



ISSU
IRISH SECOND-LEVEL
STUDENTS' UNION

The Student Voice Policy Platform

Political Platform;

A formal set of principle goals which are supported by a political party.

The United Nation Convention on the Rights of Child Article 12;

States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

Irish Second-Level Students' Union

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Background

Across 2021 and 2022 The Irish second-level Students' Union held talks with the various political parties and groups represented in the Oireachtas for them to come together and sign the Student Voice Policy Platform. The Aim of this document was to provide a platform for student voice and student issues to be included in party policy and the legislative agenda. It also asked parties to specifically commit to include student voice/ student issue policies and aims as part of their education policies in each of their election manifestos and programmes for government.

Introduction

In the last 2 years the importance of young people and students has been highlighted throughout covid-19 in the many challenges we have faced in the world of education. In this time student representation has matured and come into its own in a way we had not seen previously. At this moment in time the current legislation and policy in place around student issues and student voice are very weak. Naturally student issues rarely have the exposure or influence in our legislatures given the fact that during elections a focus is put on policies that appeal to over 18s. In this document we make a conscious effort to establish that parties will address the concerns and issues of secondary school students in their education policy. Through this we hope to provide a platform for the concerns of students to be heard by our representatives and provide a basis for us to discuss working on these issues and taking action on them in the future.

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As the Political Parties present in the Oireachtas we come together in this document;

- 1. To uplift and enshrine the student as an equal and central stakeholder in their education and issues that affect them. We recognise their voice as an essential part of the decision-making process.*
- 2. We promise to provide for the inclusion of student voice and student issues in party policy, legislative agendas and education action plans.*
- 3. We commit to include specific student voice/student issue policies in each of our election manifestos, education policies and programmes for government.*
- 4. We commit to engaging in a cross-party dialogue to examine the introduction of a student voice bill to amend the Education Act 1998, ETB Act 2013 and other relevant legislation to provide for and uphold the student voice.*
- 5. As part of forming these policies, we will engage with the Irish Second-Level Students' Union (ISSU) as the national representative body of second-level students.*