

A 9-step guide to establishing and maintaining an effective SRC

This is a quick guide to setting up and running an SRC. Use it as a reminder. The SRC Masterclass videos, and the other downloads, such as structure examples and project ideas, will support you in bringing these steps to life.

Step 1: Define the purpose and structure

Define your school's vision for student voice, participation, and representation.

A successful SRC starts with a clear purpose. Whether your SRC is new or well-established, it's valuable to revisit staff and student perspectives on student voice and participation.

Consider how the SRC's structure ensures fair representation of all students. What processes help maximise diverse voices and ideas? How does the SRC connect with other student leadership structures in the school?

Step 2: Plan and coordinate

A well-planned SRC is a strong SRC. Allocate an annual budget for leadership programs, student and staff training, and resources like badges and certificates. Seek staff support for training, elections, and meetings.

The SRC Coordinator is the coordinating teacher and plays a key role by:

- Monitoring meetings
- Assist planning and organising if needed
- Liaising with staff and parents
- Suggesting project ideas
- Scheduling meeting times and venues
- Advocating for the SRC when necessary
- Supporting and guiding SRC members
- Ensuring key dates are on the school calendar

Step 3: Raise awareness

Engage staff, students, and parents by communicating the SRC's purpose, goals, responsibilities and activities.

Teachers, students, and community members should be aware of:

- The role and structure of the SRC
- SRC members' responsibilities
- The importance of student representation and participation
- Leadership and democracy
- The election process
- Key leadership qualities

Awareness can be raised through classroom discussions, staff meetings, P&C meetings, school assemblies, newsletters, and the school website or learning platform.

SRC members can also increase visibility by:

- Inviting students to attend meetings
- Giving reports at assemblies and class/year meetings
- Allocating time in roll call or class to discuss SRC activities

Step 4: Set up an election and induction process

Set up a clear, fair process for electing and onboarding SRC members.

Elections may be formal or informal, depending on school preference. Options include:

- Candidate information sheets outlining their interests and reasons for nomination
- Encouraging students to nominate
- Formal voting through paper ballots or electronic systems
- Including nominee photos on ballot papers
- Holding class-based elections for informal selection

Induction can be formal, such as during recognition assemblies, to highlight the SRC's leadership role within the school community.

Step 5: Train student reps

Equip SRC members with leadership skills and clarify their responsibilities. Ensure student input is considered in shaping the council's structure and representation.

Leadership training helps SRC members:

- Connect with their fellow representatives
- Develop skills in problem-solving, decision-making, project planning, negotiation, and communication
- Discuss potential projects and priorities
- Define roles and responsibilities within the SRC

Step 6: Establish a constitution

Invite your students to create a constitution that guides the SRC.

An effective SRC operates with structure. A constitution helps define how the SRC is organised and functions. Every SRC member should receive a copy at the beginning of their term.

Step 7: Generate and prioritise ideas

Help SRC members turn student voice into action by brainstorming ideas and setting clear priorities. Encourage the collection of ideas from across the school community. Use suggestion boxes, class discussions, surveys, or informal chats to gather input.

Once ideas are collected, SRC members can work together to:

- Group similar ideas into themes
- Discuss feasibility, resources, and impact
- Vote on or rank projects to determine priorities
- Allocate responsibilities for follow-up

Prioritising together helps build ownership and focus the SRC's energy on achievable, meaningful initiatives.

Step 8: Conduct meetings

Hold regular SRC meetings at a suitable time and venue to keep momentum going.

Meeting best practices:

- Use a minute book to track decisions and actions
- Decide whether meetings should be formal or informal
- Ensure student representatives lead discussions effectively

Step 9: Evaluate

Annual evaluations help assess the SRC's effectiveness. Gather feedback from staff, students, parents, and SRC members through surveys. It's also important for SRC members to evaluate their own projects, reflecting on successes and identifying lessons for future initiatives.