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Student Services and Equity Programs

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Department of Education and Training wishes to acknowledge the work of the following in the preparation of this document.

Project Manager: Stuart Hearne

The contributions of principals, teachers, students, departmental officers and personnel are gratefully acknowledged. In particular Doug Calleja, Danielle Fanning, Ariane Welch and Melinda Meldrum from the New South Wales Student Representative Council (NSWSRC) and Ruth Doyle, Harry Berwick, Geoff Robinson and Marianne Doyle, Student Welfare Consultants.

Design and layout: Murray Taylor / arthouse

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Introduction

Students are happier and participate in their education more effectively when their ideas are listened to and their opinions valued. Schools also benefit when students are involved in their own learning and the school's operation. A Student Representative Council (SRC) is one structure which can assist students and schools in achieving this ideal.

An SRC is a formal group of students, elected by their peers to represent them and their views. An SRC facilitates leadership and decision making by all students in the school. It is an important way in which schools can provide meaningful leadership opportunities for students.

This document has been designed to support schools and student leaders in establishing an effective and successful SRC by providing policy and operational information. Practical strategies and best practice examples have also been included.

A variety of suggestions for getting started have been designed for student leaders and teacher advisers. These can be found on pages 7 and 8. The graphic outline on pages 4 to 6, provides an overview of the guide and its contents.

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	Examples of good practice page 11	<p>Activity, Evaluate your SRC's effectiveness using the activity sheet provided Page 12</p>
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1. Ideas for using this resource

Ideas for student leaders

Determine what your SRC is all about by looking at **Why do schools have an SRC?** page 9, and working through **Goal setting and action planning**, page 72.

Evaluate the SRC's lines of communication, both within and beyond the school using the **Evaluating communication** activity sheet, page 18.

For schools wanting to establish an SRC, determine future actions by working through **Setting up an effective SRC**, page 19 and using the **Action planning** activity sheet on page 21.

Discuss the information and checklists provided in **How should an SRC work?** page 22, to determine if there is a need to change elections, constitution or meeting procedure.

Use **Skills to help an SRC work effectively**, page 49, to develop skills to assist in carrying out the role of SRC executive. This could be done in small workshop sessions with the support of the teacher adviser.

Trial the use of some of the suggested ideas in **Problem solving and decision making**, page 63, to solve your problem or use one of the sample situations provided.

Liaise with the principal to survey students to determine their views on the positive aspects of the school and their suggestions for improvement. Use **Goal setting and action planning**, page 72, to help develop plans for implementing improvements.

Locate the policies and documents mentioned in **References, further support and information**, page 75, and become familiar with them.

Ideas for teacher advisers

Use **Skills to help an SRC work effectively**, page 45, as a basis for a training day for SRC representatives. This could be done jointly with other schools.

Assist in evaluating the effectiveness of the SRC using **Examples of good practice**, page 11, and checklists provided.

Assist the students to understand and implement strategies suggested in the guide especially in **Examples of good practice**, page 11, **Setting up an effective SRC**, page 19 and **How should an SRC work?** Page 26.

Provide access to the documents and policies listed in **References, further support and information**, page 75.

2. Why do schools have an SRC?

The SRC is a body within the school which represents students and promotes their views and their participation in school decision making. While SRCs will actively canvass a wide range of issues which affect young people, they do so within a framework which ensures that the advice presented to students is balanced and relates to school activities, not wider community or political movements.

School activities need to be conducted within the *Controversial Issues in Schools* guidelines. Teachers and students need to be aware that schools are:

- neutral grounds for rational discourse and not arenas for opposing political views
- not places for recruiting into partisan groups (see Memorandum to Principals 98/224 S.192).

Whilst raising funds for the improvement of facilities or donation to charity is a worthwhile endeavour, a school's SRC should focus on the development of leadership skills and the meaningful involvement of students in school decision making. This guide provides examples of how this level of involvement can be achieved.

An effective SRC is:

Educational

Students develop skills in leadership and communication.

Democratic

Every student has a voice.

Responsible

Students solve real problems and make real decisions.

Sharing

Students share with the school executive, teachers and the school community in the decision-making.

Caring

Students care about their school and what happens in it and to it.

Fun and Rewarding

Students experience enjoyment through successful participation.

Policies you should know about.

The *Student Welfare Policy* (1996) is implemented in all schools and explicitly encourages student leadership. It covers three areas:

1. Effective learning and teaching
2. Positive climate and good discipline
3. Community participation

Student leadership and involvement relates to all three areas of the policy, but is specifically addressed in 2. Positive climate and good discipline, pages 6 and 7.

The *Student Welfare Policy* states that students should be involved in whole school decision making and that if this happens then

- students will participate in all aspects of school life as equals
- students will know and understand their school's organisation and know about SRCs and other representative bodies such as the school council.

Good Practice:

The SRC at a school awards certificates for citizenship and improving the spirit of the school. These awards are part of the school's merit system.

Students also have a responsibility to:

- participate actively in the learning and teaching process
- provide their views on school community decisions, including reviews of student welfare, using agreed upon processes which include SRCs and school parliaments.

The *Student Welfare Policy* was sent to all schools in a folder called *Student Welfare, Good Discipline and Effective Learning*. More information about this folder and the policies and documents it contains can be found in Section 8 References, further support and information.

Good Practice:

A school principal meets twice each term with the executive of the SRC to discuss aspects of school management including student welfare, curriculum matters, the school environment, and related financial issues.

Activity

Locate the *Student Welfare Good Discipline and Effective Learning* folder and the documents it contains.

Request a copy of the school discipline policy and documents which spell out the school's views on student welfare.

If you would like more information about the implications of these documents for students, contact the student welfare consultant at your district office who will be able to assist the SRC with further information.

Consider the SRC's involvement in the review process of the school discipline policy and the development of student welfare initiatives in the school. The student welfare consultant will be able to provide advice on these processes for your information.

Examples of good practice

The SRC is involved in:

- awarding certificates for citizenship and improving the spirit of the school. These awards are a part of the school's merit system
- committee decisions in all areas of school organisation
- workshops on a variety of topics and themes of concern to students including drug education, sexual harassment and other discrimination issues
- assisting schools to implement departmental policies eg, *Good Discipline and Effective Learning*
- making decisions about school organisation including subject choices, canteen organisation, community involvement, school management committee
- identifying problems which teachers may not be aware of eg, gender domination and bullying in particular playground areas
- seeking assistance in developing negotiation and problem solving skills to solve real issues in their school
- reviewing and evaluating policy implementation eg, student welfare, discipline and sport
- raising awareness of school policies and priorities such as student welfare, Aboriginal education, anti-racism, anti-violence and appeals and complaints procedures

- specific programs including peer support, peer mediation, drug education, anti-discrimination, gender equity, civics and citizenship
- forums for discussion of issues concerning young people
- caring for, and working towards improving the physical and social environment of the school
- organising activities for students, including discos, concerts, camps, sporting and debating competitions
- co-operating with teachers and others in running school events, including Year 7 and Year 11 orientations
- supporting students with special needs
- co-ordinating school assemblies
- fund raising for specific purposes

Activity

If you're interested in finding out how your SRC compares or how you could improve, look at the *Evaluating your SRC's effectiveness* activity sheet on pages 13 and 14.



Evaluating your SRC's effectiveness

Good Practice	Where are we now?	What can we do to improve?
SRC members are respected and encouraged to be actively involved, regardless of their age		
Elections for SRC membership are considered seriously and conducted formally		
Students are encouraged to reflect on the difference between popularity and leadership in the election of the SRC		
Students are involved in negotiation of school issues eg discipline, curriculum, timetabling, assessment procedures		
Students are aware of key policies, documents and priorities within the department and school		
Students are involved in the implementation and evaluation of these policies, documents and priorities		
There is good communication between students and teachers		
The SRC encourages community involvement		
Students are involved in a variety of programs eg, peer support, drug education, gender equity		

Evaluating your SRC's effectiveness

Good Practice	Where are we now?	What can we do to improve?
The SRC provides a forum for all students to discuss issues of concern		
The workload of the SRC is shared across its members		
The SRC organises a variety of activities for students eg, debates, workshops		
The SRC is involved in school events eg, Year 7 orientation, sports activities		
The SRC supports students with special needs		
The SRC is involved in school assemblies		
All members of the SRC are accessible and known to the school community		

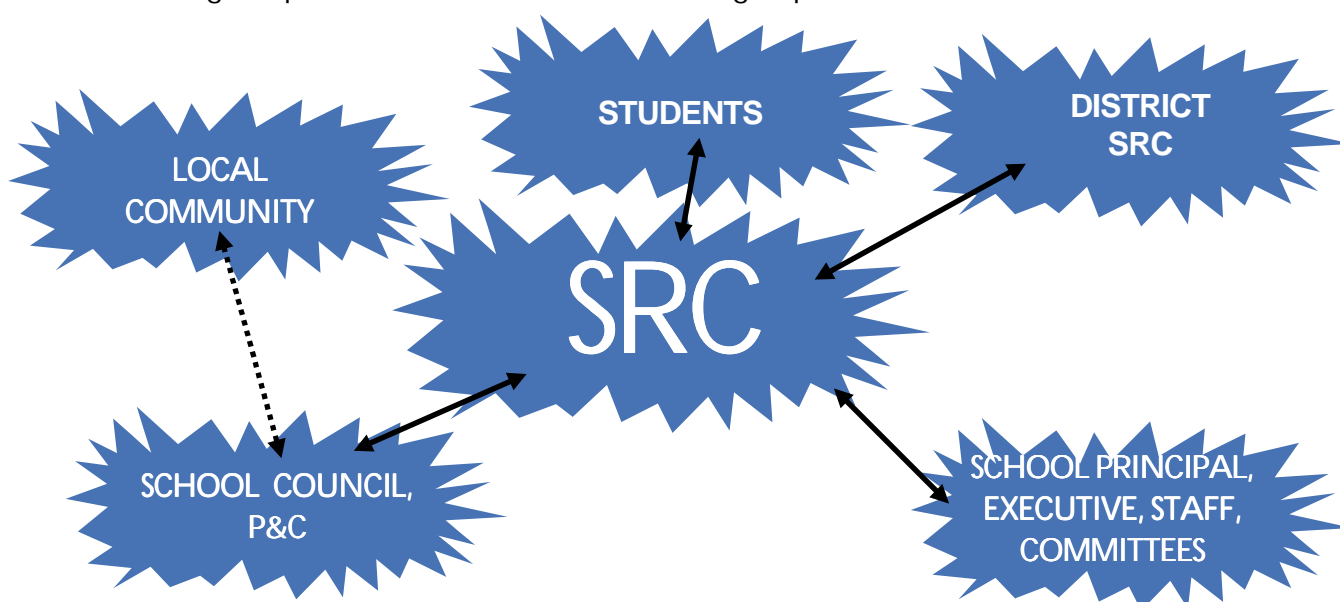
The good practices listed are broad examples of appropriate SRC activities. It is not expected that a school's SRC would be involved in all these activities. Use the *Action planning* activity sheet on page 21 to detail planning steps as necessary.



3. Where does our SRC fit ?

Where does our SRC fit within the school community?

The SRC is a formal leadership structure which has a responsibility to liaise and communicate with a number of groups within the broad school community. This diagram provides an overview of the main groups with which this liaison occurs.



Each school SRC needs to consider what form of communication is appropriate with each group. This will change over time and will need to suit the particular priorities of the SRC and the school at the time. The SRC will be enhanced if:

- minutes of SRC meetings are written up promptly and circulated to members of the SRC, the principal or school executive, and displayed for the information of all students
- SRC members seek support for major initiatives by writing to relevant groups and inviting them to discuss any issues raised
- approved SRC activities are advertised using posters, school newsletters, local newspapers (in consultation with the principal)
- face-to-face meetings are focussed on an agreed agenda
- opportunities are sought for SRC representation on school committees and working groups
- forums are conducted on specific issues to canvass students' views or to introduce particular initiatives.

Activity

If you're interested in finding out how well your SRC communicates or how you could improve, look at the **Evaluating communication** activity sheet on page 18. This checklist could be an agenda item at an SRC meeting or completed individually by

Where does our SRC fit beyond the school?

The NSW Department of Education and Training has a secondary SRC structure which operates across the state, linking student leaders through two state level groups. This organisation has three levels.

1 School SRCs

- operate in ways that are appropriate to school needs
- elect students (usually two per school) to the district SRC
- receive support from teacher advisers in schools
- receive support from student welfare consultants in district offices.

Good practice :

A district SRC in conjunction with a community organisation is producing student cards. These cards provide information about local resources (in and out of school) available to students in times of stress

2 District SRCs

- help to improve school SRCs within districts
- help to improve communication between school SRCs
- deal with issues that affect the district
- provide leadership training
- receive co-ordinated support from the district student welfare consultant working with teacher advisers
- may choose to become involved with other districts for various projects and activities
- form part of a network of 40 districts across NSW.

Good practice :

The NSW SRC decides upon goals and priorities for its term of office (one year). It addresses these issues by developing plans and linking in with resource people at state and district level who already work on these issues.

3 State SRCs

The NSWSRC:

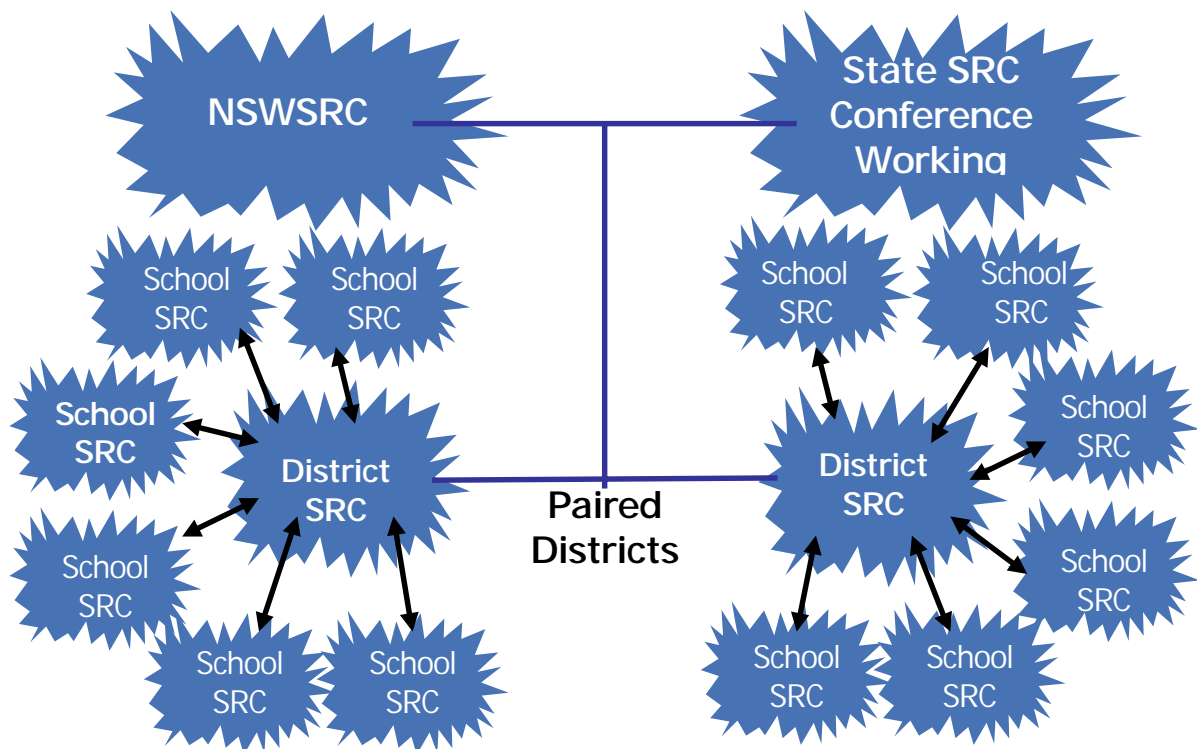
- is the peak student leadership organisation in the state
- has 20 elected members from across NSW
- meets regularly, and is consulted on student issues by senior officers in the Department of Education and Training, other government departments, business and community groups
- represents the views of NSW secondary students
- assists in determining priorities for school and district SRCs each year.

State SRC Conference Working Party:

- selects a theme for the annual State SRC Conference
- plans and organises the State SRC Conference and follow up activities
- encourages the exchange of ideas, views and skills regarding student leadership and SRCs in NSW at this conference.

Paired Districts:

- consists of two geographically adjoining districts
- each year one district elects a NSW SRC member and the other district elects a State SRC Conference Working Party member
- in the following year the pair of districts usually swap the position for which they are electing a representative
- each elected representative is responsible for representing and communicating back for the pair of districts.



* Students from secondary schools may be elected to the district SRC.

* The number of school SRCs linking to each district varies.

Evaluating communication

Some examples of effective lines of communication	Our SRC does this	Our SRC doesn't do this	Priority for our SRC to do this
Representatives of the SRC meet regularly with the principal and/or the school executive			
Representatives of the SRC speak at staff meetings about future plans and activities			
The principal and/or executive are invited to and/or asked to speak at some SRC meetings			
The minutes of the SRC meetings are accessible to all staff and students			
Representatives of community groups (including the P&C) are invited to and/or asked to speak at some SRC meetings			
The SRC members are known to the local school community			
Local community members are invited to speak to the SRC			
All correspondence is written appropriately and filed			
All students know who the members of SRC are and are able to approach them for consultation			
The SRC regularly addresses the whole school assembly			
Important information for all students is passed on in writing (eg, posters, leaflets)			
The SRC is represented on the School Council			
Representatives from the SRC attend district SRC meetings			
Correspondence is forwarded promptly to the SRC			

Use the **Action planning** activity sheet (page 21) to detail planning steps as necessary

Where does our SRC fit ?



4. Setting up an effective SRC

Strategies for gaining support

The following strategies may be used for gaining the support of:

the principal and other members of the executive

- Be clear about what you want to achieve.
- Prepare a plan. This should be written and clearly stated in as few words as possible.
- Ask to be involved in policy development.
- Start with small achievable activities and gradually move up to larger initiatives.
- Discuss the results of a student survey.
- Listen to the principal's advice and/or suggestions.
- Ask to speak at an executive meeting about student leadership.
- Contact successful SRCs from other schools and discuss their suggestions. Invite SRC members and teacher adviser from another school to speak about their SRC's achievements.
- Talk with the student welfare consultant from your district for specific suggestions.

the school staff

- Talk informally to your teachers about student leadership.
- Ask to speak at a staff meeting about the role of the SRC.
- Invite supportive teachers to SRC or working party meetings.
- Listen to their ideas and advice.
- Be clear about what you would like to see happening in student leadership in the school.
- Discuss the results of a student survey.

the students

- Attend meetings of students to discuss student leadership eg, roll call, year meetings.
- Talk informally to groups of students in the playground.
- Ask students what they would like to see happening in the school in student leadership.
- Listen to their ideas, suggestions and concerns.
- Conduct a survey of students to determine their feelings on various issues.

the school community

- Be clear about what you would like to see happening in student leadership.
- Talk informally to community members about student leadership.
- Ask to speak at a community meeting eg, P&C, about student leadership.
- Listen to the ideas and suggestions of community members.

A process for developing formal student leadership structures

Activity

Use the *Action Planning* activity sheet on page 21 to assist you in this section. Encourage student participation, decision making and leadership within the school by following these steps:

- discuss student leadership with the principal and school executive and seek their advice and approval
- find an interested staff member to be the teacher adviser
- contact your district student welfare consultant for information, ideas and support
- contact people in other schools which have an effective SRC and read information about SRCs
- discuss ideas with the principal, staff, teacher adviser, students and community members
- make posters to show some of the things SRCs can do, look in magazines such as *Connect* (page 77) and on the internet
- invite guest speakers from other schools, district or state SRC members to talk about SRCs
- survey the school community (students, parents and staff) for their ideas and attitudes about SRCs

A group of interested staff, students, parents and community members may get together to discuss what a student representative council could do and how it could operate. This group should set a time frame and firm dates for presenting their proposals to the school community.

Important questions for consideration will include:

- what could be the purpose, role and areas of responsibility of the SRC in the school?
- how could the school support the SRC?
- how could the SRC be involved in the decision making processes in the school, including the development of the school plan and planning to meet departmental priorities?
- how could members be elected?
- how could members be trained in the skills of communication, decision making and running meetings?
- how could the efforts of members be recognised and accredited?
- how could the SRC communicate with the whole school community, the students it represents, the principal and staff?

Develop a discussion paper for the establishment of a formal student leadership structure, possibly an SRC, which would be presented to the school executive, staff and students for discussion and consideration.

Action planning

_____ SCHOOL

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

Project Name: _____

What we want to achieve (Goal): _____

What we need (Support and resources): _____

Steps	Action	Responsibility	By when	Possible problems	Possible solutions	How will we know we have succeeded ?
1						
2						
3						
4						

Enlarge onto A3 paper for use



5. What roles are associated with an SRC?

Activity

Use this information as

- reference material when electing SRC officers
- a checklist to ensure that all roles are being effectively implemented.

SRC officers

Leader of the SRC

Often one or two students act as the co-ordinators of the SRC. Their role could include representing the school at official functions on behalf of the students. He or she usually (but not always) chairs these meetings.

Chairperson

The chairperson conducts SRC meetings by:

- controlling meetings using the rules of meetings and ensuring the agenda is followed and actions agreed upon
- ensuring that everyone has a chance to speak and is heard
- keeping the discussion to the point
- remaining impartial to the matters being discussed
- summarising or clarifying points where necessary
- managing the time
- listening attentively.

Secretary

The secretary keeps records of SRC meetings and deals with correspondence by:

- making sure that the minutes are recorded and everyone gets a copy
- preparing the agenda in consultation with other people
- keeping copies of all of the letters and SRC files
- keeping a record of attendance
- letting members know when and where a meeting is being held
- writing letters if needed and presenting correspondence at the meetings.

Treasurer

The treasurer handles all the financial dealings of the SRC by:

- keeping a record of bills, money received or paid out and working out current account balances
- presenting reports to meetings
- investigating the cost of items or activities.

The principal must approve any activity involving the raising and handling of money.

Good practice:

Many skills that are required by SRC members are taught through curriculum areas such as English (verbal and written communication) and Commerce (financial management). Minute taking techniques are taught through the English program in primary schools.

Class / Year / House representative

This person communicates issues discussed at the SRC meetings to students they represent at regular intervals by:

- participating in the various committees of the SRC
- attending all meetings
- presenting student suggestions and concerns at these meetings
- providing regular opportunities for students to present and discuss their ideas and opinions.

Other positions that might be filled are:

- publicity officer
- representatives on school council or school committees such as curriculum, student welfare, canteen, social committees.

Activity

Invite the district teacher adviser and/or district student welfare consultant to an SRC meeting to speak about appropriate student leadership initiatives in student welfare programs in schools.

SRC teacher adviser

The teacher adviser supports the activities of the SRC and liaises with the principal, school executive and other groups within the school community on behalf of the students.

Effective teacher advisers:

- help students to develop confidence and skills in decision making, communication, leadership, meeting procedure, financial management, goal setting and action planning
- liaise with other staff and students on a district and state level
- listen to the ideas and opinions of SRC members and encourage all staff to consider students' views
- provide information on structures, problems and ways to work and give directions when needed
- work with the SRC as a team by encouraging the members to support each other
- encourage the SRC to evaluate what it does and give thought to what members have learned from their actions
- provide information on structures, problems and ways to make and give directions when needed
- develop skills, experience and knowledge that can be passed on to the members
- give advice on how decisions are made in the school
- indicate the best people to talk to about different matters and when it would be advisable to approach them
- support student ownership of SRC activities.

Good practice:

A school limits its SRC fundraising activities to one charity per year so that it can concentrate on issues of a higher priority.

District teacher adviser

Many districts have a district teacher adviser coordinator who assists the student welfare consultant in the administration of SRC networks across schools in the district.

Effective district teacher advisers:

- assist the student welfare consultant organise district meetings (at least one per term) by setting agenda, organising travel arrangements and venue
- communicate with the paired district teacher adviser co-ordinator to invite the state (NSWSRC or working party) member to present a report at the district meeting and/or attend in person
- assist in preparing district/paired district SRC reports to be tabled at NSWSRC meetings
- assist in district SRC projects eg drug education, discrimination, anti-violence
- disseminate information or minutes of meetings where necessary, including NSWSRC minutes
- assist in the selection of the most appropriate district SRC member to participate at NSWSRC and/or state SRC conference working party meetings.

District student welfare consultant

Every district has a student welfare consultant. In relation to SRCs their statement of duties includes:

- providing support for student welfare, discipline policy and procedures, and student leadership opportunities including SRCs.



6. How should an SRC work ?

The structure of the SRC will depend on:

- the size of the school
- established traditions
- student needs
- particular programs and priorities already in the school.

Students, staff and community members should play a part in determining the structure of the SRC so that it fits into the school's organisation.

Elections and membership

The most successful SRC will have members who really want to represent student ideas and opinions and who are prepared to work to improve student participation in all areas of the school. Members of the SRC can come from all years.

The most capable and enthusiastic students should be encouraged to become members of the SRC.

The election process might involve:

- an awareness campaign, using items such as posters, pamphlets and speeches to stress the aims and achievements of the SRC and the need for responsible voting
- information sheets being compiled on different candidates, including photos and lists of their school based interests, which can be displayed in a prominent place and distributed
- students who would make good leaders being lobbied to stand for election
- people such as local members of parliament acting as election observers and drawing comparisons with Australian and state government election processes
- former SRC members talking to students
- speaking at school assemblies and highlighting the SRC as an active body that is valued and respected by the whole school community.

Activity

Critically examine your school's SRC elections using the dot points above. This could be an initiative of the SRC executive or could form an agenda item at an SRC meeting.

Activity

Continually review the number of positions and composition of the SRC eg, number of students from senior and junior years, number of specific positions elected by students eg, Aboriginal students, students from support classes, boys in Year 8.

Constitution

An SRC constitution is a written document that sets out the fundamental principles or guidelines about how the council is organised and how it will operate.

An SRC constitution sets out:

- its aims and purpose
- operational procedures
- when the SRC will meet.

GOOD PRACTICE:

At an annual school SRC training day, the students familiarise themselves with their constitution. A copy is given to each SRC member at the beginning of their period of office.

An SRC constitution is important because:

- it gives formal guidelines to all members of the school community about the structure and procedures
- it enables the SRC to become a formal and organised student leadership structure within the school.

GOOD PRACTICE:

Teacher advisers contact the student welfare consultant at the district office for a copy of the district SRC constitution so that he or she can provide good support for student representatives at district forums.

Activity

Look at the following

Framework for a constitution, page 28, - Rooty Hill HS Constitution, page 29, Fairfield District Constitution, page 34 - Lismore District Constitution, page 37, to see if your SRC's constitution covers the key points.

Framework for a Constitution

The format should include:

1. **Name** The name of this (organisation) is

2. **Aims**
 - Purpose
 - Areas of Responsibility
3. **Membership**
 - Representation
 - Termination of membership
 - Conduct
4. **Elections**
 - Type of voting
 - Method of nominations
 - When elections will be held
5. **Positions**
 - Chairperson or President
 - Treasurer
 - Committee Co-ordinator
 - Secretary
 - Other positions
6. **Role statements of officers** (refer to section 5)
7. **Role of teacher adviser** (refer to section 5)
8. **Meetings**
 - Frequency of meetings
 - Annual General meeting
 - Special meetings
 - Quorum
9. **MEETING PROCEDURES**
10. **COMMITTEES**
11. **AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

NB:

◆ Quorum means the minimum number of members required to attend.

How should an SRC work ?



ROOTY HILL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

1. Name

The name of the organisation shall be the Rooty Hill High School Student Representative Council (SRC).

2. Role

- 2.1 (a) To organise co-ordinate and participate in
- (i) school/student activities
 - (ii) decision making activities
 - (iii) some fund raising activities
- (b) to liaise between - students and staff - school and community
- (c) To carry out its own decisions

AIMS

- 2.2 (a) To provide a forum for student opinion
- (b) To develop leadership
- (c) To promote improvement in the school
- (d) To promote school spirit

- 2.3 The Council's authority shall be limited by this constitution and the decisions of the Principal.

3. Membership

- 3.1 The SRC shall consist of 41 members, comprising the following:

- School Captains (2)
- House Captains (8)
- Vice Captain/House Co-ordinators representative (4)
- Year representatives (16)
- House Co-ordinators (members of staff) (4)
- SRC Co-ordinator (neutral member of staff)
- Leading Teacher
- Principal/Deputy (1)
- Principal's representatives
- General Assistant
- Leadership Activity Organiser (a member of staff) (1)
- P&C representative

- 3.2 The School Captains cannot be House Captains.
- 3.3 The Vice Captain/House Co-ordinators representative and Leadership Activity Organiser are optional positions. If not used, number of members will vary from 36 to 41.
- 3.4 The Principal/Deputy may attend at his/her own discretion, whereupon he will have the right to discuss and vote on any SRC business.
- 3.5 The SRC Co-ordinator shall be a member of staff not attached to a House and shall be elected by the Principal.
- 3.6 The Chairperson may have any member who persistently interferes with the good conduct of the SRC suspended from participating in SRC meeting and activities.
- 3.7 It shall be the duty of members to attend SRC meetings. A member will automatically forfeit their position on the SRC if:
- (a) On more than three occasions, during their term of office, is absent
 - (b) On more than three occasions they are suspended from the SRC under the clause 3.6
- 3.8 If a member forfeits their position by the clause 3.7 or by resigning, then the House that the member represents will replace that member.

4. Elections

- 4.1 The SRCs term of office shall extend from October to the following October.
- 4.2 Elections for the School Captains, House Captains and House representatives shall occur in October and be carried out in the order below.
- (a) The method of election for the School Captains shall involve a written application from Yr 11 students. The top 5 applicants (male and female), will be eligible to be interviewed for the position. The applicants must also prepare and present a speech in front of current School Captains, House Co-ordinators, SRC Co-ordinator and selected executive staff. A secret ballot will then determine the School Captains for the up coming year.
 - (b) The method of election for House Captains will be as in clause 4.3. The written application will come from either Yr 11 or Yr 10 students. The interview panel will consist of current School and House Captains, House Co-ordinators and SRC Co-ordinator.
 - (c) The method of election for the House Representative and House committees shall be the responsibility of the houses concerned.

5. **Positions**

- 5.1 The School Captains shall have the role of Chairperson and Secretary.
- 5.2 The following positions shall be filled by nominations and voting if appropriate at the AGM
- Daily Planet reporter
 - Caretaker of the notice board
 - Publicity Officer
 - Treasurer

6. **Duties officers**

- 6.1 The Chairperson shall be responsible for the continuity of meetings and overall co-ordination of the SRC.
- 6.2 The Secretary will record and distribute the minutes and accept agenda items.
- 6.3 The Publicity Officer shall be responsible for the in school publicity of events.
- 6.4 The Daily Planet reporter shall enter a brief summary of SRC business and messages in the Daily Planet.
- 6.5 The caretaker of the notice board shall be responsible for placing a copy of the minutes, the agenda for the next meeting and any other advertisements deemed necessary by the SRC on the notice board.
- 6.6 The treasurer shall be responsible for keeping a record of all financial matters received/allocated and report regularly to the SRC on the current state of affairs.
- 6.7 The SRC Co-ordinator shall provide advice to the SRC when asked and will also liaise between the SRC and the staff body.
- 6.8 Representatives of committees formed by the SRC may attend meetings and will provide reports of that committee's progress on its allotted task.

7. Meetings

- 7.1 Ordinary meetings shall occur weekly out of normal school hours.
- 7.2 Any member of the school community may attend a meeting. Any non-member of the SRC will have the authority to discuss SRC business but will not have voting rights.
- 7.3 Special meetings of the SRC may be called by the Principal, the Chairperson or the SRC Co-ordinator and will be held at a time that is appropriate.
- 7.4 The Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held in October following the election of the new School Captains and House Committees and before Yr 12 have left.
- 7.5 Persons or groups wishing assistance from the SRC will be represented at the meeting during which their submission is being discussed.
- 7.6 All student based fundraising activities to be held within the school shall be passed through the SRC for approval, by way of a written submission.
- 7.7 A quorum shall consist of 21 Members where every house is represented.

8. Meeting procedures

- 8.1 The procedure for debate shall follow modified Parliamentary Procedure.
- 8.2 The standard procedure shall follow in this order.
- Attendance recorded, roll marked
 - Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted
 - Business arising from the minutes
 - Correspondence business
 - Treasury report
 - House reports (2 mins)
 - Any other business if time permits and the SRC is agreeable.
 - Accepting of the following weeks agenda items where appropriate
 - Close of meeting
- 8.3 Motions must be moved and seconded before debate begins.
- 8.4 Debate shall be controlled by the Chairperson who may call for a vote at any time during debate.
- 8.5 Chairperson may appoint a time-keeper to control debate if appropriate.

- 8.6 Debate will alternate between speakers for and against the proposed motion. Each member will only have one opportunity to debate.
- 8.7 All voting shall be by simple majority unless specified by this Constitution. The Chairperson shall have the casting vote.
- 8.8 All voting shall be by show of hands or voice unless a secret ballot is agreed to by the SRC by way of a show of hands.

9. **Committees**

- 9.1 Sub committees may be formed by the SRC or the executive from members of the SRC and/or the school at large. Sub committees will deal with specific matters and will liaise between other students and teachers if necessary. The committee will be dissolved when the SRC deems that it has fulfilled its purpose or its continuation will no longer be fruitful.
- 9.2 Committees shall be represented on the SRC as in clause 6.8 and will be expected to give a report of that committee's progress if the SRC wishes.

10. **House Committees** (Not part of Constitution)

11. **Amendments to the Constitution**

- 11.1 Two weeks notice must be given of proposed amendments. Adoption will require a two thirds majority at a meeting at which 90% of the SRC is present and voting.
- 11.2 The Principal retains the right to over-rule any amendments to the Constitution.

FAIRFIELD DISTRICT STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

1. Name

- (a) The Organisation will be known as the Fairfield District Student Representative Council.
- aka Fairfield District SRC
- aka District Council

2. Purpose and role

- (a) The Fairfield District Student Representative Council is to meet periodically to discuss issues that concern its member representative.
- (b) To facilitate the growth of strong networks between School SRCs.
- (c) To report to the School SRCs the actions, discussions and decision of the District SRC.
- (d) To raise and discuss student issues.
- (e) To increase public awareness of the SRC.

3. Membership

- (a) Every School in the Fairfield District is to have two (2) elected representatives to the District SRC from their school SRC or the school's most senior student representative body.
 - (i) The District SRC will consist of 26 voting members, i.e. two members from every school. If a school representative is absent, a reserve should be provided as replacement.
 - (ii) A member of the District SRC is to be recognised as a District Councillor.
- (b) SEO1 Student Welfare
 - No voting rights
 - Advises us on D.E.T. policy and is the liaison between the District SRC and the District Superintendent
- (c) Teacher/Co-ordinator/Advisor
 - No voting rights
 - Facilitates material needs and advises the District SRC on its actions.

4. Executive positions

These are permanent elected positions in the District SRC

- (a) District Chairperson
Any member of the District SRC qualifies for this position. The primary duty of the Chairperson is to convene the order of business at meetings.
- (b) District President
Any member of the District SRC qualifies for this position. The primary duty of the President is to prepare and organise the agenda items and other related activities that the District SRC is involved in.
- (c) District Secretary
Any member of the District SRC qualifies for this position. The primary duty of the District Secretary is to record the minutes of the District SRC meetings, then prepare them for distribution within the fortnight following the meeting.
- (d) State level representative
Experienced representatives are preferred for this position.
The district representative to the state level position will alternate every year between the two state level bodies.
The state representative is the primary liaison between the Fairfield district and Bankstown district.
Any information from a state level council or party will be compiled by the state representative in his/her report, who will in turn report this data to the District SRC and our sibling district.
- (i) The New South Wales Student Representative Council.
(NSW SRC/State Council)
This is the highest level of the SRC. Its main purpose is to advise on government policy, particularly those concerning the Department of Education and Training. The State Council also confers with other leading youth interest groups.
- (ii) The Student Representative Council State Working Party.
(SRC SWP/Working Party)
This Party prepares and co-ordinates the Annual SRC State Conference.

5. Meetings

- (a) Frequency
To be determined
- (b) Quorum
Optional attendance by each school.
A majority of two thirds of those eligible to vote is needed for a motion to be passed.
Maximum of two from each school is eligible to vote.
Voting may be by proxy.
- (c) All district counsellors are expected to attend all district meetings.
In the event of their absence, a letter of apology is to be sent to the district president 24 hours prior to the next scheduled meeting.
- (d) Reports
Each school should prepare a typewritten report discussing the current position of their SRC. It may include items such as up coming events, rights and responsibilities issues, SRC internal affairs and any other SRC related issues.

LISMORE DISTRICT STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

1. Name

The name of this organisation is the Lismore District Student Representative Council (Lismore District SRC).

2. Objects and functions

Object:

To provide effective representation of students through communication and liaison with and between students in Lismore District and departmental and government officers.

Functions:

- (i) To promote representation through Student Representative Councils
- (ii) To establish and maintain communication between the NSW SRC, Lismore District SRC and school SRCs
- (iii) To facilitate the growth of a strong SRC network in Lismore District
- (iv) To provide student advice on educational issues to the District Superintendent and other departmental officers
- (v) To raise student issues with the District Superintendent and other relevant departmental officers
- (vi) To promote public education.

3. Membership

- (i) Eighteen (18) student representatives {two (2) from each secondary/central school or as negotiated with majority agreement with up to 3 students from each school}
- (ii) The Executive Officer - Senior Education Officer 1 Student Welfare Consultant {No voting rights}.

4. Office bearers

- (i) Chairperson
- (ii) Secretary
- (iii) Minutes secretary
- (iv) Executive Officer - Senior Education Officer 1, Student Welfare Consultant.

5. Meetings

Frequency:

- (i) One (1) council meeting will be held per term, with additional meetings as required
- (ii) The Student Welfare Consultant may call additional meetings. Students may call additional meetings if the majority request it and they have the approval of the District Superintendent
- (iii) Meeting to be organised by the Executive Officer and nominated representatives.

Quorum:

At least ten (10) members with voting rights must be represented for business to proceed.

Attendance:

- (i) Council members are expected to attend all meetings
- (ii) If a council member is unable to attend a meeting, the student should advise the Executive Officer, in writing
- (iii) If the member cannot attend, their nominated reserve shall attend in their place
- (iv) Visitors may attend meetings. This may be at the request of a visitor and agreed to by the council or it may be at the invitation of the council.

Agenda:

- (i) The agenda is to be prepared by the Executive Officer and nominated representatives
- (ii) Items for inclusion on the agenda must be forwarded to the organising committee one (1) week before the meeting
- (iii) The agenda is to be circulated by the organising committee to council members two (2) days prior to the meeting, where possible.

Minutes:

Minutes are to be circulated to each council member within two (2) weeks of that meeting.

6. Voting rights

- (i) Each member has the right to cast one (1) vote
- (ii) The SRC advisers and the Executive Officer do not have voting rights
- (iii) Decisions will be taken by simple majority
- (iv) Proxy votes will be accepted on published "notices of motion".

7. Term of office/tenure

- (i) The term of office of the council will be one (1) year from the commencement of Term 4
- (ii) Student members may hold office for no more than three (3) years.

8. Meeting procedures

Meeting procedure will follow standing orders of the NSW SRC.

9. Sub committees

Sub committees may be formed at the discretion of the Lismore District SRC.

10. Amendments to the constitution

- (i) Proposed changes to this Constitution may only be made through a "notice of motion" circulated to all schools
- (ii) Changes to the Constitution need the acceptance of 14 members before being forwarded to the District Superintendent for approval.

11. Definitions

Student Representative Council	A student organisation representing students within the NSW Government school system.
SRC Network	Communication channels between SRCs in schools, and the paired district and state.
Executive Officer	Senior Education Officer 1 Student Welfare.
Proxy vote	A vote forwarded to the executive officer on a "notice of motion" and presented on behalf of a school, if the representatives are unable to attend the meeting.
Notice of motion	A formally approved motion which is circulated to all schools with the meeting agenda.
Standing orders	Agreed meeting procedures of the NSW SRC.

12. Roles

School SRC Adviser	Teacher who co-ordinates SRC activities in the school. The adviser has a role at meetings, to support, encourage and facilitate school and district representatives. They do not have voting rights.
Executive Officer	Student Welfare consultant responsible for the co-ordination of the District SRC and acts as an administrative assistant and advisor to the District SRC.
Chairperson	To chair the meeting effectively by following constitutional guidelines. The chairperson should remain in their official capacity until the next meeting.
Minute Secretary	To take the minutes of the meeting and to ensure that the minutes are sent to the Executive Officer for distribution.
Members	To effectively represent their school perspective at the district level by regular communication within their school, attendance at meetings and taking action as decided by the meeting.

Meetings

Meetings can be managed either formally or informally. Informal meetings have no set agenda, are usually chaired by the chairperson and are discussion based. Formal meeting procedures require pre-planning and an agenda which clarifies purpose, direction and clear outcomes.

Planning for formal meetings

These actions are the responsibility of the SRC Secretary.

Time	set date, starting time and length of meeting
Place	where meeting will be held
Agenda	list of what is going to happen at meeting
Publicity	make sure everyone concerned has this information (using posters, noticeboards, assembly announcements and the grapevine)
Resources	organise any people or equipment required

Reports and motions check that reports and motions are ready.

Motions during formal meetings

Any member can put forward a suggestion (motion) to seek the group's agreement for action on a particular issue. This is usually done by saying to the Chair *I move that ...*

For this business to then be considered, another person must second, or support the proposal. A second is expressed, *I second the motion.*

A motion should be made in one clear sentence if possible. It should be quite specific.

- A *motion* becomes a resolution when it is carried.
- A *resolution* is a formal decision by a meeting.
- No discussion is allowed on a motion or amendment until it has been *seconded*. If it is not seconded, it lapses. However, this does not restrict the right of the proposer of the motion to introduce and speak to the motion.
- The mover of a motion has the right of reply at the end of discussion. Once he or she has exercised this right there can be no further speakers and the motion must be put to the meeting for decision.

Activity

Use Sample agenda , page 43, Minute taking activity sheet page 44 and Evaluating SRC meetings, page 45 (to find out if your SRC meeting procedures could be improved).
How should an SRC work ?



The formal meeting

Meeting procedure is the way in which meetings are conducted. An example of this is:

- 1 The chairperson calls for order and opens the meeting, welcoming any guests or new members. *I declare this meeting of the SRC open.*
- 2 The chairperson receives apologies. *Are there any apologies?* The secretary records the apologies.
- 3 The secretary reads out the minutes of the previous meeting. Any changes to the minutes need to be recorded and agreed upon.
- 4 The chairperson signs the minutes, once the meeting has agreed that they are an accurate record. *Will someone move that the minutes be adopted?*
- 5 Business arising out of the minutes is discussed (eg, check through the minutes to see what has been done).
- 6 The secretary reads out the correspondence. *It is moved that the correspondence be accepted.*
- 7 Business arising out of the correspondence is discussed. Particular items may be deferred because they are on the agenda for later. Appropriate motions may arise from the correspondence.
- 8 The chairperson calls for reports to be read. For each report it is moved that the report be received, after which it is open for discussion. Usually it is moved that the report be adopted.
- 9 General business items listed on the agenda are dealt with one by one.
- 10 The chairperson asks whether there is any further general business.
- 11 Items to be raised at the next meeting are put on notice.
- 12 If appropriate, a decision is reached as to the date and venue of the next meeting.
- 13 The chairperson thanks members for their attendance and declares the meeting closed.

Activity

Trial the use of the *Motion* activity sheet , page 47 to assist you in SRC meetings. Look at the video *Making schools better for everyone* which is found in the *Student Welfare, Good Discipline and Effective Learning* folder. This video has a short segment of an SRC meeting.

Sample agenda

_____ School

SRC meeting agenda

Meeting place:

Date and time:

- 1 Attendance
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Previous meeting's minutes
Matters arising and acceptance
- 4 Correspondence
In
Out
- 5 Reports
- 6 General business
- 7 Date of next meeting



Minute taking

_____ School

SRC Meeting minutes

Meeting date: _____ Chairperson: _____ Minute taker: _____

Agenda item	Discussion	Action



Evaluating SRC meetings

Good practice	Mostly	Rarely	Evidence	Priority for action
All members understand the goals of the SRC				
All members have opportunities to participate in leadership training and know their responsibilities				
New members are trained in relevant skills and procedures				
Elections follow agreed procedures				
Accurate records are kept of every meeting				
Meetings are interesting, orderly and well planned				
All activities and projects are well planned by committees				
The SRC is supported by students				
The SRC is supported by staff				
The SRC is supported by parents and the wider community				
There is good communication between the SRC and staff				
The SRC follows established ways of communicating with parents, school executive and other SRCs				
The activities of the SRC benefit the school				
SRC activities are fun to be involved in				
The SRC checks that it is meeting the needs of the student body				
The SRC regularly sets goals and measures its achievement				
There are established ways of solving problems and resolving conflict				

Use the **Determining priorities for action** activity sheet page 46 to decide on your SRC's priorities.

How should an SRC work ?



Determining priorities for action

List the six priorities for your SRC's actions

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____

Now as a group decide the six priorities for your SRC.

List the group priorities below.

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____

Use the *Action planning* activity sheet, page 21, to detail your plans.



Motion

Section: _____

Item: _____

Moved by: _____

Seconded by: _____

✂-----

Motion

Section: _____

Item: _____

Moved by: _____

Seconded by: _____



Promotion of the SRC

Through promotion, SRCs can gain support and respect from staff, students and the wider community. The more students know about what an SRC can do, the more likely they are to work with it. Students need to be aware that the SRC can express their views and needs. Some of the ways to promote an SRC are:

Tell people

Ensure that reports are given at assemblies and year meetings. Encourage discussion between peers about SRC activities to increase interest in its role in the school.

Recognise members

Find ways to give SRC members recognition for their efforts. An official induction ceremony could be held annually for the incoming SRC. The principal could show support by awarding certificates to members at the end of the year. An SRC 'Award for Leadership' could be presented annually.

Advertise

Visual reminders of the ways in which the SRC helps students can be very effective. Run a competition for students to design a poster advertising the SRC. Mount them in prominent positions in the school to inform students about the role of the SRC. Consider electing a publicity officer whose responsibility is to co-ordinate efforts to raise the profile of the SRC.

Make it easy

The easier it is for students to express their opinions, the more support the SRC will have. Consider a suggestion box or holding open meetings. Also, encourage SRC members to be approachable and listen to the suggestions of their peers. Some schools allocate time in roll call to discuss SRC plans and issues. Give the SRC a positive image, and focus on what it can do for students and the school.



7. Skills to help an SRC work effectively

An essential element for an effective SRC is the development of the skills and knowledge of its members. Some essential skills are included in this section.

Activity

Use the information in this section as the basis for training sessions for SRC members.

Communication and negotiation

Negotiation occurs when two or more people work towards securing an outcome or solution with which all parties are satisfied.

There may be negotiation in an SRC meeting, when two people try to come to an agreement, or when an SRC delegation goes to see the school principal, with the aim of getting agreement to change things that they think would benefit the school.

(i) The negotiation process

Gather information and work out your case. Be sure to ask:

what does the other person want and what will their position be?
what is important to me?
what are the areas that I am willing to give up or compromise in?

Ask the other person what their needs and wants are.
(Do not interrupt or argue, just listen.)

The proposal stage, eg, *If I... will you...?* Try different alternatives until one is found that meets both parties' mutual needs.

Make a firm proposal, eg, *I will... if you...* Gain a commitment from the other person if the proposal is acceptable.



Activity

Think of an issue in your school, or use one of the sample situations provided in section 7, and work through the negotiation process using role play. In pairs, one person takes on the role of student leader and the other school principal/school executive.

(ii) **Negotiation**

Effective negotiation is made up of many steps which include:

- making an appointment or specifying a time to meet
- preparing a summary of the things you would like to talk about
- being aware of your own needs and stating them clearly
- listening to the other person and looking at things from where he or she stands, taking notes if necessary
- being prepared to answer questions about your proposal and bringing any materials which you may need
- discussing the advantages and disadvantages of the proposal, attempting to come up with ideas, options and alternatives. Incorporate the other party's suggestions where possible
- negotiating a decision and committing yourself to the solution
- clearly specifying any actions which have been agreed to (this may need to be in written form)
- reporting back to the SRC or principal to vote or to approve.

(iii) **Having your say**

Part of the ability to negotiate effectively is being assertive (but not aggressive). Do not be intimidated during negotiation. Make sure you have your say.

Remember that:

All people have certain rights in a democratic society. Students are citizens of a school in which democratic practices are important. With every right goes a responsibility.

You have a right to:

- be listened to and taken seriously
- be treated with respect
- express opinions and feelings, in an appropriate way
- ask for what you believe is fair
- ask for more information
- make mistakes.

Remember that:

You have a responsibility to:

- listen and take others seriously
- treat others with respect
- allow others to express opinions and feelings
- allow others to ask for what they want
- allow others to ask for more information
- allow others to make mistakes.

Activity

Use this information as a basis for negotiation with the principal and school executive or within the SRC.

Good practice:

Each year the incoming school SRC has a leadership training day conducted by the student welfare consultant and teacher adviser. Guest speakers are invited to conduct training on communication and negotiation skills

Good practice:

In order to become more involved in school management a school SRC makes use of the priorities of the Department of Education and Training as a guide for projects and activities. The principal, or his or her nominee is asked to explain to students the way the school's plan will be linked to departmental priorities.

(iv) Formal presentations

Presenting a formal case is all about giving information in an appropriate manner, whether you are making a speech or putting your thoughts across in writing. The following questions can be used to assist people in planning and presenting information.

Purpose

Why am I presenting this information?

Understanding the purpose may help you work out how much detail you need to provide and perhaps what headings to organise this information under. It will also help you work out what's relevant.

Background

How much does the audience already know about the matter?

If they already understand the background, a summary or 'up-date' will probably be enough. If they don't, you need to provide a summary of what's already happened so that the new information makes sense.

Content

What else do the others need to know?

This is related to the purpose above. If they need to make decisions based on the information, then they will need more detail than if it is simply a matter of keeping them informed.

Organising the information

What is the most logical way of organising the information?

You can choose to include chronological (date) order, subject headings, background issues involved, action to date, or action required.

Method

Should the information be presented verbally or in writing?

Issues to be considered include:

- does the audience need to refer to the information again later?
- do you need a formal record of the information?
- do you need to be able to respond to questions?
- do you need to provide the same information to other people later?

Presentation style

What is my relationship to the audience?

The style in which you present the information should vary according to the relationship you have with them. (As a rule, be more formal with those older than yourself, or those you don't know well).

Language

Will the audience understand the words I use?

Check for acronyms (eg. SRC is an acronym for student representative council) and jargon. Use simple words and keep sentences short and direct.

Values

How do I expect the audience to feel about this?

Be aware that different people will have different opinions about your topic before they even hear you speak. Do not offend your audience.

(v) **Listening skills**

One of the most important skills is that of listening. Often communication breaks down through the listener not understanding what is being said.

Listening involves more than just hearing. It is something you do not only with your ears, but with your sight, intelligence and emotions.

The body of the letter

Each letter should have only one main theme. Each paragraph should contain only one aspect of the message to assist in building up the theme step by step.

Paragraph 1:

Introduction, establishing a relationship between the letter and its recipient.

Paragraph 2:

Expansion of introduction - purpose of letter (request, information or offer).

Concluding paragraph:

- Short summary of purpose of letter.
- Indicate, if appropriate, that you require some sort of response.
- Thank you.
- Contact person for further information (if necessary).

The close

Yours sincerely, is an acceptable way to sign off a formal letter.

The signature

Print your name and title as well as signing the letter so people know how to address the reply, eg, (Mr/Ms) P Jones, SRC Secretary.

Sample letter 1

The addressee's name, address and postcode

The sender's address and postcode

The date

The greeting

SUBJECT: Reference or subject line

The body of the letter

The close

The signature

The sender's name (printed or typed)

Sample letter 2

The sender's
address and
postcode

The date

The addressee's
name, address and
postcode

The greeting

SUBJECT:

Reference or subject line

The body of
the letter

The close

The signature

The sender's name (printed or typed)

Hints for writing better letters

- Think before you write. Know where you are going and decide what you want to say.
- Remember that the aim of writing a letter is to convey a message that will be understood.
- Jot down all your ideas and group similar ideas together so they may be set out in paragraphs.
- Use words such as 'you' and 'your' that will involve the reader. Tailor your writing to suit the reader.
- Be sincere, friendly, helpful and considerate.
- Use simple words that the reader will be familiar with.
- Use short, clear sentences and paragraphs rather than long confusing ones.
- Be accurate. Find the right words and use the correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Review your first draft and if possible have somebody else look over it.

Letter writing can be used to formally communicate with:

- principal
- school executive
- parent groups
- school council
- district superintendent
- school community
- local member
- other SRCs.

Good practice:

The SRC is invited by the principal to conduct regular open forums on relevant issues. The school counsellor and year advisers attend. Valuable information is exchanged and whole school action plans are formulated after consultation with the principal.

Dealing with difficult people in a group

This section is taken from *It's Your Challenge Too!*, a project developed by Gilgandra High School. Reference and purchasing details can be found in section 8.

The Latecomer

- Always comes late to meetings, often making a big commotion, stopping the meeting and wanting to be filled in about what has happened.

Strategies

- Don't confront. It will just lead to embarrassment.
- Don't lecture. After the meeting simply ask why he/she is late so frequently.
- Ask him/her to be the recorder for the next meeting.
- Don't stop the meeting.

The Broken Record

- Keeps bringing up the same point over and over again.
- This person is often worked up about the issue and needs an opportunity to air their concerns.

Strategies

- Let him/her get it off their chest eg, Why don't we take time to listen to you now, before we move onto the next point.
- Indicate that their views have been heard and recorded and that the meeting must move onto other matters. Yes Fred, I know the issue is important to you. We have already written it down.

The Head-Shaker

- Non-verbally disagrees in a disruptive manner, by shaking head, rolling eyes, uncrossing leg, slamming books shut, pushing chair back.

Strategies

- Ignore this person and focus your attention on the person who is talking.
- Recognise their behaviour eg, *Jane, I see you are shaking your head. Do you disagree with what is being said? Would you like to say something?*

The Whisperer

- Constantly whispers to a neighbour and makes it hard to concentrate.

Strategies

- Keep the group on focus eg, *Let's get back on task.*
- Ask the whisperer if he/she wants to share their conversation.
- Sit them apart.

The Attacker

- Launches a personal attack on another group member or on you as leader.
- There may be two people involved.

Strategies

- If two are involved, try physically moving between them.
- Try talking about it eg, *What's the problem?*
- Try to defer it eg, *Why don't we discuss it after the meeting?*
- Stay calm.
- Make positive suggestions eg, *What do you think we could do about this problem?*

The Interpreter

- Always speaks for other people eg, *What Joan is trying to say is ...*

Strategies

- Jump in quickly eg, *Hold on Meg. Let Joan finish what she was saying.*
- If this does not stop the interruptions, indicate that the group doesn't need or want his/her interruptions by saying, *Joan, is that an accurate account of what you were trying to say?*

The Know-it-all

- Uses credentials: age, length of service, etc to argue a point eg, *I've been here long enough to know...*

Strategies

- Emphasises that the decision has to be made by the group as a whole eg, *There may be equally valid points of view or We're trying to find a different perspective.*

The Back-seat Driver

- Keeps telling you what you should be doing eg, *I'd move on or Tell him to shut up.*

Strategies

- Point out that there is a variety of ways of dealing with situations and you need to work out what you think is best because you are in the chair. There is no one right way but you have to start somewhere.
- Ask him/her to suggest a procedure and then check it out with the rest of the group. If the group agrees, do it, then the Back-seat driver will be satisfied for a while; if the group disagrees, the Back-seat driver's argument will be with other group members, not you.

The Interrupter

- Starts talking before others are finished because he/she becomes impatient and overly excited.

Strategies

- Jump in immediately, eg, *Hold on Ian, let Marion finish.*
- Be impartial and fair in your intervention. Don't play favourites.
- Make the interrupter the recorder.

The Teacher's Pet

- Spends more time looking for approval than focussing on the content of the meeting.
- Continually keeps talking to you.

Strategies

- Don't let the person become dependent on you.
- Walk or look away and break eye contact.
- Turn it back on the person eg, *I don't know Michael, what do you think?*

Activity

How would you deal with the following problems if you were chairperson of the group?
Complete the activity individually, then share your ideas with others.

Dealing with difficult people

The Early Leaver

Drains the energy from the group by always leaving early.

Strategies

.....

.....

.....

The Doubting Thomas

Constantly downs everything eg, That'll never work, or I don't like that idea.

Strategies

.....

.....

.....

The Dropout

Sits at the back of the room, doesn't say anything, reads a book or doodles.

Strategies

.....

.....

.....



The Loudmouth

- Talks too much and too loudly. Dominates the group.
- Often the Loudmouth is the senior person or decision maker of the group.

Strategies

-
-
-

The Gossiper

- Introduces hearsay and gossip to the group, eg, I heard someone saying that they heard..., or I remember reading in the rules something about...

Strategies

-
-
-

The Busybody

- Always ducking in and out of the meeting.
- The person is often the manager of the meeting and this is why he/she feels free to come and go.

Strategies

-
-
-

Problem solving and decision making

(i) Decision making options

One person decision

An autocratic decision made by an individual or small group in a position of authority. Decisions can be made quickly and simply. The views of the whole group are not canvassed directly.

Majority vote

A democratic decision made by voting. It occurs when more than half the people agree. It is an efficient method of reaching a decision. The disadvantage is that up to 49% of the voters may oppose the decision and therefore have no commitment to it.

Consensus

A decision made only when everyone agrees. All views are sought and considered. The group tries to understand all points of view and take them into account. The process is time consuming as it takes a lot of patience and talk to make the decision which will bring together the best aspects of the different views. This process is about a 'win-win' resolution in the group context. No one is right or wrong and everyone has an opportunity to share ownership of the process and the decision.

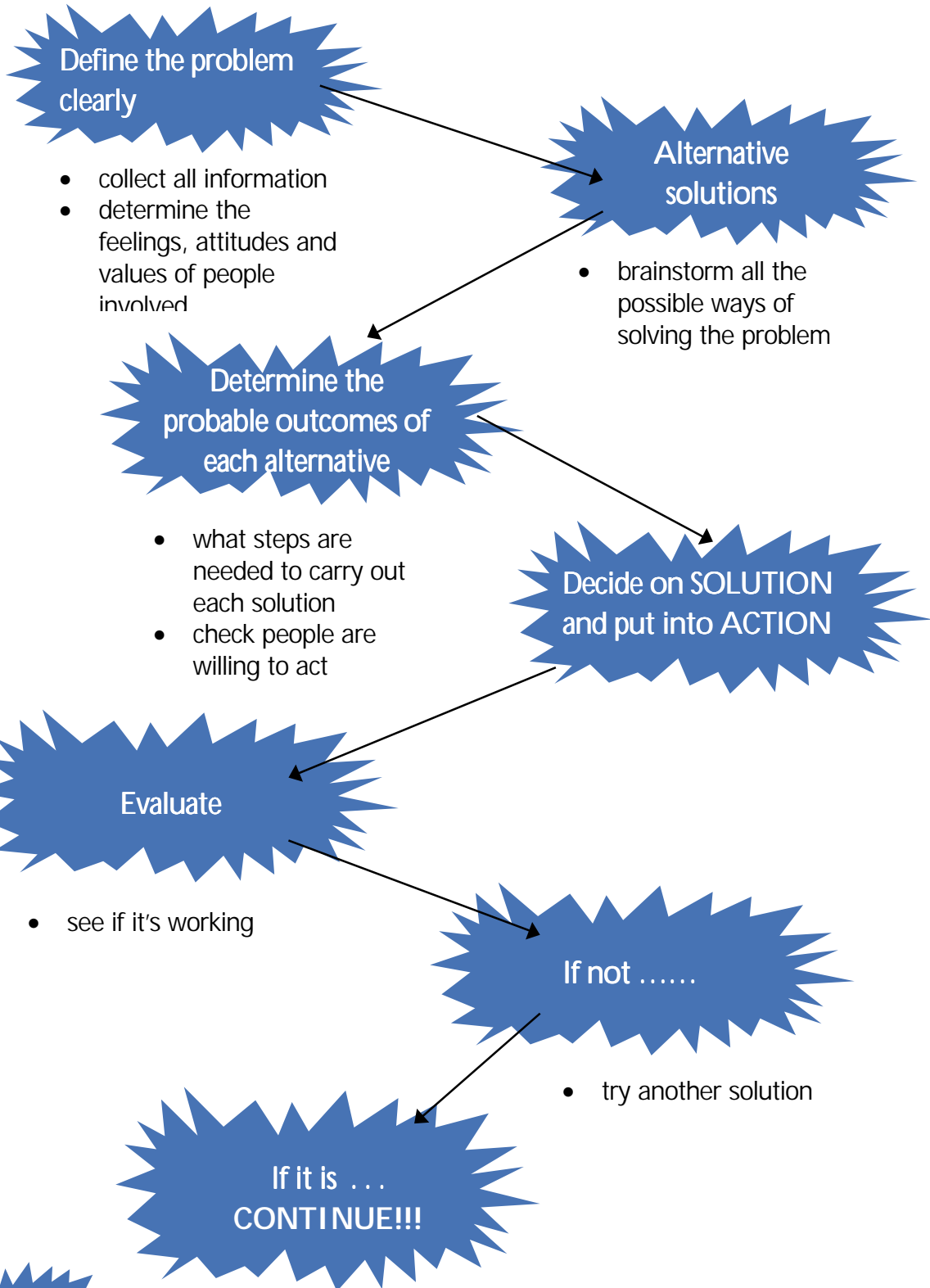
(ii) Steps in decision making

1. State the problem/concern/issue.
2. Gather information to assist looking at options.
3. Determine the feelings, attitudes and values of the people involved.
4. Look at all options (brainstorming is a useful tool).
5. Review the positives and the negatives of each option, consider the consequences.
6. Check that everyone's opinion is presented and heard.
7. Make the decision.
8. Record the decision.
9. Develop an action plan to ensure the decision is implemented.

Activity

Use Sample situations for problem solving and decision making, page 66, and work through the 9 steps in decision making.

(iii) **Steps in problem solving**



Activity

Use the **Problem solving** activity sheet, page 65, to assist you in solving a relevant problem for the SRC or one from the sample situations.

Problem solving

Use the information provided on the previous page, to work through the following steps and solve your problem.

What is the problem? _____

What are all the possible solutions? (Don't judge)	What is the probable outcome of each alternative?	Which is the best solution?

Use the Action Planning activity sheet, page 20, to detail your plan.

After implementing your actions ask this question. Is it working?



try another solution



continue

(iv) Tools for decision making

1. Basic brainstorming

This process requires any ideas from the group being recorded.

The rules are:

- All ideas are welcome. The ideas should not be judged at the time of recording.
- As many ideas as possible must be written down. Quantity is essential to broaden the possibility of finding an answer to a problem.
- Combine and improve ideas. One thought often leads to another.
- Be positive. A solution does exist. The task is to find it.

2. Creative brainstorming

- Write the question or problem clearly at the top of a sheet of paper using the introductory phrase *In how many ways could we...?* Have at least four sheets of blank paper posted adjacent to the headed sheet.
- Explain to the group the nature of a brainstorm, which is designed to encourage creative thinking and to generate a large number of ideas which will be evaluated after the brainstorm is concluded.
- State the rules of an effective brainstorm (see above).
- Practise the brainstorming technique on a lighthearted issue eg, *In how many ways could we use this paper clip?*
- Begin the brainstorming.
- If the group 'runs dry' before, say 30-35 ideas are registered, take 60 seconds time out and invite each person to generate at least one new idea in that time or highlight the wildest idea and invite the group to brainstorm further around that.
- When the 'ideas gathering' phase is complete, state the criteria for evaluating their work.
 - Feasible: Can we do it? It is too complex? Is it too time consuming?
 - Appropriate: Will it solve the problem? Will it answer the question?
 - Specific: Will the action stated lead to a result?
- Invite each member of the group to select the best 5 to 10 ideas.
- Tally the selections and highlight those receiving the most nominations.
- Allow discussion of these in order to reach clear group decisions.

3. Nominal group technique

◆ *Private recording*

- this task is completed individually
- no discussion is allowed

• *Collation*

- one item at a time is called from each member in turn
- no debate, discussion or challenge is allowed
- avoid obvious repetition of items
- when members have no further statements to contribute, they pass

• *Clarification*

- any member may ask for clarification of an item
- minor amendments may be made to eliminate ambiguity or doubt
- no discussion is allowed

• *Combination*

- similar statements may be combined in order to avoid split voices
- no discussion is allowed other than that necessary to gain agreement from the two proposers

• *Voting*

- members vote (secret ballot) for the most important problems
- the group leader decides the number of votes to be allowed
- each vote is recorded on a separate card
- votes are recorded by writing the numbers of the selected statements on different cards

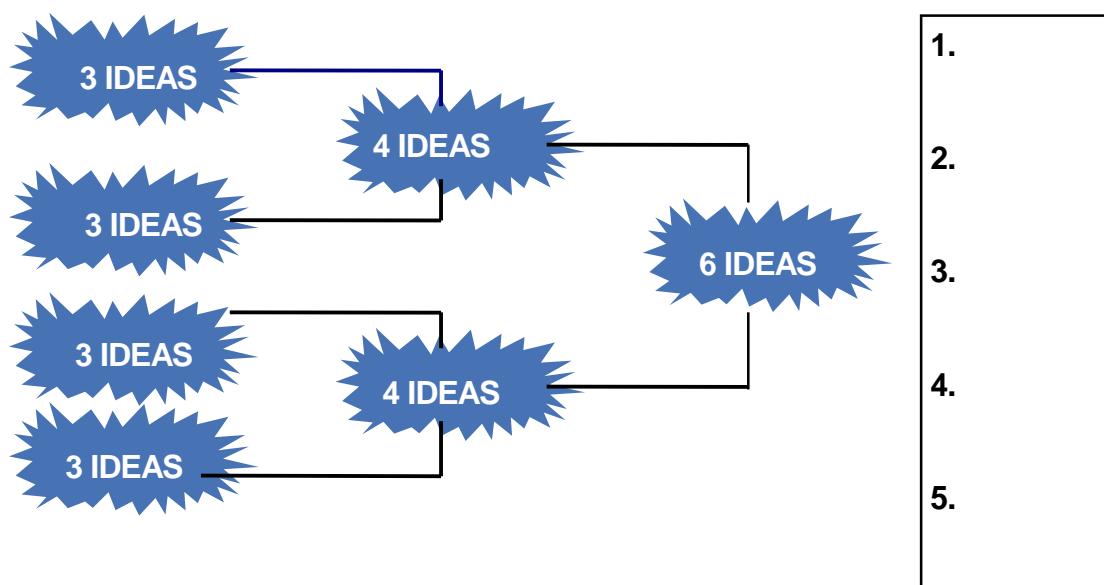
• *Counting*

- votes are sorted according to number and the number of votes for each item is recorded.

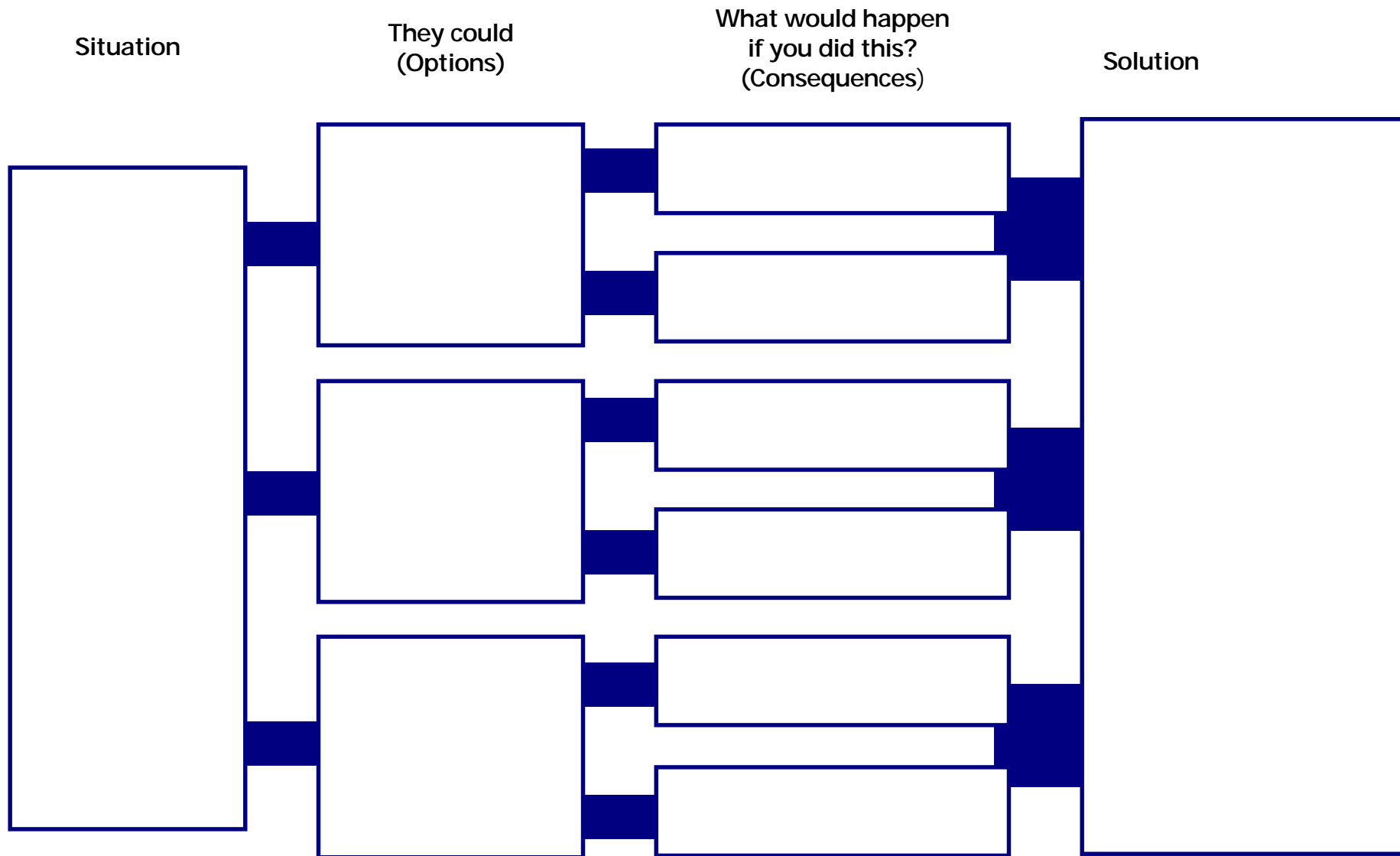
The result of this procedure is an ordering of the original list according to the importance of each alternative as seen by the group as a whole.

4. Modified delphi technique

- The question is displayed in front of the group.
- All members write down (privately) their three top suggestions.
- They form pairs who have to read each other their suggestions and then reach agreement on four suggestions in about 5-10 minutes.
- The pairs group into foursomes which then have to reach agreement on six suggestions. Each foursome appoints a group recorder.
- As a whole group, each recorder then reports one idea in turn while the leader records them onto chart paper. Recorders avoid repeating points.
- The whole group prioritises the ideas listed. This may be done through use of the nominal group technique.



5. Decision making maze



(v) QuEST program

QuEST stands for **Quality Empowers Student Teams** and is a model of problem solving using the principles of quality management and process improvement.

Although this program was designed for use with Year 11 Business Studies students, it can involve any group of students in the school, especially the SRC.

Steps involved in the program are:

1. Have students suggest problems/processes around the school that they consider need improving.
2. Choose the best processes for investigating.
3. Write them as a process eg, increasing the amount of recycling within the school, improving the maintenance of the toilets.
4. Place students into teams of five or six. There should be 'leaders' and 'doers' in each group.
5. Teach the principles and tools of quality management. This will require a training day, or half day.
6. The students then spend some time (four or five weeks) carrying out investigations. This will involve finding out the current process, interviewing all the people involved in the process (the internal and external customers) analysing where there are possibilities for improvement, brainstorming solutions.
7. Having considered the possible solutions, the team will make definite recommendations for 'short term' and 'long term' action.
8. Prepare a presentation to the executive of the school. This should involve a written report as well as visual presentation.
9. An evaluation committee, consisting of staff and students, will meet to consider the implementation of the student suggestions. This will require the full support of the principal.
10. Implement the suitable recommendations.

If your school has:

- the active support of the principal
- enthusiasm of the SRC to improve aspects of their school
- involvement by local business to help students with quality management by acting as facilitators
- commitment and active involvement by teachers assisting students
- commitment by the school to implement suitable recommendations

...then this program could suit your school.

Further details about obtaining this program can be found in section 8.

Sample situations for problem solving and decision making

- The SRC at Decision High School has been asked to select two people to represent them at an international youth conference in New York.

What process will it use to choose the people?

- Your SRC has \$5,000 to spend before the end of term.

What will be the best way to spend the money?

- There is growing concern about the amount of graffiti on the school buildings. The SRC has been approached by the principal to help solve this problem.

How will it decide which strategies to suggest to the principal?

At Decision High School there has been an outbreak of harassment against people who have green eyes (blonde hair, big noses, black watches, jewellery). The students who have experienced this violence appeal to the SRC for help.

How can the SRC help ?

- The SRC at Options High School has concentrated entirely on fundraising for the last five years. The newly elected SRC executive wishes to broaden the scope of its activities by becoming more involved in curriculum and student welfare issues in the school.

How will it gain staff support for this new direction ?

Solution High School has a poor image in the local community. The SRC decides to take action to improve this image.

How will it decide on the strategies to use ?

Activity

Use **Identifying goals** activity sheet, page 73, to determine the goals of your SRC

Goal setting and action planning

Goal setting is essential as it determines the appropriate direction for a group or individual to reach their desired outcome. Action plans decide the steps needed to achieve the goal and it includes setting a time frame, individual responsibilities, method and criteria for judging success.

Goals can be short term, medium term or long term. Duration will depend on the need and context at the time. When a goal has been reached it should be replaced by another.

(i) Considerations

Your goal is more likely to be achieved if it is:

- decided by all members of the group to meet group needs
- measurable so that the groups can see when they make progress and gain confidence through their achievements
- realistic, attainable, challenging and has the ability to be flexible enough to respond to needs
- specific so that it is able to be broken down easily into meaningful action stages during the planning
- prominent so that the goal motivates the members instead of being forgotten.

(ii) Planning and doing

You will need to:

- list all the things that need to be done to achieve the goal
- order the list so that it has a logical sequence
- consider any resources required (ie, money, equipment, other)
- give each action a time frame (deadline)
- allocate responsibilities and specific actions to team members.

Activity

Use *Planning to achieve goals activity sheet, page 74* and *Action planning activity sheet, page 20* to complete this activity

(iii) Evaluation

It is important that ongoing evaluation occurs to ensure that the plan is working.

Useful evaluation questions would include:

- did we do what we set out to do?
- what did we do well?
- what could we have done better?
- what did we learn from what we did?
- if we were to do it again, what would we do next time?

Remember to be flexible, sit back and assess your progress, have some fun, follow-up and evaluate.

Identifying goals

What would you say if a visitor in your school asked;
What are the goals of your SRC?

List the goals that *you* believe are important

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____

Now as a group decide the most important goals for *your* SRC.

List the group goals below.

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____

Planning to achieve goals

We (group) _____

plan to:

Things that must be done to reach this goal:

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____

Difficulties that might prevent us achieving this goal:

This will be completed by: _____

Monitor: _____ Date: _____



8. References, further support and information

Departmental documents and support

In order to operate effectively within your school, you should look at and become familiar with the following departmental documents which all encourage the meaningful involvement of students in the decision making and implementation processes.

All schools have copies of these documents.

- **Aboriginal Education Policy, 1996**

This policy has specific activities and outcomes for all students.

- **Departmental Priorities Documents**

These documents, sometimes in poster format, are developed by the Department every year and detail the areas of priority for the year for all schools.

- **Anti-Racism Policy Statement, 1992**

This policy outlines specific responsibilities for schools.

- **Anti-Racism Grievance Procedures, Memorandum 93/014 (S.011)**

This document details steps to follow when resolving a complaint regarding racism. Every school has an Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO) who has attended a training course to support the implementation of these procedures. The ARCO will be able to help the SRC fully understand these procedures.

- **Challenging Racism, 1997**

Training materials have been developed for the Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO) who may be able to assist you in developing initiatives to combat racism.

- **Drug Education**

The following resources have been provided to secondary schools to assist in implementing an effective drug education program. It is important to realise that none of these resources stand alone and should be used within a whole school approach.

End of Year Celebration, 1998

This resource identifies issues, resources and strategies for students to encourage safe celebrations.

Rethinking Drinking, 1996

How will you feel tomorrow?

A resource to assist in alcohol education.

Students Who Smoke, 1998

This resource has been developed specifically for students who have been caught smoking at school.

Healing Time 1998

This resource has been developed for Aboriginal students and focuses on drug education issues.

- **Girls and Boys at School: Gender Equity Strategy 1996 - 2001, 1996**

This strategy encourages the involvement of students in planning, implementing and evaluating activities to improve the quality of education for boys and girls.

- **Multicultural Education Policy Statement and Support Documents, 1982**

This policy and support documents are currently being revised.

- **Procedures for Resolving Complaints About Discrimination Against Students, Memorandum 95/015 (S.014)**

This document details steps to follow when resolving a complaint regarding discrimination.

- **Student Welfare, Good Discipline and Effective Learning, 1996**

This folder contains the *Student Welfare Policy* and *Ministerial Statement Good Discipline and Effective Learning* which have specific roles for students (see section 2 of this document).

Further support for your SRC can be obtained from the **student welfare consultant** at your district office.

Leadership resources

- **It's Your Challenge Too! - Helping Youth In Crisis.**

A project developed by Gilgandra High School. 1995

This document contains a variety of workshop activities designed to allow students an opportunity to discuss problems and assist in finding possible solutions to these. Some of the activities also deal with self-esteem and coping skills.

The folder includes details on organising workshops and overhead and handout masters. This resource can be purchased from Gilgandra High School for \$80.00.

- **"QuEST".** Kirrawee HS. 1997

QuEST stands for **Quality Empowers Student Teams** and is a model of problem solving using the principles of quality management and process improvement.

Although this program was designed for use with Year 11 Business Studies students, it can involve any group of students in the school, especially the SRC.

For further information about this program and its implementation contact Mr Clive Houldin at Kirrawee HS.

Group resources

- **'Connect' magazine,**

12 Brooke Street, Northcote Victoria 3070

- **PASTA**

Professional Association of SRC Teacher Advisers

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