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***New Cross College***

***Student Council Policy***

**Background:**

The New Cross College Student Council is a representative structure through which our students can become involved in the affairs of the school, working in partnership with school management, staff and parents for the benefit of the school community.

**Rationale:**

* Students have a valuable contribution to make to the effectiveness of our school and active participation in an appropriate manner in the operation of the school is a valuable dimension of a student’s educational experience: it provides preparation for citizenship and also fosters mature behaviour.
* Our Student Council provides an opportunity for students to engage in a structured partnership with teachers, parents and school managers in the operation of their school. Research indicates that student councils can improve academic standards and improve retention in schools. Student Councils can create a sense of ownership of the school and its activities among the student population.
* The National Children’s Strategy, published in 2000, emphasises the importance of Students Councils as a mechanism for giving young people a voice in schools.
* DEIS further specifies that all second-level schools participating in the School Support Programme (SSP) need to have a student council in operation to support engagement between school staff and students in the process of planning for the effective implementation of SSP measures.

**Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school:**

Our mission in New Cross College is to create a safe learning environment within the community which acknowledges diversity, fosters mutual respect, celebrates achievement, recognises the needs of the individual, challenging all to meet their full potential.

The Student Council in New Cross College aims to embed itself within our mission statement, aiding the creation of a safe learning environment and fostering mutual respect amongst our whole school community.

**Goals and Objectives:**

The Student Council policy aims to support the establishment and operation of the Student Council in the school. The objectives of the Student Council are:

* To represent the views of the students on school matters of general concern.
* To support the management and staff in the development of the school.
* To enhance communication between students, management, staff and parents.
* To promote friendship and respect among pupils.
* To contribute to the development of school policy.
* To nurture a range of important skills among students, such as participating in meetings, negotiating, responsible leadership and collaborative problem solving.

***Assisting the establishment and operation of a Student Council:***

* The Board of Management will assist the Student Council once it is formed. The Board of Management facilitate a student council member or members to present to the board, at agreed times, their progress/ idea/ opinions/ feedback on topics relating to the student body in the college. A liaison teacher (APII) will assist the Student Council with its day to day function. This appointed teacher will have no voting rights on the Student Council.
* The Board of Management will provide any training needed for Student Council members outside of that provided by the Liaison teacher.
* The Board of Management should provide information about the Student Council to other members of the school community including Principal/ Deputy Principal, Teachers, SNAs, Ancillary Staff Parents/ Guardians and other students.
* The Board of Management should ensure that the Student Council is involved in relevant school policy development and in the planning and organising of school events and activities, e.g. sports events, concerts, open days, newsletters, mentoring award ceremonies etc.;
* The Board of Management shall respond in a meaningful way to Student Council members following consultation with them regarding their concerns.

***Rules for the establishment of a Student Council:***

In accordance with the guidelines on Student Councils issued by the Minister for Education and Skills and the guidelines outlined in *Student Councils: A Voice for Students*:

* The Student Council shall promote the interests of the school and the involvement of students in school life, in co-operation with the Board of Management, parents and teachers.
* The council should, as far as practicable, be representative of each class or year group in the school. The Board of Management shall at all times retain the right to dissolve a council or remove a council member in accordance with these guidelines.

***The procedure for establishing the Student Council shall consider:***

1. Size and composition of the Student Council. Two students nominated from each year group.
2. Nominations and Elections: Two students are nominated from each tutor class, in each year group annually. These names are posted in each base area prior to the elections. Students vote by secret ballot in each year group. Election results are announced by the Principal. Students receive their Student Council badges formally at assembly.
3. First Meeting. Election to various positions on the Student Council: Chairperson; Secretary; Treasurer; P.R.O; Attendance Officer etc.
4. Constitution: Students draw up their constitution in line with Student Councils: A Voice for Students
5. Procedure for filling a vacancy in the council.
6. Removal of a member.
7. Dissolution of the Student Council.

***Links to school related policies:***

The following policies are already in place in New Cross College:

* Code of Behaviour
* Anti-bullying
* Substance use
* Child Protection
* Relationships and Sexuality in Education
* Health and Safety
* Health Promotion
* Guidance Plan
* Attendance and Participation
* Pastoral Care Policy
* Homework Policy
* Intercultural Policy
* School Plan
* Admissions
* Critical Incident
* Special Educational Needs
* Teaching and learning
* Internet Acceptable Use

***Links to curriculum delivery:***

* Civic, Social and Political (CSPE) class looks at giving young people a voice, incorporating Student Councils.
* Transition Year Programme gives students the opportunity to raise awareness of school issues and to fundraise for various events.
* SPHE
* Debating Team.
* Surveys to students.

***Ratification and Communication:***

It will be implemented by the staff of New Cross College under the direction of the Principal. Senior management team and the Student Council liaison teacher will oversee the implementation of the policy. The policy in draft form will be distributed to all staff and members of the Parents’ Association and Board of Management via e-mail.

Signed: 

Chairperson School Board of Management

Signed 

Secretary to the School Board of Management

6/2/23