

## **ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL CENTRE**

### **POLICY ON LEARNER PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL MATTERS**

#### **Preamble**

The democratization of certain components of the school needs to be revisited to ensure that all voices are heard during any process of engagement and consultation. The learners make up the majority of the school, and their thoughts, opinions, aspirations and needs need to be appreciated as part of the whole school development.

According to the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996, Chapter 2 : Learners, a representative council of learners at the school must be established at every public school enrolling learners in the eighth grade or higher, and such council is the only recognized and legitimate representative learner body at the school.

#### **THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL FOR LEARNERS (RCL)**

##### **1. WHAT IS A REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL OF LEARNERS**

- 1.1 The RCL is an official body that represents all learners in secondary schools.
- 1.2 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, 84 Of 1996.

##### **2. THE PURPOSE OF THE RCL**

- 2.1 The Council provides learners with an opportunity to participate in school governance and to appropriate decision making.
- 2.2 The RCL has to enable learners to contribute towards the improvement of the culture of learning, teaching and service in their school within an Islamic ethos and value system.

##### **3. WHAT MUST THE RCL KNOW**

- 3.1 The RCL must acknowledge that their main purpose of being at school is to learn.
- 3.2 The RCL must understand that the Principal is the head of the institution and acknowledge the Ameer as the head of the Shura;
- 3.3 The RCL must know and understand its rights and responsibilities (obligations) within the school environment;
- 3.4 The RCL must report or contribute to the good governance of the school and must assist in accordance with the school rules and regulations;

3.5 The RCL must contribute to the smooth running of the school and work with the learners, teachers and the Shura;

3.6 The RCL must accept that each school is unique in respect of its ethos and operations;

3.7 The RCL must remember that the relationship between educators and their employers (Shura) 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 an opportunity to identify and train future leaders. In the school;

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 acts as a sounding board to keep learners abreast of events at school and in the community.

4.6 It aims to promote sport, social impact activities and cultural activities within the school community.

4.7 It represents learners at the Shura meetings; subject to such invitation from the Ameer;

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, school management and the Shura at the school.

5.2 Because it represents the learners, it must accept that the well-being and reputation of the school must be 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 by learners in school activities.

5.6 It must provide a training ground for developing leaders.

- 5.7 It must help each learner to feel at home in the school.
- 5.8 It must lead learners to develop high ideals of personal conduct.
- 5.9 It must promote orderliness and not disrupt the order and discipline in the school.
- 5.10 It must assist school management in implementing the school policy.
- 5.11 It must attempt to democratize its activities at the school.

## **6. THE AUTHORITY OF THE RCL**

The authority of the RCL vests in its capacity to serve the needs and aspirations of the learners at the school within the framework of the school rules and regulations..

## **7. FUNCTIONS OF THE RCL**

7.1 A good RCL must be a sound, functioning body which respects teachers, learners, the Shura 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 to consider ideas, suggestions, comments and even complaints from its constituency.

7.3.3 After every meeting the RCL must provide feedback to the learners.

7.3.3.1 If an idea is turned down, the RCL must explain why such 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 Shura, where applicable.

## **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 voice and liaise with the RCL. These learners represent the class.

8.1.2 The RCL then tries to solve the problem in accordance with the powers vested in this policy.

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, for a resolution..

8.1.4 In extreme cases, the Principal might refer the problem to other bodies, e.g. the Shura., the SAP or Social Welfare Services.

## **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. For a resolution.

## **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 The Principal's general advice, communication, inspiration and assistance are indispensable learners at large. Communication and liaison between the RCL and the principal are implicit 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. 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 work as a team and co-operate with one another.

9.2 All school rules and regulations must be respected, and adhered to.

9.3 The TLO and RCL must support each other and work in harmony.

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 within all stakeholders at the school.

9.6 The RCL must always strive to reach decisions on behalf of the learners by consensus.

9.7 The RCL should not make binding decisions on behalf of the learners without consulting or engaging with them prior to ratification.

9.8 The RCL must exhaust all avenues to resolve disputes through the existing channels of communication, and should approach Shura members as a last resort.

## **10. THE TEACHER LIAISON OFFICER (TLO)**

10.1 The TLO must be a teacher at the school, and is understanding and sympathetic to learners and their problems and issues.

10.2 He/she must create a sincere and trusting relationship with the RCL, the Principal as well as the Shura.

10.3 He must guide, assist, mentor and coach the RCL to fulfil its mission at the school.

## **11. DISQUALIFICATION AS A MEMBER OF THE RCL**

A learner automatically disqualifies himself/herself from serving on the RCL on the basis of the following:

11.1 Acts in a manner that is in conflict of the school's disciplinary policy and learners' code of conduct;

11.2 Wilfully and deliberately leaves the classroom on a regular basis without any justification;

11.3 Found guilty of misconduct;

11.4 Brings the name of the school into disrepute.