



HAVING YOUR SAY



>> VOTE FOR ME!

A key and integral part of setting up a school council is ensuring the election of members is fair, open and supportive to all pupils.

Why

A school council is a forum through which **all** pupils can have their say. This means that every pupil has the right to take part in electing their representatives. To encourage people to vote fairly, it is important to make sure that the pupils understand why they are voting and what qualities are required in an effective representative.

The link teacher in consultation with pupils, senior staff and / or the Board of Governors will draw up rules to define the election procedures, number of students on the council, and how long they can sit on the council for. Don't forget, procedures can be changed and refined for future elections.

Some small schools may like to have representatives from each class on the council. For larger schools, there may be a representative from each year sitting on the council.

How

Information should be circulated and all pupils should know well in advance that **nominations** are being sought. Those who want to be elected to the school council should submit written nomination forms before the election and have at least two other pupils to endorse them. Nomination forms should be freely available in the school. Nominations should be inclusive reflecting for example gender, religion, special needs and ethnic background of the school population.

Following nominations the next stage is the **election**.

There are many ways to elect pupils to the school council but the following rules should apply in any election:

- Only pupils can be elected to the school council
- The election procedure is agreed in advance, e.g. first past the post or proportional representation
- Only pupils can vote in the election
- One pupil, one vote – everyone has a vote
- Pupils know where and when voting will take place
- Voting is a personal choice and should be held by secret ballot
- Pupils count the votes, supervised by a teacher or parent (some schools have asked officials from, for example, the electoral office to carry this out)
- The school council represents all pupils in the school

Checklist

Have you:	Tick
1. Advertised the election and identified the method of selecting candidates	[]
2. Received candidates' applications	[]
3. Ensured each class/year has been able to nominate candidates	[]
4. Provided candidates with support for developing manifestoes, photocopying	[]
5. Provided time for candidates to share their manifesto	[]
6. Organised a voting procedure	[]



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- 7. Ensured independence of voting and counting procedures []
- 8. Introduced elected members to staff and pupils []

For further information and support on how to organise an election, the different types of elections and for sample ballot papers and nomination forms you may wish to visit the following websites:

School Councils UK:
www.schoolcouncils.org

School Council of Ireland Online:
www.studentcouncil.ie

School Councils Wales:
www.schoolcouncilswales.org.uk

Dept. of Education, New South Wales:
www.schools.nsw.edu.au

Dept. of Education, State of Victoria:
www.education.vic.gov.au

Ministry of Education, Ontario:
www.edu.gov.on.ca

Alberta School Council Resource Manual:
www.ahsca.ab.ca