IT'S YOUR CHOICE USE YOUR VOICE

SET UP A STUDENT COUNCIL IN YOUR SCHOOL

It's in the ACT
get the FACTS at
www.studentcouncil.ie

What is a Student Council?

A Student Council is a representative structure for students only, through which they can become involved in the affairs of the school, working in partnership with school management, staff and parents for the benefit of the school and its students.

This definition of a student council was drawn up by the Working Group on Student Councils. This Working Group was set up and is chaired by the National Children's Office to encourage the establishment of effective and democratic student councils in all second level schools in the country. All of the partners in education, including students, are represented on this group.

Does your school have the right to set up a student council?

The Education Act 1998 states that Boards of Management must encourage and give all reasonable assistance to students in the formation and running of student councils. The National Children's Strategy states that children and young people will have a voice in matters that affect their lives and be provided with opportunities to participate in decision-making.

Both of these are Government policy

How can I set up a Student Council?

1. Gather support – get together with anyone who is interested (students; teachers; parents; other staff).
2. Log on to the Student Council website for background information and ideas – www.studentcouncil.ie.
3. Log on to the Union of Secondary Students (USS) website for ideas and support – www.ussonline.net.
4. Get a copy of the Department of Education and Science booklet – Student Councils: A Voice for Students from www.studentcouncil.ie. This contains practical advice on setting up councils.
5. Get a copy of the National Youth Council of Ireland publication – Youth Participation, Citizenship, Democracy from www.studentcouncil.ie. This contains helpful advice on setting up councils.
6. Seek a meeting with your school Principal.
7. Inform all the students in the school about setting up your Student Council.
8. Hold democratic elections for representatives from each year or class.
9. Hold your first meeting.
10. Draw up a constitution. Check out sample constitutions on www.studentcouncil.ie.
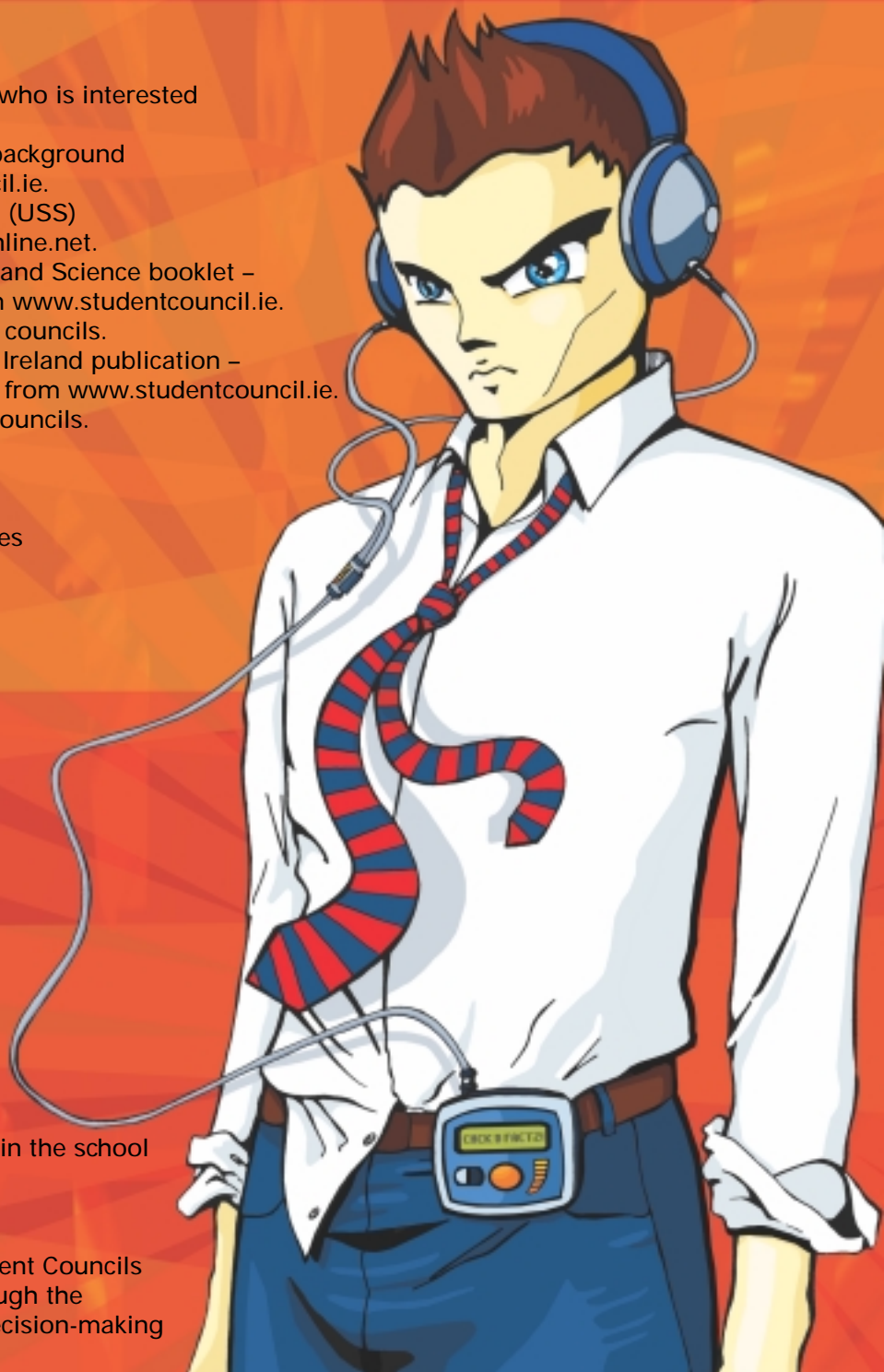
Why have a Student Council?

The benefits for YOU

- A group of students elected to represent your views
- Have a say on school issues such as uniforms, school rules and regulations
- Make your school more democratic
- Replace peer pressure with peer support
- Help prevent bullying
- Get involved in organising social events

The benefits for Your School

- Equality and respect for everyone involved in the school
- New ideas and a new point of view
- Improved student – teacher relations
- Support for younger students
- Build links with other schools through Student Councils
- A better school and satisfied students, through the involvement of students in planning and decision-making

Suggested activities of a Student Council

- Liaising with Principal and Board of Management on issues of concern to students
- Communication and co-operation with school staff
- Working with Parents Council in school
- Co-operating with management and staff on the development of school rules and regulations
- Be involved in developing the curriculum in your school
- Involvement in School Planning
- Having a say in school policies e.g. anti-bullying policy
- Making suggestions about improving school facilities
- Extra-curricular activities
- School newsletter/magazine
- Links with other schools
- Getting involved with the community
- Mentoring programmes for younger students
- Student Award ceremonies

Who can help to set up a Student Council in your school?

The National Children's Office
St. Martin's House, Waterloo Rd., Dublin 4.
phone: 01 2420000 website: www.nco.ie
email: child_strategy@health.irlgov.ie

The Department of Education and Science
Post-Primary Administration, Portlaoise Rd.,
Tullamore, Co. Offaly phone: 0506 25411
website: www.education.ie
email: info@education.gov.ie

The Union of Secondary Students
phone: 086 1779116 website: www.ussonline.net
email: info@ussonline.net

The National Youth Council of Ireland
3 Montague Street, Dublin 2
phone: 01 4784122 website: www.youth.ie email: info@nyci.ie

set up a student council
INYOURSCHOOL

Check the Student Council Website www.studentcouncil.ie for publications and guidelines on Student Councils, up-to-date information and links to relevant websites.