

HOËRSKOOL NOORDERLAND

Through Education we Conquer

THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL FOR LEARNERS (RCL)

1. WHAT IS A REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL OF LEARNERS
 - 1.1 The RCL is an official body representing all learners in secondary schools.
 - 1.2 The RCL should become the most prestigious official representative structure of learners in the entire school.
 - 1.3 The RCL is made up of learners elected by their fellow learners to represent them.
 - 1.4 It is constituted in accordance with the SA Schools Act.
 - 1.5 The RCL is the only body that represents every learner and in which every learner can participate.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE RCL
 - 2.1 The council is to provide learners with an opportunity to participate in school governance and to participate in appropriate decision making.
 - 2.2 The RCL also has to enable learners to contribute towards the improvement of the culture of learning, teaching and service in their school.

3. WHAT MUST THE RCL KNOW
 - 3.1 The RCL must know that the main purpose of being at school is to learn.
 - 3.2 The RCL must understand that the principal cannot morally or legally hand over the management of the school to anyone; he or she cannot give his powers to learners.
 - 3.3 The RCL must know and understand its rights and responsibilities (obligations).
 - 3.4 The RCL must report or contribute to the sound management of the school authorities and must normally act in accordance with the school authorities.
 - 3.5 The RCL must contribute to the smooth running of the school and support the governance of the school.
 - 3.6 The RCL must understand that each school is unique just as families are; as a result two schools can never be identical in their management and governance.
 - 3.7 The RCL must remember that the relationship between educators and their employers (LDE) is governed by Labour Law and that they have no direct influence on labour processes and matters.

4. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RCL
 - 4.1 The main objective of establishing the RCL is to create a sense of co-responsibility in learners.
 - 4.2 It is an attempt to create the opportunity to identify and train future leaders.
 - 4.3 It is also an attempt to create a sound and healthy relationship between learners, educators and non-educators, as well as parents.
 - 4.4 It fosters sound interaction among learners and teachers.
 - 4.5 It aims to keep learners abreast of events at school and in the community.
 - 4.6 It aims to promote sport and cultural activities within the school community.
 - 4.7 It represents learners in the SGB.
 - 4.8 It provides a voice for learners' expression.
 - 4.9 In appropriate cases, the RCL provides learners with an opportunity to participate in decision making regarding the school.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RCL

- 5.1 It must liaise and communicate with the learners, professional SMT and the SGB at the school.
- 5.2 Because it represents the learners, it must accept that the well-being of the school and the L is its primary task.
- 5.3 It must foster a spirit of mutual respect, good manners and morality among the learners.
- 5.4 It must promote and maintain discipline among learners and promote the general welfare of the school.
- 5.5 It must foster participation in school activities.
- 5.6 It must provide a training ground for developing leaders.
- 6.7 It must help each learner to feel at home in the school.
- 6.8 It must lead learners to develop high ideals of personal conduct.
- 6.9 It must promote orderliness and not disrupt the order in the school.
- 6.10 It must assist school management in implementing the school policy.
- 6.11 It must attempt to democratize its activities at the school.

6. THE AUTHORITY OF THE RCL

- 6.1 Generally three main areas of authority can be defined:
 - 6.1.1 Those in which learners, teachers and management share authority.
 - 6.1.2 Those in which learners have authority.
 - 6.1.3 Those in which learners have no authority.
- 6.2 The amount of authority or responsibility to be assumed by the RCL must be understood clearly.
- 6.3 The RCL should not interfere unlawfully with the administration of the school.

7. FUNCTIONS OF THE RCL

- 7.1 A good RCL must be a sound, functioning body which respects teachers, learners, the SGB and non-educators.
- 7.2 The RCL must serve the school willingly and must be able to encourage the voluntary co-operation of learners.
- 7.3 The following are the main functions of the RCL
 - 7.3.1 The RCL acts as an important instrument for liaison and communication.
 - 7.3.2 The RCL meets at fairly regular intervals, as determined by its constitution, to consider ideas, suggestions, comments and even complaints from its constituencies.
 - 7.3.3 After every meeting the RCL gives feedback to the learners.
 - 7.3.3.1 In an idea is turned down, the RCL must explain why approval was not granted.
 - 7.3.3.2 If an idea was approved, it must be conveyed to the professional management of the school and the SGB, where applicable.
 - 7.3.3.3 If they also approved the idea, it becomes part of the school policy, if applicable; if they do not approve the idea, the principal must explain the reasons for this decision to the RCL, who in turn must inform its constituencies.

8. THE LIAISON ROLES OF THE RCL

There are 5 different ways in which the RCL plays a liaison role. These can be explained as follows:

8.1 LEARNER →CLASS REPRESENTATIVE →RCL →TLO(Teacher liaison officer) →PRINCIPAL

- 8.1.1 A learner makes contact with the class representatives who contacts the RCL directly when there is a problem. The class representatives are learners elected by a specific class to act as its mouthpiece and liaise with the RCL. This learners represent the class.
- 8.1.2 The RCL then tries to solve the problem in accordance with the powers vested in it through its constitution.
- 8.1.3 If it cannot solve the problem, it will be referred to the TLO, who, if he cannot solve the problem, refers it to the principal, who must make a decision.
- 8.1.4 In extreme cases, the principal might refer the problem to other authorities, e.g. the SGB.

8.2 LEARNER →PRINCIPAL →TLO →RCL

- 8.2.1 A learner communicates directly with the principal.
- 8.2.2 The principal refers the problem to the TLO.
- 8.2.3 Depending on the nature of the problem, the TLO refers the problem to the RCL.

8.3 RCL →PRINCIPAL

- 8.3.1 Sometimes it may be appropriate for the RCL to liaise with the principal without including the TLO, although the TLO would normally be included.
- 8.3.2 Without superseding the function of the TLO, the principal's general advice, communication, inspiration and assistance are indispensable. Communication and liaison between the RCL and the principal are imperative for the well-being of the school.

8.4 RCL →LEARNERS

- 8.4.1 The most important communication is that between the RCL and the learners. The procedures and duties of the RCL in this regard will be spelled out in the RCL constitution. A negative relationship between the RCL and learners can cause serious tension in the school situation.

8.5 CLASS REPRESENTATIVES →RCL

- 8.5.1 The class representatives communicate the interests and/or problems of the class to the RCL.

9. HOW TO WORK TOGETHER

- 9.1 All members of the RCL must co-operate with one another.
- 9.2 Rules and regulations must be respected.
- 9.3 The TLO and RCL must support each other.
- 9.4 Differences of opinion must be accepted and should not prevent the RCL from acting as a united body.
- 9.5 The RCL must work towards creating mutual trust and support.
- 9.6 The principal and the teachers should be sympathetic to the RCL and have a true understanding of its role.
- 9.10 The RCL must always strive to reach decisions on behalf of the learners.
- 9.11 The RCL should not make binding decisions on behalf of the learners without consulting them for ratification.

10. THE TEACHER LIAISON OFFICER (TLO)

- 10.1 The TLO must be a teacher at the school concerned.
- 10.2 He must be a reliable and sympathetic teacher.

- 10.3 He must create a sincere and trusting relationship with the RCL, the principal as well as the SMT.
- 10.4 He must help to guide and organize the RCL.
- 10.5 He must develop a sense of leadership in the members of the RCL.