

STUDENT COUNCIL CONSTITUTION IN



Tarbert Comprehensive School

Approved by the Board of Management on the 8th of April 2014

The Board of Management has established a Student Council in fulfilment of Section 27 of the Education Act, 1998.

The Board acknowledges the valuable contribution that students can make to the effectiveness of Tarbert Comprehensive School and considers their meaningful involvement in the operation of the school to be a valuable part of their education process.

Role of the Student Council

The aim of the Student Council is to work in partnership with the Board of Management, staff and parents for the benefit of the whole school community. The Student Council seeks to build a relationship based on mutual respect and trust with all in the school and supports the staff, management and parents in their efforts to create and maintain an environment conducive to educational and personal development. As part of the process, the Student Council seeks to provide a line of communication between students, management, staff and parents.

- To create in cooperation with the Principal, staff and students, a better school life for the students of our school.
- To provide students with opportunities of leadership and to develop in all students a sense of responsibility.
- To encourage the students in the school to become more aware of how the school is run and to constructively identify and express their needs.
- To contribute to overall school development by being involved in school policy development and to be a resource in working in partnership with the management of the school.
- To act as liaison where appropriate between the students and the teaching staff and management.

Structure of the Student Council

The council will consist of one democratically elected representative of each first, second, third, Transition Year, LC1, LCA1, LC2 and LCA2 classes.

- Elections
- Elections will be democratic and students will be required to sign the ballot paper so as to prevent abuse of the electoral process
- Only the students will vote in Student Council elections.
- Each student will have only one vote.
- Students may only vote for candidates in their own class.

- Student will be invited to put their names forward for election.
- To run for the council, a student must be proposed and seconded by TWO members of their class.
- If there is more than one candidate going forward an election will be held. If there is only one candidate they are deemed elected once they have been proposed and seconded.
- Ballot papers will be produced.
- The votes will be counted by a nominated teacher/s and kept for verification.

Term of Office

Each member will serve for one academic year, from the date of election until the following October 31st.

Officers / Activities

After the council has been formed, the entire council must elect the following officers:

Chairperson

Deputy Chairperson

Secretary

Assistant Secretary

Treasurer

Public Relations Officer

- These positions will be filled by a democratic secret ballot.
- The positions of PRO and Treasurer may be held jointly.
- The chairperson will run the meeting, adhere to the agenda and direct all comments through the chair. The Chairperson will endeavour to ensure that all council members have the chance to express their views.
- The Vice Chairperson will act in the absence of the Chairperson or Secretary.
- The Secretary will record the minutes in a designated minute book. A typed copy of the minutes will be given to the Student Council Liaison Link Teacher and the school's Deputy Principal.
- The Treasurer will manage Student Council funds and report on financial affairs to a meeting.
- The PRO will publicise Student Council activities, issue press releases, maintain the Student Council notice-board and make relevant intercom announcements.
- All members will report back to their classes on matters discussed at meetings and bring issues raised by their classmates at meetings.

Meetings

The Student Council will meet weekly where possible on Fridays at 1.20 in Room D2. A Student Council Liaison Officer will usually be present at all meetings. The teacher will assist in the smooth running of the meeting but, in so far as is possible, students should run their affairs entirely on their own initiative. For any major decision to be voted on or agreed, at least two thirds of the council must be present at the meeting.

Attendance / Discipline

When a council member has advance knowledge that they cannot attend a meeting, they will inform the Council Chairperson and the liaison teacher.

The Student Council has the right to remove a member if that member fails to attend three consecutive meetings without a valid reason or is not committed to the work or the aims of the student council. The member must be given at least one week's notice of the proposal and must be allowed to address the council in their defence. Where a member is to be removed a vote must be taken and at least two thirds of the council must be present.

A code of conduct will be drawn up to ensure the council carry out their duties and that the council will not be brought into disrepute by members who seriously misbehave.

Changes to the Constitution

The constitution and Members Contract will be reviewed yearly or as appropriate. At least two thirds of the council must be present at any vote.

A vote must be held regarding any amendments to this constitution. Proposed amendments must be circulated to all members of the council at least one week in advance of the vote. At least two thirds of the council must be present for the vote.

Any amendments to the constitution must be discussed in advance with the Board of Management. All amendments to the constitution must be approved by a two-thirds majority of members present at the meeting.

Liaison Teacher

- Attends Student Council meeting.
- Acts as a link between staff members and the council.
- Has a voice but not a vote.
- Is a source of information.
- Can take notes to complement the secretary's minutes.

- To be a support to the council when needed and to be active when called upon.
- To inform all members of relevant information (training etc.).
- To put student council issues / activities on the agenda for staff meetings.
- In the event of difficulties with the Student Council and Liaison Teacher the Principal is to be contacted.

Contract of Behaviour

All members of the council once elected must sign a Members Contract once it has been reviewed and amended where appropriate.