



## Student Council Policy

### 1.1 Scope

This policy considers all school stakeholders; students, parents/guardians, and school staff. A school is not only a learning environment but is also a place where friendships and social norms are developed, where support structures are accessible, and where student voice is heard, which all affect young people's development.

### 1.2 Context

This policy was drafted in conjunction with the school community. It should be read in the context of the Health and Safety Policy, the Anti-Bullying Policy, the Code of Behaviour, the Pastoral Care Policy, the Child Protection Policy, and the Wellbeing Policy. Gaelcholáiste Charraig Uí Leighin always encourages excellence and the highest standards in every aspect of school life. The Student Council affords the opportunity of student representation, that is associated with students only, and there is a strong link between the Constitution of the Council and the school's Mission Statement.

### 1.3 Rationale

This policy was drafted because;

- a) The Education Act (1998) Section 27 states that Boards of Management must encourage and give all reasonable assistance to students in the formation and running of student councils.
- b) The National Children's Strategy states that children and young people will have a voice in matters that affect their lives and be provided with opportunities to participate in decision making.
- c) Every child should have their voice heard, understood, and responded to.
- d) This will enable them to become active participants in their communities.

- e) Developing confidence, communication skills and being happier as a result of being involved with school and student council, help children develop.
- f) A student council shall promote the interests of the school and the involvement of students in the affairs of the school.

#### **1.4 Aims and Content of the Policy**

- a) Effective school councils should engender peer leadership, openness, and awareness.
- b) Students involved with the council should develop essential life skills, such as listening, diplomacy, compromise, and communication.
- c) Student councils should make a positive contribution to every aspect of a school community. They should improve academic performance, reduce bullying and vandalism, and improve teacher-pupil relations.
- d) To develop personal and social skills amongst the students; these include self-management, problem-solving, communication, self-respect, avoiding negative social influences and flexibility;
- e) The Student Council was formed in 2016.
- f) Elections are held in September of each academic year.
- g) Two students from each class are elected to the Council.
- h) Expressions of interest from those wishing to be on the council should be conveyed to the organising teacher. An election is organised once expressions of interest are received.
- i) Each candidate is afforded the opportunity to canvass for votes, including making a speech to the class prior to the election.
- j) Votes are cast at a pre-arranged time with the teacher in charge of the council, and they are counted after this. Class representatives are announced at the next assembly.

## **1.5 How the Council Functions**

- a) The Council consists of two class representatives, a boy and a girl, from each class.
- b) The Council meets at least once a month.
- c) Officers are selected after the election. It is recommended that senior cycle students fill these positions if possible. These roles include;  
  
Chairperson  
Vice-Chairperson  
Secretary
- d) The Council drafts the Mission Statement and the Constitution. Role descriptions will be given to each officer also.
- e) At least one class representative should attend each meeting. The Council reserves the right to remove a student from the Council should they miss three consecutive meetings. A new class representative will be sought in this case.
- f) Feedback on each meeting will be shared with classes at the next SPHE or Religion class.

## **1.6 Agenda Setting**

- a) Topics for the Agenda must come through class representatives at least a week in advance of any meeting so as an agenda can be prepared.

## **1.7 Meetings**

- a) Once the agenda has been set items are discussed at the monthly meeting.
- b) Chairperson takes responsibility for the running of the meeting.
- c) Minutes are recorded by the secretary and signed off at the beginning of the following meeting.

- d) Decisions are reached by a vote.
- e) The student council facilitating teacher present at each meeting can clarify certain issues.
- f) Other issues are normally brought before the principal through email from the class representative who raised the issue.

## **1.8 Responding to Issues**

- a) Issues raised by the Council are discussed at management level. A response is given prior to the next meeting, where possible.
- b) Issues relating to all staff members can be discussed at staff meetings.

## **2. Róil agus Freagrachtaí**

### **2.1 Students should**

- a) Participate fully in the student council.
- b) Nominate suitable candidates to represent their class.
- c) Discuss genuine issues in a constructive manner.
- d) Support the work of council representatives.

### **2.2 Elected class representatives should**

- a) Represent their class in a mature and constructive manner.
- b) Attend all meetings.
- c) Make a genuine effort to improve the school.
- d) Work to become positive role models for the rest of the student body.

### **2.3 Parents should**

- a) Encourage students to participate in the student council

### **2.4 Staff should**

- a) Facilitate students in participating fully in school planning and decision making.
- b) Encourage participation in the Council in all students.
- c) Allow elections to take place during the SPHE/Religion classes.
- d) Allow time for Student Council issues to be discussed during SPHE/Religion classes.

### **2.5 Year heads should**

- a) Encourage full year participation.
- b) Facilitate the work of the Council.
- c) Provide an opportunity to the Class Representatives to speak at Assembly.
- d) Regularly publicise student council events.

### **2.6 Student Council Co-Ordinator should**

- a) Organise and manage annual elections.
- b) Ensure that Class Representatives and Officers are fulfilling their duties.
- c) Ensure attendance and proper conduct at meetings.
- d) Report to management if Representatives or Officers do not take their role seriously.
- e) Ensure all necessary equipment is available.
- f) Be available to students to discuss any queries in relation to the council.
- g) To regularly review the running of the student council.

### **2.7 Principal/Deputy Principal should**

- a) To respond to any queries or issues brought before them by the student

council.

b) To encourage and promote the student council.

c) To ensure that students feel they have an important and proactive role to play in the running of the school.

### **3. Success criteria**

a) Student's participation in the work of the Student Council.

b) An active Council in every aspect of school life.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020. It will be reviewed regularly.

It is available to all school stakeholders.

Chairperson's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_