



St Louis High School

Student Council Policy – March 2019

Mission Statement

St. Louis is a dynamic centre of learning where we foster a happy and secure environment. We nurture creativity and embrace diversity while building on our rich traditions in an atmosphere of generosity. We share in the journey towards deeper understanding in this complex world.

National Children's Strategy, 2000

Goal 1: Children and young people will be given a voice in matters which affect them.

Section 27 of the Education Act, 1998

- Students of a post-primary school may establish a student council and, without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1) a board of a post-primary school shall encourage the establishment by students of a student council and shall facilitate and give all reasonable assistance to:
 - (a) Students who wish to establish a student council, and
 - (b) Student councils when they have been established.
- A student council shall promote the interests of the school and the involvement of students in the affairs of the school, in co-operation with the board, parents and teachers.

What is a Student Council?

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

Student Council Constitution

Role of the Student Council

- To act as role models for other students and to uphold the school rules at all times.

- To provide a forum for students to voice their opinions on relevant issues.
- To enhance communication between students, staff, management and parents.
- To help in creating a happy atmosphere and promote good teacher-student relationships.
- To organise events for the different year groups, which boost morale both within and between year groups.
- To contribute to overall school development by being involved in school policy formulation.
- To assist and be present at various school functions and on formal occasions.
- To meet with the Board of Management, Parents' Council and Staff Council.
- To submit an annual written report and financial statement to the Board of Management.

Structure of the Student Representative Council

The Student Representative Council (SRC) is comprised of 12 elected 6th Year students and includes the Head Girl and Deputy Head Girl. Ten of the SRC members liaise with the different year groups - two for each year group from 1st year to 5th year. These are known as the SRC Liaisons. Each class in the school also elects an SRC Representative (Rep.) and an SRC Vice - Representative (Vice - Rep.)

Nominations and Elections

- The SRC class representatives (reps.) are elected in late September each year. Nominations will be sought from each class by completing an official form. This will take place during an extended registration period. Nominated students must have a very good record of behaviour, attendance and punctuality. A decision will be made as to the suitability of nominees in consultation with the Class Teacher, Year Head, SRC Liaison Teacher, Deputy Principal and Principal, as appropriate, prior to the election process. The provision of nomination papers and the class elections will be organised by the SRC Liaison Teacher. The class elections are by straight vote at a class meeting i.e. the student with the most votes is the SRC Rep. and the next student with the most votes is the vice-SRC Rep. The counting of votes is supervised by the class teacher.
- Preparations for the 6th Year Student Representative Council (SRC) elections will take place in the April/May of Fifth Year. ***Applicants will be initially required to complete an application form. Whilst there are no marks or votes awarded for the completion of the application form, all forms must be completed in the spirit in which they were intended. If application forms are not completed in this spirit, then the applicants will meet with the SRC Liaison Teacher and Principal/Deputy Principal and Year Head to discuss their application. Applicants must have a very good record of behaviour, attendance and punctuality which will be checked in consultation with the Class Teacher, Year Head, SRC Liaison Teacher, Deputy Principal and Principal, as appropriate, prior to the elections. This will be organised by the SRC Liaison Teacher. The SRC elections take place in two stages:***
 - (1) The twelve positions are elected by the ***5th Yr year group and by the SRC representatives (including vice-representatives) from year groups 1st-4th Yr*** by Proportional Representation (P.R.)

- (2) Any of the twelve elected members of the SRC may then decide to go forward for the position of Head Girl. All 5th Year students, out-going SRC and staff are eligible to vote. Voting is by P.R. The student with the most votes is elected the Head Girl and the next in line is elected the Deputy Head Girl. The counting of votes is supervised by the SRC Liaison Teacher and the outgoing SRC. The results are retained by the SRC Liaison Teacher.

At all stages, voting is by secret ballot following speeches by the candidates. Candidates must receive a nomination from a student in their class or year group and this nomination must be seconded by another student before they can go forward for election.

Term of Office

- 6th Year SRC- May – May
- SRC Reps – September – May

Student Council Officers

- Head Girl is the Chairperson & 6th Year Liaison
- Deputy Head Girl is the Deputy Chairperson & 6th Year Liaison
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Ten SRC Liaisons – two for each year group
- The roles of the other officers will reflect the aims of the SRC in a particular year e.g. PR officers, Arts & Events, Sports, *Promotion of Global Citizenship* etc.

Finance

The SRC has a bank account and receives a contribution from the school each year. The SRC will consult and co-operate with the staff council and management when planning fundraising activities. The treasurer, with the help of the SRC liaison teacher, keeps an accurate account of income and expenditure and is responsible for the petty cash. No student may count money on their own. The SRC must submit a statement of accounts annually to the Board of Management as part of their annual report.

Meetings and Decision Making

The SRC liaison teacher must be present at all meetings and the Principal has an open invitation. Any other staff member can also request to attend a meeting to address the SRC. The SRC meet during lunch time once a week and may have extra meetings if necessary. The Class Reps. meet with the SRC liaison student approximately once a month. For all meetings an agenda must be prepared and minutes recorded. All ideas should be discussed so that everyone's opinion is taken on board.

Decisions are taken by consensus or by a majority vote with the chairperson having the casting vote. Issues discussed must be treated with discretion and confidentiality maintained when appropriate.

SRC Liaison Teacher

The main role of the liaison teacher is:

- To promote the interest of the SRC
- To assist and advise the SRC
- To be the link between SRC, teachers and management
- To attend SRC meetings and provide guidance and information; the teacher has a voice but not a vote
- To provide training and team development activities for the SRC
- To help raise the profile of the SRC
- To help ensure that the student council is involved in all aspects of student life
- To monitor and evaluate the development of the SRC

Profile of the SRC in St Louis High School

St Louis High School has a long-standing tradition of giving students a voice and encouraging leadership. The SRC was introduced in the school over 30 years ago and is an integral part of St Louis High School's community.

The 6th year SRC is elected in May. They are introduced to the school at the end of year assembly and badges are presented to them. The outgoing Head Girl hands over her badge to the incoming Head Girl and both students address the school.

The SRC starts the year with a day of leadership training. Following this the SRC plays an important role in welcoming the First years and other new students to the school. New students are assisted in getting organised with their lockers and timetables and members of the SRC provide a guided tour of the school and lead some fun activities to help students to get to know one another. The Head Girl and Deputy Head Girl address the Parents' Council at its AGM at the start of each new academic year. The SRC meets with the BoM, Parents' Council and Staff Council every January. The Head Girl addresses the school at the Christmas and end-of-year assemblies.

The SRC is a member of the ISSU and regularly attends training days and other events.

Two members of the SRC are allocated to each group to act as SRC Liaisons. The SRC liaisons visit their assigned year groups at lunch time at least once a week. They are also present at their weekly assemblies. SRC events are organised for the year group once a year. This ranges from the Halloween Disco for the 1st years to the 6th year Sports Day Breakfast. These are important events in the school calendar as they promote team building, confidence and a positive atmosphere within year groups. The SRC leads a cleaning competition for all 1st year classes. The SRC Liaisons strive to develop a good rapport with their year group and often are in a position to spot students who are experiencing difficulties. They pass on all information to the appropriate Year Head.

Each class in the school has an SRC Rep and a Vice-SRC Rep. They wear badges so they are easily identifiable. They play an important role in creating a positive atmosphere in their class. They meet with the 6th years once a month and they also work closely with the SRC Liaisons for their year group. Students feel they have a voice and can easily communicate issues that affect them. Their duties are as follows: *(this list is not exhaustive)*

1. To promote a good atmosphere and a happy class.
2. To encourage good behaviour between classes.
3. To promote a clean and healthy working environment and remind those on the cleaning rota to clean the board and sweep the floor.
4. To conserve energy by encouraging the class to switch off lights and close windows as appropriate.
5. To report to the office if a teacher has not arrived to take a class.
6. To collect from the office and distribute circulars, newsletters, notes and return leftovers to the office.
7. To bring students' views to the SRC meeting and to report back to the class.
8. To represent class views and requests to the Year Head and class teacher.
9. To express formal appreciation for class teachers, Year Heads, subject teachers and staff at all times and especially at Christmas and the end of the year.
10. To ensure that the class keeps in touch with ill or bereaved students.
11. To report problems e.g. bullying, theft, illness etc. to the class teacher or Year Head. In cases of emergency, report to the office for the attention of the Principal or Deputy Principal.

The noticeboard is in a prominent position at the main entrance to the school. SRC Reps have a noticeboard in each base classroom. A suggestion box is placed beside the noticeboard in the foyer. The SRC use the announcements and digital display for communication with students. The website, app and newsletter are also used as a P.R. tool.

Removing Student Council Members and Filling Vacancies

A member of the SRC can be removed from the Council by the Principal and the SRC Liaison Teacher in consultation with the Board of Management. The student concerned and the SRC should be given notice of the proposal for removal from the Council and the reason/s for such action. An opportunity will be afforded to the student to appeal the removal to the Board of Management in accordance with established appeals procedures within the school. A student may be suspended from the SRC for a period of time if warranted. An opportunity to appeal the suspension to the Board of Management will be afforded to the student.

Reasons for removal:

- A student does not actively participate in SRC business
- A student is regularly absent from meetings without a valid reason
- A student uses their position in a negative way
- A student leaves the school or chooses to leave the SRC
- A student has been disruptive and/or uncooperative with staff or students
- A student is involved in a serious breach of the school's code of behavior

If a vacancy arises either by a student leaving the school or having been removed, the next student in line from the year group elections will take her place. This system will also be used to replace the Head Girl or Deputy Head Girl. The SRC liaison teacher will have kept a record of the results from the election. However, if it is late in the school year the vacancy may remain unfilled.

Dissolution of the SRC

Normally a Student Council is dissolved when the term of office of the members expires. The Board of Management may dissolve the Student Council before the expiry date of the term of office. This will only happen in exceptional circumstances after consultation with all concerned.

Circumstances that may require the early dissolution of the Student Council include:

- Where a significant number of members of the Council have been involved in a serious breach of the school's code of behavior
- Where serious irregularities have occurred in the election of the Council
- Where the activities of the Council have endangered the welfare of staff or students of the school
- Where serious financial irregularities occurred

Changes to the Constitution

All changes must be presented to the staff, students and parents and be ratified by the Board of Management.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 27/03/2019

Next Review Date: 2022

Signed: 
Maura Mooney, Chairperson, BOM