

## NATIONAL SECONDARY STUDENTS' COUNCIL

### ROLE OF THE STUDENTS' COUNCIL

#### Listening to students

A student council must listen to the views, opinions and ideas of all students in the school.

#### Representing students' views

A student council must represent students' views and is a forum for students' concerns to be addressed. It should bring the views and concerns of students forward to the school administration and teachers in a diplomatic way.

#### A consultative body

A student council has a consultative role. Students should be consulted prior to implementation of new school policies, e.g. uniform, violence prevention, sports and activities.

#### Providers of information

A student council should provide the school administration with information. It can alert the school administration to student concerns of which they might not be aware and also provide the school administration with ideas and solutions to problems that students have, e.g. peer pressure, drug use, etc.

#### Peer support

A student council should act as a peer support group. It can provide support on a confidential basis for students with problems, e.g. personal, social or teacher/student relationships.

#### An educational opportunity

A student council can be a learning tool. Students can learn to think critically through involvement with the student council.

#### Improving school atmosphere

A student council can create a positive school atmosphere by providing students with a sense of ownership of their school.

#### Improving school facilities

A student council can have a role in improving school facilities, e.g. benches or seating areas for break-times, sports facilities, better school equipment (e.g. AV equipment, tape recorders), school décor (e.g. brighter walls, , making the school accessible for students with disabilities).

#### Improving the learning environment

A students' council can help to improve the learning environment by achieving a good school environment suitable for all staff and pupils to work to their maximum ability.

#### Raising students' awareness of 'bigger' issues

A student council can raise students' awareness of social issues, such as poverty, the environment, health and peer pressure.

There can be no effective functioning of the student council without the support, acceptance and involvement of the students, teachers and the Government. To be effective the student council must have the full and active support of students, must hold regular meetings and perform some useful functions, or enthusiasm will die and it will be a council in name only. Moreover, the council must foster and encourage responsible, disciplined councillors.

A council must be effective in these five fundamental areas:

- Discipline in the council itself
- Financing
- Relations between the council and administration
- School development projects
- The structure of meetings.

If your council is not effective, it may well be that it is lacking in one or more of these areas. Check to see which it is, and correct it immediately.

