

MARYMOUNT HIGH SCHOOL

Students' Council Election 2020-2021



Nominations

NOW OPEN UNTIL

October 30, 2020

We are looking for:

**Students' Council Representatives from Grades 7-13
to form the 2020-2021 Students' Council Body**

Online Election

Date:

November 2, 2020

STUDENTS' COUNCIL ELECTIONS PROCEDURES

In establishing a students' council, certain procedures must be carried out to ensure democracy and transparency at all levels. The election process will typically involve:

- ✓ Election of class representatives
- ✓ Election of the school's students' council executive

THE FOLLOWING **MUST** APPLY TO ANY STUDENTS' COUNCIL ELECTION:

- Students should have a shared understanding of the role of the council prior to elections ·
- The procedure for nominations and elections is agreed and documented in advance · All students are made aware of how and where voting will take place
- Only registered students can be elected to serve on a school's students' council body ·
- Only students can vote in a students' council election
- Each student only has one vote in an election

Nominations – Class Elections

In putting a students' council in place, the process begins with having class elections. For class elections, nomination is the method through which any student can suggest that another student in the class be the students' council representative for that class.

Before nominating a student to be the class representative, the form teacher should ensure that all students in the class have a clear understanding of the role that the students' council representative is expected to fulfil.

For class elections, any student in that class may nominate another student. Students should be nominated based on their:

- ✓ demonstrated understanding and commitment to the AIMS and OBJECTIVES of the students' council

- ✓ ability to participate actively in the plans and activities of the council, and motivate the class to participate as well
- ✓ ability to represent the views and concerns of the class and NOT HIS/HER own views ▪
- ✓ understanding that attendance at meetings is very important and that aside from illness or other serious considerations, ATTENDANCE IS COMPULSORY
- ✓ capacity to REPORT to the class after each council meeting.

Once all students are clear on the role of the council, they can then be asked to nominate one of their classmates to be their representative – their voice on the school’s students’ council. Through the staff advisor, the school should set a date or a timeline during which nominations will be accepted.

How to nominate a students’ council representative for the class

At a designated time, students can be asked by their form teacher to nominate a classmate for the position. Any student can then rise to say: **“I [student’s name] beg to nominate [classmate’s name] for the position of students’ council representative for this class”**. A nomination is not complete however until it is seconded by another classmate. ‘Seconded’ means that another student is indicating that they are in support of the nomination. The person who is seconding the nomination will typically say, **“I [student’s name] second the nomination of [classmate’s name] for the position of students’ council representative for this class”**.

Once the nomination has been seconded, the suggested student must then accept the nomination by simply saying, **“I accept the nomination”**. If the student does not want to serve as students’ council representative, they can respectfully decline and will not be considered as a candidate in the students’ council elections for that class.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD REPRESENTATIVE?

- When choosing class representatives, it is important to think about who will do the job well and fairly. ***The election should not be a popularity contest.***

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CLASS REPRESENTATIVE

- As a class representative on the students' council, your job is to listen to the views and ideas of your class and pass these issues on to the students' council.
- You also have to let the class know what the students' council is doing.

A CLASS REPRESENTATIVE SHOULD HAVE THE FOLLOWING QUALITIES:

- **RELIABLE:** Will you do everything you have promised to do?
- **FAIR:** Can you represent the views and ideas of your class clearly at council meetings, even if you don't agree with them?
- **A GOOD LEADER AND NEGOTIATOR:** Can you lead a group in a discussion, listen to everyone's point of view and give advice.
- **A GOOD SPEAKER:** Can you speak clearly and concisely to get your point across and take an active part in discussions?
- **ACCURATE AND EFFICIENT:** Will you make accurate notes at class and students' council meetings?
- **TRUSTWORTHY:** If you are told something in confidence, or if confidential issues are discussed at a students' council meeting, can you keep them confidential?

AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDENTS' COUNCIL MOVEMENT

WHAT IS A STUDENTS' COUNCIL?

A students' council is a representative structure through which students become involved in the decision making processes of the institution, working in partnership with school management and staff and parents for the benefit of the school and its students. The council promotes the interests of the school and the involvement of students in the affairs of the school, in co-operation with the board, parents and teachers.

WHY HAVE STUDENTS' COUNCILS?

Students' councils have long been a staple in Jamaica's secondary school system. The council is based upon principles of active citizenship, participation and positive youth development. The council is an avenue for students to have a say on issues of concern. A number of national and international policies and laws underscore the right of students to voice their opinions on matters affecting them. Among these policies and laws are the Education Act (1980), the National Youth Policy (2004), the Child Care and Protection Act, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Each of these documents specifies rights and responsibilities of children and youth. Students' councillors should make themselves aware of the content of these documents as the documents contain information that can and should guide councillors in their advocacy efforts.

NATIONAL SECONDARY STUDENTS' COUNCIL (NSSC)

The National Secondary Students' Council was established in 1975, through a policy brought before government in 1973. This policy came as a response to the growing demand for effective student representation and the need for students' involvement in the decision making process of schools at the all levels. The Education Regulations of 1980 legitimised the movement, in stating that *"every public education institution shall have a students' council, which shall consist of elected representatives of students with at least one staff advisor, elected by students."*

The NSSC continues its representation of Jamaica's students with the guiding philosophy, ***“responsible students make the difference”***.

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF THE COUNCIL

The students' council, in each school offers a mechanism for students to:

- Participate in decision-making structures in their schools;
- Present their views on any matter affecting them to relevant decision-making bodies in the school (e.g. school principal, Board of Management); and
- Advocate on issues affecting students, and provide recommendations for addressing these issues.

THE STUDENTS' COUNCILLOR

A students' councillor is an individual who has been democratically elected by students to represent and advocate for the acknowledgement and respect of their rights. While doing so, councillors must enforce discipline and good conduct at all times.

Responsibilities of the Students' Councillor

- The students' councillor is responsible for representing matters of the membership of his/her class to the students' council, school boards and committees
- The students' councillor must communicate all instructions and decisions made within the council to its members
- The students' councillor advocates on behalf of the members of his/her class
- The students' councillor sensitises his/her fellow students of their rights and responsibilities
- The students' council can mediate in student matters prior to disciplinary actions by the school administration

- The students' councillor must elevate the morals and values of the student population through development programmes

Code of Conduct for the Students' Councillor

- The students' councillor must abide by the rules of the council, the school and the country
- The students' councillor must exhibit exemplary behaviour in terms of mannerism and interaction both on and off the school campus
- The students' councillor must not abuse the privileges of office and must always maintain integrity

An effective councillor:

- Must be an effective advocate
- Must be able to network by way of initiating and maintaining contact with individuals and organisations that share or support the goals of the council
- Should report issues discussed during meetings to classmates, and should report concerns of their fellow students to the council and school administration
- Attends meetings regularly
- Must be a good listener
- Must be trustworthy and maintain confidentiality when the need arises
- Allocates sufficient time to listen to student concerns
- Should have appropriate conflict handling and negotiation skills
- Should coach fellow classmate, encouraging and guiding them towards achieving superior results ▪
- Is an exemplary figure at all levels of the NSSC and by extension the wider society

THE STRUCTURE OF THE STUDENTS' COUNCIL

Students' Council Members

First, it should be established that only registered students of a school can become members of that schools' students' council. The council is a mechanism for representing students and therefore involves students selecting from among their peers, the group of individuals that they want to advocate on their behalf.

Executive Members of the Council

The executive body is the team that is charged with the responsibility of leading the council. Each school can decide on the positions that will comprise the executive body. It is recommended however that the executive body include: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary and Public Relations Officer.

Students' Council Staff Advisor

The students' council staff advisor (or faculty advisor) is a teacher who provides support to the council by serving as a resource person, mentor and consultant. According to the Education Regulations, each council must have a staff advisor assigned to the council.