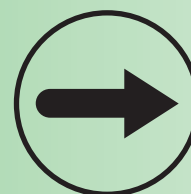


Guidance for Governing Bodies on the Establishment and Operation of School Councils

National Assembly for Wales Circular No: 42/2006
Date of Issue: 23 October 2006

Guidance
Circular



School
Governance &
Management



- Title of document:** Guidance for Governing Bodies on the Establishment and Operation of School Councils.
- Audience:** Governing Bodies and headteachers of all maintained schools in Wales; Directors of Education of local education authorities in Wales; teacher and other unions; Funky Dragon; Children's Commissioner; relevant national and local education organisations in Wales; and relevant national and local children and young people's organisations and partnerships.
- Overview:** This document explains for governing bodies, headteachers and other school staff the regulatory requirements for school councils; provides guidance on the establishment and operation of school councils; and the expectations for schools where there is no statutory requirement for a school council.
- Action required:** Governing bodies and headteachers in maintained schools to have regard to the guidance.
- Further information:** Enquiries about this document should be directed to:
Tel: 029 2082 6002
Fax: 029 2082 5823
e-mail: YALO.Mailbox@wales.gsi.gov.uk
- Additional copies:** Additional copies of the guidance document can be obtained from:
Nick Johnson
Youth and Adult Learning Opportunities Division
Tel: 029 2080 1034
e-mail: YALO.Mailbox@wales.gsi.gov.uk
or in writing to the address below
- Postal address:** Policy, Inclusion and Participation Branch
Youth and Adult Learning Opportunities Division
Welsh Assembly Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ
- Related documents:** Pupil Involvement in Decisions That Affect Them And Establishment Of School Councils in Primary, Secondary and Special Schools Consultation Document issued by the Welsh Assembly Government October 2003.

Guidance for Governing Bodies on the Establishment and Operation of School Councils

Contents

Summary

	Paragraph
Section 1: Introduction	
Taking Account of Children's and Young People's Opinions	1.1 - 1.2
Benefits of School Councils	1.3 - 1.5
The Legal Context	1.6 - 1.7
Section 2: Requirements of the Regulations	2.1
Establishment of School Council	2.2 - 2.4
Membership of School Councils and Election of Members	2.5 - 2.10
Management of School Council Business	2.11 - 2.17
Matters To Be Considered by School Councils	2.18
Matters Not To Be Considered by School Councils	2.19
Engagement with Pupils, the Headteacher, and the Governing Body	2.20 - 2.24
Resources for School Councils	2.25
Special Schools	2.26
Associate Pupil Governors and School Council Links with the Governing Body	2.27 - 2.35
Section 3: Further Developments	
Welsh Assembly Government School Councils' Website	
Annex 1: Web Links	

Guidance for Governing Bodies on the Establishment and Operation of School Councils

Summary

The School Councils (Wales) Regulations 2005 came into effect on 31 December 2005¹. The regulations require maintained primary (excluding nursery and infant schools), secondary, and special schools in Wales to establish a school council from registered pupils and to hold the first meeting of that council by **1 November 2006**². Section 176 of the Education Act 2002 requires governing bodies of maintained schools to have regard to this guidance in complying with the regulations.

Specifically, this guidance provides information about:

- the purpose of school councils;
- the legislative requirements upon governing bodies and headteachers of maintained schools;
- suggestions for establishing and running school councils effectively;
- arrangements for associate pupil governors for secondary schools; and
- the expectations for schools where there is no statutory requirement to establish a school council.

In addition to this statutory guidance, the Welsh Assembly Government has set up a school councils' website³ which hosts training materials, practice guidance and sample case studies to provide additional on-going support to schools and pupils.

¹ A web link to the regulations is provided in Annex 1.

² 1 November 2006 is not a requirement for special schools.

³ Further information is provided in section 3.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Taking Account of Children's and Young People's Opinions

1.1 The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to implementation of the United Nations' convention on the rights of the child⁴.

Article 12.1 of the convention states that signatories:

"shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child"

1.2 It is Welsh Assembly Government policy that the opinions of children and young people should be heard by decision makers in all public services. Accordingly, the Welsh Assembly Government has stimulated and supported a range of interlocking initiatives including the Office of a Children's Commissioner. Local authorities across Wales have established Children's Partnerships, Young People's Partnerships, and the Children and Young People's Framework Partnerships. Funky Dragon and youth fora across Wales have been established with the aim of encouraging the participation of children and young people in policy making and in the taking of decisions that affect them. The statutory requirement for school councils is a further step in ensuring that the delivery of services for children and young people in schools takes proper account of their needs and wishes by providing a means to listen and act upon what they say. School councils are also a way of providing pupils with the opportunity to develop participation skills, so that they become active citizens in the school community and beyond.

Benefits of School Councils

1.3 The Welsh Assembly Government made the establishment of school councils a priority in 'The Learning Country'. Pupils are the most important stakeholders in schools. Their school career has a great impact on their future. The Welsh Assembly Government therefore requires schools to provide pupils with the appropriate means to make their opinions known and to contribute to decision making through a school council. Many schools have already established school councils voluntarily. The Welsh Assembly Government welcomes that commitment but wants to go further. The regulations and this guidance build on what is already in place.

1.4 Effective school councils can:

- make schools more inclusive and better places by bringing together pupils, staff, the senior management team, and the governing body;
- provide a formalised channel of communication between pupils, the senior management team and the governing body;

⁴ The Learning Country II: Delivering the Promise page 12.

- provide a sounding board for the senior management team and governing body;
- offer an organised and representative way for pupils to express their opinions;
- help pupils develop and practise life skills such as communication and improve their understanding of the perspectives and opinions of others;
- give pupils opportunities to take responsibility and to share ownership of problems and their resolution; and
- help improve mutual understanding between pupils, staff, senior management and governors.

1.5 School councils demonstrate a commitment to engage with pupils and to value their contribution. By doing so they can help:

- improve behaviour and attendance;
- improve standards of achievement as pupils and staff work together in a participatory process;
- enhance some aspects of the curriculum such as PSE;
- provide evidence of 'taking account of the views of pupils' in line with Estyn inspection requirements; and
- facilitate changes in the school environment and provision, and in relationships with the local community.

The Legal Context

1.6 The School Councils (Wales) Regulations 2005 (National Assembly for Wales Statutory Instrument 2005 No. 3200 (W.236)) were made under sections 19(2), 19(3), 20(2), 21(3), 210(7) and 214(1) of the Education Act 2002 and came into force on 31 December 2005. **Annex 1** of this circular provides web-links to the Act, the Statutory Instrument, and to the Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005 which were amended by the School Councils Regulations, in order to provide for associate pupil governors.

1.7 This guidance is addressed to governing bodies and is issued under section 176 and 19(7) of the Education Act 2002. Section 176 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local education authorities and governing bodies of maintained schools to have regard to guidance issued by the Assembly about consultation with pupils in connection with the taking of decisions that affect them. Section 19(7) of the 2002 Act provides that a local education authority or the governing body of a maintained school shall have regard to any guidance given by the Assembly in discharging any function conferred by regulations under that

section. Accordingly governing bodies, and local education authorities in providing advice to governing bodies, must have regard to this guidance. Section 21(2) of the Education Act 2002 requires a governing body to conduct a school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement. Section 21(3) permits the National Assembly to make regulations that may include, amongst other things, setting terms of reference for governing bodies and conferring functions on them and headteachers.

SECTION 2: REQUIREMENTS OF THE REGULATIONS

2.1 This section describes the regulations individually. Attention is drawn to mandatory requirements. Suggestions are included in boxes to illustrate points and to provide ideas. Further information will be made available on the Welsh Assembly Government's school councils' web site. Not all of the regulations apply to community special schools or foundation special schools; the differences are explained in paragraph 2.28.

Establishment of School Councils

2.2 The governing body of every maintained school in Wales, except maintained nursery and infant schools, is **required** to establish a school council. A governing body and headteacher **may** agree to establish a school council jointly with the governing body and headteacher of another school.

2.3 Although the regulations do not require maintained nursery or infant schools to establish school councils, the Assembly Government encourages such schools to set up less formal, but nonetheless recognised and effective, ways of seeking the views of pupils and to give them a voice in the running of their school, such as 'circle time' etc.

Schools on shared sites, or nearby, might have shared interests which a joint school council could serve well. In these situations there might already be close working between the headteachers and governing bodies and a joint council would supplement and extend that to pupils. A joint council would promote dialogue and understanding, raise shared interests, and might also help solve shared problems. Establishing a joint council does not preclude a school from having its own school council as well.

2.4 The headteacher **must** ensure that the school council meets at least six times during the school year. Meetings should be held at regular intervals as far as is practicable. The first meeting of the council as established under the regulations **must** take place by 1 November 2006⁵.

It is suggested that a school council meets every half term, unless there are good reasons why that is not practicable. A regular programme will maintain momentum and pupils' interest. Half-termly meetings will probably be frequent enough to deal with current business and prospective matters. School councils may choose to meet more frequently or hold additional meetings as business demands.

⁵ 1 November is not a requirement for special schools.

Membership of School Councils and Election of Members

2.5 School council members **must** consist solely of pupils registered at the school. Arrangements **must** be put in place for at least one registered pupil from Year 3 and each year group above to be elected as members of the school council.

2.6 The governing body and headteacher **must** make arrangements for registered pupils to be elected to the school council by secret ballot. Members **must not** be chosen by school staff, the headteacher, or the governing body⁶. All registered pupils are entitled to vote for a candidate/s in their year group.

2.7 The regulations do not dictate the number of members that a school council should have. A balance should be struck between a workable number and achieving balanced representation of pupils. For instance, school councils should aim to have a gender balance and to reflect the ethnic make-up of the school and the presence of any disabled pupils. At its most basic level this might be achieved by pupils electing one girl and one boy from each year group. In a primary school, this would produce a council with 8 pupil members, and in a secondary school with 14 pupil members. Schools should encourage pupils of both genders, pupils from ethnic backgrounds and pupils with disabilities to stand for election as council members. In very small primary schools, with perhaps 30 pupils or less, it might be more practical for all registered pupils to be members of the school council - an approach which would fulfil the requirements for elections.

2.8 The governing body and headteacher of a maintained school which has a SEN resource base **must** make arrangements for the appointment to the school council of at least one registered pupil from that SEN resource base. This is required irrespective of the size of a school's SEN resource base, or of the fact that any pupil from the SEN resource base has been elected as his/her year group member of the school council. Any SEN resource base representative on the school council is additional to the year group representatives on the school council. Arrangements for appointing a pupil representative from a SEN resource base need to be sensitive to avoid stigmatisation while encouraging representation.

2.9 It is up to schools to determine how candidates should be nominated. Pupils might nominate themselves or be put forward by other pupils. Candidates should not be chosen or recommended by the staff, headteacher or governing body.

2.10 Elections may be held at any time of year. There is no regulation about how frequently they should be called, or the length of members' term of office. It is suggested, however, that an annual election would strike a balance between members having sufficient time to get to grips with their role and an opportunity to refresh the make-up of the council. Current members may stand for re-election but it is important to avoid stasis and provide opportunity for as many pupils as possible to serve on school

⁶ Different arrangements apply for registered pupils in special schools.

councils. There may be need for a handover after elections. This might take the form of a joint meeting of the old and new council, or an invitation to a small number of former members to attend meetings of the new council for a period of time as advisers, or pupils with an interest in becoming members being co-opted as shadow members.

2.11 Additional guidance on setting up a school council can be found under the “How?” button on the adult section of the Welsh Assembly Government school councils’ website.

Some schools hold elections that mimic central and local government elections. Nominations for candidates are collected, with separate lists for girls and boys. A ballot is held on an election day, with voting slips, ballot boxes, voting booths, and persons nominated as vote counters and a returning officer. Doing this can generate excitement and interest and also makes clear that the election is a fair process. It also raises awareness of democracy and citizenship.

Secondary schools which hold elections at the start of the school year could consider balloting year 7 pupils at a later date, perhaps towards the end of the first term, so that they have an opportunity to get to know their year group.

Management of School Council Business

2.12 The regulations **require** that all school council meetings are supervised by at least one member of school staff. Otherwise the regulations do not stipulate how the school council should operate; it is for each school council to determine its own arrangements. It is essential that school council business is managed smoothly for the council to be effective and valued by pupils, staff and the governing body.

2.13 It is recommended that a school council has a constitution or terms of reference setting out how the school council will work. This document might set out:

- the aims of the council;
- the structure of the council;
- ground rules for managing school council discussions and note-taking of meetings;
- choosing, if desired, a chairperson/secretary/treasurer from its membership and determining their responsibilities;
- how the school council will communicate with headteacher, governing body, and pupils;
- arrangements for the election of school council members, their term of office, the grounds for premature termination of membership, and arrangements for replacing members who stand down early;

- arrangements for establishing sub-committees or working parties to consider specific matters; and
- arrangements for deciding on the use of any monies or resources raised by the school council or in its control.

All school council members should have a copy of the constitution (or terms of reference) and it should be made readily available to all registered pupils. The constitution (or terms of reference) should be reviewed on a regular basis. Activities to help school councils to draw up a constitution (terms of reference) can be found on the school councils' website.

2.14 School councils may meet any number of times in excess of the regulatory requirement for a minimum of six meetings during the school year⁷. The length of meetings should be determined by the volume and nature of business but it is important that meetings are not too long or interest and attention will wane. It is expected that meetings will be held during the normal school day. Lunchtime, break times or outside of school hours are not recommended as suitable times for meetings of the school council.

2.15 Agenda setting and management of business are crucial to a school council's success. It is important that agendas comprise items in which pupils have a real interest and can make a meaningful contribution. However the issues to be discussed should be agreed by the school council itself, taking account of issues that pupils at the school wish the council to consider. Time should be allocated to school council members to enable them to fully consult with the wider pupil population and to feed back the results of school council deliberations.

2.16 Arrangements need to be put in place for note-taking. This might be shared between members of the council or assigned to one member, with support from school staff. School administrative staff might provide help where there is capacity for them to do so.

2.17 The council needs to decide on the appointment of council officers e.g. chair, deputy chair, treasurer, secretary etc at an early meeting and on the method of appointment. This could be by secret ballot by council members following nomination or by a show of hands at a meeting. The council will also need to decide on the term of appointment - this could be for the full year or shorter.

2.18 Especially in primary schools, the pupil chair is likely to need support from school staff in their role ie introducing agenda items, clarifying matters, checking understanding, ensuring all council members have the opportunity to speak and summarising discussion and decisions. Less support may be needed in secondary schools, but it may be helpful for the pupil chair to be given the opportunity to run through matters with a member of staff before meetings.

⁷ This is not a requirement for special schools.

2.19 Training activities for school council members can be found under the How? button on the adult section of the school councils' website.

It is suggested that the constitution (terms of reference) is drawn up by school council members with guidance from the school council link teacher, headteacher and/or governing body as required.

More support may be needed in primary schools because the pupils are less experienced and mature. The constitution (terms of reference) should not be a static document. It should be reviewed periodically, perhaps in conjunction with the election of a new council.

There has to be adult supervision of school council meetings by at least one member of the school staff. It is recommended that this is by a member of the senior management team. The attendance of such a person is both symbolic (demonstrating that the headteacher and governing body value the school council) and also practical because such a person will be well placed to communicate effectively between the school council, headteacher and governing body. Other adults e.g. youth workers etc could attend school council meetings for the discussion of specific matters.

School council meetings in primary schools should probably last for no more than an hour. In secondary schools up to an hour and a half might be realistic. Timings of meetings, and the day of the week on which they are held, should be varied to avoid members missing the same lessons throughout the school year.

Matters To Be Considered by School Councils

2.20 The regulations do not stipulate what school councils should consider. Issues which might be of interest however include:

- improvements to the school environment such as toilets, litter, school décor; the playground, recycling;
- developing resources and facilities such as the school library, sports, music or drama facilities;
- bullying, mentoring, pupil welfare, pastoral support arrangements;
- the transition from primary to secondary school and to tertiary or further or higher education;
- healthy eating and healthy recreation;
- improvements to learning, additions or changes to the timetable or to the curriculum such as the provision of new subject or different sports;
- involvement in school staff appointments;
- lunchtime and after school activities;

- fundraising/use of any allocated budget;
- school meals;
- school uniform;
- pupil attendance;
- school transport/safe routes to school;
- code of conduct for teacher-pupil relations;
- decisions regarding the running of the school (school policies, code of conduct, ethos etc);
- links with the local community/local community projects e.g. environmental projects; and
- representations to the local authority on issues of concern to pupils e.g. transport.

In order to deal with issues effectively, school councils could establish sub-committees or working parties. They should also ensure that there is co-ordination and effective communication with any other groups or committees in the school such as a healthy schools committee or eco-committee.

Matters Not To Be Considered by School Councils

2.21 The regulations do not preclude a school council from discussing any topic. Nevertheless it is recommended that school councils should not consider personal issues relating to individual pupils, staff or others.

Engagement with Pupils, the Headteacher, and the Governing Body

2.22 A school council is a forum for pupils to discuss matters relating to their school, their education, or any other matters which they deem of concern or interest and to have a voice in the running of the school and to participate in decisions that affect them. The school council provides a representative and inclusive means by which issues can be brought to the attention of the headteacher and the governing body. The regulations **require** the headteacher and governing body to consider any matter communicated to them by the school council and to provide a response.

2.23 Headteachers and governing bodies may use their discretion in deciding how to reply to communications from the school council, taking into account how the matter is raised (be it verbally or in writing) and its nature. However it is expected that the headteacher and governing body will reply to all written communications in writing. It is important that reasons are given for decisions and that answers are timely and are not dismissive or patronising. Any matters communicated to the governing

body should receive a reply from the governing body directly and not a secondhand reply communicated by the headteacher. Responses to all communications should be prompt.

2.24 The school council also provides a means for the headteacher and the governing body to obtain representative opinion from pupils. The headteacher and governing body should give thought to what matters they would like to obtain the council's opinion. The matters should be of genuine interest to pupils and consultation should be timely and meaningful not 'rubber stamping'.

2.25 The success of a school council will depend on how well it engages with the wider pupil population and captures their ideas, opinions and concerns. Pupils at the school will need to have regular opportunities to think about and discuss what they would like the school council to consider and to have effective means to communicate this to the school council. This process should provide opportunities for a regular flow of ideas and suggestions to be considered by the school council and the input should be a crucial part of the make-up of school council agendas. Feedback from the council to pupils is very important if interest and enthusiasm is to be generated and sustained. Adequate time should therefore also be given for feedback, so that all pupils are aware of the outcomes of matters considered by the school council.

2.26 It is important that pupils know who their school council members are. Class based discussion, attended or led by a school council member/s will help. It is also suggested that school councils members could have badges and the names and pictures of the council members be placed prominently where pupils can see them.

There are many ways that the school council can engage with pupils, suggestions are listed below. A mix of approaches could be used taking account of the needs of all pupils:

- allotted time during form registration period, or other gatherings, for pupils to consider in their classes or year groups what matters they would like the council to consider;
- visits by school council members to classes or year groups;
- suggestion boxes placed around the school;
- e-mail box and/or web page;
- questionnaires to pupils or groups of pupils;
- a regular newsletter to pupils with a reply/comments form to return;
- school council notice board.

Resources for School Councils

2.27 The governing body and headteacher may provide the school council with resources. Doing so helps give the school council status as well as providing a means to facilitate its work. Resources can be whatever the governing body and headteacher deem is fit and so might be physical, financial, or staff support for secretarial work. It is recommended that ground rules for the control and use of resources are made clear in the school council's constitution or terms of reference (see para 2.12). In line with the regulations, the governing body and headteacher must consider any request from the school council for resources and provide a response.

Where accommodation permits, it is suggested that the school council is given a dedicated room or office. This physical presence will raise the council's profile in pupils' eyes. It could also be staffed at set times by school councillors so that pupils could drop in to make suggestions or ask questions.

The school council could make use of the school website, with a dedicated page that might provide information, give feedback and provide a means of pupils raising issues they want the school council to consider.

In some schools, the school council has undertaken fund raising and has then decided how that money should be spent. This gives pupils the means to do things which they think important and empowers them. There have also been collaborative fund-raising efforts with PTAs. Governing bodies might also decide to provide funding for the school council when setting the school budget.

School councils will generate some administrative work. Initially, at least, school councils will need support from experienced staff to undertake this successfully. Over time, older pupils might take on part or substantial elements of this work.

Special Schools

2.28 Different arrangements apply for maintained community special schools and foundation special schools in recognition of the practicalities of establishing and maintaining a representative school council. Regulations 3(2)(a), 4(2), 6 and 7 do not apply to community special schools or foundation special schools⁸. This means:

- There is no requirement upon the headteachers of such schools to ensure that the school council meets six times a year, or that the first meeting must be held by 1 November 2006. Headteachers may hold meetings as they see fit, with the date of the first meeting at a time of their choice.

⁸ Different arrangements apply for registered pupils in special schools. Regulations 3(2)(a) numbers of meetings and date of first meeting; 4(2) year group representation; 6 election by secret ballot; and 7 associate pupil governors, are not a requirement for special schools.

- The governing body and headteacher are not required to make arrangements for the election of at least one pupil to the school council from each year group.
- The governing body and headteacher are not required to make arrangements for elections to be by secret ballot. The governing body and headteacher may choose or recommend pupils for membership but they are encouraged in doing so to reflect the make-up of the school population in terms of gender, ethnicity and disability and to include a cross-section of ages.
- There is no requirement on the headteacher to ensure that the school council has the opportunity to nominate up to two pupils from years 11 to 13 (inclusive) from its membership to be associate pupil governors. Headteachers of community special schools and foundation special schools with these year groups may choose to consider such an arrangement. But prior agreement of the acceptance by the governing body of the nominated pupils would need to be reached as the regulation requiring governing bodies to accept associate pupil governors does not apply to maintained community special schools and foundation special schools.

Associate Pupil Governors and School Council Links with the Governing Body

2.29 The headteacher must give the school council the opportunity to nominate one or two of its members, from years 11, 12 or 13, to be associate pupil governors. The governing body **must** accept these nominated pupils and appoint them as associate governor/s to the governing body unless there are reasons to disqualify them under Schedule 5 of the Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005.

2.30 The purpose of associate pupil governors is to provide the voice of the school council at governing body meetings and in turn to communicate matters from the governing body to the school council. They have a link role to bring pupils and the governing body together. The governing body must consider any matter communicated by the school council and the governing body must provide a response. Where the communication from the school council is in writing the governing body is expected to reply in writing.

2.31 Associate pupil governors are well placed to contribute to governing body consideration of matters such as:

- the formulation and review of policies that affect pupils such as school uniform, anti-bullying policies, sex education, pupil-teacher relations, behaviour and attendance;
- the development of whole school initiatives and change such as programmes for global citizenship, healthy schools and eco-schools;
- the development and provision of school facilities;

- formulation and review of the school development plan;
- input to any post-inspection plan;
- review of the curriculum and how to improve teaching and learning; and
- links with the local community and local projects.

2.32 The creation of associate pupil governors has required the consequential amendment of the Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005⁹. A number of requirements apply to the tenure of associate pupil governors:

- associate pupil governors are in addition to other members of the governing body;
- associate pupil governors do not count towards the quorum of governing body or governing body committee meetings;
- associate pupil governors are not permitted to be a clerk to the governing body or a governing body committee;
- associate pupil governors may not vote at governing body meetings;
- associate pupil governors may hold office for one year after which they may be re-appointed if they are still school council members; and
- associate pupil governors may be removed by the governing body in the same way that appointed parent governors and partnership governors can be removed from the governing body.

2.33 Associate pupil governors may be members of non-statutory governing body committees and may vote at those committees if the governing body grants them voting rights. Statutory governing body committees are: the staff disciplinary/dismissal committee and disciplinary/dismissal appeal committee, the pupil discipline and exclusions committee, and the admissions committee. Associate pupil governors may not be members of the statutory committees.

2.34 It may not be appropriate for associate pupil governors to be party to information or discussion about certain sensitive matters. For this reason, the governing body may exclude associate pupil governors from any discussion which is about:

- staffing matters such as pay, discipline, performance management, grievance and dismissal;
- admissions;
- individual pupil discipline;

⁹ A web link is provided at [Annex 1](#).

- election, appointment and removal of governors;
- the budget and financial commitments of the governing body; and
- in the case of a voluntary aided school, the Trust Deed.

2.35 The governing body also has discretion to exclude associate pupil governors from any discussion which, because of its nature, is considered to be and should remain confidential. This discretionary power is not intended to provide the governing body with a pretext to exclude associate pupil governors from discussions without good reason. There should be a presumption that associate pupil governors are party to a significant proportion of governing body business

2.36 In addition to associate pupil members, governing bodies are encouraged to agree with the school council ways of working together. These could include:

- the school council inviting governors to attend council meetings and/or asking for meetings with governing body representatives on a regular basis to consider specific issues;
- school council members other than the associate pupil members attending governing body meetings as observers;
- the governing body reporting on the school council and its activities and achievements in its annual report to parents.

2.37 Many governing body meetings are held after school hours and the headteacher needs to ensure that associate pupil governors are able to travel home safely. The governing body should make allowance in the school budget for any costs that such arrangements incur.

Governing bodies need to give thought to the arrangement of business to ensure that meetings are managed efficiently and that associate pupil governors have ample opportunity to participate effectively. In view of the fact that associate pupil governors may be excluded from participating in some sort of business it is recommended that agendas are arranged so that items are grouped. Sensitive business could be considered in the initial or later part of a meeting with associate pupil governor attendance accordingly.

SECTION 3: FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Welsh Assembly Government School Councils Website

The Welsh Assembly Government is developing a designated school councils' web site which will be available from 1 September 2006. The website is bilingual and is intended for school staff, pupils and governors. It hosts the following:

- background information about the Welsh Assembly Government's approach to pupil participation;
- additional information and advice about how to set up, develop and maintain a school council;
- training activities for staff and pupils to support them in making school councils effective;
- designated sections for primary, secondary and special schools;
- sources of help and support;
- frequently asked questions;
- a discussion board; and
- case studies highlighting good practice.

The website will be a dynamic and flexible resource that will reflect schools' needs and enable staff and pupils in Wales to share good practice. It will evolve as needs and circumstances require.

The web site address is:

www.schoolcouncilswales.org.uk

or in Welsh:

www.cynghorauysgolcymru.org.uk

ANNEX 1

Web Links

The School Councils (Wales) Regulations 2005, National Assembly for Wales Statutory Instrument 2005 No. 3200 (W.236), are available at:

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/wales/wsi2005/20053200e.htm>

The regulations have amended the Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005, National Assembly for Wales Statutory Instrument 2005 No. 2914 (W.211) so as to provide for associate pupil governors. The Government of Maintained Schools Regulations are at:

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/wales/wsi2005/wsi_20052914_mi.pdf

The Education Act 2002 is available at:

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/20020032.htm>