



Student Representative Council Policy

Meán Scoil Mhuire Longford

Chairperson: Ms. Karen Clabby

Principal (A): Ms. Mairéad Lyons

Date: 16th April 2024

Introduction

Meán Scoil Mhuire seeks to enable each student to develop her potential. We work hard to create a positive and inclusive school environment where students feel their voice is appreciated. The Student Representative Council (SRC) provides an established route for the students' voice to be enabled. SRC are part of the whole school community, their role having a positive impact on staff-student relations.

This policy was drawn up in consultation with staff, students, parents and the Board of Management fulfilling the requirements of the 1998 Education Act, (Section 27).

Scope

The SRC is a representative structure through which students in a post-primary school 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 its students. This policy applies to the establishment and operation of the student council in the school and to all students, teachers, board of management and other people involved in any way with the student council.

Rationale

- Students have a valuable contribution to make to the effectiveness of the school and active participation in an appropriate manner in the operation of the school is a valuable dimension of a student's educational experience; it provides preparation for citizenship and also fosters mature behaviour.
- The SRC provides an opportunity for students to engage in a structured partnership with teachers, parents and school management in the operation of their school. Research indicates that student councils can improve academic standards and reduce dropout rates in schools. Student councils can create a sense of ownership of the school and its activities among the student population.
- Section 27 of the [Education Act, 1998](#) provides that students of a post-primary school may establish a student council and that boards of management shall encourage the establishment by students of a student council and shall facilitate and give all reasonable assistance to students who wish to establish a student council, and to student councils when they have been established.
- Section 27 also states that the rules for the establishment of a student council shall be drawn up by the board, in accordance with such guidelines as may be issued by the Minister from time to time, and such rules may provide for the election of members and the dissolution of a student council.
- *The National Children's Strategy*, published in 2000, emphasises the importance of student councils as a mechanism for giving young people a voice in schools.

- *The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12*
- *Towards 2016 (Section 30 – Children)* includes a commitment to promote “*the establishment and operation of democratic student councils in schools, in accordance with the Education Act 1998 and the National Children's Strategy*”.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

Mission Statement

Meán Scoil Mhuire is a voluntary, secondary, catholic school. It is a centre for the holistic formation of girls and young women

Aims

- (1) We respect the dignity of each person with her own unique background, talents, traditions and beliefs
- (2) We provide a pleasant disciplined atmosphere in which students can grow spiritually, morally, academically, socially, culturally.
- (3) We expose all to a rich cultural heritage and help them to acquire the knowledge and skills which enable them to understand, appreciate and respect themselves, others and their environment.
- (4) We foster positive Christian values and self-esteem so that our students leave school with a sense of self-worth and self-esteem, and are well equipped for the challenges of life.
- (5) We encourage partnership at all levels between the management, staff, pupils, parents and the local community.
- (6) Meán Scoil Mhuire has not only a highly respected academic tradition. We also develop creativity, leadership and social skills by promoting involvement in extra-curricular activities.

Goals/Objectives

The policy is intended to support the establishment and operation of an effective student council in the school. The objectives of the student council may include:

- to represent the views of the students on matters of general concern to them;
- to support the management and staff in the development of the school;
- to enhance communication between students, management, staff and parents;
- to contribute to the development of school policy
- to nurture a range of important skills among students, such as participating in meetings, negotiating, responsible leadership and collaborative problem solving.
- to initiate and encourage activities and spirit between students, staff and management in the best interest of the school.
- to uphold school rules, to appreciate their purpose and to communicate the purpose of such regulations to their respective class and year groups.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management

- To facilitate the establishment of and give all reasonable assistance to the SRC in Meán Scoil Mhuire.

Principal

- To promote a school culture which recognises the valuable input students can make through the SRC, in the development of the school.
- To appoint a student council liaison teacher(s) as a non-voting member of the student council to provide assistance to the council and to act as the link between the council and teachers and management.
- To facilitate training for student council members.
- Involve the student council in the development of school policies (eg: bullying, uniform requirements etc.) and in the planning and organising of school activities and events.
- To consult and collaborate with the SRC and respond in a meaningful way to it's concerns.

Liaison Teacher(s)

- To liaise with staff and management and provide information about the SRC to other members of the school community.
- To support the activities of the SRC and facilitate regular communication between the SRC and the school community in general. Eg. suggestion boxes, organising the school walk, healthy eating
- To consult with the SRC and respond in a meaningful way to the concerns of the council.

Student Councillors

- To follow and adhere to procedures as set out in the SRC Constitution
- To undertake a programme of work that will support students, parents, staff and management of the school.
- To represent student opinion in a fair and balanced way.
- To report regularly to the Base classroom they represent on the work of the SRC.
- To initiate activities and programmes of school and civic interest.
- To work with the staff in maintaining discipline in the school.
- To represent the SRC by presenting their work at a BOM meeting annually.
- To have an awareness of and foster links with the other student bodies locally and nationally e.g. Comhairle na nÓg, Irish Second Level Students' Union.

Links to Other School Policies

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- CEIST Charter
- Child Protection
- Code of Behaviour
- Data Protection
- Whole School Guidance Plan
- Health and Safety
- Prefect Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)
- SPHE Policy
- SRC Constitution
- Substance Use
- Wellbeing Policy

Links to curriculum delivery

- CSPE
- SPHE
- TY
- LCA
- LCVP
- RE
- Politics & Society LC
- Wellbeing Programme
- Extra Curricular Activities

Supporting Documentation

- *Student Councils: A voice for students*. Available at:
https://www.education.ie/en?Schools-Colleges/Information/Post-primary-School-Policies/student_student_council_voice.pdf
- *Second-Level Student Council Resource Pack*. Available at:
https://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/childyouthparticipation/SCI_ResourcePackPF-ENG.pdf
- *Looking at Our School 2022: A quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools*
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/b1bb3-looking-at-our-school-2022/>
- *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023 (revised 2019)*
- *Student Participation Unit, Department of Education*
- *Cineáltas- Action Plan on Bullying* <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/52aaf-cinealtas-action-plan-on-bullying/>

Reviewing and evaluating the policy

The policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis and will be reviewed and evaluated every two years. The review and evaluation will take account of the effectiveness of the SRC as

perceived by students, student council liaison teacher, other teachers, members of the board of management, principal, parents/guardians. The policy should be revised as necessary in the light of such review and evaluation and in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Minister, [*Student Councils: A Voice for Students*](#).