

Saint Louis Secondary School  
Carrickmacross

The Student Council

**Background**

In line with our mission statement and with regard to current legislation, Saint Louis Secondary School, Carrickmacross wishes to create and maintain a democratic structure that give students a real and meaningful voice in the operation of our school.

**Mission Statement**

*The aim of St. Louis Secondary School, Carrickmacross, is to foster a school community where all the members live in a friendly environment, where young people are taught to think for themselves, to be responsible for their actions, to hold in respect the world in which they live, and to recognise the importance of spiritual values in their lives.*

**Legislation**

Section 27 of the Education Act, 1998 states: *students of a post-primary school may establish a student council ....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*

*That the rules for the establishment of the student council shall be in accordance with such guidelines as may be issued from time to time by the Minister for Education and Science.*

THE MINISTER IS HEREBY ISSUING THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES FOR THIS PURPOSE:

A Board of Management shall, following consultation with teachers and parents, draw up rules for the establishment of a Student Council, having regard to the following basic principles:

- the 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
- the Council should, as far as is practicable, be representative of each class or year group in the school
- the Board of Management shall at all times retain the right to dissolve a Council or remove a Council member, in accordance with these guidelines.

A Student Council will set its own objectives, which will vary from school to school. Some general objectives could include:

- To enhance communication between students, management, staff and parents

- To promote an environment conducive to educational and personal development
- To promote friendship and respect among pupils
- To support the management and staff in the development of the school
- To represent the views of the students on matters of general concern to them

All students in each class or year group having a representative on the Student Council should be entitled to stand for election to the Council.

A Board of Management may, at its discretion, make provision for the Principal or relevant teacher to veto a nomination. Such a right should be exercised with caution and only in exceptional cases. Provision should be made that where a veto is exercised, those exercising the veto must explain clearly to students the basis for their decision, and students should be given an opportunity to respond.

### **Removal of a Member**

The Student Council may remove any member or officer of the Council for a continuing failure to attend meetings of the Student Council, or for demonstrated lack of commitment to the purposes of the Student Council, or for stated misconduct. Such a decision will be taken on the basis of a majority vote of the Council. The member or members shall be given adequate notice of the proposal, the reasons therefor, and an opportunity to present their case in advance.

The Board of Management, acting on the advice of the Principal, or on its own initiative, may remove a member from the Student Council. The rules drawn up by the Board of Management should state clearly the grounds on which the Board may remove a member or members of the Council. The Student Council should be given adequate notice of the proposal, and the reasons therefor, and both the Council and the member(s) concerned should be given an opportunity to appeal the decision to the Board of Management or patron, in accordance with any local appeals procedures which may be in place.

The Education Act provides that a Student Council shall act in co-operation with the Board of Management, parents and teachers. A Student Council should not through its activities interfere with, or detract from, the authority of school management or the teaching staff of the school. It is therefore not a function of a Student Council to discuss or comment on matters relating to the employment or professional affairs of the Principal, teachers and other staff of the school, or to become involved in any issues that fall within their professional competence.

### **The Election, Structure and Organisation of the Student Council in Saint Louis Secondary School.**

General principles:

- The election process should be as democratic and transparent as possible
- Voting should be by secret ballot

- A nominating system should be used and individual students have the right to refuse a nomination
- Every student is entitled to vote and may be nominated
- The election of a new Student Council will occur by the Halloween Mid-Term each year. The council shall operate until a new council is elected to replace it

### **Structure and Organisation**

The Student Council shall consist of 28 members elected as follows:

- In First Second and Third Year on a class basis
- In Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Year on a year basis

Each class in First, Second and Third Year shall elect one member to the council

Fourth Year students shall elect four members to the council

Fifth Year students shall elect eight members to the council

Sixth Year students shall elect four members to the council

The Fifth Year student receiving the highest vote will be known as the Head Girl. The Fifth Year student receiving the second highest vote will be known as the Deputy Head Girl. These two students shall act as Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the council respectively.

The eight Fifth Year students elected will act as the Senior Executive Council of the Student Council. This body will be responsible for convening meetings of the Student Council, will take instruction from the Student Council and will be answerable to the Student Council for the actions that it takes. The Senior Executive Council will keep the Student Council informed of its activities and will endeavour where possible to involve the members of the Student Council in its activities.

At its first meeting, the Student Council will elect additional officers from among its members to promote the efficient conduct of its business. These might include a Secretary, a Treasurer and a Public Relations Officer.

All members of the Student Council will receive Student Council/Prefect badges and will endeavour to promote the welfare of the entire student body. To this end, they may, within their structures, establish committees for various purposes. All members of the Student Council should be eligible for membership of such committees. Students who are not members of the student council may be co-opted onto these committees by a vote of the student council.

The Student Council will meet at least once a term and will put in place structures to keep the entire student body informed of its activities.

The Student Council will, through its Senior Executive Council, present an annual report of its activities to the Board of Management of the school.

The Student Council may make representations on issues that fall within its remit to the Board of Management of the school. These representations should be made through the Secretary to the Board of Management.