

Our Lady and St. Joseph Catholic Primary School

"Shine with love, kindness and respect"



School Council Policy 2014/15

Introduction

The *school council* is comprised of 2 members from each class in Year 2, 3 4 and 5. There 4 members from Year 6. Elections are held in September at the start of every new academic year. It meets 2 or 3 times every half-term.

The school council is linked with *class councils*. Class councils involve the whole class in discussing issues and are run and chaired by elected class councillors. 2 members of each class from Year 2 – 6 are elected by their class as class councillors for one term. Meetings are held every fortnight.

The emphasis of both school and class councils is put on pupils taking responsibility for their own behaviour and their environment.

The school council system is an integral part of our PSHE and Citizenship programme. Through it children learn to make positive contributions to the whole school community, how to contribute to society as a whole and what it means to be an active citizen. They learn to listen to others and recognise themselves and others as worthwhile individuals with a right to be heard. Children learn self-confidence, social skills and morally responsible behaviour towards each other and adults working in the school.

The school uses School Councils UK and Kaizen to train both children and staff.

Aims – Build pupil ownership of the school, encourage pupil voice, encourage children to take ownership for their own behaviour, build respect for self and others and help to create a safe, happy and productive learning environment.

Elections

Elections need to be fair and teachers have a responsibility to trust their pupils in choosing good school councillors. Children must **freely volunteer** for a position and, time-permitting, could be given the opportunity to make a speech prior to the ballot. Children should be encouraged to base their votes on whom they think would make a good school councillor and not just choose their friends. A secret paper ballot should be conducted and the votes should be counted by an adult. Only the winners should be announced to the class. This ensures that children do not get zero votes in front of the class.

Responsibilities

The school expects class and school councillors to be role models for other students, and councillors need to act appropriately. In extreme circumstances, if class and school councillors do not meet the schools expectations they may be disqualified from acting as councillors.

Badges

School councillors are given badges at the start of their school council session. It is their responsibility to look after the badges and to return them at the end of the session in exchange for a certificate.

Meetings

Class teachers must make every effort to ensure that children are released from class to attend school council meetings and that time is set aside for class council meetings. As an important part of PSHCE and Citizenship education, teaching staff should recognise the importance of class and school council to maintaining a healthy and supportive school environment.

Class councils

All classes from **Year 2** to **Year 6** should set up class councils.

Aims - Class councils raise, discuss and find solutions to issues affecting the day-to-day running of the class, with a clear emphasis on children taking responsibility for anti-social and disruptive behaviour and bullying. Class councils could be used to resolve conflicts, air concerns and bring to light problems that affect the whole class or individual pupils.

Method - Children may hold back concerns if they feel that their concerns are not important. Class councils should focus on hearing the voice of as many pupils as possible. A circle-time format may be appropriate. At the start of the meeting, children could sit in a circle and all children given the chance to say what their concerns are. Obviously children have the right to 'pass' if they have no current concerns or are not comfortable talking about them. The group could then choose which concerns to concentrate on and any unresolved concerns could be added to the agenda for the next meeting. The teacher should stand back as much as possible but could encourage children to highlight the most important concerns. It is important that the class feels as if it has ownership over the process and the format for meetings should be altered if it is thought necessary.

Suggestion Box – The suggestion box should be used as an additional way of airing concerns rather than as an alternative. Some children may prefer to use the box whilst others might only think of a concern in the meeting. Teachers and class council representatives should remind children about how to use the suggestion box.

Time commitments - Class council time will need to be timetabled for at least 20 minutes once a fortnight when convenient for the class. Elections need to be held every term so should be as quick and simple as possible.

Elected members – The class should elect a **class council chairperson** and a **secretary** every term. Children should only be permitted to volunteer once in the academic year.

Pupil responsibilities – The chairperson should chair and direct the meeting. The secretary should take minutes of the meeting, taking care to note all the concerns that were raised, those which were discussed and any action that is planned.

Link adult - Before the first class meeting of each term the link adult should meet with all class council councillors to teach them how to chair and run a meeting and take minutes. The adult should also regularly check class minutes to make sure that meetings are running smoothly.

Relationship to school council – Any concerns that are raised in class council meetings *which cannot be addressed at the class level* can be added to the agenda for the next whole school council meeting on the **school council notice board**. It is the responsibility of the school councillors to make sure this is done.

School Council

Aims – Raise any concerns that cannot be addressed by the class councils.

Method – School council meetings should be scheduled in advance and should follow a set agenda which is displayed on the school council notice board.

Time commitments – The school council should meet at least twice in a half-term or three times if there is already enough on the agenda for the second meeting. Each meeting should be planned to be approximately 30 minutes to an hour long and should be attended by a member of the SMT as well as the link adult. Other adults should also be invited to attend where appropriate.

Elected members – Each class must elect the following: **Year 6 = 4 members, Year 5 = 2 members, Year 4 = 2 members, Year 3 = 2 members, Year 2 = 2 members**. Each school council session should last for 1 academic year after which classes should elect new school council members. Children should not be allowed to be school council representatives for two consecutive sessions.

Pupil responsibilities - The school council should elect a **chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, vice-secretary, treasurer, assistant treasurer** and **infant representative**. The *chairperson* should lead and direct the meeting and prepare and distribute the agenda. The *secretary* should take detailed minutes of the meeting including any actions passed, distribute them to each class and place a copy in the school council file and on the school council notice board. The *treasurer* and *assistant treasurer* are responsible for dealing with school

council funds and fundraising. The *infant representatives* should report back to Year 1, Reception and Nursery on any business which affects those classes. All school council members should be responsible for feeding back to their own class councils.

Link adult – The link adult should be present at all school council meetings and may need to help the chairperson prepare the agenda. The link adult will also be responsible for inducting new school council members.

Appendix 1

Class Council Meeting Format (20 minutes)

1. Welcome
2. School council feedback
3. Collect ideas for the agenda from the class and write up on the board
4. Ask your teacher if they have any thing they would like to add
5. Add ideas from the suggestion box
6. Choose three problems for discussion. Try to get through all the points but don't rush.
 - *What is the problem?*
 - *How can we make it better?*
 - *Who needs to do what?*
7. Are there any problems that need to be added to the School Council agenda?
8. Agree on who needs to do what (Action points)
9. Close the meeting and thank your teacher.

Timing

It is important that the meetings keep to a strict time and do not over run.
REMEMBER you can always carry on the discussion in the next meeting.

1 to 5 should take about 5 minutes.

6 to 9 should take about 15 minutes.

You could ask your teacher to time the meeting for you.

Appendix 2

School Council Meeting Format (30 minutes)

1. Welcome visitors
2. Briefly describe what the agenda for the meeting will be today
3. Listen to the minutes of the last meeting (3-5 minutes)
 - *Keep discussion of the minutes very simple. Remember, you still have to go on to the main agenda!*
 - *What were the main action points?*
 - *Did everyone do their jobs?*
 - *Were there any problems?*
4. Class council feedback (5 minutes)
 - *What issues have been discussed in class council?*
 - *Does anything need to be added to the agenda?*
5. Main agenda (15 minutes)
 - *Go through the points on the agenda, introduce the topic and invite discussion.*
 - *Make sure you have enough time for each point on the agenda*
 - *Make sure that the discussion does not 'wander off track'*
 - *What needs to be discussed?*
 - *What do we need to decide?*
 - *Are there any action points?*
 - *Who needs to do what?*
6. Any other business (1 -2 minutes)
 - *Did any other concerns come out of the meeting?*
7. Agenda for the next meeting (1-2 minutes)
 - *What needs to be added to agenda for the next meeting?*
 - *Are there any problems that weren't discussed that needed to be added?*

