



What are the principles of an effective School Council or pupil group?

Using our evidence from inspections as a starting point, we have worked with pupils in secondary schools to gather their ideas on the principles of effective school councils or pupil groups.

- Pupil representatives are from diverse groups that represent the whole community across all year groups
- Pupil representatives are well-respected, successful and engaged in different aspects of school-life and are therefore knowledgeable about the whole school
- Pupil representatives listen to other pupils, are patient and represent the views of all pupils not just their own
- There shouldn't be any negative judgements of someone's opinion in the Council meetings. It is safe to share opinions and to speak up. This comes from everyone in the group - pupils and staff
- There are regular surveys to get constant feedback from pupils and teachers about the important issues to discuss in Council/groups
- The Council/pupil groups hold regular meetings so they are constantly able to review decisions, their impact and what can be improved next
- Pupils run the meetings, not teachers or other staff
- Pupils have different roles – chair, secretary etc, and understand how to fulfil these roles (perhaps through training)
- Meetings have agendas that have been planned by the pupils
- Meetings address topics that are important to pupils, as well as topics school staff have asked them to discuss
- The council/group discusses a range of topics and not just the same things all the time (e.g. does the council/group discuss what and how they learn?)
- School Council discussions are focused on school improvement
- The pupils on the Council/group represent the views of other pupils in the school (e.g. they gather their views through form and year group councils, through suggestion boxes or surveys)
- The Council/group makes decisions on what has been discussed and decide on actions
- Someone from the Council/group is responsible for each action and takes it forward after the meeting
- The school acts on the suggestions of the School Council/pupil groups
- Decisions from the meeting are communicated to other pupils and staff
- Progress on actions from previous meetings is discussed in following meetings
- There should be regular feedback to all pupils and staff on the outcomes of meetings. The feedback should be led by members of the School Council.
- The Council/group regularly seeks the views of other pupils and staff on how effective they are and how much other pupils and staff know about what they do