student Welfare, Discipline, Uniform, Resources, Curriculum, Extra-curricular activities & Facilities

Code of Ethics

- Student Council shall operate in a non-judgemental manner respecting confidentiality, employing constructive discussion and reaching decisions through consensus

- Members shall respect and recognise the rights and responsibilities of individual students, staff and board members
- Meetings are to remain free of discussion of individual parents, teachers, students, board members, trustees or other council members
- Council members will focus on school wide issues and on what is best for the students and the school
- The staff representative is free to intervene and stop any discussion if these conditions are broken
- A staff member will normally be present at meetings. She/he should ensure that proper meetings procedure is adopted, particularly in the case of a new council. However, in so far as possible, the Council members should run their own affairs entirely on their own initiative. The primary purpose of any Staff member should be to act as a mediator between staff and the Council.

Student Council Rules

- Each Council runs from November to October of the following year. This is in order to allow 1st years to play an active part in the Council and to make an informed choice of representatives
- The Student Council will meet at least 6 times a year. In order to facilitate Council members who are involved in other lunch time activities it will not be possible to hold all meetings during lunch time. Several meetings may be held before or after school. All Council members must be given at least a week's notice of a meeting, unless in exceptional circumstances. Meetings will be called by the Chairperson or in the absence of a Chairperson, by the Vice Chairperson. Meetings may also be called on the requisition of six Council members. All council members and designated teacher must be given at least one week's notice of a meeting
- All issues for inclusion in the agenda must be submitted one week before date of meeting. A post box for all students in the school to submit suggestions for the agenda for the following meeting. All suggestions must be signed by the person submitting it
- The Chairperson will draw up the agenda and it will be circulated to council members in advance of the meeting with notice of the meeting. This agenda will also be given to the designated teacher
- As an exception, a matter may be introduced later to the agenda with the consent of a majority of the Council members present and voting at the meeting
- The Chairperson must run the meeting in a fair and effective manner
- Students must speak through the Chairperson
- Ideas must be well researched, be of valuable quality and general concern

- **Members should voice their class views**
- **Speakers must not be interrupted**
- **All records/ minutes of decisions of the Council must be taken and recorded**
- **Records of persons attending each Council meeting must be kept**
- **Decisions made at Council meetings must be posted on the Student Council notice board within two weeks of the meeting**
- **Members who are absent from two consecutive meetings without adequate reason will cease to be members of the Council**
- **Council members represent the student body and are expected to conduct themselves in a way that will not bring the Student Council into disrepute. The Council reserves the right to suspend the membership of any member whose conduct damages the reputation of the Student Council**
- **The Student Council may form subcommittees of its members. A subcommittee will consist of at least 6 members, with at least 2 members from Junior Cycle and 4 members from Senior Cycle (Transition, 5th and 6th year). The term of reference of a subcommittee must be submitted to the Council for prior approval. Subcommittees must report regularly to the council on their progress**
- **A vote must be held regarding any changes to this constitution. Proposed changes to this constitution must be approved in advance by the Principal and Board of Management. Proposed changes must be circulated to all members of the Council at least one month in advance of the vote. At least two thirds of the Council must be present for the vote. Any changes to these rules must be discussed in advance with the Board of Management. Changes to the rules require the approval of three fourths of the Council members present and voting at a Council meeting called for the purpose**

Election to Student Council

Composition of Council

- 1. There will be 24 Student Council Members, one elected from each class**
- 2. Students must vote for a student candidate from their own class**
- 3. Each student has one vote**
- 4. All students are eligible to vote**

Submitting Nominations

- **Nomination forms must be submitted to designated election officers by the date specified on the nomination form. In the case of the elections for the first Council, the election**

officers will be members of staff. Nominees must obtain a signature from two proposers, who must be a teacher and a student and including the written consent of candidates being nominated.

Timing

1. Nomination forms must be submitted by the date given on the nomination form.
2. Election information may be broadcast on the intercom system, at year assemblies and on school notice boards
3. The nominees' names are to be published within five working school days after submission. Nominees have five school days to canvas for votes in which time one set class will be given to each class to discuss the election.

Running the Election

1. There will be two voting opportunities during the day of voting
2. Before school 8am – 8.45am, lunchtime 12.30pm – 1.10pm
3. Voting must be by secret ballot and take place in students' free time only
4. Written permission to run the election must be sought from the Principal or Deputy Principal
5. A committee of students approved by the Principal or Deputy Principal will be formed to supervise the polling stations and tick off the register of electors (which in this case is the enrolled student body). They will also assist in the counting of the vote, which will take place immediately afterwards

Term of Office

- The elected student's term of office begins immediately following the publication of the results of the election for a period of one year. A student may seek re-election the following year, but no student may serve in office for more than two consecutive years.

Results

- Elected members will be published not more than ten working school days after election.

Appeals

- An appeal for a recount of votes must be made in writing to the election officer/s within 3 days of the results being published. Such appeal must specify the reason/s for seeking a recount. The decision of the election officer/s on any such appeal will be final and must be given within 5 days or receipt of the appeal
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Student Council Officers

The Student Council will elect the following officers:

- **Chairperson**
- **Vice Chairperson**
- **Secretary**
- **Treasurer**
- **PRO**

Any other officer the Council thinks is necessary.

The Chairperson

- **Is the chief spokesperson and officer of the Student Council**
- **Calls meeting**
- **Draws up the agenda for each meeting**
- **Chairs meetings in a fair manner, ensuring that all have an equal say**
- **Signs any letters, notices etc, that are issued by the Student Council**
- **Liaises with school authorities**
- **Ensures that the Student Council is run effectively and efficiently**

The Vice-Chairperson

- **Takes over the responsibilities of the Chairperson when unavailable or as determined by the rules**
- **Assists the Chairperson in the organization of the Student Council**

The Secretary

- **Takes the minutes at meetings and writes them up**
- **Distributes/reads out the minutes from previous meetings**
- **Makes progress reports, keeps records of all work being carried out which should be posted on Student Council Notice Board.**
- **Take a roll of members and teachers present at meeting**

The Treasurer

- **Keeps financial records in order and reports to the Student Council on the current financial status of the Council**

- Pays bills and controls petty cash
- Where a Student Council bank account exists, a teacher must be a signatory of the account in conjunction with the Chairperson or Secretary
- Must obtain two signatures on documents from Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson
- Provide a financial report to the Council at the last council meeting of the election year>
- Consult on behalf of School Council with management, staff and parents in respect of planned fund raising activities