

## St. Augustine's College Student Council Constitution.

St. Augustine's College Student Council was set up to voice the opinions and concerns of the student body.

### **Aims and Objectives**

- The aim of the student council is to express the opinions and views of the students within the school to the staff, the Board of Management and the Parents Association of the school.
- The student council will support and promote the Augustinian ethos of the school.
- To improve communications at all levels – staff, students and parents.
- To develop self-respect, self-esteem, confidence, independence, leading to a caring and responsible attitude among the students.
- To promote a healthy environment between students and teachers.
- To foster a sense of loyalty and pride in the school. It also gives students a chance to become more active in school activities and concerns.

### **Role of each Member**

- Loyalty to the group is essential.
- Generous with time and talents
- Willing to listen to other points of view
- Prepared to attend meetings
- Reasonable in making requests
- A role model in the school

### **Structure**

There are many different and important **roles** within the student council:

#### **Chairperson**

- Chairs each meeting of the council
- Acts as a representative of the student body at school functions
- Addresses the board of management or parent's council if required
- Inform incoming Committee members of their duties

#### **Deputy Chairperson**

- When the chairperson is unavailable the Deputy Chairperson takes over the duties and assists in the responsibilities of the chairperson in the organisation of council.
- Attends all meetings.

#### **Secretary**

- Records proceedings, discussions and decisions of all meetings, and should retain such records and give a copy to the staff Liaison
- Record the attendance at council meetings.
- Send and receive all correspondence of the council.
- Prepare the agenda for all meetings and inform all members of such meetings in good time.

**Assistant Secretary**

- Will take over the duties of the secretary in his/her absence.

**Treasurer**

- There is no treasurer, as the Student Council does not handle financial matters. However if a fundraising event or another occasion arose, one can be elected.

**Public Relations Officer**

- Keeps student body informed about the activities of the council.
- Keeps the council notice board clean and updated.
- Is the spokesperson on behalf of the council to the press.

**St. Augustine's College Student Council consists of:**

- 2 elected representatives of each year group from 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year.
- 3 representatives from Transition Year and 6<sup>th</sup> year.
- A liaison officer from the staff

In order to provide continuity an outgoing 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year representative will remain on the SC for the second year, if they so wish. If both outgoing members wish to remain, then the Student Council will vote to select one. This will be done at the final meeting of the outgoing council. Overall, there are 14 active members on the student council. The positions of Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Secretary shall be open solely to senior cycle students only.

The work of the council shall not effect teaching time.

Any council member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings without reasonable explanation will be deemed to have resigned from the council and will be notified to that effect by the council's secretary. The "runner up" in the previous election will fill any vacancy on the council.

**Election Process**

Election of officers for the council is held annually during the 1<sup>st</sup> term around October. The term of office of the student council is one to two years to allow for continuity described above.

Class teachers organise their specific class to select representative/s from their class. A candidate must be proposed and seconded by classmates. Each student may only nominate one person. There can be many students nominated in a year. A ballot paper is drawn up; a final list of candidates is published on the school notice board for each year and a system of proportional representation is used for voting. Secret ballot is used. Each ballot paper contains a list of the candidates and the voters writes the "numbers 1, 2, and 3"etc beside the candidate's names. The Transition Year students under the guidance of the presiding officer conduct the count in public. An official record of the election is kept in the school file.

**The main role of our student council liaison officer is:**

- To promote the interests of the student council.
- To support the elected members in their work, but not to control them.
- To assist and advise the student council.
- To liaise with the staff on developments within the student council.
- To be the link between students and teachers and management.

**STUDENT COUNCIL MEETINGS****Terms of Reference**

- No individual student, teacher or member of staff can be discussed either by name or implication.
- Members must at all times conduct themselves in a professional manner.
- Members are required to attend all meetings.
- Failure to attend more than three consecutive meetings without reasons can result in removal from the council.
- It is important that council members are seen to represent the entire student body and that a definite line of communication exists both ways.

Meetings should take place once every 2-3 weeks, during lunch hour and normally have a time limit of a half hour. The chairperson calls meetings, however in certain circumstances the chairperson or the student council liaison officer may call an extra meeting. The liaison officer must be present at all meetings of the council. Before every meeting, the Chairperson and Secretary meet with the liaison officer to write up the agenda for the upcoming meeting with the council members.

Council members are given three or more days notice for meetings.

The chairperson chairs meetings. The council discusses and agrees on an action for all of the items on the agenda made out by the chairperson and Secretary. After every meeting, the council members report back to their classes of changes and ideas, which were discussed. Five members must be present for a council meeting to be held. The whole council must agree and be present for a vote to be valid. Topics are dealt with by general discussion. Everyone's views are respected throughout meetings.

Should it be necessary to sanction a member (including removal from office) such action can only be taken at a specially convened meeting to which all parties must be given three days notice. The member in question must be given an opportunity to advocate his/her case. A two-thirds majority will be required for removal (a simple majority will suffice for sanctions/reprimands). The chairperson will have a second (casting vote) in the event of a tie.

**Guidelines for Group discussions**

1. All members have equal rights.
2. Only one person should speak at a time.
3. Members should be punctual.
4. The group should be seated in a circle.
5. Individual members should not speak for too long.
6. Members should be encouraged but not pressurised to speak.
7. No personal criticism or "put-downs" allowed.
8. Loyalty to the group is essential
9. The group must make all decisions.
10. Members must accept each other's strengths and weaknesses.
11. Confidentiality, where necessary, must be strictly observed.
12. No personal names should be used in relation to specific problems.
13. Respect the opinions of others.
14. School rules apply to the group.

**Review and Evaluation**

The constitution will be reviewed regularly. The Student Council should coordinate this process. On going review and evaluation should take cognisance of changing information, legislation, developments in the school based programme and feedback from parents/guardians, staff and students. The policy should be revised as necessary in the light of such review and evaluation and within the framework of school planning.

**Conclusion**

The success of the student council depends, not only on the enthusiasm and commitment of the elected students and the Student liaison officer, but on the goodwill, understanding and active support of the whole school community.