



## 10 Ways to Strengthen Your SRC (That Don't Involve a Badge)



# Welcome

SRC is more than a shiny badge. Student voice is about listening, activating agency, and creating space for all students to shape their school experience.

SRC has a lot in common with Peer Support, in terms of supporting whole-of-school culture via building a culture of belonging and student voice. In fact, it was our Peer Support schools that asked us to help them with their SRCs.

Peer Support developed SRC training more than 15 years ago. Hundreds of SRC coordinators have completed our online two-hour workshop. We are delighted to now offer an on-demand SRC Masterclass, a ten-episode online program available for teachers. The insights are designed to spark ideas, challenge old habits, and remind us that even small shifts can have a big impact.

I hope you enjoy the tips in this ebook, which draws from our SRC Masterclass and online workshop.

**JILL PEARMAN**

SENIOR WELLBEING EDUCATION CONSULTANT

P.S. You can buy SRC badges on our website. It's great to formally acknowledge your student leaders, but we know SRCs can be so much more.





## Take the time to understand the ‘why’

**It’s easier to make decisions about how to run your SRC if you articulate why it exists.**

Be clear on your SRC’s purpose. What’s its *raison d’être*? Consider taking the time to develop a purpose that you write down and return to as a reminder. Developing your purpose could form part of your incoming SRC’s on-boarding process or discussions in early meetings. (We will discuss on-boarding and planning later!)

When schools know why they have an SRC, it becomes something that adds value to the school community and culture.



A photograph of two students, a girl and a boy, in school uniforms walking and smiling by a large window. The girl is on the left, wearing a blue blazer and a plaid skirt. The boy is on the right, wearing a blue blazer, a striped tie, and black trousers, with a red backpack. They are both looking out the window with happy expressions.

## 2

# Let students take the wheel

**Let go of control and trust students to lead.**

Do you want student voice to be more than buzz words? If your SRC involves adults talking while students nod politely, it's not student voice.

"In some schools, we've given students a badge and a meeting, but no actual influence," says Jill Pearman, education expert. "That's not participation."

Jill encourages schools to give students real ownership of their meetings, decisions, and impact. Adults should play a supporting, not controlling, role. Yes, they'll need structure and support. But they also need room to experiment, lead, and sometimes even fail.

"It's amazing what happens when we step back just enough," says Jill. "You'll see students rise to the challenge. They'll problem-solve, plan, listen, adapt. It's powerful."



# 3

## Make SRC part of your wellbeing strategy

**Your SRC can enhance belonging, connection, and mental health when done well.**

An effective SRC does more than create leadership opportunities; it helps create a culture of belonging, which is at the heart of wellbeing. Student voice helps students feel seen, heard, and part of something bigger than themselves. It changes how they show up at school.

Students' sense of self and connectedness grows when they help shape their environment, contribute to real decisions, and see their ideas taken seriously. This has a real impact on learning. Students who feel they belong at school are more likely to be engaged in class, have stronger relationships with peers and teachers, and experience fewer behavioural issues.

An SRC can play a critical role in this. It gives students a meaningful role in school life and a space to practise empathy, communication and collaboration, which supports mental health and academic outcomes.



# 4

## Set up your students for success

**An organised SRC sets students up to lead well.**

Education expert Jill Pearman says the difference between a token SRC and a thriving one often comes down to structure and process. “It’s not about being formal or rigid — it’s about giving the group clarity, consistency, and proper support,” she says.

That means planning, including defining why the SRC exists beyond organising fundraisers or running assemblies. It’s having a structure, goals, meeting format, clear roles, and someone on staff who is genuinely invested.

“You don’t need to run it for them,” Jill says. “But they do need a champion who will guide, mentor, and make sure they’re heard. This is all part of the process to enable student voice and agency.”

Structure isn’t about control. It’s about setting students up to lead well. Teachers who participate in our SRC training gain access to a range of planning templates to help the process.





# 5

## Train your members

**If we want students to speak up and step up, we need to show them how.**

Training SRC members is often forgotten. We may assume young people naturally know how to lead or talk to teachers and peers. Your students will benefit from the opportunity to learn and practise those skills.

You can use the training manual that comes with our SRC training to onboard your members. The training guide covers active listening, speaking with confidence, brainstorming, decision-making, or giving and receiving feedback. It's about setting them up to succeed.





## 6

### **Empower reps to lead projects they care about.**

**The key is to step back and let your students initiate and manage activities, with the school providing guidance, not control.**

Our SRC Masterclass shares examples of SRCs leading meaningful initiatives, such as Oxley Park Public School's 'wellbeing wagon'. This SRC raised funds and created a mobile activity centre that houses games and toys for students to use at recess and lunch.

Your projects don't have to be big or complicated. Start with small wins: a survey about canteen food, a recycling drive, or a LEGO club. It's about choosing projects that the students care about and can follow through on.

Letting students take the lead on real activities builds skills, confidence, and school culture one small project at a time.



# 7

## Teach skills in communication

**Communication is about developing social and emotional skills like empathy, active listening, and the confidence to speak up.**

Build time into every meeting for check-ins, feedback, and peer-to-peer learning.

You can empower students to communicate by giving them structured opportunities to practise. They could lead parts of meetings, present to staff, or run peer discussions. Students will become more thoughtful leaders and more connected humans if they have the opportunity to develop emotional and social skills.

The Peer Support Program is a powerful avenue for providing this opportunity too. Students can both learn about and practise social and emotional skills.



## 8

# Ask for feedback, then act on it

**A strong SRC isn't set-and-forget. The best ones keep evolving because they listen to their members.**

Jill Pearman encourages regular reflection and evaluation of your SRC. "If we're serious about student voice, we have to have an evaluation process for measuring our SRC," she says.

That might mean a quick feedback activity at the end of each term, a survey, or one-on-one chats with quieter members. It's not about overcomplicating things — it's about continually improving the SRC experience.

"Evaluation doesn't have to be formal," says Jill. "It just has to provide an opportunity for students to share their opinions."

But, don't just collect the feedback; do something with it. The most empowering thing you can say to a student rep is: we heard you, and we changed something because of it.





## Share leadership opportunities with different students

**Leadership isn't about perfection or popularity. It's about giving students the chance to practise responsibility, make decisions, and reflect on their impact.**

Jill Pearman encourages schools to think more broadly about what leadership looks like. "When we only celebrate confident or more vocal leaders, we miss so many students with potential," she says.

The SRC is one place to do this, but there are many others. Jill suggests looking for moments where students can lead in ways that feel meaningful to them, whether that's planning an event, solving an issue, or running part of a meeting.

"When students get even a small taste of leadership, it helps them see themselves differently," Jill says. "It gives them agency. It shows them they belong."

Leadership opportunities help students build confidence, purpose and connection. It can enable students to step-up and see their own capabilities and value.



# 10

## **Make your SRC a place where every student can belong**

A truly representative SRC reflects the full diversity of your school, not just the outgoing students who always put their hand up. Ask: Who's not in the room?

"We often default to the students who are already visible," Jill says. "But leadership shouldn't be limited to a particular personality type or background."

To amplify student voice, schools need to actively include students from a range of cultural backgrounds, students with disability or learning differences, and those who may not fit the traditional idea of a leader. That might mean offering alternative ways to nominate, using visual supports during meetings, or inviting quiet students to co-lead behind the scenes.

"It's about creating an environment where every student feels welcome and supported to contribute," says Jill. "Because when different perspectives are included, the whole SRC gets stronger and this reflects in the school culture."

An inclusive SRC doesn't just give more students a voice. It sends a clear message to your whole school: everyone's experience matters here.





# Upskill with our professional development for SRC Coordinators

Enjoyed these tips? Our SRC training goes deeper. We offer two options for SRC Coordinators and school leaders.

Our training offers a practical learning opportunity, giving teachers and school leaders the tools, strategies, and inspiration to build meaningful student voice across year levels and school types.

Our approach is underpinned by the Peer Support pedagogy.

## **SRC Masterclass: a comprehensive online series you can watch anywhere, anytime**

The masterclass includes real-school examples, expert insights, training resources, and a companion workbook so you can take action straight away. It's a 10-part series that you can watch anytime, anywhere.

## **SRC workshop: a two-hour live training session online**

Our two-hour online training is an interactive workshop that helps SRC coordinators establish and maintain an effective SRC. We focus on helping you empower student representatives with the skills needed to become leaders. Join us to give your student representatives the tools they need to succeed.



# We'd love to hear from you.

Get in touch to discuss our SRC training and Peer Support program.

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