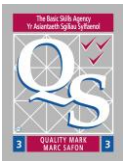


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School Council Policy and Procedure





BRYNTIRION COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

Bryntirion Comprehensive School is committed to implementation of the United Nations' convention on the rights of the child.

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”

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.

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;
- 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.

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.

Membership of School Councils and Election of Members

Bryntirion Comprehensive School council members consist solely of pupils registered at the school. Two pupils will be elected to the position at the start of each academic year by secret ballot. Members will not be chosen by school staff, the headteacher, or the governing body. All registered pupils are entitled to vote for a candidate in their year group.

We aim to have a gender balance and to reflect the ethnic make-up of the school and the presence of any disabled pupils.

The election process will involve pupils being nominated and seconded by fellow pupils in their year group. Candidates should not be chosen or recommended by the staff, headteacher or governing body. Current members may stand for re-election. Following an election there may be need for a handover. This will take the form of a joint meeting of the old and new council.

Management of School Council Business

All school council meetings will supervised by at least one member of school staff. The School council may meet any number of times in excess of the regulatory requirement for a minimum of six meetings during the school and should be determined by the volume and nature of business.

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.

The council will 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 should be by secret ballot by council members following nomination. The council will also need to decide on the term of appointment - this could be for the full year or shorter.

Matters To Be Considered by School Councils

National Assembly 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.

Matters Not To Be Considered by School Councils

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

Bryntirion School Council is a forum for pupils to discuss matters relating to this 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.

Associate Pupil Governors and School Council Links with the Governing Body

National Assembly regulations state that 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.

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.

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.

The creation of associate pupil governors has required the consequential amendment of the Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005. 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.

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.

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;
- election, appointment and removal of governors;
- the budget and financial commitments of the governing body.

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.

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.

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Chair of Governors

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Date

Bryntirion Comprehensive School

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Appendix 1

The following Internet links contain relevant information relating to the formation of school councils:

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>