

School Council Policy

St Vincent's School for Sensory Impairment and Other Needs



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Contents

1. Purpose of the policy	2
2. Vision	2
3. Aims and Outcomes	3
4. Meetings and Communication	3
5. Curriculum Overview	3
6. Links to Smart Schools Council	4
7. Roles and Responsibilities	4
8. Inclusion.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
9. Links to Other Policies	5
10. Monitoring and Review	6

1. Purpose of the policy

This policy outlines the purpose, structure, and operation of the School Council at St Vincent's School. The School Council provides pupils with a voice in decision-making and helps to promote leadership, responsibility, and democratic participation across all year groups.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Define how the School Council operates within the wider ethos of St Vincent's.
- Ensure every pupil has the opportunity to express views and contribute to school improvement.
- Promote the values of inclusion, equality, and respect.
- Provide clarity for pupils, staff, and parents about the council's role and procedures.
- Demonstrate how the School Council contributes to pupil development and citizenship education.

2. Vision

At St Vincent's, pupil voice is at the heart of our community. We believe every pupil, regardless of sensory or additional need, should have the opportunity to influence how their school runs.

Our vision for the School Council is to:

- Empower pupils to express their ideas confidently and respectfully.
- Encourage leadership and teamwork through shared responsibility.
- Promote active citizenship, social awareness, and school improvement.
- Ensure pupil perspectives shape decisions on key issues, from wellbeing to learning environment.
- Develop confidence, communication skills, and independence in all members.

3. Aims and outcomes

The School Council aims to:

- Represent the views and interests of all pupils.
- Provide a formal structure for consultation and discussion.
- Encourage pupils to take an active role in shaping school life.
- Foster democratic values, mutual respect, and collaboration.
- Support whole-school improvement through pupil-led initiatives.

Outcomes

By the end of the academic year, the School Council will:

- Hold regular meetings and record discussions on the Smart School Council system.
- Work collaboratively to identify and address issues raised by pupils.
- Present feedback and proposals to the Headteacher each term.
- Lead projects or campaigns that enhance school life (e.g. charity work, environmental initiatives, inclusion drives).

4. Structure and Operation

- The School Council is made up of representatives from each year group across the school.
- Each class elects their representative at the start of the school year through an accessible, inclusive process.
- Representatives serve for one academic year, with opportunities for re-election.
- The council elects a Chairperson, Vice Chair, and Secretary to oversee meetings and communication.
- Staff support is provided by a designated School Council Coordinator who ensures accessibility and guidance.

5. Meetings and Communication

- The School Council meets every two weeks during term time.
- Each meeting follows an agreed agenda prepared by the Chair and Coordinator.

- Notes and outcomes are logged on the Smart School Council system, ensuring transparency and accountability.
- The Chairperson meets with the Headteacher after each meeting to discuss key issues and feedback from pupils.
- Council decisions and updates are shared with staff, parents, and pupils through assemblies, newsletters, or displays.

6. Links to Smart Schools Council

St Vincent's is a proud member of the Smart School Councils network, which provides a structured and inclusive model for pupil participation.

Through Smart School Councils, we ensure that:

- Every pupil has a voice in decision-making through class-based discussions.
- Debates and votes are logged and tracked online for transparency.
- Pupil-led projects are supported with clear frameworks and resources.
- The School Council aligns with national standards for active pupil engagement.

All School Council debates and decisions are recorded using the Smart School Councils online system, ensuring evidence of impact and ongoing reflection.



7. Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher:

- Meets regularly with the Chair to discuss outcomes and next steps.
- Supports implementation of agreed actions where appropriate.

School Council Coordinator:

- Facilitates meetings and ensures accessibility.
- Maintains the Smart School Council platform and records.
- Encourages pupil participation and ensures inclusivity.

Chairperson:

- Leads meetings, keeps discussions on task, and presents feedback to the Principal.

Representatives:

- Gather views from their year group.
- Contribute ideas, discussions, and votes during meetings.
- Share feedback with their peers following meetings.

All Staff:

- Encourage pupils to engage with School Council initiatives.
- Support the development of pupil voice and leadership skills.

8. Inclusion

Inclusion is central to the work of the School Council. Every pupil at St Vincent's has the right and opportunity to contribute their views, regardless of ability or sensory need.

Adaptations include:

- Providing accessible meeting materials in large print, Braille, or audio format.
- Using assistive technology to ensure full participation.
- Allowing flexible communication methods (spoken, tactile, or digital).
- Offering adult or peer support where needed.

All activities are designed to promote equity, respect, and representation, ensuring that the School Council truly reflects the voices of all pupils within our community.

9. Links to other policies

- **Curriculum Policy**
- **PSHE and Citizenship Policy**

- **Inclusion Policy**
- **Behaviour Policy**
- **Safeguarding Policy**

10. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the School Council Coordinator and Senior Leadership Team, with input from pupil representatives.

Outcomes and developments from the School Council will be shared with governors as part of the school's annual review process.