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A. Introduction

A.1 The Sixth Form College, Solihull believes that an effective Student Council plays a vital part in promoting openness and tolerance and facilitating free debate which are central to British values. A good Student Council provides opportunities for all students to influence decisions, to communicate views, and to develop individual skills and confidence.

A.2 This Constitution sets out how student opinions and views collectively described as “the Student Voice” are built into College processes. There are five main ways we will do this through:

- A.2.1 subject and area based feedback using questionnaires, focus groups and subject course forums;
- A.2.2 the annual cross-College Student Conference and Student Survey;
- A.2.3 the Student Council, made up of elected Council representatives;
- A.2.4 the Student Executive, who have a specific set of responsibilities;
- A.2.5 two student governors, who are also members of the Executive, are full members of the College governing body known as the Local Governing Body.

A.3 This Constitution also sets out how the Student Council and the Executive will operate. These arrangements are underpinned by the British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance.

A.4 We aim to keep legal language to a minimum, but this is a formal document setting out a set of rules and regulations which must be followed by both students and the College.

B. Aims of the Student Council

B.1 The Student Council is set up to help improve the College by creating a place where student opinion can be developed, shared and presented to College leadership and governors.

B.2 The Student Council must set high standards of behaviour, language and debate which meet the requirements of College policies on areas like equality and diversity.

B.3 The Student Council will be allocated funds each year which should be used to support the social, cultural, academic and welfare needs of the student body.

C. Membership and Meetings

C.1 All students are automatically members of the Student Council and therefore entitled to vote for the Student Council Executive and Coaching Representatives. If a student does not want to be a member, they can withdraw by writing formally to the Chair of the Executive.

C.2 Full Student Council meetings will be held on at least one occasion each term. An Agenda will be circulated via group coaching prior to each meeting, and Minutes circulated after meetings. Students wishing to raise motions at meetings must do so by informing the Chair to the Student Council in writing at least one week before the meeting.

C.3 The meetings shall comprise:

C.3.1 Student Council representatives (one from each coaching group), formally elected following a process set by the College, in October of each year;

C.3.2 the elected Executive officers of the Student Council;

C.3.3 appointed members of staff acting as advisers and facilitators to the Student Council;

C.3.4 any other student member who wishes to be part of the meeting.

C.4 The Student Council may request the presence of appropriate members of staff at meetings, including the Principal and Vice-Principals.

C.5 Any other member of the staff wishing to be part of the meeting should ask prior permission of the Chair of Student Council.

C.6 Additional meetings may be called by the Executive or by at least 15 members of the Student Council who have signed a notice demanding an exceptional meeting.

C.7 At least once a year the Principal or a nominated deputy will attend a Student Council meeting. The Principal (or deputy) will:

C.7.1 present an Annual Report which summarises issues, concerns and comments from the student voice collected by the College through all feedback systems;

C.7.2 present an Action Plan on how the College will respond to this feedback;

C.7.3 report on progress against this Action Plan.

D. Elections

D.1 In October, every Coaching group elects a Coaching Representative. This will include a formal nomination opportunity to state a case for election and a secret ballot.

D.2 Once elected, Representatives are in post until they resign, or leave College, or there is another election, whichever is earlier. If a Representative resigns or leaves College, a new election will take place.

D.3 Elections will normally take place in October of each year to create a familiarisation period before new students have to decide to put themselves forward for nomination.

D.4 The election for all the Year 12 Executive posts will take place in November. The election process will be overseen by a nominated member of staff who will act as Electoral Officer. Any Year 12 student who wishes to put them self forward for election to any specific

role must have an exemplary student record, and obtain nomination from two other students in writing and give these to the Electoral Officer following a procedure which will be published in advance. An Electoral College made up of the Coaching Representatives will be used to elect the Executive via a secret ballot. Candidates will be allowed to present their case for election in writing, and the Electoral Officer will arrange for hustings if this is feasible.

E. Student Executive Committee (see Appendix)

E.1 The Student Executive Committee acts as the voice and leadership of the student body. It has a responsibility to act in the best interests of students and must behave fairly, openly and in accordance with all College policies.

E.2 The Student Executive will include the following roles as a minimum, but can include additional roles agreed at a Council Meeting, for any year.

E.2.1 Chair of the Student Council and Student Governor (a Year 13 student);

E.2.2 Vice-Chair of the Student Council and Student Governors (a Year 12 student);

E.2.3 Treasurer (a Year 13 student) and Deputy Treasurer (a Year 12 student);

E.2.4 Three Year 13 Officers and three Year 12 Deputy Officers who lead on charitable fundraising, student events and publicity.

E.3 The Executive may, in any particular year, agree different arrangements for the nomination of Student Governors from within the Executive, in discussion with the Principal. There should always be one Year 12 and one Year 13 Student Governor. This ensures that both year groups are represented on the College's Local Governing Body.

E.4 The Chair of the Student Council has the responsibility for organising Student Council meetings, setting agendas and working with the College on agreed actions arising from these. They will be supported by all other members of the Executive. The Chair will automatically be nominated as a Student Governor, subject to approval by the Local Governing Body.

E.5 The Vice-Chair will automatically be nominated as a Student Governor, subject to approval by the Local Governing Body, and will act as Chair in the absence of the Chair.

E.6 The Treasurer of the Student Council sets the budget for Council funds after discussion with the full Executive. This budget must show how funds provided to the Council will be used to meet the aims of the Student Council as set out in this Constitution, and must be approved by the Student Council. The Treasurer will present this budget to the College's Senior Leadership Team for endorsement.

E.7 At least three Officers will be appointed to the Student Council Executive. The Events Officers will work with nominated College staff to develop and deliver a key programme of joint College/Student Council events. There will be at least three events: a charity fundraising event, a student conference, and a year 13 celebration event.

E.8 After election of the stated Executive members, the Executive may decide at any point in the year that they wish to create additional posts in the Executive. Each such post must have a clear and published rationale, and must be formally elected in the same manner as the main Executive posts.

E.9 Each Executive member is elected to serve on the Executive Committee for two years. The Year 12 Executive members automatically move into the vacated Year 13 positions when they step down in May.

E.10 If any Executive member either leaves College, or resigns from the Executive, a replacement may be provided either from the existing Executive members, or through an extra election. The flexibility provided in this approach reflects the different possibilities available at different times of the College year. Any process for replacement roles should be the subject of consultation and agreement with the College's lead member of staff for the Student Council.

E.11 Executive meetings will normally take place each week during term time. The lead member of staff for the Student Council will support these meetings and supply a draft calendar of tasks covering the responsibilities created by this Constitution which will be at the core of the Executive's work.

E.12 If any member of the Executive ceases to take an active role in the work of the Council, and fails to attend three consecutive Executive meetings, the Executive can, with the support of the nominated member of staff, suspend the absent member. The suspended member has the right to appeal against this suspension, in person or in writing at the next Executive meeting when the Executive will decide to either arrange for the election of a replacement member or withdraw the suspension.

F. Finance

F.1 It is important that money allocated to the Student Council is spent appropriately and safely, and that the financial records of the Council are available for checking. To ensure this, the following process and rules must be followed.

F.2 Budget

F.2.1 Each year the Treasurer, on behalf of the Student Executive, will present a budget to the Student Council Representatives. This will show how money allocated to the Student Council will be spent;

F.2.2 This budget must be approved by the Student Council Representatives and is then taken by the Treasurer to a Senior Leadership Team meeting for approval;

F.2.3 The Treasurer must also report to the Senior Leadership and the Student Council Representatives at the end of the budget period on how the money has been spent.

F.3 The following rules are designed to support the Treasurer when the Budget is set:

F.3.1 All Student Council money must be held in a separate official College budget;

F.3.2 Money should only be spent on activities which are clearly related to the educational, social or welfare benefit of College students;

F.3.3 Donations to charities can only be made using funds raised specifically for this purpose and in accordance with the College's procedures on safe charitable giving.

G. Student Groups

G.1 Student Council members are encouraged to organise student groups within the College providing they do not contravene the law or College rules and policies.

G.2 Any group wishing to receive the support of, and financial assistance from, the Student Council must submit to a full Student Council meeting its clearly stated aims, criteria for membership and a budget proposal.

G.3 Each student group should receive support and oversight from a designated member of staff.

G.4 All student groups must comply with all the College's policies and procedures including the E-Safety Policy, Equality & Diversity Policy, Health & Safety Policy, and the Student Groups & Societies Procedures.

H. Grievance Procedure

H.1 Any member of the student body with a complaint against the Student Council, its Executive, other students or staff carrying out its tasks, should follow the procedure outlined below:

H.1.1 The complaint should be made in writing to the Chair of the Student Council and will then be considered by the Executive and a member of staff. They shall meet with the person making the complaint and respond accordingly.

H.1.2 If a satisfactory conclusion cannot be reached, the complaint shall be forwarded to the Principal who will nominate an independent person to investigate the complaint and advise on further action.

J. Equality and Diversity

J.1 The Student Council endorses the College's Equality & Diversity Policy and is committed to ensuring that all students have an equal opportunity to participate fully in the life of the College.

K. Changes to the Constitution

K.1 The Student Council Constitution is set by the College's Senior Leadership Team and can be modified by governors at a Local Governing Board meeting.

K.2 If the Student Council Executive wish to amend the Constitution, they should consult with a member of staff, and present any proposals to the Senior Leadership Team.

L. Student Council and Year Start

L.1 All classes start at the beginning of September each year and electoral arrangements allow students at least one month "settling in" before students elect their Coaching Representatives.

L.2 Election to the Student Council Executive Committee takes place in November of Year 12.

L.3 In May each year, the Year 12 Student Council Executive members automatically move into the vacated Year 13 positions when they step down. A smaller Executive continues until November, when there are fresh Year 12 elections.

Appendix 1

1. Key tasks and Responsibilities for the Executive

- a) Creating agendas and managing discussions at Student Council meetings which create a sense of interest and involvement.
- b) Allocation of budgets to projects and activities which students value.
- c) Creating a calendar of events using allocated funds and College support.
- d) Delivering at least three annual events with College support: a charity fund raising event, a student conference and a year 13 leavers' event.
- e) Engaging with the College to ensure that the "Student Voice" is a strong element in planning and decision making. This will include the Principal reporting to Student Council on student feedback and on how the College plans to respond to this.

2. Roles of Executive Officers of the Student Council

The roles are flexible and subject to change. The right is reserved to change roles according to the projects planned.

a) Chair

- to be the Chief Executive of the Student Council
- to act as the spokesperson for the students in the College after consultation with the Executive
- to chair meetings of the Student Council
- to chair meetings of the Executive
- to oversee committees
- to liaise with Executive members
- to support the Treasurer
- to liaise with the Assistant Principal and the Student Development Officers
- to be a Student Governor on the Local Governing Body
- to mentor the Vice-Chair

b) Vice-Chair

- to support the work of the Chair and deputise for in their absence
- to liaise with the Assistant Principal and the Student Development Officers
- to be a Student Governor on the Local Governing Body

c) Treasurer

- to supervise and administer the Student Council fund
- to assist named members of staff to keep accurate accounts for the Student Council fund
- to submit a budget to the College's Senior Leadership Team for approval
- to present the Student Council's accounts to the Student Council meeting at the beginning and end of each calendar year
- to have the accounts available for inspection by the Local Governing Body during the year

- to make grants which have been approved by the Executive to individuals, groups and College teams carrying out activities of general benefit to the student community
- to liaise with Executive members
- to liaise with the Assistant Principal and the Student Development Officers
- to mentor the Vice-Treasurer

c) Events Officers

- to take the lead on one of the core annual events and work with a specific lead member of staff to deliver this project
- when required to do so, to take the lead on other projects and events which may be set up using Student Council funds. These must have a lead Events Officer who is responsible for the organisation of the event
- to liaise with the Assistant Principal and the Student Development Officers
- to mentor the Deputy Officers.

3. Calendar

The following Student Council business will be put into the official College Calendar:

- dates of elections of Coaching Representatives to the Student Council
- dates of Student Council Executive elections
- three meetings of the Student Council
- presentation of Student Council budget and report on the budget to the Senior Leadership Team
- presentation by the Principal to student representatives on “student voice” (at Student Council meetings)
- dates of the three core events: charity fundraising event, student conference and year 13 leavers’ celebration.