



## Students' Union Constitution

(30 June 2024)

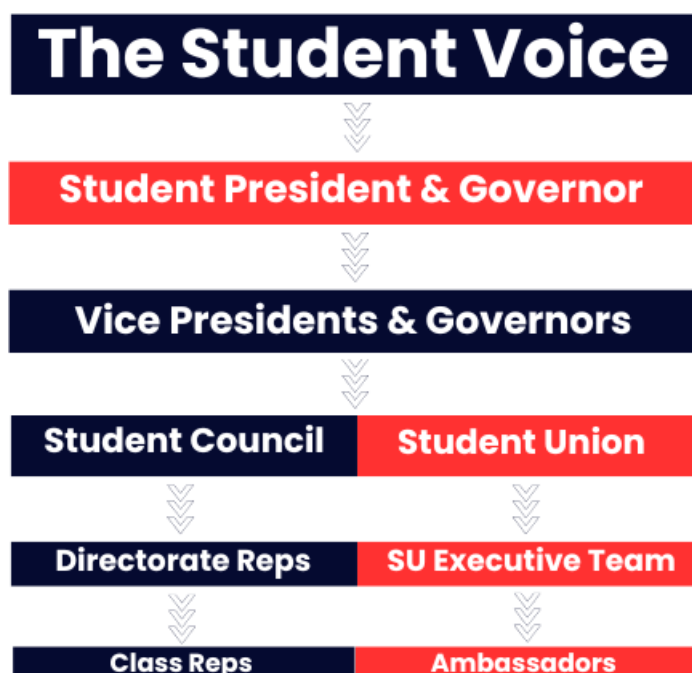
(approved by the Governing Body 11 July 2024)

### Introduction

The Student Union Constitution is a guidance document for students, staff, and stakeholders, supplying a framework for how the Student Union at the Middlesbrough College Group operates. The aim of the Student Union Constitution is to provide a reference document for all Student Union activity and to act as a point of clarity for any queries or issues that may arise as part of the day-to-day operation of the Student Union across all campuses of the Middlesbrough College Group.

### The Student Voice Structure

The Student Voice is a primary influence for all aim and objective setting alongside the implementation of strategies and change across college. With its various strands, the Middlesbrough College Student Voice is vibrant, strong and at the heart of our student community.



## Aims and Objectives of the Student Voice

- To create a partnership between students and staff.
- To create a forum for the sharing and exchanging of ideas throughout the College.
- To create a clear channel of communication between representatives of the Student Council and other bodies.
- To involve the whole college community in raising aspirations, attainment, and standards through the creation of new initiatives, problem solving and achieving goals.
- To empower and enable students to contribute and become active citizens in the wider community.
- To represent the students' views at the Governing Body and to ensure a two-way communication between students and staff. This will include attendance at internal committee meetings, as agreed with the Principal / Chief Executive.
- To create a network locally, regionally, and nationally with other Students' Unions.

## Student Union

All students receive an automatic membership to the Student Union when they enrol, giving them full access to executive roles, the ambassadors programme, clubs, and societies. Students can be as involved as they would like to be and can choose to 'opt out' at any time, however this does result in some Student Union benefits being revoked.

The Student Union Executive Team are the prime representatives for the Students' Union and are the main spokespersons to media and external bodies. They are elected in by students to support the Student Engagement Strategy and are the conduit for the Student Voice, along with the Student Council.

The team consists of 4 Executive Officers who will develop the existing mechanisms and ensure that students are represented exceptionally at all levels, and that consultation and aspiration are at the heart of the 'Learner Journey'.

The Executive Officers roles are:

- Health and Wellbeing SU Officer
- Anti-bullying SU Officer
- Equality and Diversity SU Officer

As well as leading on campaigns they also:

- Lead on their own subgroups, i.e. antibullying-peer mentors etc.
- Act as the Student Representative on relevant internal committees.
- Act as a liaison within the Senior Leadership Team / College Management Team, and provide regular updates on Student Union activity, outcomes, and Student Council information.
- Work with the Head of Student Engagement, Director of Student Services and the Vice Principal for Students and Communication in terms of managing the Student Union budget.

### **Student Membership and Opting Out**

- Every student, when enrolled onto a Middlesbrough College course, is automatically opted into the Middlesbrough College Student Union.
- Students can relinquish their right to membership of the Student Union and, should they wish to do so, students should sign the Opt-out Register, which is held in Student Services.
- Any student who opts out of the Student Union will not be able to participate in the democratic decision making of the Student Union. This includes not being able to stand for any position in the Student Union.
- Any student who opts out of the Student Union and then wishes to become a member of the Student Union again, must notify The Student Union Executive Team in writing. If the application falls within the 20 days of Students' Union Executive nominations opening, then they are not eligible to take up the privileges of membership until the nomination period has been closed.

### **Responsibilities of the Student Union**

- The job descriptions for the Student Union Executive Team will be updated annually by the Head of Student Engagement and the Head of Governance.
- A student can hold a position within the Student Union Executive Team for a maximum of 2 years before applying for re-election.
- If a student wishes to relinquish their post after a year, or is not re-enrolling in September, their post will be replaced through an election process ran during the last half term before summer.

### **Student Union Complaints Procedure**

- All Students are entitled to complain about unfair/unreasonable treatment by the Student Union, including students who have exercised their right to leave the Student Union. To do this, they can speak to the Head of Student Engagement, the Director of Student Services or the Vice Principal of Students and Communications, where appropriate.

- Members of the Student Union that would like to complain about a member of staff should follow the College Complaints Procedure to do so.

## **Student Council**

The Student Council works alongside the Student Union and has various streams to ensure the student voice is at the forefront of all staff actions, strategies, projects, and developments.

Each course group has representation in the student council, with class reps elected by their peers at the beginning of each academic year. Class reps attend meetings within their directorate and can volunteer to become Directorate Reps, attending the 4 annual Cross College Council meetings.

All class reps will be invited to a Student Conference in the first term of college where they will develop key skills in becoming a leader, public speaking and building resilience.

## **Responsibilities of the Student Council**

- Listen to peer ideas, suggestions and concerns.
- Collate all peer feedback to present at class rep meetings.
- Articulate concerns, ideas and suggestions raised in class discussions.
- Remaining impartial when presenting peer feedback, to ensure the student voice input is accurate and corresponds with class discussions.
- Discuss a range of issues brought by the Directorate Student Council Representatives or any other internal source e.g., Governing Body, Principal / Chief Executive, or other staff.
- Take an active role in the decision-making processes in college.
- Clearly disseminate information throughout the College via all established means e.g., E-mail, MS Teams, College Website, College main social media platforms, Directorate Council Meetings, Notice Boards and Screens.
- Comply with confidentiality, privacy, and data protection.
- Collaborate to determine the key roles and responsibilities of its representatives annually.
- Members of the Student Council have the power to apply a 'Vote of No Confidence' in the Student Council Executive Officers.

## **Structure and Membership**

- The Student Council will be chaired by the Student Governors. In the absence of both officers, the Head of Student Engagement will chair the meeting, and this will be determined at the beginning of the meeting.

- Cross College Representation is detailed below and is subject to change through discussion and agreement with the Cross-College Student Council, typically departments should elect up to 4 students to ensure there is always at least 1 person available to attend a meeting.

The Directorate Representatives are:

- Sport, Travel and Public Services
- Services Industries & Retail Skills
- Visual & Performing Arts
- Computing
- Construction
- Engineering
- Health and Social Care
- Childcare
- Business & Education
- A Levels
- Apprentices
- Progression Studies
- Higher Education
- TTE
- Adult & Community Learning

Key managers will also attend the Student Council meetings to provide feedback and answers to key issues being raised by students. Invitations to these meetings are sent out on a termly basis.

- The Student Council will meet on a termly basis and this will be planned into the College meetings schedule. When minutes are taken, they will be circulated to the Senior Leadership Team / College Management Team and the Governing Body as soon as they have been approved.
- It is expected that all elected members of the Student Council attend every meeting, but if they are unable to do so a nominated substitute can attend, subject to the agreement of the Student Governors or the Head of Student Engagement.
- All members are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner conducive with their position as elected representatives of the Student Council.
- Training for Student Council Representatives will be made available, and to ensure continuity it is expected that all members remain on the Student Council for the duration of their course.
- All positions will run from 1 October to 31 July the following year, respectively.

## **Student Governors**

The Student Governors represent the student voice at the highest level, with involvement in both the Student Union and the Student Council.

**The Student Governor Roles are:**

- President Student Governor
- Vice President Student Governor

Two Student Governors are selected via a recruitment process comprising of a detailed application form, referees, and an interview with the Head of Student Engagement.

The Student Governors will work with the Head of Governance, who will develop their corporate knowledge, and support them before, during and after Governing Body and / or Committee meetings.

Each Year a Vice President is recruited, supporting the President with all duties, and shadowing the role closely, before taking presidency in their second year, in post.

Additionally, 1 other student will be elected as a Vice Student President and assisting governor to ensure there is always 2 students available for Governors meetings. The assistant can attend as a viewer of the meeting and cannot vote on decisions if the President and Vice President are both in attendance.

**Student Governor duties include:**

- Fronting the SU Executive team, supporting all Student Union activity, including the ambassadors programme, societies, and campaigns.
- Attend Governing Body meetings, training days and relevant committee meetings, to ensure the Student Union and wider Student Body is represented successfully.
- Chair four Cross College Council meetings in the academic year.
- Contribute to the decision-making process of the Governing Body.
- Attend regular meetings with the Head of Governance and Head of Student Engagement to develop the understanding of the role of Student Governors further.
- Comply with the Governing Body's Code of Conduct.
- Attend relevant training and meetings to fulfil their role as Student Governors.
- Attend relevant cross college meetings to represent the Student Union.
- Attend meetings with the Student Union Officers, as required.
- Report on 'The Student Voice and Student Union activity, verbally and written, supported by the Head of Student Engagement.

Should the Student Governors fail to attend 2 meetings without apologies or good reason, then they may be removed from the Student Union Executive Team following a discussion with the Head of Student Engagement and Head of Governance, Should this situation arise, a re-election may take place.

The Student Council have the power to vote out the Student Governors, if they feel they are not fulfilling their job role. This would be through a vote of no confidence and the process is held by the Head of Student Engagement

## Reporting

- All minutes of the Cross-College Student Council meetings will be circulated to members of the Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team / College Management Team as soon as they have been approved.
- The Student Governors will also work closely with the Nominated Governor for Student Voice / Safeguarding / Prevent / Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG) and SEN, ensuring they are kept informed of progress and invited to relevant meetings.
- The Student Union Executive Team will work together on a range of issues, and will meet regularly, providing feedback to the Student Governors and the Head of Student Engagement on actions agreed.
- Student Governors will meet with the Student Union Executive Officers prior to each Cross College Council Meeting to report on progress and to ensure the Union is represented in the Student Council.

## Higher Education (HE) Students

- Higher Education students who enrol via Middlesbrough College / Open University are entitled to run for positions with the Student Union Executive Team, if they have been issued a Middlesbrough College Student ID Card.
- An independent Higher Education Department meeting has been established to collect the specific views of HE students.
- HE Directorate Reps are also invited to attend and contribute to the Cross-College Council meeting.
- Higher Education Students, who have a Middlesbrough College Student ID Card, can vote in Middlesbrough College Students' Union Elections and / or run for a position.

## Financial Matters

- To issue available funding in line with College Financial Procedures.
- To be fair and student led in distribution of funds.
- To offer equal and clear opportunities to access the fund, to all students.
- To present, to the Governing Body, an annual up-date of the Student Council accounts.

## Clubs and Societies

- All Middlesbrough College Students can participate in Clubs and Societies that are set up in college.
- The Student Union Executive Team can take part in Clubs/Societies.

- Clubs and Societies are open to all students studying in Middlesbrough College.

## **Elections**

### **Student Union Executive Team**

- Student Union Executive Team elections are normally held in April each academic year and the dates are determined annually by the Head of Student Engagement in consultation with the current Student Union Executive Team and communicated to the Senior Leadership Team and Head of Governance.
- The position of Student Union Executive Team is for up to two years depending on an end of year review with the Head of Student Engagement
- If only one student applies for this position, elections will still take place however the student body can re-open nominations, by selecting reopen nominations on the voting form, should they wish to.

### **Student Council**

- Student Rep elections take place September/ October time, before the first Cross College Council Meeting.
- The Vice President Student Governor recruitment process is held in September / October each academic year, prior to the first Cross College Council Meeting, dates are determined annually.
- If only one student applies for the position as Class Representative, elections will still take place, however, they can be voted in/out of position by selecting 're-open nominations,' on the voting form. If the individual is voted out, then nominations will have to re-open for more students to apply for the position.
- If the above occurs, then the 're-open nominations' option, must be placed on all Voting Cards.