P11 Student Voice Policy

The Purcell School aims to give students a voice in as many areas of the school as possible, believing that students should be active participants in the wider school community and that their opinions should be heard and valued. The term 'student voice' refers to ways of listening to the views of students and / or involving them in decision making.

We believe our approach empowers our students to realise that their opinions matter, that they can influence change and that they are part of an inclusive community. The Student Voice Policy endeavors to bring about greater engagement and make students more reflective and responsible members of the School and society at large.

1. Student Council **2**
2. Student Surveys **2**
3. Prospective Staff Interviews **3**
4. Student Leadership Team Meetings **4**
5. Head(s) of School and Student Leadership Team Selection and Appointment Process **4**
6. Roles and Responsibilities **6**

1. Student Council

We believe that Student Council promotes democracy, leadership and mutual responsibility throughout the school. Student Council is organised by the Student Leadership Team (Prefects) and each meeting is chaired by the Head(s) of School. Any points raised during the course of a Student Council meeting should be brought by the Student Leadership Team team to the Vice-Principal and / or Principal at their next weekly meeting for discussion.

The Council meet at least once per half term, and is made of up of student representatives from each tutor group. These representatives are selected by the students following discussions between tutors and their tutor group, and may take the form of internal elections during a tutorial session or other appropriate formats.

The process of Student Council provides:

- A positive forum for student voice
- Structured opportunity for student-leadership dialogue
- Students with an insight into democracy
- A forum for students to instigate change in respect of elements of school life, e.g. school meals, social areas, outdoor equipment
- A feeling of self-worth and mutual respect for students
- Students with a sense of ownership of their place within the school community.

2. Student Surveys

In order to gain an insight from the students we perform student surveys via our online Google platform which provide us with feedback on the day-to-day running of the School and any specific areas that the Senior Leadership Team may want to target. The Senior Leadership Team are always keen to hear how students feel the School could be improved as well as activities or opportunities that they would like to try. The surveys will often highlight important topics for the Student Council and Senior Leadership Team meetings.

Additionally, a beginning of school year ‘reflection’ survey is carried out. Returning students are asked to reflect on their school experience of the previous year and suggest improvements as appropriate; new students are asked to reflect on their perceptions of the school pre-arrival and during induction and to suggest improvements based on their experience of other educational environments or their own ideas. (Staff and parents are invited to complete similar beginning of year surveys).

3. Prospective Staff Interviews

Where appropriate, and particularly for senior pastoral appointments, prospective members of staff at The Purcell School will meet with students as part of the interview process. This may take the form of a question and answer session or an informal discussion (for example, while touring the school) as appropriate to the appointment. These students will then meet with the Principal, Vice-Principal or other members of the Senior Leadership Team as appropriate to provide their reactions and thoughts on the prospective member of staff.

4. Student Leadership Team Meetings

Each week during term time (as far as is possible) the Head(s) of School will meet with the Vice-Principal and / or the Principal to discuss matters arising from School Council, and any other business that the Student Leadership Team believes requires discussion at a senior level. The Vice-Principal will maintain records of these meetings and the Head(s) of School will be required to complete any actions arising in a timely manner.

5. Head(s) of School and Student Leadership Team Selection and Appointment Process

Each year the school body takes part in a process to select Head(s) of School (who will also play a leading role in the boarding houses) and an accompanying Student Leadership team to provide a concise and coherent voice to the Senior Leadership Team and other appropriate members of staff. This process takes place according to the following guidelines.

a. The Director of Sixth Form will invite all Sixth Form students to an assembly in which he will lay out the process for selection as Head(s) of Houses and Student Leaders as detailed below

b. Students will be given a period of time (usually one week unless affected by public holidays or other school commitments) in which to put themselves forward for the positions available by notification to the Director of Sixth Form.

c. Prospective applicants will then be invited to a present their suitability for the available positions and any key campaign messages in the following formats:

   i. **Whole School Assembly**
   Candidates will be invited to make a 2-minute presentation to the whole school where they will be encouraged to speak as to why they believe they are the best candidate, and to introduce any key campaign messages that they feel passionately about

   ii. **Staff Briefing**
   Candidates will be invited to a question and answer session with all staff, chaired by the Director of Sixth Form, which will enable candidates to explain how they, if appointed, will facilitate a good working relationship between the staff and student bodies and any other key messages that candidates wish to present

   iii. **Walkabouts**
   Candidates will be encouraged to circulate the school at break-times and meal-times

where appropriate and to speak with the student body. The student body will be encouraged to ask probing questions that are relevant to their section of the school and areas of interest. This will take place in the days between the initial presentation (as outlined at 1.c.i.) and the end of voting (as outlined at 1.d.)

iv. **Other Appropriate Activities**
Candidates may request the opportunity to speak with specific groups of students or staff at any other point in the process and, where possible, this will be accommodated. Any opportunities requested will be made open to all candidates, but candidates will be encouraged to use their initiative as to potential methods of attracting votes. This may include the use of posters or flyers, announcements, the use of a campaign team or any other appropriate method as agreed with the Director of Sixth Form

d. Voting will open within one week of the initial presentation (as outlined at 1.c.i.) and will remain open for a 24-hour period.

   i. This will usually take place on the second day following the presentations subject to the school timetable and concert diary and will run from 00:00 until 23:59 on that day.

e. The Director of Sixth Form will organise an appropriate voting system that is accessible to all staff and students for the voting period. This may include (but not be limited to) paper voting slips and an online voting system,

   i. When the online system is used, those voting will be asked to provide an identifying marker to ensure no duplicate votes are cast. The Director of Sixth Form will be the only person with access to these identifiers and any duplicate votes will be removed without being opened so as to maintain anonymity in the process.
   ii. If a paper system is used in conjunction with an online voting system, the Director of Sixth Form will apply the same system of identifying markers to both and will remove any duplicate votes without opening so as to maintain anonymity in the process.

f. All staff and students will be eligible to vote.

g. Those voting will be asked to indicate a preference order for candidates, although will not be required to provide a preference for every candidate.

h. Upon the closure of the voting process, the Director of Sixth Form will collate the results and bring them to the Principal for shortlisting.

i. Shortlisted candidates may be asked to interview with a panel consisting of members of the Senior Leadership Team, or with the Principal, depending on role.

   These interviews will pose a series of questions to candidates that may be different depending on the candidate in question and information gleaned during the selection process.

j. After interview, the Principal will make a final determination as to the configuration of the team and will invite successful candidates to a meeting to inform them, before an

announcement is made to the wider staff and student bodies.

k. The Principal and Director of Sixth Form reserve the right to disqualify a candidate from the process at any point should there be concerns over their conduct, whether within the process or in the wider life of the school, which indicates an unsuitability for the role.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

a. The Student Leadership Team are ambassadors for the school and should conduct themselves accordingly. An adherence to the school rules is paramount and any infraction could result in their being suspended or removed from their position.

b. There is no formal requirement for a particular configuration of the Student Leadership Team and different role specifications will be decided by the Principal and Director of Sixth Form each year.

   i. There may be one or more Head(s) of School, of any gender.
   ii. The Student Leadership Team will usually consist of a number of the shortlisted candidates invited to interview, although the final number of Student Leaders is at the discretion of the Principal.

c. The Head(s) of School are expected to fulfill the following role:

   i. To represent the student body by acting as official intermediary between staff and students
   ii. To set a good example to all students in all aspects of school life
   iii. To arrange meetings of the School Council, to chair these meetings and to act on business raised at these meetings with support from the SLT and others as appropriate
   iv. To represent the student body where necessary at official occasions and when there are visitors to the School
   v. To support and organise occasional charity and social events in School
   vi. To oversee the Student Leadership Team
   vii. To take the initiative where appropriate to support staff in the day to day running of the School. This may include but not be limited to showing visitors around the school, keeping an eye on behaviour in the ICT Room, and helping with the management of concerts in and out of School.
   viii. To arrange meetings of the Student Leadership Team where necessary
   ix. To suggest other ways in which the Head(s) of School and Student Leadership Team can play a productive part in the running of the School
   x. To meet regularly with the Principal and Director of Sixth Form.

d. The Student Leadership Team are expected to fulfill the following role:

   i. To support the Head(s) of School
   ii. To set a good example to other students in all aspects of school life
   iii. To attend meetings of the School Council and to act on business raised at these meetings
   iv. To represent the student body where necessary at official occasions and when there are visitors to the School

v. To support and organise occasional charity and social events in School
vi. To take responsibility for ensuring that the school is kept tidy and orderly on a day-to-day basis. Student Leaders are encouraged to manage teams of sixth formers to help support this task, sharing the duties across the week.
vii. To take the initiative where appropriate to support staff in the day to day running of the School. This may include but not be limited to showing visitors around the school, keeping an eye on behaviour in the ICT Room, and helping with the management of concerts in and out of School
viii. To attend meetings arranged by the Head(s) of School when required.
ix. To suggest other ways in which the Student Leaders can play a productive part in the running of the School
x. To attend meetings arranged by the Principal or Director of Sixth Form.

Policy author / reviewer:	***Policy date / review date:***	***Next review due:***
SLT	September 2021	September 2022
SLT	September 2022	September 2023
SLT	September 2023	September 2024
SLT	September 2024	September 2025
SLT	September 2025	September 2026
T.Burns	September 2026	September 2027