

## **EUREKA STUDENT COUNCIL – DRAFT CONSTITUTION**

EUREKA



The Eureka Student Council consists of:

- 2 elected representatives of each Year Group from 1<sup>st</sup> – 6th Year.
- Head Girl & Deputy Head Girl.
- A representative of staff, Mr McKee, who acts as Student Council Liaison Teacher.

### **ELECTIONS TO THE STUDENT COUNCIL**

- The process begins with the nomination procedure for Class & Deputy Class Captains for each Year Group in early September.
- All those, and only those, elected as Class & Deputy Class Captains are entitled to put their names forward for the Student Council at the end of September each year. The list of candidates is displayed and made known. Two students are elected from each Year Group. These are joined each year by the Head Girl & Deputy Head Girl who are appointed by the School following an interview process.
- Election to the Student Council is by secret ballot using the Proportional Representation system of voting; students put 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> preferences etc beside candidates' names.
- The votes are counted and kept on record by Mr McKee and Deputy Principal Ms Mullaghy.
- If a Council member leaves or is dismissed, the candidate with the next highest number of votes from the Year Group election will replace her on the Council. If there is no other candidate available, a By-election takes place to fill the vacancy.

### **LIAISON TEACHER (MR MCKEE)**

- Attends the weekly meeting.
- Acts as link between the School Management and Student Council.
- Has a voice, but not a vote.
- Is a source of information and guidance.
- The Liaison Teacher can select a substitute teacher to attend a meeting in the event he cannot attend himself.

### **MEETINGS**

- All Council members are expected to attend all meetings.
- Meetings take place after school every Friday in the Demo Room (1.15-1.45 approx.)
- There must be 7 students present to have a meeting, 8 to have a vote (majority)
- Student Council members vote to select a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary at their inaugural meeting. This can be done by secret ballot.
- An agenda is set in advance of each meeting and adhered to. The Secretary sends out the Agenda to all Council members & the Liaison Teacher at least one day in advance of the meeting.
- Attendance record is kept and minutes are taken by the Secretary.
- All Council members get an equal say and are expected to contribute to each meeting.
- All contributions to the meeting must be through the Chairperson.
- Decisions are taken on a majority vote.
- All problems and issues discussed at meetings must be treated with discretion and respect.

- A Teacher or a member of the School Management must be present for a formal meeting to take place.
- In the event of a vote and a tie, the Chairperson has a second or casting vote.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

- Attend weekly meetings.
- To be actively involved in Student Council activities.
- To set a good example to others.
- To represent the Year Group in a positive, proactive way.
- To stand as a group and support decisions made by the Student Council.
- To maintain good relations with Staff members.
- Upon election, Council members sign a pledge in which they agree to attend weekly meetings, represent their Year group, support their fellow-Council members and abide by the School rules.
- Any uncomplimentary mention of staff, management or pupil by name or implication is strictly forbidden during meetings.
- No personal or individual grievances between any pupils & a Teacher/member of staff to be openly discussed.
- No ongoing disciplinary matters involving a student or group of students to be raised or discussed.

### **REMOVAL OF STUDENT COUNCIL MEMBERS**

#### **REASONS FOR REMOVAL**

- Non-attendance at 4 consecutive meetings without a valid reason
- Regular non-involvement in Student Council activities.
- Breach of Council's Code of Conduct.
- If a student leaves the school.
- If a student is suspended from school.

### **APPEAL**

- The Council member has a right to appeal in front of the Student Council.
- The decision to remove the Council member is voted on.
- The result is decided by a majority vote and is final.

## **ROLES OF OFFICES FOR EUREKA STUDENT COUNCIL**

### **Role of Chairperson**

- Is the main Spokesperson and Officer of the Student Council
- Calls meetings
- Chairs meetings in a fair manner, ensuring that all have an equal say
- Signs any letters, notices, etc. that are issued by the Student Council
- Liaises with Mr McKee & School Management
- Ensures that the Student Council is run effectively and efficiently
- Prepares the agenda for each meeting with the Secretary
- Signs the Minutes from the previous meeting with the Secretary when they are accepted by the Student Council.

### **Advice for the Chairperson**

1. Be prepared for each meeting and try to ensure that the other members of the group have a written agenda beforehand, if possible, so that they can also be prepared. It may be useful to meet with the Secretary to agree an agenda in advance of a meeting. An agenda should always include 'Any Other Business' (AOB).
2. Start and finish each meeting on time. Meetings to start at 1.15pm and end no later than 1.45pm.
3. At the beginning of any meeting, allow group members to put items on the agenda under 'Any Other Business'. Then keep to the agenda items for discussion.
4. At the beginning of the meeting, ask the Student Council to agree the minutes of the previous meeting. Any changes should be agreed by the Council and noted on the minutes. The Chairperson should sign the approved minutes.
5. Present each item for discussion, ensuring that everyone who wishes to do so gets an opportunity to speak and that each person is listened to. This will include:
  - giving everyone a chance to speak if they want to;
  - asking people for ideas
  - if you know that someone has the answer to any question, ask them to speak;
  - encourage the quieter people to have their say;
  - ask members to propose practical solutions to problems.
6. Give direction to meetings, making sure that there is enough time to deal with each item on the agenda.
7. Try to keep the meeting focused on the agenda.
8. Call the meeting to order if necessary (e.g. if more than one person speaks at the same time or if an argument breaks out).
9. Help the process of decision-making by asking people to clarify what they are saying if it is not easily understood, by summing up what someone has said when they are finished and by stating clearly the decision that is being taken before it is noted in the minutes.
10. In some instances, it may be necessary to hold a vote (e.g. by a show of hands) on a particular issue.
11. At the end of each meeting, make sure to arrange a date/time/venue/possible agenda items for the next meeting.

## **Role of Deputy Chairperson**

- Takes over the responsibilities of the Chairperson when she is not available
- Assists the Chairperson in the organisation of the Student Council
- Accompanies the Chairperson to meetings when necessary

## **Role of Secretary**

- Prepares the agenda for each meeting with the Chairperson and in consultation with the other officers of the Council
- Circulates the agenda to all members in advance of the meeting or at the start of the meeting
- Takes Minutes at meetings and writes them up;
- Distributes and reads out minutes from previous meeting and, on acceptance, signs them with the Chairperson
- Sends out letters and notice of meetings that will be held, stating time and place
- Ensures that everyone is aware that meetings are being held.

## **Advice for the Secretary**

1. Bring any correspondence received to the attention of the Chairperson before the agenda is drawn up, e.g. perhaps some element of correspondence needs inclusion on the agenda for discussion/response.
2. If necessary, read the minutes of the previous meeting at the beginning of each meeting and make any necessary corrections before the minutes are signed by the Chairperson.
3. Give a brief account of correspondence received/sent since the last meeting.
4. Record as accurately and as fairly as possible the Minutes of each meeting.
5. Remember to record the following at each meeting:
  - Time, date and venue of each meeting
  - Attendance
  - Apologies
  - Any corrections to the minutes of the previous meeting
  - The item that is being discussed
  - Proposals that are made and seconded
  - The names of the people who proposed and seconded them
  - Any proposals that are agreed
  - The number of votes for and against
  - Other decisions that were made during the meeting without a vote being taken
  - Any action that is to be taken, together with the names of the people who are going to carry it out and when they will carry it out
  - The date, time and venue of the next meeting
6. Remember that the Secretary also has a right to participate in discussions - don't allow your role to stop you from contributing to the various matters on the Agenda.
7. It's a good idea to use the same notebook at each meeting for the taking of the minutes.
8. After you've written them up, check the minutes with the Chairperson before the next meeting.
9. Write up the minutes as soon as possible after each meeting.