

## **Dundalk Grammar School Student Council**

The Crescent, Dundalk, Co. Louth, A91-FH00, Ireland

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**Chairperson: Isabelle Janssen**

**Vice-Chairperson: Max McCaldin**

**Secretary Generale: Dylan Gilmore**



# SC

*The Official 2022*

# Student Council Constitution

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The Official logo for Dundalk Grammar School Student Council.

# Introduction

Dundalk Grammar School's Student Council (DGS SC) has an active role in school life and manages several annual initiatives. The Council has around 30 members drawn from different years and forms throughout the school. The Student Council promotes the wellbeing of the school's students and actively fights for their voices to be heard.

DGS's Student Council seeks to uplift and support our students through active involvement in the school and local community. This includes taking part in and organizing of events, charitable contributions, and lobbying of changes or creation of legislation on a local and national level.

Post-pandemic, DGS's Student Council, in conjunction with key stakeholders, are collaborating on returning school events to the community, and creating an inclusive, vibrant and fun place to be. This includes collaboration on improvement and refurbishment of open spaces, services available, and sports facilities, as well as creating an enjoyable area and space for boarders and day students to relax and participate inclusively.

We are one of 450 member schools on ISSU (Irish Second-Level Students' Union) who represents students' voices on a national and international level. The ISSU, in collaboration with DGS SC and its other member Councils, aims to foster a stronger student voice at all levels of the educational system. Second-level students should be involved in all matters that directly affect them, and this means having a seat at the decision-making table and being respected as an equal stakeholder.

This 2022 Constitution has been made with reference to 1998 Education Act and to the Irish Second Level Student Union. It will serve as a vital document to reference throughout your term in office as a Councillor.

We wish you the best of luck in your office term, and in your future endeavours.

Yours Sincerely,

**Isabelle Janssen**  
Chairperson

**Max McCaldin**  
Vice-Chairperson

**Dylan Gilmore**  
Secretary General

## **Dundalk Grammar School Student Council Executive**

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# Terminology

We, us, DGS SC, Student Council, The Council	→	Dundalk Grammar School Student Council
Representatives, Councillors, Members	→	Students elected by the general public to DGS SC
The Officers, Government	→	The elected Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson & Secretary Generale
The Executive, Board	→	The elected Ministers and Officers
School Head(s)	→	Elected/Current heads of Staff, Headmaster and Deputy Headmaster

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## Article 1: Aims

### 1.1 Representation

To represent the students at Dundalk Grammar school fairly, without bias, and to the best ability. It involves considering different students' views and concerns and discussing these with school management and local authority on behalf of the students.

### 1.2 Development

To further the development of Dundalk Grammar School into the present and future with a student perspective for boarders' and day students'. It should contribute to the overall environment for all. DGS SC may form sub-committee's independently to discuss national and school issues, and represent those issues to the appropriate body.

### 1.3 Healthy Environment

To improve and maintain a healthy, safe, and secure school environment for all students, teachers, and families without prejudice or fear. DGS SC can assist, sponsor or organise events within the school or with its key stakeholders.

### 1.4 Relationships

To foster and ensure a healthy relationship between students, staff, parents, and management.

## **Article 2: Our 2022 Policies**

### **2.1 Input and Relevancy**

To give students input on the development of Dundalk Grammar School policy and pretence, and allow the student council to contribute to the creation of future school policy. To keep the youth voice heard on issues pertaining to them.

### **2.2 Student Voice**

To hear the voice of every student in the school through a representative democracy renewed every year. Aswell, To arrange larger meetings and/or surveys to inform.

### **2.3 Executive Manifesto**

The Government (and if available , their Ministers) may wish to publically set out their aims for this years Student Council. It is a declaration of their Goals for the duration of that Council.

### **2.4 Informing, Communicating and Brand Image**

Throughout the lifetime of a Council, it will be imperative to work with and take onboard other committee's feedback, as well as students in order to create successful, binding legislation and change. Councillors should keep their classes informed of changes and the council's work.

The Dundalk Grammar School Student Council uses an adaptation of the DGS Sapere Aude crest, using Times New Roman in it's retrospective colour scheme. Should the need to adapt the logo arise, The Executive may do so taking into account the Council's reputation and Brand Image.

## **Article 3: Membership**

### **3.1 Term of Office**

The two representatives are elected as class representatives (hereinafter referred to as Councillors) may in office for 1 school year.

### **3.2 Array of Students**

Two representatives are elected as class representatives (hereinafter referred to as Councillors) by popular vote from each form class in the school. If only one or no person is willing to step forward for elected, that is the representative for said class. This election should take place at the start of school term and is binding for each form class. Membership is valid for a full year. Additional students (unelected, whether on top of two preexisting Councillors or being the first/second Councillor) may join with permission from all the Executive.

### **3.3 Government Officers**

Mandatory officer roles: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary General. Mandatory roles must be filled with an election with more than 10 Councillors present at a council meeting (*after* form classes have elected Councillors to the council). Roles are filled by mandatory vote.

Any Councillor is eligible to be an Officer *unless* they are in first year. The role of Chairperson must be filled by someone who has previously been on the Executive (does not have to be the previous year; any experience suffices). In an absence of qualified candidates, five otherwise qualified Councillors are elected by the council to be trained by previous officers, whereafter they will enter a runoff race to select the Chairperson. In scenarios where this situation is expected during the previous year, this training can take place the previous school year in anticipation of this occurrence.

### **3.4 Executive Board & Ministers**

Executive Ministers may be brought onboard by the Government to help in a particular area. They are appointed for the term of the Council (one year) by the Executive. The Council must be informed of the appointment and must find that the selected Councillor(s) are qualified. Selected Councillors should be done so on the basis of previous hard work or dedication to the Council's efforts, *or* must apply when asked with a CV (Minister is then selected from candidates by Officers). The Executive Board Ministers are delegated tasks pertaining to specific functions of the Council by the Executive, and can hold additional meetings with them or school leadership to discuss work.

The Executive Board Ministers include, but are not limited to:

- Minister of Health and Wellbeing
- Minister of Finance
- Minister of Communications
- Minister of Local and National Affairs

### **3.5 Revocation of Councillorship**

Councillors who miss three meetings within a term are given a formal warning. Should they continue to be absent from meetings, they will be asked to resign from the council effective immediately, and all privileges will be suspended.

- Councillors may resign without this, however, must inform in writing to the Executive Officers of their resignation and their Form Teacher. See article 7

## **Article 4: Responsibilities**

### **4.1 Councillors**

It is a Councillors responsibility to be held accountable for their actions on the Student Council, regardless of their role. Councillors are expected to carry out several functions. Their responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Attending all meetings where possible. If they find themselves unable to attend, they should inform an Executive member more than 24 in advance of the meeting.
- Voting on any issues that may arise in the meeting of the Council
- Making proposals to the Executive, and being the voice on behalf of the form they represent
- Reporting to their represented form on any updates of events, situations, or opinions needed from the Student Council

## **4.2 Officer/Government Responsibilities**

An Officer is a general leader of the Student Council, responsible for all its Ministers, Sub-committee's and Councilors. They will serve in office for the full school year. The constitution and subsequent legislation is drafted by the Officers unless delegated. The Executive Officer positions are:

- Chairperson
- Vice-Chairperson
- Secretary-Generale

The Elected Officers make up the Executive Government, who are in authority over the Student Council and its workings.

- The Chairperson is ultimately in charge, and runs Council meetings. They have final say on Council matters (within reason) and speak for the Council the most to school management.
- The Vice-Chairperson takes on many of the same duties as the Chairperson, helping them in their duties. In the event that something happens to the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson takes over. If the Chairperson cannot fill their roles for a reason, the Vice-Chairperson can temporarily step in (for instance, if a Chairperson has a family emergency, the Vice-Chairperson can chair a meeting)
- The Secretary Generale is in charge of logistics and day-to-day management of the Council. They are the first-most Officer that Ministers will communicate with.

## **4.3 Executive Ministers**

Ministers who are democratically elected and will be a general leader in their intended task. They may have to deal with relevant enquiries from the public. No council member can take up two Ministerial or Officer positions. Ministers must report to the Officers on the work they are doing as part of their role, attend all Executive Meetings ad hoc to General Student Council Meetings. They should work to continuously improve and hear the voice of the public regarding their role's description. They are subject to, but not limited to the following:

- Meeting, communicating and informing the other Ministers and officers in an 'ad hoc' Executive meeting.
- Reporting and informing the Officers and Councils on the work they are doing as a part of their role.
- Working together, or independently towards their task.
- Should an exceptional incident occur, the Minister in question may be removed from their position by the quota of 50% in a vote. If sufficient notice cannot be given to the full Student Council, the Minister in question may be removed from their position by an agreement majority of the Officers.

#### **4.4 Liason Teacher**

The Liaison Teacher is an active link between the Student Council and Staff. They are a source of information and guidance to the Executive. They may attend meetings.

The Liaison Teacher for DGS SC is Mr Paul Brady. Mr Brady teaches Leaving Certificate Politics and Economics, as well as classes at the junior level such as CSPE. He also organises other in-school activities like Green Schools and Young Social Innovators. Any complaints, requests, or concerns about the Student Council or its procedures should either go to the Executive, or to Mr Brady.

## **Article 5: Voting**

### **5.1 Election Procedures**

The Election Procedure is the voting process between elected councillors. These Elections occur when a position is vacant.

### **5.2 Voting**

During the term of office of a Student Council, there may be times when Councillors will need to make a vote on a motion. There are two types of Voting:

1. Vote by Secret Ballot
2. Divisions

Once everyone has voted, there are two types of counting:

1. Popular Vote
2. Proportional Representation

### **5.3 Voting by Secret Ballot**

Voting by Secret ballot is used when voting on a motion of significant importance, that may have widespread effects on the Council and public, or when electing a qualified person to a position. These elections are more complex, and allow for multiple answers (in the case of Proportional Representation) as well as Yes/No. When voting by secret ballot you should:

- Write down your favourite Candidate/Answer
- Not write your name, or anything that can be used to identify you

### **5.4 Voting by Divisions**

Voting by Divisions is used on general motions. Divisions involve Councillors casting a vote by physically walking down one of two corridors on either side of the chamber: either the 'Aye' lobby or the 'No' lobby.

## **5.5 Popular Vote**

The candidate/motion who wins the most amount of votes in each debate succeeds. Voting Councillors may only vote for their favourite candidate, displayed on the ballot.

## **5.6 Proportional Representation**

A quota is decided on the amount of people present at a meeting. The candidate/motion preferences are displayed, and Voting Councillors write 1 opposite their first choice ,2 opposite their second choice, 3 opposite their third. You may stop after 1<sup>st</sup> preference, or continue to give a preferential vote to as many choices available on the motion.

# **Article 6: Assembly System**

## **6.1 General Meetings**

Meetings should be held at least once a month and have a quorum of 15 members to proceed. The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson are the only members with the authority to call a meeting. Subsequent Ministers and all Councillors may be informed through Announcements, Text, Email and social media.

A general meeting may take place afterschool, or in special occurrences, during school.

## **6.2 Executive & Government Meetings**

Executive meetings require Officers and Ministers to be present. The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson are the only members with the authority to call a meeting.

The Executive can hold separate meetings pertaining to the managing of the Council and their specific roles. These meetings do not need minutes, but a synopsis can be conveyed to Councillors at the next Council meeting.

## **6.3 'Ad Hoc' Meetings**

Where an urgent matter arises, the Government reserves the right to call an 'Ad Hoc' meeting. This may be called during school, at a time where it is believed will minimise potential disruption. The topic of urgency will be the first, foremost, and only motion of that meeting.

## **6.4 Annual General Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting takes place in the last term of school before summer. During the Annual General Meeting, the past year can be reflected on and Councillors can get to know one another further. During the Annual General Meeting (AGM), Executive presents to shareholders.

## **6.5 Finance and Fundraising**

DGS SC is a publicly funded and run committee of Dundalk Grammar School. It must therefore be transparent with its funding and expenses. There is currently no funding provided by management, unless requested for a specific and due purpose.

## **6.6 Meetings with Stakeholders**

Stakeholders such as the PTA, Board of Management as well as School Head(s) are also entitled to meet with the Council, either with the Council in full or just the Executive and/ or Ministers. This may be to discuss a specific topic, or to request information.

## **6.7 Sub-Committees**

Sub-Committees of Councillors can be formed by the Executive. Members of committee must be volunteers, not appointed. Committees deal with specific issues or topics, for instance, the organisation of an event, or a project.

## **6.8 Event Planning**

Events, such as the talent show, are planned by the Council. Volunteering Councillors can help with logistics (setup, etc), as well as aiding in organisation. Main organisational duties befall the Executive and can be delegated to Ministers.

## **6.9 Invited Meeting Guests**

Teachers, staff and key stakeholders may attend meetings if invited. The meeting should proceed as normal, with the attending member able to make statements or ask questions throughout or at the end of the meeting. However, they are excluded from voting on motions or interfering with other council business.

# **Article 7: Standing Orders**

## **7.1 General Etiquette**

Councillors should arrive on time.

If a Councillor is unable to attend, they should communicate their absence to the Executive

When a Councillor needs to be excused, they should do so without disrupting the motion

## **7.2 Motions & Debates**

Councillors are not to discuss; any uncomplimentary mentions, personal grievances / 'gossip' and

ongoing disciplinary matters.

Every Councillor is given an equal say on the council and in decision making. Councillors should not talk over each other, or add comments to a motion/debate without being addressed by Officers.

### **7.3 The Constitution**

The Constitution can be amended before being signed in by any Officer, although the task usually falls to the Secretary General as they are typically in charge of written tasks. The Constitution must be signed into “law” in a Council meeting of at least five Councillors (the Officers do not count). The Constitution should also be readily available online on the Student Council portion of the website.

### **7.4 Decision Making**

For decisions being made of significant importance as deemed by the chairperson, they must be 50% of members present.

### **7.5 Removing Councillors & General Resignation**

The Executive reserves the right to remove a member with a must and ‘just cause’ such as lack of attendance without valid reasoning, not committed to the aims of DGS SC, or seriously breaches school policy. The member must be given a week's notice of the vote and may address the Executive and/or Council with their defence.

#### **1. Removal Procedures:**

The liaison teacher/ Executive must receive several complaints from individual council members. A warning may be given. If serious violations or continued breaches occur, they will be asked to resign once the council has been made aware of the issue. The council member in question has the right to defend themselves which may lead to a continued reviewed membership until the Officers and Liaison teacher are satisfied with the outcome.

In which a vote requiring an Executive meeting will take place, this outcome will determine the membership of the council member.

If the Board of Governors/ Management informs the Executive that a member has seriously breached school ruling with valid reasoning. They will consult with the Liaison teacher, Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson in the removal of a member. This may occur when legality is in question and the liaison teacher and Government are to be in discussion on the member, where they will try and fairly represent the views of the council.

#### **2. Resignation:**

A Councillor/Executive member who wishes to resign from office may furnish the Executive with a letter of resignation. They should inform the Liaison teacher and their Form Teacher and anyone else appropriate.

## **7.6 Removing Officers/Government**

If Councillor(s) feels an officer is not fulfilling the responsibilities of their role and there is a lack of confidence in their position, they should propose a motion to the Liaison Teacher. The Procedure for Removing Officers is as follows:

- Letters are received by the Liaison teacher
- The amount of letters received totals up to a 25% quota.
- The Letter reason is valid and constitutional
- 

This will spark a Vote of No Confidence in the Officer. If granted, it will propose to remove their title and they will be given a week's notice to address with a defence.

If Councillor(s) feel unhappy that the Government and its associated boards and committees are not fulfilling the roles and responsibilities, they should also propose a motion to the Liaison Teacher. The Procedure for Removing Government is as follows:

- Letters and reasoning is received by the Liaison Teacher
- The amount of letters received totals up to a 50% quota
- The Letter reason is constitutional and valid.

This will spark a Vote of No Confidence in the Government. If granted, it will propose to remove their titles and responsibilities and they will be given a week's notice to address with a defence.

## **7.7 Filling Vacancies**

To fill vacancies the Student Council may decide to hold a by-election or Co-opt.

## **7.8 Changes to the Constitution**

The Constitution is the guiding set of rules for the Student Council, and its Executive, but is in no way exhaustive. Any Councillor may propose to change the Constitution. If a Motion is set to do so, Councillors shall be given a weeks' notice of the changes that are proposed, and its effects.

## **7.9 Relevant Training**

If agreed to be necessary, the relevant training will be provided by Officers or ISSU.

## **7.10 'Null and Void' Decisions**

Any motions made by a Councillor which have not reached a majority vote, will be made 'Null and Void' and shall be addressed accordingly.

# Conclusion

This document hopefully clarifies the rules, procedures, and expectations for Dundalk Grammar School's Student Council. It is the point of reference in confusion. If rules are not clear enough, the Teacher Liaison should be consulted on the best course of action. For Councillors uncertain of their role, they should speak to the Teacher Liaison or a member of the Executive.

Yours Sincerely,

**Isabelle Janssen**

Chairperson

**Max McCaldin**

Vice-Chairperson

**Dylan Gilmore**

Secretary Generale

**Official as of 3/03/2022**