

## **READING TEXT 6**

### **Task 1**

**Complete each sentence with the correct ending A-I.**

1. Students' views are likely to be taken seriously if there are .....
2. Rules related to uniform are most likely to be discussed at .....
3. Year councils may get involved in .....
4. In the Year 8 council that is mentioned, teachers make sure that students are .....
5. Those in power are .....

**A bullying and fundraising.**

**B more likely to bully others.**

**C not always the best listeners.**

**D not left on their own.**

**E organizing events.**

**F representative from the different year groups.**

**G school and year councils as well as peer mentoring schemes.**

**H school councils.**

**I teachers and parents of older students.**

### **Participating in the school community**

It is important that students' feelings, opinions and suggestions are listened to, taken into account, and that the right action is taken. There are a number of ways that this can be achieved, i.e. school councils, year councils and peer mentoring.

#### **School councils**

Most schools have a school council which exists to let the teachers and head teacher know what students' opinions are on a range of school issues. The school council usually consists of two or three elected representatives from each year group.

A school council might meet once or twice a month to discuss issues such as the dress code, the use of social areas, charity fundraising and bullying.

## **Year councils**

Because school councils are sometimes dominated by older students, some schools have introduced year councils. The aim of a year council is to give students the opportunity to express opinions on matters of importance to that particular year group. The following is an example of the rules relating to a school's council for year 8 (pupils aged 12-13).

- 1.** The council's purpose is to act as a forum for discussion of school issues relevant to Year 8, and to let the teachers and head teacher know what student opinion is on these issues. The council will also take responsibility for cooperating with year staff in the organization of one social event per term for Year 8.
- 2.** Membership of the council will consist of three representatives from each class, elected on a termly basis.
- 3.** Meetings will be held once a fortnight. The council members will elect a chair to control the meetings and a secretary who will be responsible for circulating the agenda for each meeting and taking and circulating minutes of meetings.
- 4.** The class representatives will be responsible for giving a report of the council's meetings to their class. Agenda and minutes of meetings will be put up in each classroom.
- 5.** The Year 8 council will elect two of its members to be members of the school council, with responsibility for raising issues on behalf of Year 8 students at school council meetings.
- 6.** The chair, secretary and school council representatives will be responsible for taking up matters raised at council meetings with the year head and other teachers, and for reporting back on such matters to the Year 8 council.
- 7.** The head of year will attend all council meetings as an observer and both they and the other year staff will be available as required to offer support and advice to council members and to assist in the settlement of disputes.

## **Peer mentoring**

There are other ways in which students' voices can be heard. One of the most popular schemes involves peer mentoring. Those who express an interest receive training to become mentors so that they are better equipped to help others. This starts from primary school age, when the mentors may get involved in issues related to conflict resolution. At secondary school and at university, mentors are likely to deal with a larger variety of issues, such as educational and health-related matters.

The underlying belief in schemes like these is that being heard by your peers can be more effective and helpful as fellow students may have more time and understanding than teachers or others in authority.

**Answer Key:**

- 1.G (see introductory paragraph)
- 2.H ('dress code' refers to 'uniform')
- 3.E (see point 1 under 'Year councils')
- 4.D (see point 7 under 'Year councils')
5. C (see last paragraph)