

## **CONSTITUTION OF THE STUDENT COUNCIL**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This document sets out the Constitution of Stafford College Student Council (the 'Council') which is recognised by the Corporation as a democratically run organisation, committed to serving and representing the students of the College. This Constitution shall take effect from 1 September 2009 and shall be subject to review by the Corporation at least every 5 years.

### **2. Legal Background**

- 2.1 The Student Council meets the definition of a students' union as defined in section 20 of the Education Act 1994 in that it is a body which represents and promotes the general interests of students at the College in matters concerned with the operation of the College. For legal purposes the elected members of the Council have the same responsibilities / duties as officers of a Students' Union.
- 2.2 The Student Council is a charity and has to comply with the law's requirements for charities.
- 2.3 Section 22 of the Education Act 1994 requires the governing bodies of colleges to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to secure that a students' union operates in a fair and democratic manner and is accountable for its finances.

### **3. Aims**

- 3.1 The aims of the Council are as follows:

- To promote the general interests of College students;
- To represent the interests of College students and act as a channel of communication with College Management and other bodies;
- To promote, encourage and co-ordinate social, cultural and sporting activities for students at the College;
- To promote equality of opportunity for all students at the College.

### **3. Membership**

- 3.1 All College students over the age of 16 shall be eligible to participate in Council activities, to stand for election to the Council and vote in Council elections.
- 4.1 Members of the Council are elected to represent all other learners within the College. Membership is as outlined in the Council's standing orders in Appendix 1.
- 4.2 Elections to the Council shall normally be held in October of each year with members serving until the end of an academic year. Elections to the Council will be conducted by fairly and properly using on-line voting arrangements.
- 4.3 A student has the right not to be a member of the Council or be represented by it - a student who opts out in this way should not be unfairly disadvantaged in the provision of services or otherwise.

### **4 Interest Groups**

- 4.1 The Council shall establish a number of Interest Groups to support the work of the Council for areas such as Equality and Diversity, Health and Wellbeing, Social and Activities Group, Environmental Group and the 19+ Association.
- 4.2 One member from each Interest Group shall also attend the Council meetings. Members of the Interest Group will choose between them which member shall attend the Council meetings.

### **5. Clubs and Societies**

- 5.1 Clubs and societies may be recognised by the Student Council provided that they do not breach the Council's aims and objectives.

## **6. Links to External Organisations**

- 6.1 Any proposal to formally link with (affiliate) to an external organisation **must firstly** be approved **by the** Council.

## **7. Complaints Procedure**

- 7.1 Complaints about a Council Member shall be dealt with under the complaints procedure contained in Appendix Three (Code of Practice) of this Constitution.

## **8. Council Finance**

- 8.1 Student Council members are responsible for ensuring that Council funds are only used for purposes which are permitted by this constitution and promote the charitable objects of the Council. (that is to further the interests of the students in a way that assists in the educational aims of the College).
- 8.2 The Council shall request appropriate funds from Stafford College to enable it to effectively pursue its aims and objectives. This annual allocation of funding **will** be decided by **the Senior Management Team as part of the budget setting process.**
- 8.3 The financial year of the Council shall run from 1 September to 31 August.
- 8.4 The Council shall ensure that its finances are checked and audited annually by a recognised **audit firm.** The approved accounts shall be reported to the Resources Committee on an annual basis.

## **9. Amendments**

- 9.1 The Council shall be the only body permitted to amend the Constitution. All amendments will be subject to the approval of the College Corporation before they can be implemented.
- 9.2 A complaints procedure is available form Student Services to students where they are dissatisfied in their dealings with the Council

## Appendix 1 : FINANCE REGULATIONS

### 4.1 Bank Accounts

- i) There shall be a bank account held in the name of the Council. There shall be four signatories to the account:
  - The HE Student Governor
  - The FE Student Governor
  - The Marketing & Student Service Manager
  - A finance support person (a member of staff)
- ii) Cheques shall be signed by either the HE Student Governor or the FE Student Governor (the 'Governors') **and** either the Marketing & Student Service Manager or the finance support person. In the event that there is a vacancy for the posts of HE and FE Student Governors, the Marketing & Student Service Manager and the finance support person shall be authorised to sign cheques.

### 4.3 Limits on payments

- i) All expenditure on student activities over £50 shall be approved by the relevant Interest Group. Any expenditure over £250 shall be approved by the Council.
- ii) If there is an urgent need for expenditure, and it is not possible to call a Council meeting before the expenditure is needed, a cheque can be completed and signed by either the HE Student Governor or the FE Student Governor (the 'Governors') **and** either the Marketing & Student Service Manager or the finance support person.
- iii) The Student Liaison Officer shall be responsible for the operation of the petty cash account and a record of transactions shall be presented at every Council meeting.

### 4.7 Insurance

- ii) The Council is responsible for ensuring that proper insurance cover is undertaken, including fire risks, theft, damage and loss etc. of property and employers' liability.

### 4.8 Events

- i) The cost of all proposed events undertaken or provided by the Council must be estimated and presented to Council meetings for approval.
- ii) If there is an urgent need for expenditure, and it is not possible to call a Council meeting before the expenditure is needed, a cheque can be completed and signed by either the HE Student Governor or the FE Student Governor (the 'Governors') and either the Marketing & Student Service Manager or the finance support person.
- iii) Following the event, the actual cost of the event will be calculated and reported to the Council.
- iv) Annually, the Social and Activities Group shall draw up a proposed entertainments budget, subject to consultation with and ratification by the Student Council.

### 4.9 Expenses to Elected Members of the Council or Interest Group members

- i) Any Council member may receive expenses for costs wholly and exclusively incurred on Council business. Receipts must be provided to evidence any expenses incurred.

### 4.10 Petty cash

- i) The petty cash limit shall be £50. The Council shall ensure that petty cash stays at or below this limit and that a record is kept of all advances and expenditure.

#### **4.11 Donations**

- i) The Council and Interest Groups shall not make donations or affiliations to any organisation outside the aims and objectives of the Council.
- ii) Any Council or Interest Group member under the age of 18 shall not authorise any expenditure, take responsibility for any budget, sign cheques or make any financial decisions.

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## STANDING ORDERS OF THE STUDENT COUNCIL

### 1. Aims and Objectives

- i) To provide a forum so that students can express their views on improving learning and enjoyment of College life.
- ii) To provide a channel of communication between learners and staff.
- iii) To enable student representatives to consult with College Management.
- iv) To inform College Management of student views on College life.
- v) To enable students to get involved in College decision-making.

### 2. Terms of Reference

- i) To consider issues raised by Faculty and Unit Student Forums.
- ii) To consider issues raised by College Management on student matters.
- iii) To highlight good practice within the College and celebrate success stories.
- iv) To co-ordinate the work of Student Interest Groups in the following areas:
  - Equality and Diversity Group;
  - Mature and HE Students' Association;
  - Environmental Group;
  - Social and Activities Group;
  - Health and Wellbeing Group.
- v) To elect two members of the Council as governors (one FE and one HE representative).

### 3. Meetings

- i) The Council will normally meet twice per term. Extra meetings can be called by the Chair.
- ii) The Council will be chaired by the Student Governor elected by Student Council Members. In the absence of the Chair members will elect a Chair from those present.
- iii) College Management will be represented by the Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality)/a Head of Faculty.

### 4. Agendas

- i) Feedback from Faculty/Unit Forums and Interest Groups will be standing items.
- ii) The Student Liaison Officer will present a report to each meeting on the student budget provided by the College.
- iii) College Management will provide an update on issues affecting the College.
- iv) Student Governors will provide an update on the work of the Corporation.

### 5. Membership

- i) The Student Council shall comprise 19 members:
  - Two representatives nominated by each Faculty (8 members)
  - Two representatives nominated by the HE student body (2)
  - One representative nominated by each cross-College Unit (3)
  - At least one representative from each of the five Interest Groups (5)
  - Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) or Head of Faculty
- ii) Any member of the Student Council who fails to attend three consecutive Student Council meetings without giving apologies to the Clerk, and does not provide satisfactory reasons acceptable to the Student Council, shall be considered to have resigned.
- iii) The following may also be invited to attend Council meetings:
  - Corporation Member (observer)
  - Every Child Matters Co-ordinator
  - Head of Faculty
  - Quality Manager

### 6. Reporting

- i) College Management members will report Council activities to SMT.
- ii) Student Governors will give updates on Council meetings to the Corporation.

### 7. Administration

- i) The Student Liaison Officer will act as Clerk for the Council.