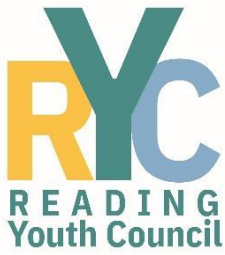


CLASSIFICATION: ENTER HERE



Reading Youth Council

Constitution

2023-2025

OWNER

Reading Youth Council

VERSION

Version 1

DATE

August 2023

© Brighter Futures for Children

Brighter Futures for Children
Civic Offices, Bridge Street,
Reading RG1 2LU

Company number 11293709

1.	Role of Reading Youth Council
2	Membership
3	Social Networking
	Expectations of members online
	Use of social media in campaigning
	The Reading Youth Council social media platform and Brighter Futures for Children
4	Political Views
5	Equalities Policy
6	Roles and Structure
	Reading Youth Council Executive Roles
	Reading Youth Council Officer Roles
	Reading Youth Council Campaign roles
7	Procedures
	Absence of key figures
	Invitation of external guests
	Voting on issues within meetings
	Grievances
8	Elections
	Internal Elections
	External Elections
9	Budget
10	Code of Conduct
	Signatures

1 Role of Reading Youth Council

Reading Youth Council is a strong elected voice, representing the young people of Reading. It is a very effective way for young people to communicate with decisions makers, to have their say and have influence on decisions which affect them and other young people.

1.1 The purpose of Youth Council is to:

- Be a strong elected voice for the young people of Reading
- To facilitate young people's engagement with senior officers, elected representatives and organisations.

1.2 The role of the Youth Council is to:

- Take part in and planning the delivery of services for young people.
- Consult and influence decision makers
- Consult young people across Reading
- To report any information which may be useful in delivering services for children and young people.

1.3 The role of Brighter Futures for Children support is to:

- Facilitate each meeting and provide resources where necessary
- Help organise events planned by the Reading Youth Council.
- To help answer any questions regarding British Youth Council or Brighter Futures for Children.
- To manage the external election process
- To offer ongoing advice and guidance to members of the Reading Youth Council

2 Membership

2.1 Reading Youth Council will have an upper limit of 30 members

2.2 Reading Youth Council is open to all people ages 11-18 who live or go to school in the Borough of Reading

2.3 Members must be between 11 and 18 in January following election

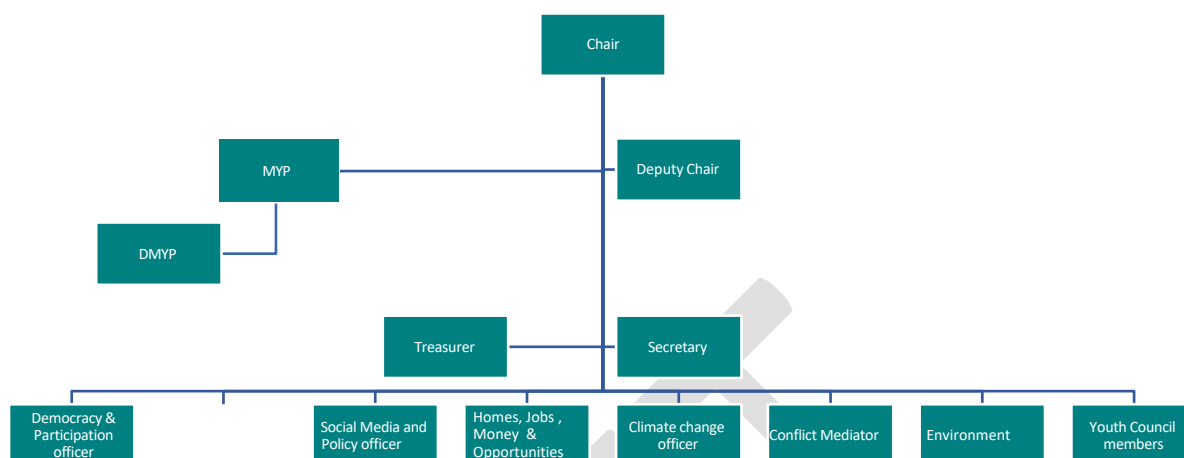
2.4 Members are elected for a 2-year period.

2.5 If further involvement is so desired, members can stand for re-election after their 2-year term.

2.6 Every member is to engage actively and consistently, within meetings.

2.7 If membership is required to be terminated early, a request should be sent to the Chair in written form.

3 Structure and Roles



3.1 Reading Youth Council Executive Roles

3.1.1 Chair of the Reading Youth Council

Responsible for:

- Effective running of the Reading Youth Council
- creating the agenda and ensuring meetings are organised
- ensuring all members participate and are given equal opportunities
- liaising with all members and staff about Reading Youth Council matters

3.1.2 Deputy Chair of the Reading Youth Council

Responsible for:

- Ensuring other role members effectively carry out their responsibilities
- aiding the Chair with their responsibilities
- standing in for the Chair during absences

3.1.3 Treasurer of the Reading Youth Council

Responsible for:

- Liaising with campaign coordinator and staff to allocate the budget fairly
- ensuring the budget is spent responsibly by minimising expenditure
- maintaining a clear record of all expenditure
- developing fundraising initiatives
- liaising with all members and staff about Reading Youth Council matters

3.1.4 Secretary of the Reading Youth Council

Responsible for:

- Recording and distributing the minutes to all members
- measuring the impact of RYC campaigns in partnership with the campaign coordinator
- writing emails to visitors and outside agencies

3.1.5 Member of Youth Parliament (MYP)

Responsible for:

- Upholding the roles and duties outlined by British Youth Council

3.1.6 Deputy Member of Youth Parliament (DMYP)

Responsible for:

- Supporting the MYP in their role as outlined above

3.2 Reading Youth Council Officer Roles

3.2.2 Democracy and Participation Officer

Responsible for:

- Encouraging participation in Reading Youth Council campaigns, events and Make Your Mark
- liaising with Councillors to promote views important to young people
- ensuring the election process is democratic and fair

3.2.3 Social Media and Communication Officer

Responsible for:

- Managing Reading Youth Council social media
- writing press releases
- ensuring the Reading Youth Council projects are inclusive and reflective of young people's views

3.2.4 Campaign Commissioner for Environment

Responsible for:

- Promoting environmentally friendly initiatives
- conversing with organisations in Reading on climate positive policy
- coordinating campaign planning
- ensuring that everyone in the campaign groups is contributing
- setting and meeting achievable campaign goals
- reporting on progress to the Chair

3.2.5 Democracy and Participation Officer

Responsible for:

- Community reach out
- getting in contact with listed individuals and guests.
- understanding and using information compiled from the general population of Reading.

3.3 Reading Youth Council Campaign Roles

3.3.2 Campaign Commissioner for Homes, Money and Opportunities

Responsible for:

- Coordinating campaign planning
- ensuring that everyone in the campaign groups is contributing
- setting and meeting achievable campaign goals
- reporting on progress to the Chair

4 Social Networking

4.1 Use of social media in campaigning

- 4.1.2** Members personal accounts are not required to have a neutral political stance but cannot use Brighter Futures for Children or Reading Youth Council to espouse their views.
- 4.1.3** The official social media accounts of Youth Council should be run by the Press Officer, MYP and Chair always combined and overseen by support staff.
- 4.1.4** The passwords for the social media accounts should be kept in a secure document, which should be kept by the MYP and press officer and passed onto the next MYP and press officer once a new one is elected.
- 4.1.5** Before a post is submitted, the Youth Council should be given a brief statement as to the content and type of post.
- 4.1.6** If a post is requested by the Youth Council, then the Press Officer is required to write up a release.

4.2 The Youth Council social media platform and Brighter Futures for Children

- 4.2.2** Reading Youth Council may request a post to the Brighter Futures for Children social media accounts.
- 4.2.3** Brighter Futures for Children may request a change to the social media presence of Reading Youth Council, which must be discussed and voted upon by Reading Youth Council before being accepted or rejected with relevant reasoning.
- 4.2.4** Brighter Futures for Children youth workers have a responsibility to safeguard all members of Reading Youth Council online and may be required to contribute to any online activity if deemed necessary.

4.3 Expectations of members online

- 4.3.2** Members are expected to be tolerant and respectful while online.
- 4.3.3** Members who are in executive positions should have social media platforms on:
 - Twitter
 - Instagram
 - Facebook
- 4.3.4** Members are encouraged to actively use social media if they have consent from their parents to do so
- 4.3.5** Members personal accounts are not required to have a neutral political stance but cannot use Brighter Futures for Children or Reading Youth Council to espouse their views.

5 Political Views

- 5.1** Reading Youth Council, in line with British Youth Council, must present as neutral on political issues.
- 5.2** Members cannot use Reading Youth Council to represent political views so as to not exclude members from across the spectrum.
- 5.3** Members should withhold personal and political views within the Reading Youth Council.

6 Equalities Policy

- 6.1** Reading Youth Council promotes that everyone, irrespective of background, should be allowed a voice and representation within Youth Council.
- 6.2** This includes:
 - Building anti- discriminatory structures into our systems.
 - Free speech for all members.
 - Work towards reducing hatred and discrimination across Reading
 - Allowed me to be more accepting of past situations and grow in confidence for the future.

7 Procedures

7.1 Meetings

- 7.1.1** Meetings will occur fortnightly during term time.
- 7.1.2** If additional meetings must be scheduled, the Chair should arrange this either online or in person.
- 7.1.3** If a guest is invited, they will be allowed to voice opinions and observe the meeting processes but will not have voting rights.

7.2 Attendance

- 7.2.1** If a member is unable to attend, must leave early or must leave late, then this must be informed to the Secretary (see 2.4).
 - If a member is consistently late, then an email will be sent asking for an appropriate explanation.
 - If it is an issue with timing, they will be caught up during meetings and if this is a widespread issue, timings may be adjusted accordingly
- 7.2.2** If sufficient notice, which means at any point before the meeting, is given then non-attendance is acceptable.
- 7.2.3** If a person is unable to attend consistently and does not give notice or reason for not attending meetings the procedure will be as follows:
 - If they miss three meetings with no prior information, they will be sent an email by the Chair.
 - If this email is ignored, a meeting will be set up to talk to the member to give them the opportunity to explain.
 - If no explanation or involvement is given, then they will be terminated formally via an email from the Chair.
- 7.2.4** Members may take leave from Reading Youth Council if they give reason for doing so.
 - If they miss three meetings with no prior information, they will be sent an email by the Chair.

- If this email is ignored, a meeting will be set up to talk to the member to give them the opportunity to explain.
- If no explanation or involvement is given, then they will be terminated formally via an email from the Chair.

7.2.5 Members may take leave from Reading Youth Council if they give reason for doing so.

7.2.6 If a member would like to leave, then the Secretary and Chair should receive written confirmation of this, which they should respond to.

7.3 Absence of key figures

7.3.1 When there is an occasion where certain key members are not present, then each of the key members have separate protocol that is to be followed.

7.3.2 If there is an absence of the Chair:

- The Deputy Chair will chair the meeting.
- If the Deputy Chair is unavailable, then there will be a temporary Chair that will be appointed and will set up the agenda for the meeting once given adequate information.
- Where possible, notice of absence for the chair and deputy chair should be given 24 hours prior to a meeting to ensure there is adequate leadership in place

7.3.3 If there is an absence of the Secretary, then a temporary Secretary will be appointed to record and send minutes after the meeting.

7.3.4 If the MYP is unable to attend:

- The DMYP will inform us of activities either they or the MYP have taken part in.
- If unable to attend, then the DMYP/MYP will have to send adequate information to update the Youth Council on their activities.

7.3.5 If the Treasurer is not present, then:

- The treasurer should provide any appropriate updates regarding the budget.
- The Chair will read such updates.

7.4 Invitation of external guests

7.4.1 If a member would like to invite an external guest, then the following procedure should occur:

- The member should send an email to both the Chair and the support staff in attendance, requesting an invitation from a guest and explain the purpose.
- If this invitation is granted, then they should continue in communications while using the CC function in email for the Youth Worker in attendance for safeguarding purposes.
- If a date is finalised, the secretary and the Chair should be informed, and it should be integrated into meetings.

7.4.2 If a Youth Worker is approached by a guest, then the Chair should be informed via email. Confirmation should be given by the Chair to make sure the meeting is free.

7.5 Voting on issues within meetings.

7.5.1 *Note: This is separate from elections* If there is an issue to be voted upon within Reading Youth Council meetings in person then the following procedure is to be used:

- Heads will be put down and a show of hands requested for the solutions to the issue.
- From this show of hands, a count will be done, and the most popular solution considered.

7.5.2 If there is an issue to be voted upon within Reading Youth Council meetings online then:

- The members must type their agreement/disagreement in a chat box or verbalise it if access is not possible.

- 7.5.3** There should be an expectation of a quorum of 50% of the Reading Youth Council is present at any given time, in order to make sure voting is fair and unbiased.
- 7.5.4** In the event of a tie, the Chair will intervene and decide. If a member would like to leave, then the Secretary and Chair should receive written confirmation of this, which they should respond to.

7.6 Grievances

- 7.6.1** If a member of Reading Youth Council has a concern or grievance they would like to air, then an email should be sent to the Chair and, if preferred, a meeting could be set up.
- 7.6.2** This should then be given consideration by the Chair.
- 7.6.3** If this is of serious concern, then Youth Worker must be informed, and further action will be taken.
- 7.6.4** If the grievance is minor, then it should be informed to the Chair to be rectified immediately and added to appropriate protocol.

8 Elections

8.1 Timeline

February	External Elections Make your Mark ballot
March	Internal elections and election of Reading MYP
March to December	Campaign work Build up to conference
January	Annual conference

8.2 External Elections

- 8.2.1** External elections take place annually.
- 8.2.2** Any young person over the age of 11 and under the age of 19, who lives, is educated, or is employed within the boundaries of Reading Borough Council’s area of authority, may vote in the annual elections that take place in December.
- 8.2.3** Running for previous elections unsuccessfully does not disqualify a young person from running again.
- 8.2.4** During elections, candidates register to run to represent their school.
- 8.2.5** Candidates may also stand as independents, representing community groups (for example, Young Carers, LGBTQ+, Faith groups, Cultural communities etc).
- 8.2.6** Candidates will be required to write a manifesto outlining their reasons to be elected, which will be published on ballot papers
- 8.2.7** Votes are counted by Youth Workers rather than Reading Youth Council members to ensure fairness.
- 8.2.8** There is an upper limit of 30 members. The terms for each of these members is 2 years from the date of election onwards.

8.3 Internal Elections

- 8.3.1** Internal elections take place with every new intake of members to the Reading Youth Council.
- 8.3.2** Every role listed above in “Reading Youth Council Officer Roles” and “Reading Youth Council Executive Roles” is voted on by elected Reading Youth Council members

- 8.3.3** Both the MYP and the Deputy MYP must be an elected member of the Youth Council.
- 8.3.4** Voting is done democratically with a space for a one-minute speech of each candidate per role before any voting takes place.
- 8.3.5** Voting is taken by secret ballot
- 8.3.6** Members may run for multiple roles at once, but if elected to more than one role, they may only choose one role to take on.
- 8.3.7** Should there be roles unfulfilled, or officers resigned during their term of office, a bi-election can be held.
- 8.3.8** Internal elections require at least 50% of the Reading Youth Council to be present before a vote is made.

9 Budget

9.1 Projected Budget

An estimated maximum budget is laid out as follows; this is subject to change within each year and at reviewed each financial year.

	Estimated annual cost
United Kingdom Youth Parliament & British Youth Council Incorporating annual fees and travel to venues for annual sitting, annual conference, regional meetings.	£1250
Annual conference costs Incorporating catering and venue hire and printing costs	£2000
Annual venue hire Based on hiring RISC for 3 hours a fortnight over 21 weeks	£700
Elections To cover printing, publicity, and other sundries towards external elections	£500
Campaigns Split evenly between each	£2400
Activities To be used for team building activities when each newly elected group begins	£1000
Contingency To be used in case of emergency in campaign or activities work	£250
TOTAL PER YEAR	£8100

9.2 Use of budget

- 9.2.1** The budget is available to be requested rather than open to be used immediately according to our wishes.
- 9.2.2** 10% of the activities and campaign work budget should be kept separately as a contingency fund.
- 9.2.3** Any major spending should be voted on by the Reading Youth Council when at least 50% of the members are present to ensure fairness.
- 9.2.4** The budget can also be used for projects spanning multiple campaigns or the entirety of the Reading Youth council if approved by a vote.
- 9.2.5** If a percentage of the budget is used for projects spanning multiple projects or the entirety of the Reading Youth Council, then the money diverted from campaign work should be taken from each of the three campaigns equally to ensure fairness.

10 Code of Conduct

The members of Reading Youth Council are always expected to follow these agreed ground rules and codes of conduct.

- 10.1 Responding to communication by the given deadline
- 10.2 Respecting other members of the Reading Youth Council as well as visitors
- 10.3 Listening to other people's ideas without silencing contribution
- 10.4 Treating the interests of every school equally
- 10.5 Limiting phone use, unless relevant
- 10.6 Upholding a degree of formality
- 10.7 Using valuable meeting time productively
- 10.8 Upholding punctuality and starting meetings on time
- 10.9 Alerting either the support staff, Chair or the secretaries of absence via email or WhatsApp
- 10.10 Respecting other meetings taking place in the building.
- 10.11 Keep yourself muted when you are not speaking online.
- 10.12 Members should be encouraged to take part in discussions.
- 10.13 Members should not attend meetings without support staff to maintain safety at all times.
- 10.14 Safeguarding the brand of Reading Youth Council within meetings and outside of meetings.
- 10.15 Using appropriate language within meetings
- 10.16 Members must ensure they are always representing the views of all children and young people in Reading

Signatories

Chair of Reading Youth Council (2021) _____

Deputy Chair of Reading Youth Council (2021) _____

Member of Youth Parliament (2021) _____

Endorsement

Executive Director of Children's Services

Social Care, Education and Early Help _____

Date: _____/_____/_____

Lead Member for Children's Services _____

Date: _____/_____/_____

This constitution will be reviewed every three years