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# Student Council committee/Student support committee

A Student Council is a representative structure through which students in the college can become involved in the affairs of the college, working in partnership with the management, staff and students for the benefit of the college and its students.

## The role of the Student Council

A Student Council will set its own objectives. Some general objectives could include:

- To enhance communication between students, management and staff
- To promote an environment conducive to educational and personal development
- To promote friendship and respect among pupils
- To support the management and staff in the development of the college
- To represent the views of the students on matters of general concern to them

## The Student Council and the Management

- The college shall establish and maintain procedures for the purpose of informing about the activities in the college.
- The college shall encourage and help students to set up a Student Council and shall assist a Student Council when established.
- The college shall draw up rules for the establishment of a Student Council which shall provide for the selection of members and the dissolution of a Council.
- The college will have a role in considering the rules governing meetings of the Student Council, and the conduct of its affairs.

The Management will give active support to the student council. This could involve designating a student advisor in the college to communicate with the Council on an ongoing basis, as well as assisting the Council in drawing up a constitution and in planning and organizing its activities.

## The Student Council and the Principal

The role of the Principal is of central importance in the establishment and operation of a Student Council. In assisting the Management in the development of college policy, and in working with teachers and to implement it at day-to-day level, the Principal is centrally placed in all aspects of the college's operations.

In the initial stages, the Principal, together with the other teachers, will assist in the development of a Student Council in several ways, for example, by discussing with students the role of a Student Council and the role of individual representatives on the Council and by advising on an appropriate constitution or statement of objectives. As the Council develops and begins to expand its role, the Principal will assist in guiding the Council's development, so as to allow for a constructive and purposeful Council.

More generally, the Principal can promote a college culture which recognizes the potentially valuable input that students can make, through a Student Council, into the development of the college.

## The Student Council and Teachers

Developing a spirit of partnership and co-operation between a Student Council and teachers has benefits for both. The Student Council can play an important role in recognizing and supporting the work of teachers. Similarly the interest and support of teachers will be of great value to a Student Council, particularly during the early stages of its development.

It is generally desirable for a member of the teaching staff to attend meetings of the Council. The support and guidance offered by a teacher will be very useful to a Council when planning its activities, and providing for a teacher to attend Council meetings will help to build a co-operative and good working relationship between students and staff of the college

**Key functions of Student Council:** The functions and activities of a Student Council should support the aims and objectives of the Council and promote the development of the college and the welfare of its students. In planning and undertaking activities during the course of the college year, the Council should:

- Work closely with the management, teachers and students,
- Consult regularly with students in the college, and

• Involve as many students as possible in the activities of the Council There is a wide range of activities of benefit to the college community which a Student Council may wish to undertake, some of which are outlined below:

**Representing the views of the student body to the college management** This should be one of the fundamental aims of every Council. It involves talking and listening to the student body, considering their views and concerns, and discussing these with the college management on behalf of the students.

**Promoting good communications within the college** Improving communication within the college community is a shared responsibility and a Student Council can contribute to this process. Making presentations at staff meetings to keep staff informed of activities, keeping a Student Council notice-board or organizing a regular newsletter are just some ways the Council can communicate with the students and staff.

**Supporting the educational development and progress of students** The Student Council can contribute to the learning environment for students in the college by, for example, setting up study groups for students in exam classes or homework clubs, or organizing lunch time activities such as language clubs.

**Assisting with induction and/or mentoring for new first year students** Starting college life is a challenging new experience for 1st Year students. During the mentoring program senior students help new students to find their feet and can help their integration into the college community.

**Contributing to the development of college policy** The Student Council can actively contribute to the development of college policy in a wide range of areas such as bullying, uniform requirements, behavior code and extra-curricular activities. The Council could form sub-committees to consider individual policy issues.

**Assisting in college sporting and cultural activities** Student Councils can assist in organizing and developing sports and cultural activities within the college, including, for example, sports days and drama or musical events. Assisting with or organizing fund-raising events for charity Student Councils can organize events both within the college and involving the wider community, for the purposes of raising money for designated charities.

**Bridging with Student Councils in other colleges** It may be useful for a Student Council to bridge with Student Councils in other colleges, particularly in the organization of sporting and cultural activities and when fund-raising for charity. An existing Student Council could have a useful role in helping and advising a newly formed Student Council in another college.

**Establishing a Student Council**
The college should provide them, in a timely manner, with a copy of the rules it has drawn up in accordance with these guidelines.

**Size and Composition of a Student Council**
The size and composition of a Student Council shall be determined by the college having regard both to the need for the Council to be representative of all students in the college andthe need for it to function effectively. It may not always be appropriate for each class to have a representative on the Council. Appropriate gender balance on the Council should be given priority. Council members shall be elected by election procedure.

**Nominations**
The Principal should set a date for the selection of representative(s) to the Student Council and its formation.

**First Meeting**
The Principal or a designated member of staff should convene the first meeting of each newly formed Council. The first meeting of a newly formed Council should take place early in the academic year.

**Constitution**
The Student Council may make rules governing its meetings and the business and conduct of its affairs, but it shall consult with the advisor before doing so.

**Dissolution of a Student Council**
Normally a Student Council shall stand dissolved when the term of office of the members expires. Management may dissolve the Student Council before the expiry of its term in accordance with the rules and procedures governing dissolution. This will only happen in exceptional circumstances after consultation with all concerned. Where Management intends dissolving the Council, it will give the Council adequate noticeof the proposal, and the reasons therefore. The Council will be allowed to appeal the dissolution to the Management or Principal of the college Where the Student Council is dissolved another Council may be formed following the procedures outlined earlier. Where a Council is dissolved less than 6 weeks before the end of the college year, the appointment of a new Council may reasonably be left until the following academic year. Circumstances that may require the early dissolution of a Student

Council include:

- Where a significant number of members of the Council have been involved in a serious breach of the college's code of behaviour
- Where serious irregularities have occurred in the functioning of the Council
- Where the activities of the Council have endangered the welfare of staff or students of the college
- Where serious financial irregularities have occurred It will not be appropriate to dissolve a Council where only a few of its members have been involved in a breach of the college. In those circumstances, the college should only consider removal of those students concerned.

**Removing a member or members of the Council**

Sometimes it may be more appropriate to remove an individual member (or members) of the Council rather than dissolve the Council as a whole. This may happen in two ways:

The Student Council may remove any member or officer of the Council for a continuing failure to attend meetings of the Council, or for a lack of commitment to the purposes of the Council, or for stated misconduct (including significant breaches of the college's code of behaviour). Such a decision should be taken on a majority vote of the Council, and the member should be given adequate notice of the proposal, the reasons therefor, and the opportunity to present his/her case.The Management, on the advice of the Principal or on its own initiative,may remove a member of the Council in accordance with the rules and procedures in this regard. Both the member concerned and the Council should be given adequate notice of the proposal, the reasons therefor and the opportunity to appeal the removal to the Management or Principal of the college.

**Filling a vacancy on the Council**

Where a member is removed or resigns from office, the resulting vacancy should be filled in accordance with the procedures.

**Getting started**

When students wish to start a Council in their college they should approach the Principal and ask for a copy of the rules for the establishment of a Student Council.Students should pay careful attention to the rules they are given and should not hesitate to ask thePrincipal if they don't understand some part of the rules orneed advice in general. At this stage regular communication with the Principal and teaching staff is necessary as it is importantthat everyone works together and that trust is built up between the students involved and the staff.

**The composition of a Student Council includes**

**President**

**Vice president**

**Joint secretary**

**Treasurer**

**Sport secretary**

**Cultural secretary**

**Staff Advisors:**

- Principal
- Student advisor
- Cultural advisor
- Sports advisor

**Responsibilities of student council**

The Student Council as a whole has responsibility for:

- Working with the staff, Management and fellow students
- Communicating and consulting with all of the students in the college
- Involving as many students as possible in the activities of the Council
- Planning and managing the Council's program of activities for the year
- Managing and accounting for any funds raised by the Council

Chairperson

Member Secretary

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