



Student Council Policy 2017/18



John the Baptist Community School

Contents

i.	Title Page
ii.	Contents
iii.	Student Council Policy
iv.	Student Council Policy continued.
v.	Constitution Title Page
vi.	Student Council Constitution/Policy: History of the Constitution
Page 1.	Article 1: Structure of the Student Council 1.1 Senior Council, Junior Council 1.2 Membership 1.3 Student Council Liaison Officers/Teachers
Page 2.	Article 1.3 Student Council Liaison Officers/Teachers (contd.)
Page 3.	Article 2 Election Procedures 2.1 Senior Council
Page 4.	Article 2 2.1 Junior Council (contd.) 2.2 Filling Vacancies 2.3 Sub-Committees 2.4 Retention of Members 2.5 Co-opting Members onto the Student Council
Page 5.	Article 3 Officers of the Council 3.1 Description of Roles
Page 6.	Article 3.1 Description of Roles (contd.)
Page 7.	Article 3.1 Description of Roles (contd.) Article 4: Workings of the Council 4.1 Provisions of the Council 4.2 Meeting Procedures
Page 8.	Article 4.2 Meeting Procedures (contd.) 4.3 Removing Student Council Members and Filling Vacancies
Page 9.	Article 4.3 Removing Student Council Members and Filling Vacancies (contd.) 4.4 Dissolution of the Council 4.5 Changes to the Constitution
Page 10.	Article 4.5 Changes to the Constitution (contd.) Article 5 Aims of the Council/The Role of the Council

Student Council Policy

The Student Council is a necessary and integral part of school life in John the Baptist Community School. There has been a Student Council in the school since its foundation in 1997, but also there is a long standing history of student involvement in such an organisation from the Presentation De La Salle School. In addition, the formation and running of a Student Council fulfils the school's requirements under Section 27 of the Education Act, 1998 to "facilitate the involvement of the students in the operation of the school".

A Student Council is encouraged and supported by the entire school population including students, management and the Board of Management as it has long lasting and far reaching benefits for those individuals who take part and for the school as a whole. For the individual, membership can foster a real sense of responsibility, assertiveness and self confidence. In addition, by taking part in the Council, students learn the skills of effective and fair leadership such as co-operation and teamwork. Moreover, through their involvement, students become acutely aware of the democratic process, hopefully cultivating a feeling of civic responsibility and understanding. In this way, the Council can be an educational opportunity, raising students' awareness of wider and bigger issues. The experience of working with the Student Council is predominantly a very positive one, with a large number reapplying to serve in subsequent years.

For the entire school population and the school as a whole, the benefits of the Student Council are manifold. The link that the Council provides between the students, management and the Board of Management is vital for improved communication and is an integral part of the positive and co-operative environment that exist in our school. By developing a genuine and open relationship between all parties, a supportive and helpful learning atmosphere is encouraged and cultivated, as well as promoting friendship and respect among all. Also, the Council provides a definite channel for student ideas to be expressed, a forum in which students can, in a constructive and positive way, identify and express their needs. In this way, it is a place where all students' voices can be heard, without judgement or bias. Moreover, the Student Council serves as a representative of all students at official events in and outside the school. Furthermore, the Council is a valuable point of information on relevant issues and concerns of the students.

The Student Council endeavours to get involved in any activities that will benefit the student body and the school as a whole, to "promote the interests of the school and the involvement of students in the affairs" (Education Act, 1998, Section 27, 4). This can involve a number of areas such as surveys of student needs to lobbying for changes to the products provided in

the shop. The Student Council is also consulted, as representatives of the student body, on school policies. Such policies are discussed and proposals made for any changes in a confidential and fair manner.

The Student Council Constitution (see attached) provides a framework in which the Council shall operate and it is therefore important that all members of the Student Council and indeed all those within the school are familiar with its provisions. It is reviewed and ratified annually by the incoming Student Council and the Board of Management. The Student Council Constitution is a vital document because it clearly sets out the running of the Council and can be used as a reference on how to proceed in certain cases and circumstances such as in disputes that may arise, elections and dismissal procedures. Also, it states an accepted code of behaviour for members, as well as laying out the scope of the council, especially its terms of reference.

From the Front

Anonymous

As for the best leaders, the people do not notice their existence.

The next best, the people honour and praise.

The next, the people fear

And the next, people hate.

When the best leader's work is done, the people say, "We did it ourselves"



Student Council Constitution

John the Baptist Community School, Hospital

Student Council



We Are The Link.

Student Council Constitution/Policy: History of the Constitution

Date	Activity	Those Involved
May 2002	Constitution first written	Student Council Management
October 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007	Officially ratified by incoming Student Council	Newly formed Student Council Liaison Teachers
October – December 2007	In Council Review	Student Council
December 2007	(First) New Full Draft	Student Council, R. Hayes, M. Sheehan in consultation with Management
June 2008	Minimal Review	Student Council, Liaison Teachers
October 2008	Second Draft	Student Council, R. Hayes & Management October
March 2008	Third Draft	Student Council, R. Hayes, E. Leahy and Management
November 2008	Complete Review	Student Council, Liaison Teachers
January to March 2009	Final adjustments and proof reading	Student Council, Liaison Teachers
April 2009	Reviewed by Management	Management
25 th May 2009	Reviewed by the Board of Management	Board of Management
October 2009	Ratified by Student Council	Student Council, Liaison Teachers
September 2010	Ratified by Student Council	Student Council, Liaison Teachers
September 2011	Ratified by Student Council	Student Council, Liaison Teachers
September 2012	Ratified by Student Council	Student Council, Liaison Teachers
September 2013	Ratified by Student Council	Student Council, Liaison Teachers
September 2014	Ratified by Student Council	Student Council, Liaison Teachers
September 2015	Full review started	
December 2015	Reviewed and ratified by Student Council	Student Council, Liaison Teachers
	Review by Staff member	
	Review by Parent	
	Review and ratification by Board of Management	
November 2017	Reviewed and Ratified by Student Council	Student Council, Liaison Teachers
April 2018	Review and ratification by Board of Management	

Article 1

Structure of the Student Council

1.1 Number of Students elected

➤ Senior Council

- i. Leaving Certificate (6th Year) – minimum of four to a maximum of six
- ii. 5th Year – minimum of four to a maximum of six
- iii. L.C.A. 1 & 2 – at least one representative from either L.C.A.1 or L.C.A. 2. However, if at all possible, two representatives, preferably one from both L.C.A. 1 and 2 is the ideal. The council acknowledges that representation from these groups can be difficult to obtain.
- iv. Transition Year – minimum of two to a maximum of five students. Due to its nature, the number of students taking part in Transition Year can vary greatly from year to year and therefore the exact number of T.Y. representatives must be decided on an annual basis. Where possible, a gender balance will be sought but this will not interfere with the democratic process.
- v. The number of students should never exceed the maximum of eighteen students and or be lower than a minimum of twelve.

➤ Junior Council

- vi. Each junior class (every class grouping from First Year to Third Year) will elect a male and female class representative. This normally will take place in the C.S.P.E. class with the C.S.P.E. teacher, in consultation with the Class Tutor. On a monthly rotational basis, one year group per week will meet, i.e. week one will be a meeting of all first year representatives, week two will be a meeting of all second year representatives, week three third year representatives. On the fourth week, two representatives from each year group will meet to pass their findings onto two third years, usually one male and one female, who will represent the junior council as a whole at the senior council meetings each week. A suggestion box will be introduced to the first year campus to encourage junior cycle students to become involved in school life.

1.2 Membership

- i. Membership of the Council is open to all students attending John the Baptist Community School, if they are compliant with the rules set down by the school and the Student Council
- ii. The term of office for each member is one academic year, from September to June
- iii. The Council will always hope to exhibit a gender and racial balance. However, such a desire will not at any point disturb or disrupt the democratic process. Therefore, if the

The Policy & Constitution of the Student Council

candidates applying for position are primarily one gender or group, every effort will be made to include others. Yet, if this does not yield results, the Council will carry on with the democratic process with those interested.

1.3 Student Council Liaison Officers/Teachers

- i. There will be a minimum of two Student Council Liaison Teachers assigned to the council each year. This may increase due to interest.
- ii. A minimum of one Liaison Officer must attend each meeting. It is however preferable that both be in attendance at every meeting to provide a consistent voice and awareness of the issues at hand.
- iii. Student Council Liaison Teachers are appointed by management in consultation between existing Liaison Teachers if possible, management and any possible candidates who express an interest in the Council.
- iv. The Student Council Liaison Teacher is not a member of the Council. The Student Council Liaison Teachers have a voice in the Council but not a vote. They do not lead the meetings unless in the interim before elections (i.e. if a Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson has not been appointed).
- v. In the event of difficulties arising between the Student Council and the Liaison Teacher(s), the Principal is to be contacted by the Chairperson on behalf of the Council as a whole.
- vi. The role of the Student Council Liaison Officers/Teachers
 - To act as a link between management, staff members and the Council
 - To facilitate smooth and ordered meetings
 - To provide information
 - To take notes to complement the notes of the secretary's minutes
 - To provide support and guidance to the members of the Council and to any work/activities they undertake
 - To put Council issues and activities on the agenda for staff meetings.
 - To maintain the Student Council Notice board in the Staffroom
 - To open the Student Council suggestion box and to read the suggestions. This is in case sensitive material or issues arise from the suggestions, such as bullying information. By reading the suggestions prior to the meetings, any sensitive material can be kept confidential and passed on to the relevant parties. The Council will be informed that material of this nature has been received and dealt with.

Article 2

Election Procedures

2.1 Nomination and Election Procedures

Senior Council

- i.** Applications must be made on the official nomination form by the students themselves. No student can be put forward for the council without their express knowledge and permission. Nomination forms are available through the Student Council Liaison teachers and existing members of the council.
- ii.** A talk will be given by previous Student Council members to all years involved in the selection and voting process, outlining necessary qualities and attributes.
- iii.** The election of future sixth year representatives will take place in May/early September, with nominations sought from mid-April onwards/start of the school year. Due to the very busy nature of the final months of term, it may not always be possible to hold elections at this time. Therefore, the option to seek nominations/have the elections early in the first term of school may be needed.
- iv.** The Student Council Liaison Teachers will examine applications
- v.** A ballot paper will be drawn up.
- vi.** Voting will take place by secret ballot, normally during a designated class time.
- vii.** 5th Year, Transition Year and L.C.A. 1 elections will take place in September
- viii.** Election results will be displayed on the Student Council Notice Board
- ix.** The ballot papers must be kept in case the member elected needs to be replaced. The candidate with the next highest number of votes will fill the vacancy. A by- election can be held to fill a position if the next highest candidate does not want/is unable to fill the vacant position.
- x.** Election of Officers of the Council
 - The election of Officers of the Council will take place in September, when the full Council is formed.
 - The position of Chairperson must be applied for in writing on the official application form
 - The Chairperson is chosen by an interview process conducted by the Principal and at least one Student Council Liaison Teacher.
 - The position of Vice-Chairperson is normally filled through this interview process also

The Policy & Constitution of the Student Council

- All other positions are democratically decided within the council. If there is one candidate for the position, the person is proposed and seconded by others in the Council, and so deemed elected.
- If more than one candidate applies for a position, a system of proportional representation is used in a secret ballot of all the members. At least two thirds of the Council must be present for such an internal election. Each candidate will receive an opportunity to speak to Council as a whole to express why they should be elected to the job.

Junior Council

- xi.** One male and one female representative must be elected from each Junior class, First Year to Third Year. This is normally done with the kind cooperation of the classes' C.S.P.E. teachers as "Democracy" is one of the seven key concepts of the subject. These representatives are voted for fairly by the rest of the class and are obliged to attend each of their respective class representative meetings and, if selected, to attend meetings with representatives from other junior cycle year groups. The senior council members may also advise the students on acceptable behaviour and other matters regarding the council.

2.2 Filling Vacancies

- i.** If a place becomes available on the Council due to removal of a member, resignation or prolonged illness. They shall be replaced by the student whose votes put them next in line in the election. If this is not possible, a new election (by-election) will take place to fill the position.

2.3 Sub Committees

- i.** Rather than try and plan every activity during the year, the Council may find it more effective to use sub-committees to plan and oversee specific activities. The Student Council therefore reserves the right to form subcommittees
- ii.** Subcommittees must regularly report to the main Council on their activities
- iii.** Any large undertaking by a subcommittee must be submitted to the Council for approval
- iv.** Sub-committees are normally formed for a specific purpose, for a specific length of time.
- v.** Members of the Student Council can sit on other committees/groups separate to the Student Council e.g. the Debs committee.

2.4 Retention of Members

The Policy & Constitution of the Student Council

- i. To ensure continuity in the Council, any existing 5th year members who wish to remain on the Council and are deemed suitable to do so, are automatically elected to the Council for the following year. This is only the case with 5th years to ensure the Council remains at its heart a democratically elected representative body for all students.

2.5 Co-opting Members onto the Student Council

- i. If the Student Council feels a certain member of the student body would be of great benefit on the Council either for a specific project/activity or on a long term basis, he/she may join the Council without being elected. A least two thirds of the Council must agree with this appointment and the terms of their membership must be clearly outlined from the beginning. A person who joins in this manner will not have a vote on the Council.

Article 3

Officers of the Council

3.1 The Student Council of John the Baptist consists of the following officers:

i. The Chairperson

- Is the official student link between the Council, management and the Board of Management
- Normally a 6th Year student
- The position of Chairperson must be applied for in writing on the official application form
- The Chairperson is chosen by an interview process conducted by the Principal and at least one Student Council Liaison Teacher.
- The Chairperson chairs the meetings in a fair and impartial manner, ensuring that all have an equal say
- Liaises with the school authorities on behalf of the Council
- Ensures the Council is run effectively and efficiently
- Can call a meeting

ii. The Vice-Chairperson

- Performs the duties of the Chairperson when the Chairperson is unavailable
- Assists the Chairperson in the organisation of the Council
- Attends all the meetings

iii. The Secretary

- Normally a 5th Year student, due to the heavy workload
- Takes minutes at each meeting and writes them up. A copy of the minutes is put on the Student Council Notice Board for the students, in the staffroom and in the Student Council files. The secretary keeps a copy of such records also as a back up for official purposes.
- Reads out minutes from the previous meetings. The Chairperson and the secretary both sign the minutes of the previous meeting on acceptance by the Council.
- Verifies agenda with Chairperson and Student Council Liaison Teacher(s) before each meeting and posts the agenda on the Student Council Notice Board
- Completes any typing or paperwork necessary for the effective work and record keeping of the Council

The Policy & Constitution of the Student Council

- Is in charge of any official documentation for the Council bearing the Council logo and name
- Is in charge of any correspondence to and from the Council

iv. The Vice-Secretary

- Performs the duties of the secretary when the secretary is unavailable
- Aids the secretary in performing their duty when necessary

v. The Public Relations Officer (P.R.O.)/Team

- Keeps the student body informed about the activities of the council
- Publicises the date and location of meetings
- Keeps the Student Council Notice board updated and tidy
- Is the spokesperson of the Council to the press and if needed with the staff
- Conducts surveys to gauge the Student body's needs and opinions
- Makes relevant intercom announcements
- Heads the Public Relations Committee, if one is established
- Updates the Student Council Webpage on the John the Baptist Community School's website

vi. The Treasurer

- To be in charge of all the financial matters of the Council
- To prepare financial reports at the end of the term of office and keep detailed records during the year
- To compile a request each year for a financial bursary from the Board of Management
- To obtain at least three quotations for any item or activity to be bought or undertaken by the Council to ensure fairness and financial efficiency

vii. The Vice Treasurer

- To carry out the duties of the Treasurer when the Treasurer is unable to do so
- To help count and allocate monies and funds in conjunction with the Treasurer for security purposes

viii. The Attendance Officer

- To take a detailed and comprehensive roll each week
- To collect any excuses for non attendance and record such in the Council's records

The Policy & Constitution of the Student Council

- Inform the Chairperson if a member has three unexplained absences

ix. The Office Director

- Organises the meeting room for the meeting
- Fixes the room back to perfect condition after each meeting
- Catalogues all items of the Council at the start and end of each year

x. The Junior Council Liaison Officer(s)

- To be the link between Junior Representatives and the Senior Council
- Meet with Junior class representatives on a regular basis
- Bring the concerns and issues of the junior class representatives back to the Senior Council to be dealt with in speedy and confidential manner.
- One or more liaison officers may be elected by the senior council to fill this position.

Article 4

Workings of the Council

4.1 Provisions of the Council

- i.** No student or member of staff can be discussed either by name or implication. The Student Council is not a forum for airing individual grievances against other pupils or teachers.
- ii.** All members must sign the Student Council Contract and abide with its provisions at all times
- iii.** Members are required to attend all meetings. Failure to do so will result in the sanctions outlined in 4.6
- iv.** Proposals can be made to Council in relation to activities that may be undertaken or discussed from a number of sources – the student body, staff members, the Student Council Liaison Officers, Management, the Board of Management, special interest groups e.g. the Green Schools Committee and any other group with a close relationship with the school. However, the Council does have the option to accept, delegate or refuse proposals after discussion and a fair vote.
- v.** Certain matters are not the concern of the Council and will be dealt with by separate committees not affiliated to the Council e.g. the Leaving Certificate Party/Debs and Yearbook Committees. Members of the Council may serve on such committees, but not in the name of the Council.

4.2 Meeting Procedures

➤ Place and Time

- i.** A suitable time and place is picked at the beginning of each year for the meetings. This done in consultation with the members and the Student Council Liaison Teachers.
- ii.** Meetings of the Senior Council usually occur once a week at lunchtime, though meetings can be organised outside this time when deemed necessary. Members must be given as much notice as possible of an unexpected meeting.
- iii.** Meetings of the Whole School Council (both Senior and Junior) will take place during a chosen class period, though careful consultation between staff and students will minimise disruption to the timetable.
- iv.** The Whole School Council (the Senior and Junior Council) will meet approximately once a term. However, the Junior Council Liaison Officer(s) will be in constant contact with the Junior representatives at all times to ensure that their issues are addressed on a regular basis.

➤ Running of the Meeting

- v. Each meeting lasts thirty-fourty minutes (the duration of lunchtime)
- vi. At least two thirds of the Council and at least one Student Council Liaison Teacher must be present for a quorum/to hold a meeting. In the case where these conditions are not met, the meeting is cancelled and rescheduled.
- vii. Unsanctioned meetings of “splinter groups” involving Student Council members that are not approved by the Council cannot take place. This does not apply to sanctioned sub-committees
- viii. Minutes of each meeting will be kept by the Secretary. The Chairperson/Vice-Chairperson chairs each meeting. The minutes of the previous meeting will be read at the beginning of each meeting. This normally followed by correspondence to and from the Council, Janitorial issues and any other concerns on the agenda. Any unexpected further issues can be discussed under “Any Other Business”
- ix. The agenda for each meeting will be agreed between the Chairperson and the Secretary prior to the meeting. The Liaison Teacher(s) and members of the Council can also add to this agenda.
- x. Decisions will be taken on a majority vote. It is an aspiration of the Council that decisions will be reached by general consensus but in the event of a tied vote, the Chairperson shall have the casting vote.
- xi. All comments must be made through the Chairperson and to the group as a whole, with only one person speaking at the time.
- xii. All members are encouraged though not pressurised to contribute.
- xiii. Each member will have one vote
- xiv. All issues discussed must be treated with discretion and confidentiality
- xv. Members of management, staff, the Parents’ Association and the Board of Management can attend a Student Council meeting at any time and are welcome to do so. However, it is requested that anyone wishing to attend a meeting must inform the Chairperson and/or a Liaison Teacher at least one week in advance so it can be entered into the agenda and preparations can be made.

4.3 Removing Student Council Members and Filling Vacancies

- i. A member who fails to attend more than three successive meetings without valid reason shall be asked to resign and shall be replaced by next highest contender from the original election. If this is not possible, a new election (by-election) will take place to fill

The Policy & Constitution of the Student Council

the position. A warning is to be given to a member by the Attendance Officer after two unexplained absences in the hope that this will avoid future occurrences.

- ii.** A student may be removed from the Council for any of the following reasons:
 - Failure to uphold the Contract or the Constitution of the Student Council
 - A series of serious complaints (from a fellow Student Council Member or from the student body)
 - If it is felt that the member is a negative force within the Council, and is ultimately harmful to the reputation or work of the Council
 - A serious breach of the School's Code of Conduct/School Rules
 - At the discretion of Management, in consultation with the Liaison teachers for the above reasons
 - At the discretion of the Board of Management

- iii.** If a situation occurs when the removal of a member is possible, the following steps must be taken:
 - The complaint must be verified from as many sources as possible, with written verification requested if necessary.
 - The situation will be discussed by the Council, during which the student involved can present their side to the Council. A way forward is then decided upon. If deemed suitable, a warning can be issued by the Council and Management to the member at this point and the issue can be considered closed.
 - Suspension for a time must be considered as an option. The length of suspension is to be decided, in light of the nature of the complaint, by the Council, in consultation with Liaison Teachers and Management.
 - If all other options are exhausted, the vote to remove a member will take place by secret ballot, and any decision must have a two thirds majority. It is hoped that extensive consultation among all parties involved (the member, the Council, the Student Council Liaison Teachers, Management and the Board of Management) will avoid this having to occur.

4.4 Dissolution of the Council

- i.** The Council is dissolved at the end of each academic year
- ii.** Adequate notice, at least two weeks, must be given if a current council is to be dissolved at any point.

The Policy & Constitution of the Student Council

- iii.** The Council can be dissolved by the Principal and Board of Management at anytime in the case of serious misconduct of the majority of members of the Council. This is a Student Council, not a Student Union.

4.5 Changes to the Constitution

- i.** It is recognised that the Constitution of the Student Council is a working document and may need to be altered and changed to respond to changing circumstances and events.
- ii.** The Constitution will be reviewed and ratified by the new council each year.
- iii.** Any changes will be brought to the Principal's attention and any recommendations returned for discussion to the Council.
- iv.** The Constitution must be ratified by the Board of Management each year and as necessary
- v.** Any proposed change to the constitution must be circulated to all members of the Council at least one week in advance of any vote or decision taken regarding the change.
- vi.** Any proposed change must be discussed and ratified by the Board of Management
- vii.** It is proposed that at the end of each academic year, the Council will undergo a process of self evaluation and evaluation of the Constitution. The results of this evaluation will be then sent to the Board of Management.

Article 5

Aims of the Council / The Role of the Council

- i.** The Student Council represents a position of responsibility not authority
- ii.** To represent the views of the student body to the staff, Principal, parents and Board of Management.
- iii.** To afford students the opportunity to play an active part in the co-operative life of the school and the development of school policy
- iv.** To help create the conditions conducive to the development of interpersonal relationships, built on mutual respect and trust
- v.** To encourage students to become self confident, responsible and caring
- vi.** To foster a sense of loyalty and pride in the school
- vii.** To improve communication at all levels – staff, students and parents
- viii.** To assist in school activities
- ix.** To promote a healthy environment between students and teachers
- x.** Recognise the importance of teamwork
- xi.** To empower students to take an active and responsible role in the workings of the school
- xii.** Liaise with student councils from other schools



Assessment Policy

Reviewed by:

- Assistant Principals
- Parent Association
- Teachers
- Student Council Members
- Presented to the Parent Association

Updated by: Elaine O Donnell, Patrick Stack and Student Council throughout the school year 2017/2018.

Ratified by the B.O.M on: 16/04/2018

Review Date: September 2018

Signed: Jim Twohig **Date:** 16/04/2018

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: Noreen Rafferty **Date:** 16/04/2018

Principal