

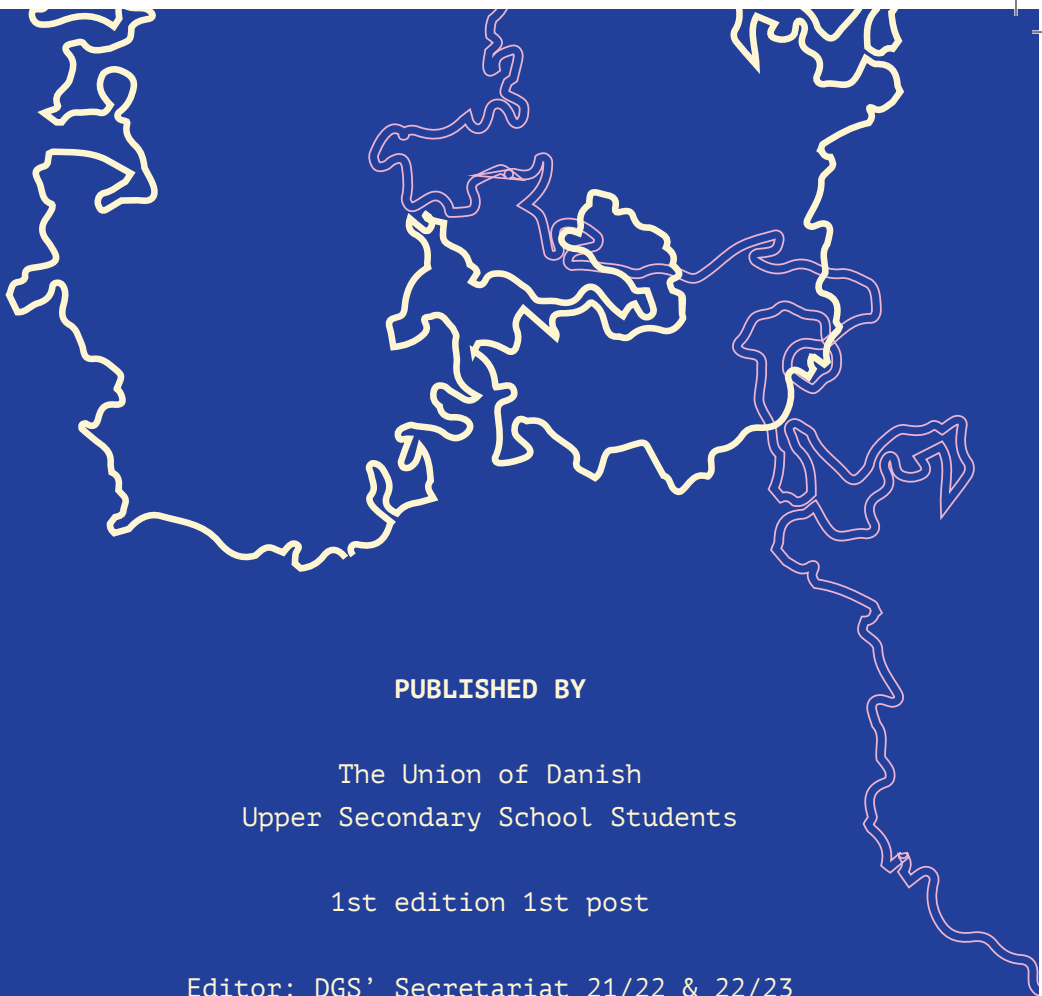
THE STUDENT COUNCIL HANDBOOK



the union of danish
upper secondary
school students



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upper secondary
school students



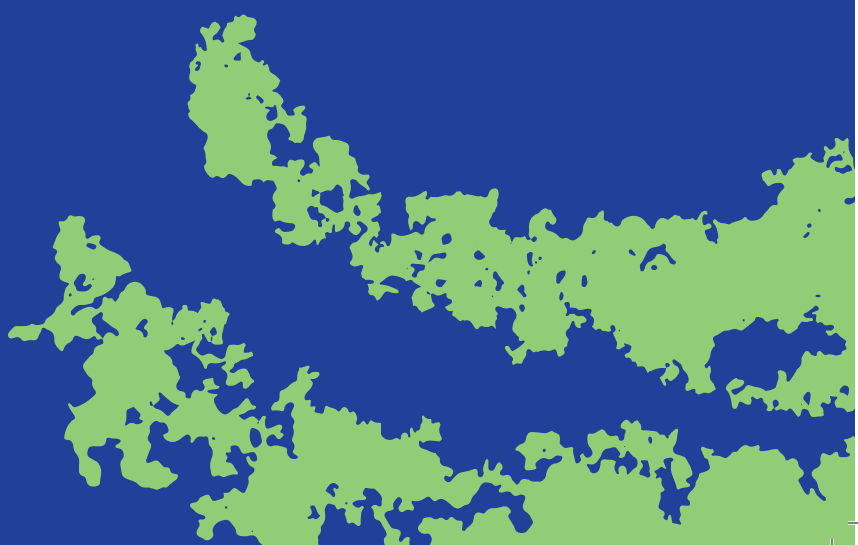
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The Union of Danish
Upper Secondary School Students

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Preface



Dear Student Council

The student council at each individual school is the students' opportunity to have influence and to be heard. Thus, it is crucial that we have strong student councils across the country. In your student council you can advocate for the students and fight for their rights to be respected.

The students are the everyday experts. We are the ones who will speak up if the indoor climate is bad or the textbooks are outdated. It is significant that the student council maintains the interests of the students and presents the students' proposals on what can be done better at the individual school.

In DGS we have always supported the student councils and worked to ensure that you are both heard and seen. Student council handbooks have for many years taken part in DGS' fight for a better student democracy at STX-, HF-, IB- and EB-schools.





In this handbook you will find various tools to make your student council the best version possible. The book is intended as reference work, where you can find help to whatever you need - whether it is how to start-up a new student council or how to ensure funding for a project. DGS is by high school students for high school students. We are excited to fight side by side with you for a better high school for all of us!

Enjoy yourself!



**the union of danish
upper secondary
school students**

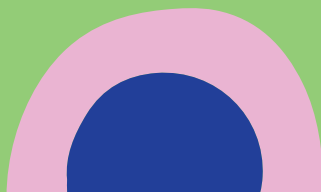


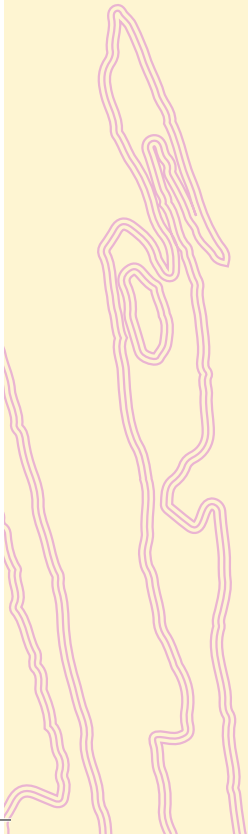
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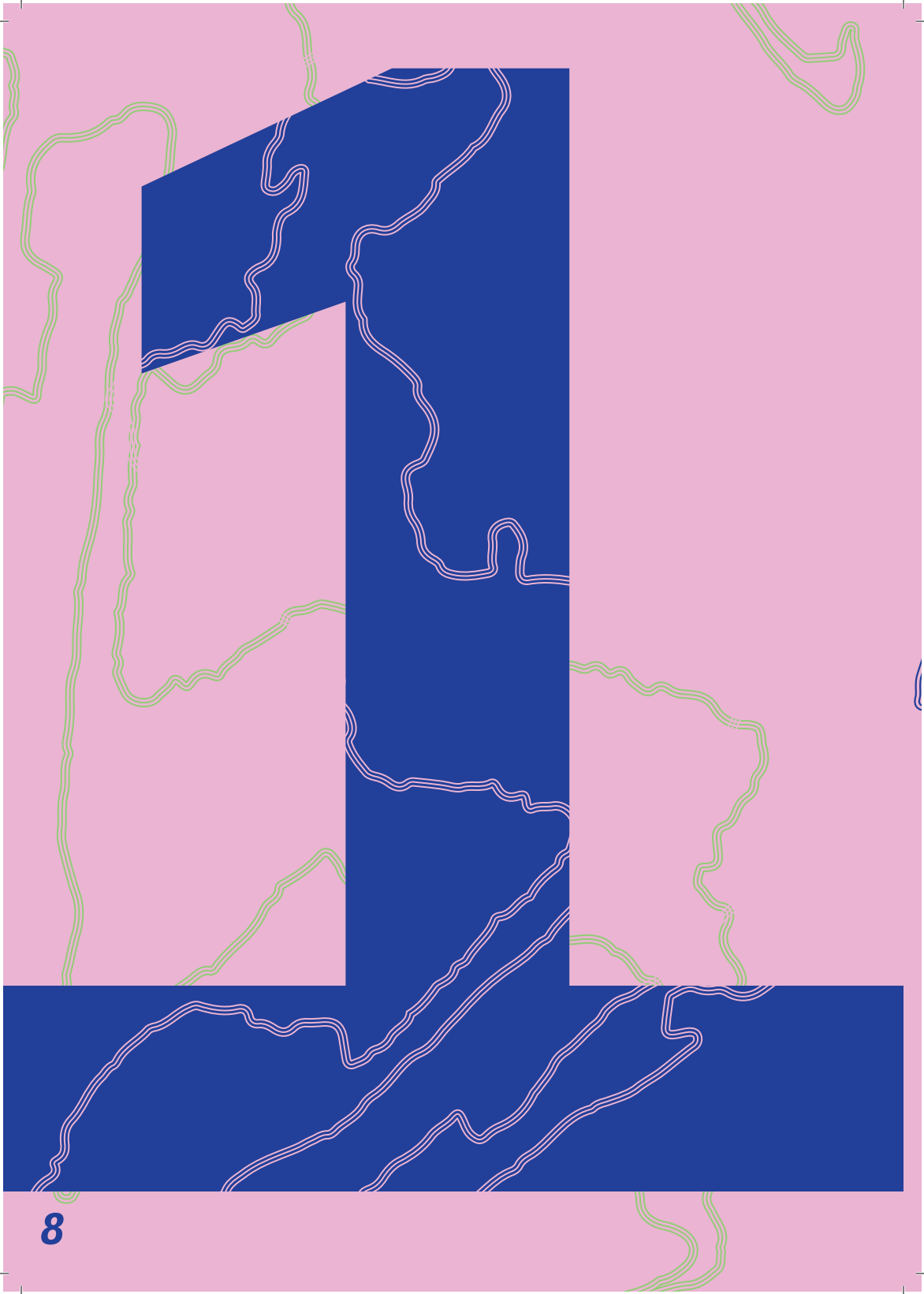
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THE FORMALITIES AND RIGHTS OF THE STUDENT COUNCIL

The rights of the student council

It can be challenging getting through all the formal papers that relates to the student council. But that's part of getting an association started. The Articles of Association are a big part of it, but they do not require a lot of work once they have been established the first time.

Knowing your rights as a student council is not only important when finding yourself in a bad position, but it is important knowledge in general.

Law on student councils is one of the most important tools to know when doing student council work. It was last revived by the Ministry of Children and Education on the 30rd of January 2013, and it contains many student councils' rights. The Student Council Executive Order can be helpful if you, for instance, have a difficult principal and administration at your school. In that case you can refer to the Law on Student Councils, and demand that your rights are respected - an easy way to make your case.

There are paragraphs in this Law that are also mandatory for the student council, thus it is essential to know about them and have the student council read them through, for example at a student council meeting.

The executive order is available several places online for instance here: www.retsinformation.dk/eli/lta/2013/84

The Law on Student Councils has a clause that describes the general purpose of the student councils: *“The Student Council is the students’ representation towards the institution”* and *“Through cooperation with the General Board, the manager and other staff groups, the student council looks after the students’ common educational, professional, cultural, personal and financial interests at the institution.”*

On the following pages you will see an extract of the most important points and paragraphs from the Executive Order.



From the Law on Student Councils

"The Student Council appoints two members to the institution's General Board, one of whom has the right to vote. The one entitled to vote must be of legal age."

"The Student Council appoints representatives to all committees which the institution has set up to deal with important issues to students in general. However, this does not apply to committees where students' participation would conflict with other legislation."

"The student council may appoint teaching environment representatives cf. Act on Pupils' and Students' teaching environment."

"Participation in student council meetings, including participation in permanent council meetings, during teaching hours is equated with participation in classes and is not registered as absence. The meetings' timing and extent must however be agreed upon with the Head of Institution."

What does it mean to you?

You have a seat in the General Board. It is good to have influence in a high school's General Board. There are great decisions to make, thus the students' votes really need to be heard.

If the school sets up a committee to investigate things that concern you, you have the right, as a student council, to have a seat in that committee. Since you go to the school every day, the committees often concern you. However, sometimes you can be forgotten, thus you must ask to be included yourself.

It is the students who will suffer if the teaching environment deteriorates. Thus, it is important that the student council has a say as they are the voice of the students.

In this context it is important to focus on the word "equal" because it explains that student council work is just as important as being at class. You are entitled to excused absence from the student council meetings. However, you are not allowed to plan all the meetings when having math-tests, thus the approval from the principal. This point is also a helping tool to manage the absence you can get when you are at student council meetings.

From the Law on Student Councils

"The principal is obliged to encourage the students to form a student council if they themselves do not take the initiative. The principal must in collaboration with the student council contribute to spread the knowledge of the student council among the students, including the work and tasks of the student council to strengthen the democratic understanding among students. The principal must continuously ensure cooperation with the student council to make sure that the students know about student democracy."

"The institution makes a financial contribution to the student council work, including expenses for memberships of organizations or participation in events of a student democratic nature. The institution's General Board will determine the size of the grant, considering a budget proposal from the student council."

"The institution will provide an available room for cultural, educational, and organizational meetings regarding work of student council, including student council meetings."

What does it mean to you?


The item ensures a cooperation between the student council and the principal.

The key words are that the principal is obliged to call for a student council. Furthermore, that the collaboration with the student council spread the students' knowledge of student democracy.

Here it is ensured that the student council receives a grant and a budget from their institution. Finances can be a big issue, but money is not paramount for a well-functioning student council. It can contribute to the student council becoming more visible at school, i.a. by holding a joint lesson with presenters for the school or handing out coffee some mornings to create a good atmosphere.

To have a proper meeting, it is important that the surroundings are good as well. Even if an institution may not afford nor can provide a student council room, the student council still has the right to have a changing, suitable room for all meetings.

Articles of Association



In the Student Council Executive Order, there are some minimum requirements for what the student council's statutes must contain. But what exactly are statutes?

In short terms, statutes are rules that determine how the student council is run and contain important, basic information including the student council's name, budget year, information about bigger meetings or the General Assembly etc.

Read § 12 of the student council executive order to see the Ministry of Children and Education's requirements for your statutes.

Drawing up statutes is not necessarily interesting, but it is necessary for the student council to function and to be democratic. Without statutes your student council technically does not exist, and you will have no guidelines for how the student council and your meetings should function. It does not take a lot of time to make and most of the work will be done when you have entered information about your student council.



On the next page you can see a list that may inspire you for the content when you start drafting or revising the statutes.

1. **NAME:** You can use the first paragraph to enter the name and abbreviation.
2. **PURPOSE CLAUSE:** The high school executive order states that “The student council through cooperation with management, teachers and other staff groups, looks after the common interest of the students at the school/course.” Discuss how this will be done. Interpretation is up to you
3. **DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES:** It can be a help to establish in the statutes who is responsible for what in the student council. It is important that the leadership of the student council has clearly defined roles regardless of the structure.
4. **STRUCTURE:** It is important that you discuss which structure that suits your school best. There are two overall structures:

A.DIRECT DEMOCRACY: The student council consists of all students who each has one vote if they participate in the meeting. Anyone can contribute with something. The risk is that those who does not show or are not good at speaking up for their cause, will not participate and therefore will not have an influence on the student council.

B.REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY: The student council consists of several representatives from each class who look after the class’s interests. This means that the class representatives represent the views of the class and not their own personal. The student council’s committee and working groups can still be open for anyone - even if you are not a member of the student council.

5. **ECONOMICS AND ACCOUNTING:** This point is mandatory in the Executive Order. The Statutes must describe who (usually the treasurer) is responsible for the finances, including bookkeeping and reporting.
6. **THE STUDENT MEETING:** The annual student meeting must also be described in the Statutes. Read about student meeting in § 8 of the student council executive order.
7. **AMANDMENTS TO THE STATUTES:** It is important to enter how to change the statutes and the majority that is required. This is the students’ security against the student council’s influence being abused.

General Assembly

It is stated in the Student Council Executive Order that you must hold 'the annual student meeting' - also known as the General Assembly. The student meeting, a.k.a. general assembly is the meeting where the past year is evaluated and where you begin to plan the new one. Usually, it is also here that elections are held for the various positions in the student council.

There are six items, which must be covered as a minimum at a student meeting:

ELECTION

Depending on your student council's articles of association, it may be at the student meeting that a new management is elected. This may consist of a presidency and a steering group/General Board.

REVISION OF ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

If you have discovered that some of your statutes do not work or create obstacles in relation to your work, it is at the student meeting that you can propose amendments to the individual paragraphs in statutes. Some statutes however are determined by law, see § 12 of the student council order.

PROCESSING OF THE ANNUAL REPORT

The report is a story about the bygone year. It is typically someone from the student council leadership who presents the report to the rest of the students. Afterwards you can have an open debate on the year's work. Here the students can give feedback, praise, and talk about what needs to be done better in the coming year. At last, a vote must be taken on whether the report can be approved or not.

All student councils must have an account prepared by the treasurer. Here you can see which income and expenses a student council has had during the year. You cannot change the accounts at the General Assembly, but you can ask the treasurer (financial officer) questions about what the money has been spend on. If you choose not to approve the accounts, this usually means that the treasurer must resign. However, this is only necessary if a management finances as needed.

REMEMBER!

It is also possible to send out a questionnaire before your general assembly, so you can ask all the students what they think of the year.

TREATMENT OF THE BUDGET

The budget is a plan of how the money will be spend the coming year and what income you think you have. The treasurer normally drafts a budget for the coming year which the students can comment on and change. The budget must also be approved at the student meeting.

PROCESSING OF THE WORKPLAN

A workplan is a plan of the work that needs to be done in the coming year, as well as the goals you have for the year - aka. annual wheel. These can for instance include a cabin-get-away, arrange a joint lesson, or creating a campaign for a better teaching environment. The student council may have written a draft in advance, which the students can change at the student meeting.



DESIGN OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

All students at school must be invited to the student meeting, but there is a significant difference in how much students at each school will to be involved in the student council's work. A student meeting can be designed in many ways. Here are a few examples:

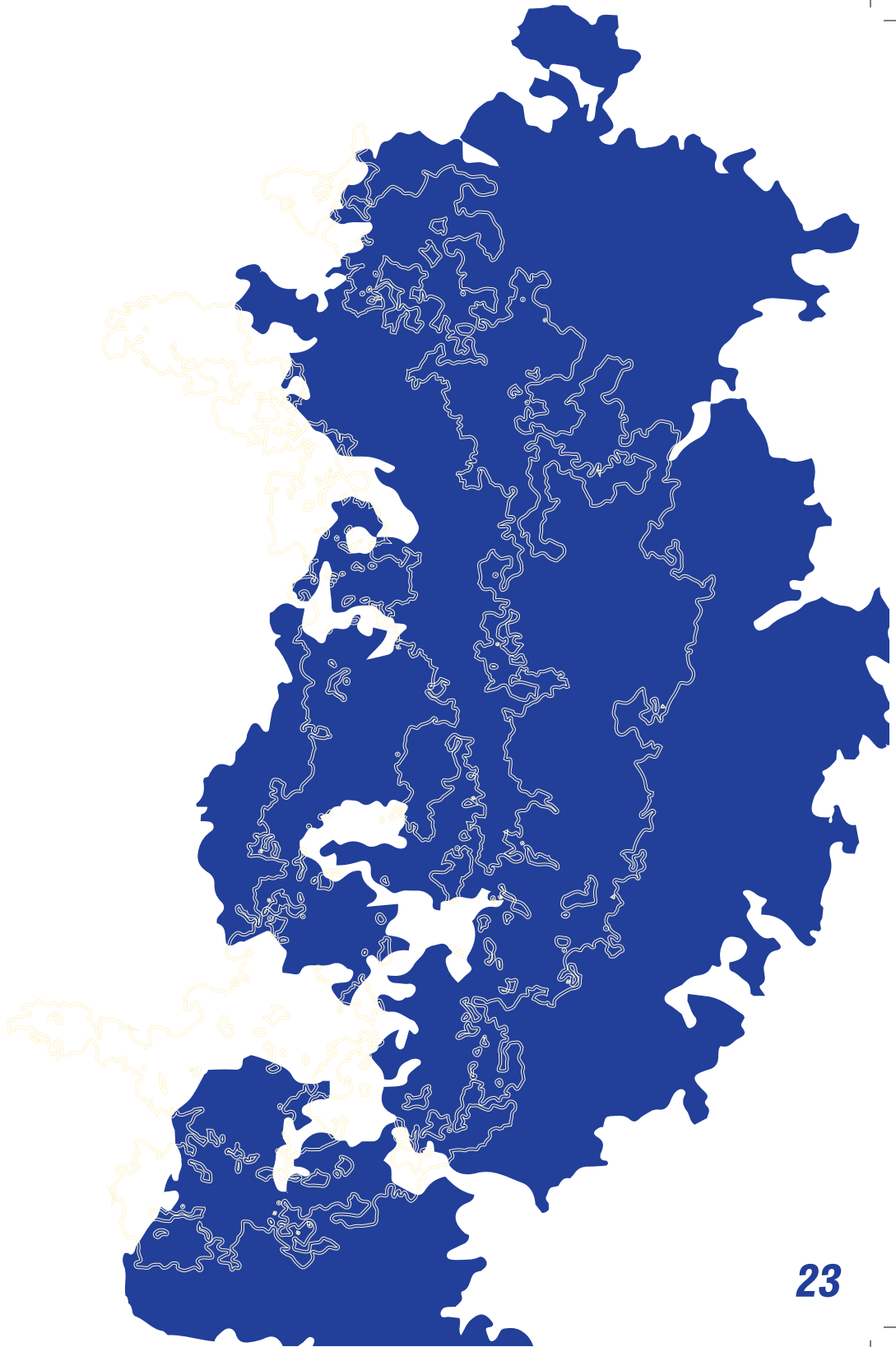
A general meeting gives the opportunity to involve all students directly in the student council work. For the general meeting it is endeavored that all students participate in the meeting and actively takes a stand on the work of the student council. It is important that all amendments and proposals are in place before the meeting. When so many people attend, the meeting becomes less flexible. One must therefore consider which item requires a lot of time and what should be discussed further at a student council meeting before the general meeting.

The General Assembly is a way to involve all interested students in the student council work. All students must therefore know about the student meeting and its content so that everyone who may like to, can participate. Thus, it is a good idea to come out to the classes and talk about the meeting. The size of the meeting allows for group work and open debate. Some may not know the student council very well so please remember to be open and explain what happens at the meeting.

Study and order rules

It is important to know the Study and order rules because they are the rules about absence and sanctions. Thus, it is important that the student council assesses whether the students can vouch for it. It is a great victory if you change something here because it will affect the students' everyday life. Drugs and smoking policy are often discussed.

The institution must determine its Study and order rules after consultation with the student council. So, as student council you have the right to be consulted, but no requirement to be listened to because the final decision-making competence rests with the principal. Even if you have no formal say, there are other things you can do if you are not heard.



Social policy

WHAT IS SOCIAL POLICY?

A Social Policy is a document which consists of a concretization of the student council's values. It sets the rules for good behavior and how to be social in the student council. It is also a way to prevent potential misunderstandings and align expectations with your student council and ensure that everybody is on the same page. Although it does not always seem like there is a need to write down on paper how to behave, it is a good way to show that there is a mutual respect in the student council and making sure that everyone feels safe.

WHICH POINTS CAN BE INCLUDED IN A SOCIAL POLICY?

- Social events and behavior
- Alcohol and drugs
- Romantic relations and sexual acts
- Social media and how to behave on them
- Suspicions and rumors
- Limits and tolerance
- Who to contact if someone breaks the social policy?

It is also important to point out that the social policy is open for new suggestions, which is to your advantage as it can be adjusted as much as you want, and you may also change it as needed.

The thing that makes the social policy great is when you sit down in a work group and have a good dialog about what this group of people thinks is important to mention in the social policy. It may vary if you write about alcohol policy for an entire school or a smaller group of people for the student council, or who must be contacted if anything should go wrong.

It will work to bring the completed social policy to the student meeting and talk about it with all members so you jointly can adopt the social policy.



THE STUDENT COUNCIL AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

The student council is an important part of the school. However, the student council can quickly be forgotten, if it does not allow itself to be seen, or try to create an improvement for the students' everyday life. As a student council, you have a certain responsibility. You are the voice of the students, and you must ensure that it is taken care of.



Startup guide

This part of the Student Council Handbook is for those, who need advice on how to start your student council. On the following pages are some starting points that a newly started student council must consider when creating a well-functioning student council.

Getting in touch with the classrooms

Go to the classes and tell the students that the student council is there to speak and fight for the students' cause. If necessary, take a concrete case that have an impact on your everyday life as a starting point. It is also important to stress out that the student council is for everyone. Remember to be visible at school assemblies as well, try to present yourselves in a unique way and do not be afraid to make a little fun.

Organizing new members

When you go to the classes, you can, for example, also bring a PowerPoint to make a visible element, wear something funny or matching clothes etc. Fortunately, there are different ways to do this, and DGS is always ready to help if inspiration is needed.

When visiting first graders for the first time, these visits can make a significant difference. Invite them to an event or meeting right from the start, if possible. This way, you can involve people and show them, that the student council is for everyone.

When you are out in the classes recruiting new members, it can be a good strategy to say that each class must have at least two representatives. This way you can ensure that someone signs up and that all students at school are represented.

Involvement

Let the new members of the student council be a part of the decisions on what should be done. In this way, new members will feel ownership for the projects, and they will become more involved and put more work in the student council. Do not hesitate to delegate responsibility - this way more people will get engaged in projects.

Structure

When things settle and are under control, it creates a more professional image and a good structure. At the same time, this means that the students have better opportunity to show up and participate actively in the student council. Thus, make sure convening for a meeting in advance, to have a realistic agenda and send resume out on time. Make sure to have a room; a white board etc. and remember to take breaks if the meeting drags on. If you are trying to recreate a student council, you could try to do fun and cozy stuff to the meeting: Walk and talk or bring a cake.

Social cohesion

Make sure to talk during the breaks, bake a cake and arrange social evenings, parties or whatever you think could bring you together. The meetings may be very well-functioning, but the social aspect is just as important for people to want to come again.

Among other things, it can create a good dynamic if there are personal relationships in the student council, as long that everyone is included and a part of the community. It is a fact that you as student council, can bring identity into play, if you have the energy. You may even do a workshop about what you think being part of a student council means to you - both internally and externally.

Branding

A win, no matter size, is a win! Remember to tell the students about your victories. Write about it in the school magazine, talk about it at morning assemblies or on social media. Show the students that you are there, and you do make a difference.

Collaborations partners

A student council must never be afraid of disagreeing with the teachers or the management, but in some situations, these can also be good partners. For more about collaboration partners and who to contact look under chapter 5.

Delegating

If one person stands alone with a student council, this person will easily take responsibility for everything. Delegating the tasks is important, but it also requires a skilled project manager. Remember to write down who is in charge of what in a group chat, on a white board in the student council's room or in the summary from the meeting where the decisions were made.

If you delegate jobs, you can make sure that bigger tasks may be managed by those who have the energy and resources for it. You can also involve students if you let them work with some key issues of personal interest. For instance, if someone is committed to sustainability you can try getting their agenda out to the rest of the students.

To delegate the right tasks to the right persons can give the members of the student council motivation and they will get more committed.

Upgrading

WHAT DO I GET FROM THE STUDENT COUNCIL?

Make sure that the student council gets presenters who can talk about meeting techniques, rhetoric, or other instructive presentations, which make the students feel that they develop and learn something from being part of the student council, just as it makes for a more skilled student council.

Also, it can always be an advantage to mention what they can get out of a student council - also after high school. Here you can mention that it is good to have on their CV - and that they will learn to become a structured person, take responsibility, and speak their mind.

How to ensure a great student council

One of the hardest tasks is to ensure that the student council always maintains its commitment. What can you do to make sure that you do not lose focus?

Work plan

One of the things you can do is to produce a work plan. A work plan is a schedule over the work that must be done in the coming year, as well as the goals that you may have during the year. You may want to do a cabin trip, arrange joint teaching for the students or create a campaign for a better teaching environment.

The work plan can be based on a vision made last year or on projects that students have suggested in a questionnaire.

HOW TO WRITE A WORK PLAN

There are several ways to write a work plan. You can do it at a general meeting of the school's students, at the student council's general assembly or let the student council management present a draft that the students can make changes to. It may be a good idea to create working groups or committees that oversee different activities.

OVERALL GOALS

To stick to the good structure, we recommend having a few overall goals. This will make it easier for the students to see what the student council works for. The work plan must show what the students think needs to be improved at school and what is important for their everyday life and school.

PERFORMANCE

It is important that the work plan is realistic to carry out. Small successes feed students' incentive to be active and show that the student council can make a difference. You can for example write that you want to create a campaign at school for better food in the canteen or start a "homework café".

3 QUESTIONS THAT THE WORK PLAN MUST ANSWER:

The goal: For what does the student council work?

The means: How are the goals achieved?

Why? What values and wishes lie behind the work plan?

RESULTS IN THE STUDENT COUNCIL

After you have executed a work plan, there will be victories, both personal and as a group. It is important to recognize each other's work effort regardless of the result. Someone may have succeeded to get a greener agenda and others may have had a nice report written to a meeting. Both are equal achievements for which you of course deserve recognition. Tell each other congratulations on the personal victories and stand together and say "We did it together as student council" when achieving wins together.

DELIVERY

Now you have a student council that runs well, but the year is soon ending. So what?

Now it is time to make a handover to all of those who take over important positions next year. You can make a good handover in different ways. Some students choose to do it at the student council's annual meeting after the new student council leadership has been elected. Others throw a party where they can talk it all through.

A good tip can also be to make a document in which you write important things.

For example, it could be:

- How to talk with the principal and to introduce yourself to
- the management
- How to take over traditions and how to carry them on
- How to delegate tasks
- How to write an agenda and a summary
- How to hold a student council meeting

After creating the document, you can simply edit it over the years as needed.

Roles in the student council

Most student councils have several formal positions, each with their own individual duties. It makes it clear who has which responsibility. Among other things, this can be written in the Articles of Association which items are relevant for you.

STUDENT COUNCIL MANAGEMENT/CEO

You can find different examples on student council leadership. In the following you will find different examples on structure.

One president, who has all the responsibility.

Two or multiple, who share the responsibility.

President and Vice President, each with their own tasks. For example, one external spokesperson and one responsible for the committees.

Executive committee e.g., President, Vice president, treasurer, secretary, private, which together make up the student council management.

Collective management. This means no formal management. You will choose project managers and spokespersons according to the situation.

There are advantages and disadvantages to all types of leadership, so find out what suits your student council best. Here are 4 examples on tasks that the president can have:

1. Has an overview and is responsible for the committees and working groups as well as the agenda.
2. Ensuring that the student council's work plan is adhered to.
3. Representing the student council to the school's principal among others.
4. Being the face of the student council.

CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

The class representatives are the core of the student council. The student council must represent a wide section of the school's students and fight their case, otherwise the student council loses its entitlement. Thus, it is important that the representatives talk to their classes so that they can bring their views to the student council meetings.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES IN THE GENERAL BOARD

As stated in the law on Student Councils, students have two seats in the school's General Board of which one of them has the right to vote if they are over the age of 18 years. The General Board is a powerful forum to have a voice in, therefore it is a good idea that the two persons chosen overlaps. This means, each year, there is only one new member of the school board.

Economy

Money is never the prerequisite for the student council's work, but it does make it easier.

In law on student councils, the student council is guaranteed a subsidy for their work. This means that your school must give you a sum of money to do student council work for, and they must do so based on a budget proposal from the student council. If your school does not do this, you can bring it up at the General Board. You are also assured that your school pays for your membership of e.g., DGS. The student council should not pay for it themselves. In the same way the school must cover the expenses when participating in student democratic events e.g., DGS' National Assembly or courses for students in the school committee.

Unfortunately, the amount of money that the student council receives can vary from school to school, and therefore it is good to know about other income opportunities that are available.

THE DGS FOUNDATION

The DGS fund is a pool that student councils that are members of DGS can apply for. The DGS fund can go to many different things that engage the students at their high school, strengthen the community or support student democratic purposes. You can apply for everything between debate nights, flower boxes, musicals, or school magazines.

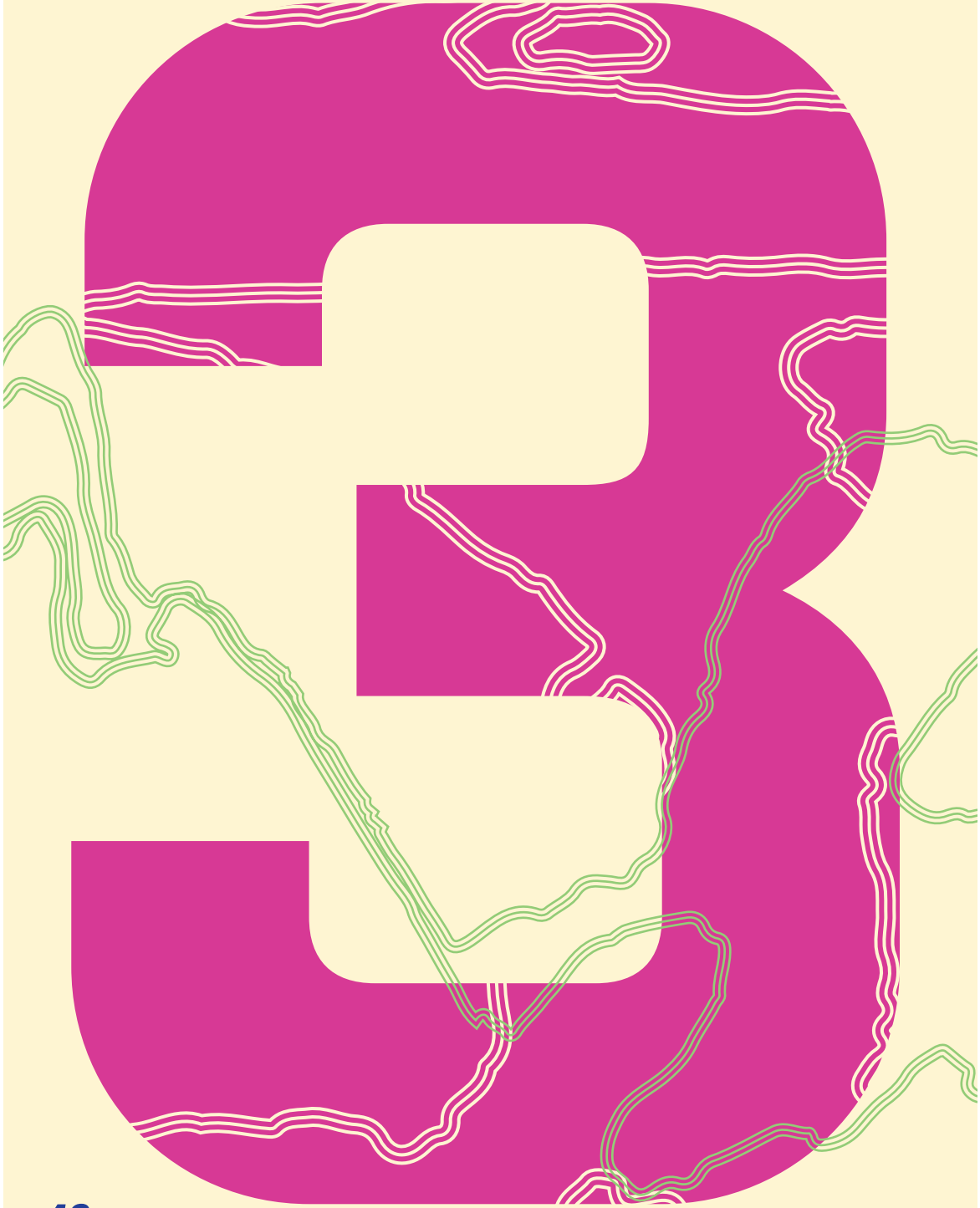
You can apply for up to DKK 10.000 and you apply at the following link: www.gymnasieelever.dk/dgsfonden

DUF'S LOCAL ASSOCIATION POOL

As member of DGS, your student council can apply to Dansk Ungdoms Fællesråd's local association pool. The pool supports initiatives that are created for students by students and must support student democracy. Through DUF's local unit pool you can get money for acquisitions such as soundboxes or camera equipment. You can apply for the local association pool on DFU's website, duf.dk. If you need help with your application, you are welcome to contact DGS.

BUDGET AND ACCOUNTING

It is important that the student council's finances are under control. Thus, it can be a clever idea to make a budget at the beginning of the year and keep accounts on an ongoing basis. A budget must contain your expected income and expected expenses. That is, how much money you expect to get and from whom as well as how much money you think you will spend and on what.



A photograph of three young men smiling and looking at a document together. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter and has a white, hand-drawn outline border. The student on the left is partially cut off by the edge of the page. The student in the middle has curly hair and glasses. The student on the right has short dark hair and glasses. They are all looking towards the camera with friendly expressions.

THE GOOD STUDENT COUNCIL MEETING

The student council meetings are central in relation to the activities that the student council arranges. Thus, it is important that the meetings function optimally. You can divide the good meeting in three phases: Before, during and after the meeting.

Before the meeting

To make sure that a meeting will be good and constructive it is important to be in control of the proceedings. You must, among other things, be in control of premises and a good agenda. There are three main rules that applies when writing an agenda:

- 1 QUALITY BEFORE QUANTITY:** Time is often short when holding a student council meeting. Thus, there should not be too many items on the agenda. It is better to have few, but well-considered items. Before the meeting, consider how the items should be dealt with, for example, should it be a debate or a walk and talk.
- 2 RELEVANT ITEMS:** It is important that an agenda is relevant and contains specific decisions, so every participant feel that they have influence.
- 3 TRANSPARENCY:** It must be clear to the participants of a meeting, what each point covers. This means that clear, distinct headlines and any sub-items that elaborate on the meaning of the item must be made in the agenda. This will also benefit the referent when the summary is being written and one needs to write what was discussed and what was decided during the meeting.

In addition to the three main rules, there are three items which are always good to have on the agenda:

FORMALIA: Here you must choose the manager and referent for the meeting. It is important to start the meeting with formalities to set clear lines for the meeting.

NEWS FROM: Here the various committees, the students who are in the school committee, pedagogical council etc. as well as the leadership must tell what they have accomplished since the last meeting. It might also be a good idea to ask if there are any news from the different classes.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS AND EVALUATION: Meetings should end with an open point where the students can add other items that are not on the agenda. Hereafter you can evaluate so you will know what to improve for the next meeting.

The agenda may be discussed in separate classes before the meeting, which also is a way to include all the students in school.

Appendices and attachments

If the meeting contains a long text or an account statement/accounts, you can for example choose to add appendices as an extension of the agenda, have a presentation ready that includes this.

The practical preparation:

It is a good idea to send out a message with the invitation and agenda at least a few days before the meeting so the class representatives can discuss relevant points in the classes before the meeting. It is also a good idea to set up the meetings in the students' schedule, for example in Lectio or Ludus. Make sure to advertise in the mornings or at gatherings for the school.

BEFORE THE MEETING, IT WORKS WELL TO ENSURE:

- A room that is clear and open
- Switch on the computer so it is ready for the person who is going to write the summary as well as the manager and referent.
- Possibly: Coffee, cake, or other stuff that you can do in advance.

REMEMBER

In the law on student councils, it is written that student council work equates with a teaching class – so make use of the time and have a good and well-functioning meeting.



During the meeting

A good meeting culture is important. Find a balance with room for fun, while at the same time, there is structure and a good meeting discipline. The president can, among other things, help making sure of this.

THE MANAGER'S ROLE: The president is the meeting's moderator and must ensure that all items are discussed that the participants stay on topic and that the meeting takes place in a good tone. For this purpose, there are several different tools that the president can make use of:

- Explain what each item includes and is about before a discussion.
- Keep a speakers list of who may speak and when. The moderator is in its right to close the list of speakers to keep track on time and to avoid that people repeat each other.
- Encourage a good debate tone if it is tough.
- Be responsible for the votes when voting is necessary to decide

There are many ways to vote, including active support, simple majority e.g. It is always a matter of assessment for the student council - for example, the president. On the opposite page comes a brief introduction of the most frequent voting methods.

Simple majority

If you vote on something by simple majority this means that more than half must vote in favor before it can be adopted.

Two-thirds majority

With a two-thirds majority there must at least be two-thirds who votes in favor for it to be adopted. This voting method is often used when something important, for example amendments of articles to the articles of associations, needs to be adopted.

Actively support

Often you choose to go with actively support, if there is not broad disagreement about the item being discussed. Active supporting takes place when the president asks if anyone cannot support what is being adopted. You can only actively support something if you are neither against it nor voting blank. If you vote blank, you are not supporting anything.

DISTRIBUTION OF WORK TASKS AND CREATION OF WORK GROUPS

Typically work tasks appear during a meeting. Thus, it is important to get an overview of the work tasks and assign a responsible person to each task and set a deadline. It is an advantage to write a summary with the difference work groups and the opinion of the rest of the student council.

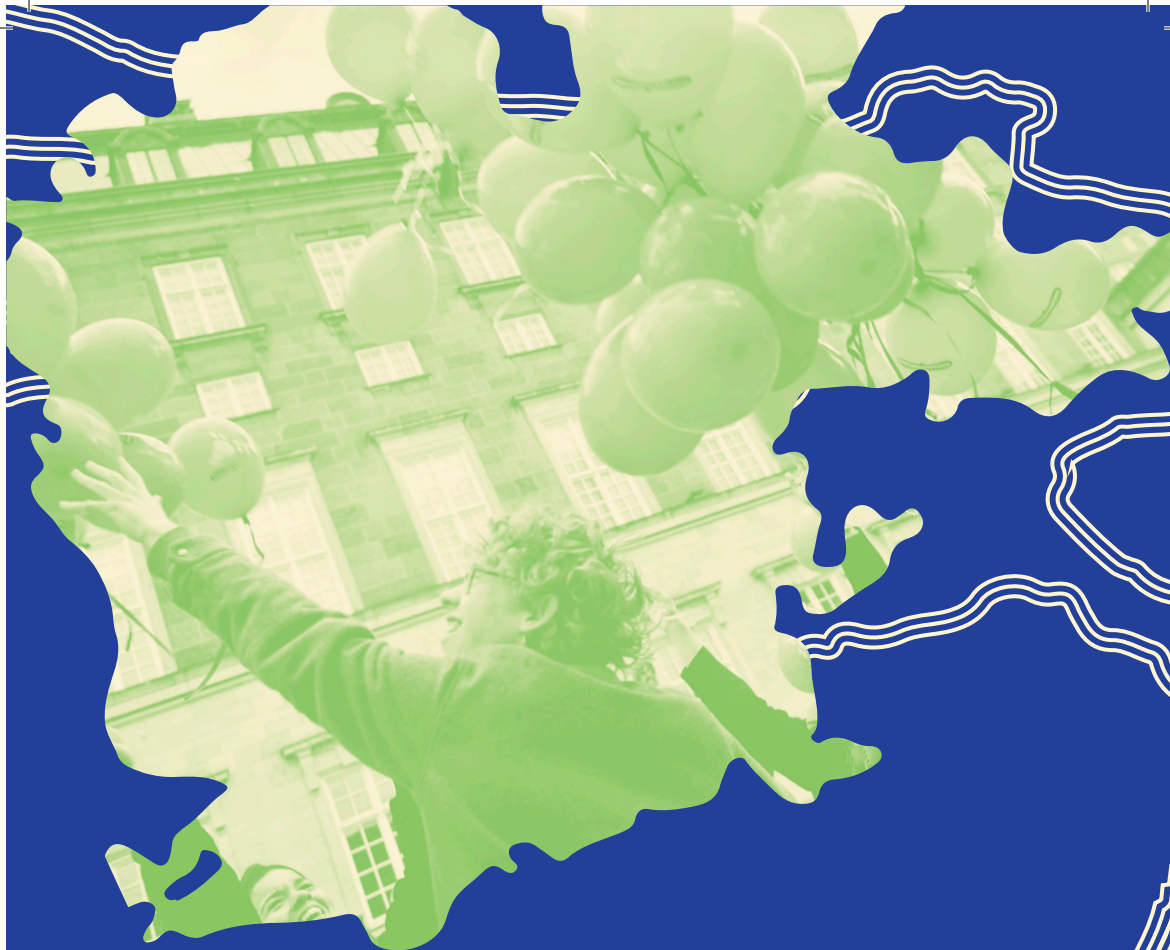
After the meeting

To ensure that the things discussed at the student council meeting are done, choose a responsible person for each task.

To organize the meeting, you need to have a rapporteur. The rapporteur will write what you have discussed during the meeting. You can do it in bullet points to avoid making it unmanageable. Or you can for example write a summary on a blank document or use the agenda as headlines and write below each point what was said and discussed. You can send the summary to the others the day after the meeting as it will be adjusted and structured properly afterwards. Remember to send out the summary and follow up on the meeting and the summary on the following meeting.







ACTIVISM

If the collaboration with your principal does not work, it may be necessary to make use of activism. There can be areas on a bigger political level where your principal unfortunately is without influence, and there may be decided things on a political level that makes it difficult for the students. The student council can influence the local and national high school policy and get through with your opinions.

To go on the offensive

One of the ways to show that a big part of the students is dissatisfied at your school is to fight on a larger scale. Following may be considered as a possibility:

MAKE A QUESTIONNAIRE about what is bothering you. In this way you can always start quietly by showing your principal that many of you are dissatisfied.

START A PETITION if it does not work with a questionnaire. If a big part of the students sign, it demonstrates to the management that it is about time to act on the problem.

CAMPAIGNS where you can get other students involved and find out if your problem are experienced in other schools as well.

GO TO THE MEDIA and tell them that there are students who are dissatisfied with what is going on. You can, among other things, write a press release or call the local newspaper to set up an interview. Local newspapers would like to hear the voice of young people and surprisingly many people read the local newspapers.

TEACHING STRIKES where one shows up at school but refuses to participate in the classes and block the teachers from doing their work. Instead of going to classes, you can have fun with a board game, make presentations, paint signs for a demonstration or something else. Here you can also get the media to cover it and get greater focus on it. This is especially effective in collaboration with other schools. Do not hesitate contacting DGS if you want to organize a major teaching strike!

Remember not to get in a fight with others in your network or collaboration partners at school. Of course, you should not be passive, but it might be an idea to tell someone from the management before going to the media. You might find a solution to the problem together.

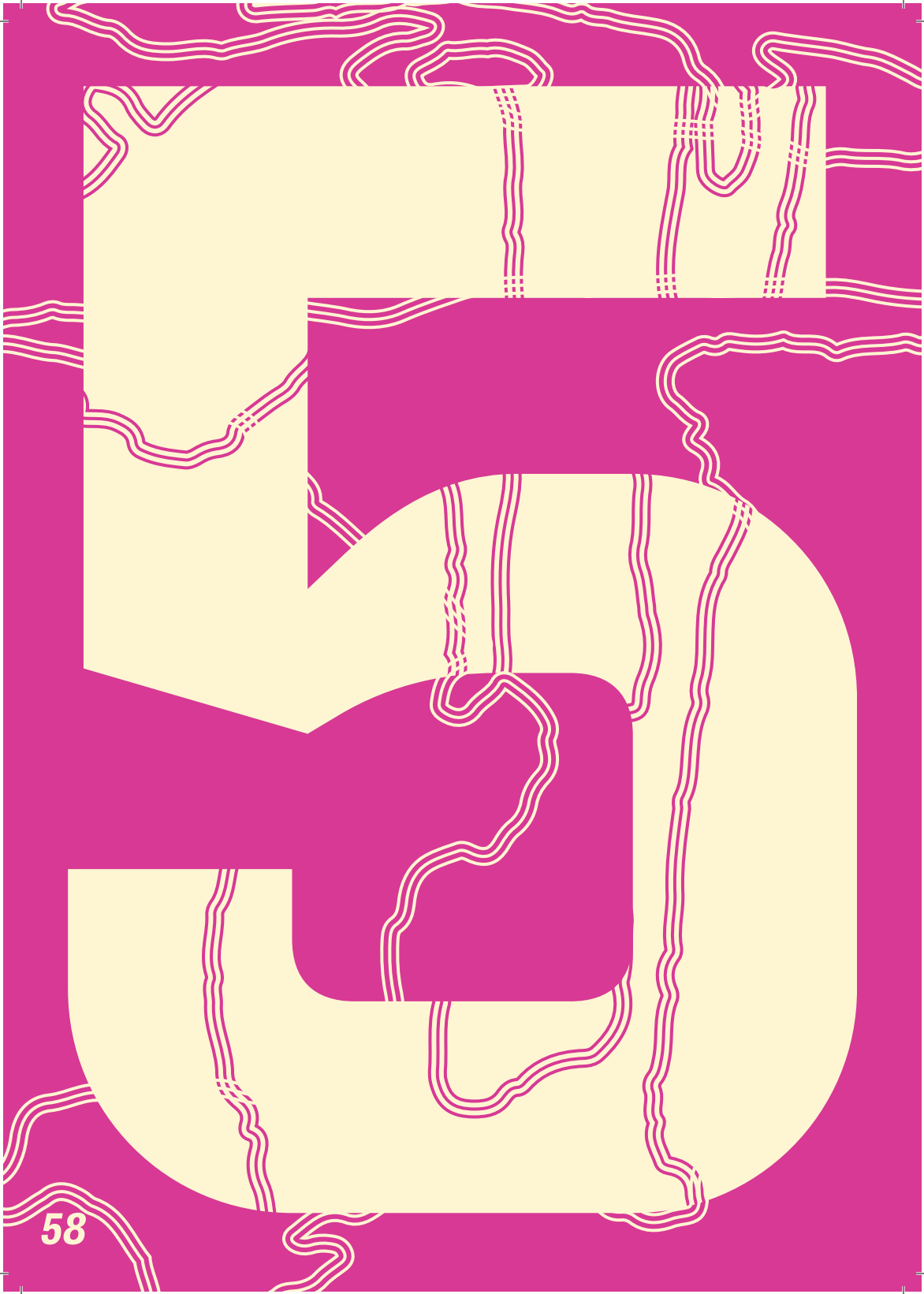
It will always be a possibility to contact DGS or write on the message board on Facebook if you are in doubt about something or help need to organize activism.

Politics

It may also be an opportunity to address the policy that lies behind your problem. If, for example, you require more teachers for your school, it is unfortunately most likely that your principal and management cannot do anything about this, due to lack of finances. In this case, you can, among other things, write a debate with the student council. If you are dissatisfied with poor transport/commute options, it is also unlikely that the school management can do anything about it. Instead, you can invite local politicians to a debate or a questioning round. You can also write complaints to them and demand that they do something about your problem. Another way to influence politics is to participate in DGS' General Assembly. Here you can suggest what DGS should think about different topics. Your student council can therefore come and have an influence on what DGS must fight for and thus create political change.









CONTACTS

As student council it is important that you maintain that you are the voice of the students, and therefore also the students' representative towards the different actors at the school. Thus, it is important to have a good cooperation with everyone who can lend a helping hand or be good partners.

Contacts

Principal

Regular meetings with the principal will make it easier to create a relationship of trust between the student council and the principal.

You can update the principal on the student council's work and get to know about new initiatives at the school. Some student councils also choose to invite the principal to a student council meeting occasionally or have lunch with the principal once a week/month. Remember that you have a right to be the students' voice - the principal wants to (and must) listen to you!

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

The principal has something called a *performance pay contract*? The principal gets a salary bonus by doing things during the year that he/she has said he/she will do. You may not think much about it in everyday life, but it can have a great impact on what happens at your school. Finally, have a talk with your principal about how the student council could influence the contract.

If you have something you would like to talk to or persuade the principal about, you must remember:

BE WELLPREPARED: Whether it is a new foosball table or a sofa for the canteen, it is a good idea to have set a budget for the purchase and bring all the information along. Including pros and cons and consider what counterarguments the principal could come up with.

RESEARCH: Investigate how the same item is managed in other schools and bring examples. It can be used as a “blackmail tool”. It is a good idea to have several people at the meeting, so you are not sitting alone in front of the principal. You can use DGS’ message board on Facebook as mentioned in chapter 6, page 71.

Once the principal is persuaded, make sure to follow up on agreements between the principal and the student council to avoid them being drawn out. Be involved during the entire process so you are not “cheated”. A good relationship with the principal can be a huge advantage. However, if this is not possible, DGS is always here to help.

The teachers and union representative

The representative is the teachers' group's contact to the Gymnasieskolernes Lærereforening (GL), which is the teachers' union. It can be advantageous to keep in regular contact with the trustee at the high school as this is often an ally in the school committee. You may agree to meet before meetings at the Pædagogiske Råd/Educational Council or the school's General Board to find a common ground. Always talk to the trustee in connection with teaching cancellations. Both so that the teachers are informed but also so you can, for instance, discuss the possibilities for a statement of sympathy from the teachers. Make sure to exchange contact information and preferably have a permanent teacher-contact person in the student council.

In addition to your trustee, it is a good idea to regularly talk to the teachers as they usually also know a lot about the school and its structuring. They can also always be used for sparring or general questions.

Pædagogisk råd (PR)

(Educational Council)

The PÆDAGOGISKE RÅD (PR) (Educational Council) functions in practice as the teachers' student council. This is where they discuss what is going on at the school, choose people for committees, inform about activities/meetings, and evaluate events/teacher courses. The student council has cf. the student council Executive Order, the right to have one or more representatives at the meetings. The PR-meetings are a good place to get a feel for what is going on in the teaching group. At the same time, you send a signal to the teachers that the student council is active and must be taken seriously. You can for example look at the schedule of the teachers who are involved in PR to see when they have meetings. You can then write to the PR-manager and ask if someone from the student council can participate.

Janitor and office

To have a good relationship with the office and the janitor can open a lot of opportunities. It can be nice to have a helping hand if the student council for example must plan an event, or you have transport something heavy to the student council room. Always contact the janitor in advance to ensure a good relation between you. The office/TAP-staff (Technical-administrative-staff) are also someone to whom you should have a good relation. They can both be handy when needing help with practical things, but they can also make sure to put in a good word for you with the management.

The General Board of the school

Since 2007 when self-ownership was introduced (take-over of own buildings) The General Board of the school has become the school's strategic management. Here you can influence more long-term plans. The General Board is the top management of school and has a composition consisting of 6-10 members:

- Someone from business and other educations
- Two staff representatives
- A member appointed by the municipal council
- The principal is secretary and sparring partner without the right to vote.
- The student council has two representatives on the General Board but only one has the right to vote (of whom must be of legal age).

There is a mismatch between outsiders and those who have their daily work at the school, thus it is more important that the students are heard well and thoroughly here.

BUDGET AND FINANCIAL PRIORITIES:

It is within the General Board that you determine how much money the student council will receive, how much money will be spent on advertising for the school and when/how renovations, or rebuilding will take place.

Point out that you know the students and that your position is relevant. Watch out for:

- Study and rules of order
- Joint teaching and student activities (to the student council)
- Study trips
- Purchase of equipment and general maintenance
- Marketing and (advertising)

TIP:

If many of you are dissatisfied with something that you can talk to the General Board about, you can mention it at a General Board meeting. If you insist that it must be put on the record, the referent must write it down and you can then show the rest of the school's students that you have fought their cause.

DGS

In The Union of Danish Upper Secondary School Students we represent the country's high school students and their opinions. We support the student councils in their student democratic work. The student councils represent the students at their school and through that, DGS represents them as well.

Each school belongs to a region based on the geographical placement and the distance to the General Board's headquarters, which is typically in the biggest city of the region. There are nine regional general boards, and these are the ones closest to the student councils. Each regional board has a certain number of representatives or regional secretaries on the main general board based on the number of students in their member schools.

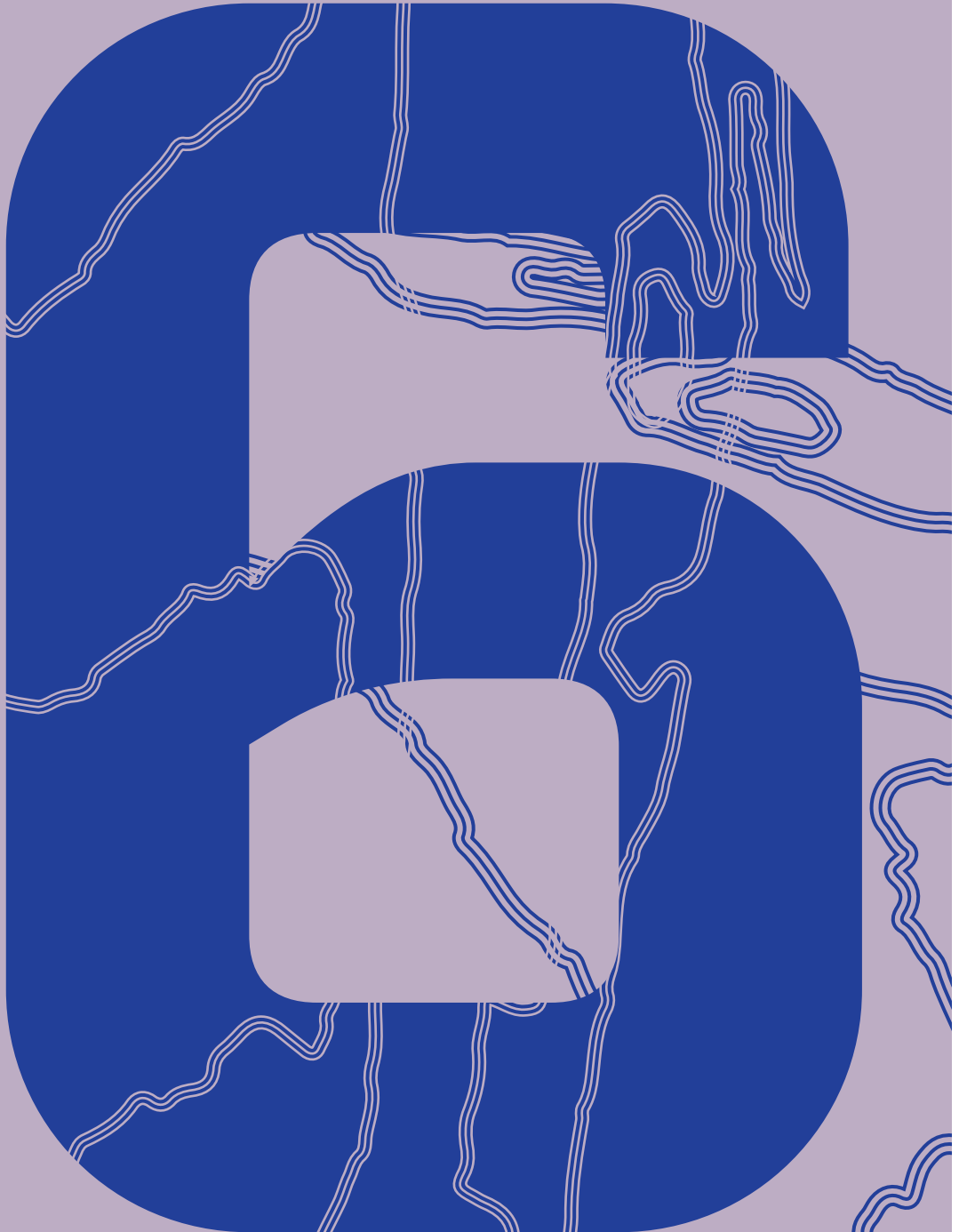
It can be an advantage to contact your region if you need help as it will be more locally based. Otherwise, it is always possible to contact your daily management or the Secretariat.

*You can always find contact information on
www.gymnasieelever.dk/kontakt*

DGS can help with many things, such as complaints assistance. With the help for complaints, we can give good advice on how you can manage a complaint which can be anything from a written complaint due to grades or how help a student who has unfairly been expelled from school.

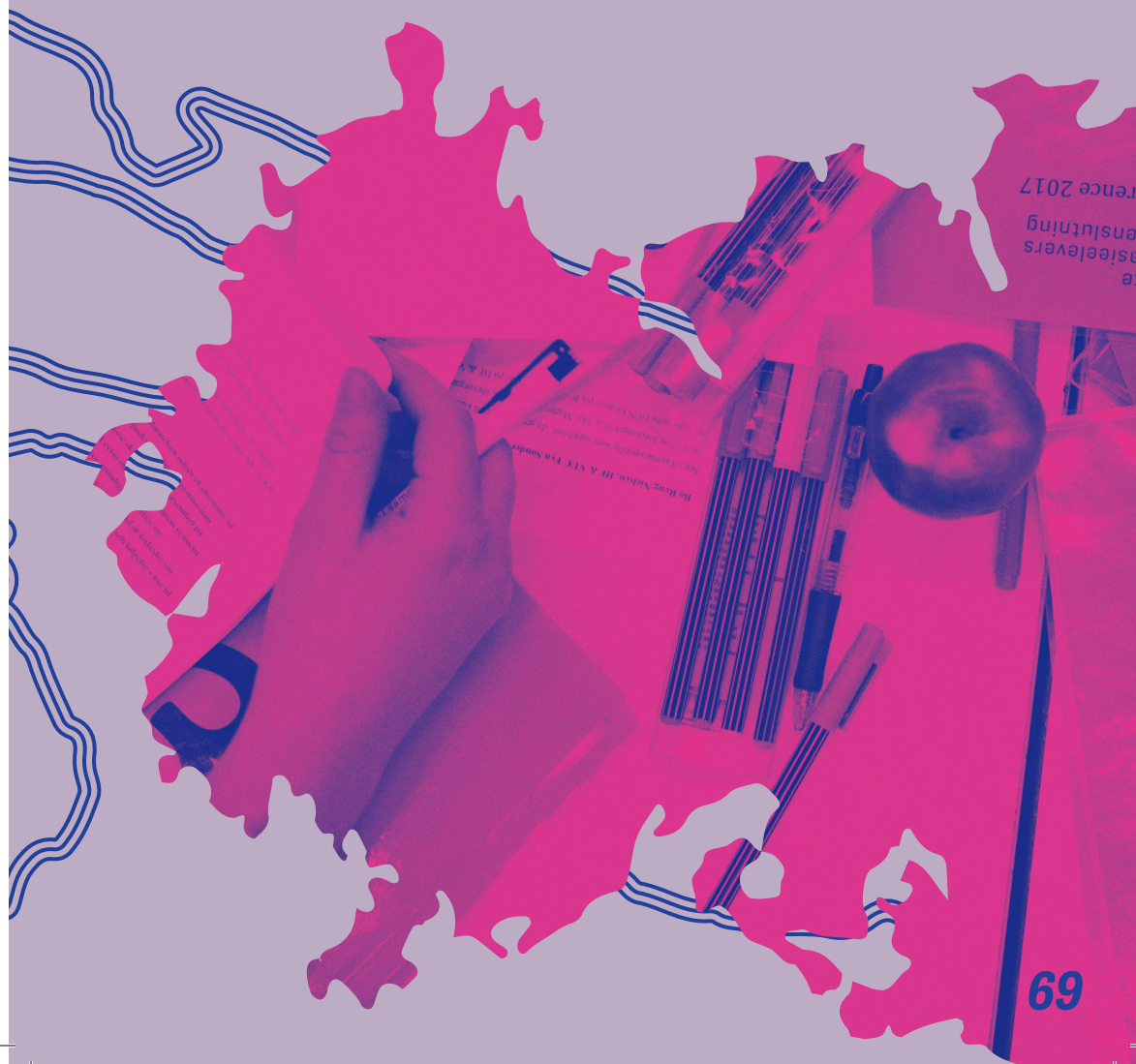
DGS can also donate money to a student council through the DGS Fund. You can apply for up to DKK 10.000.

The applications are processed by DGS' general board, but applications of less than DKK 3.000 are usually processed by the Executive Committee.



WHAT IS DGS?

DGS stands for DANSKE GYMNASIEELEVERS SAMMENSLUTNING/ The Union of Danish Upper Secondary School Students and is the Danish High School Students' interest organization. The organization was founded in 1965 and has since then been fighting to improve the education system and the everyday life of the high school students. DGS is independent of financial and party-political interests.



What we do

WHEN DGS LOOKS AFTER THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, IT HAPPENS IN SEVERAL WAYS.

DGS meets with politicians, ministers, civil servants, and relevant organizations that have an impact on the students' everyday life. In this way, we work in a parliamentary manner for a better education system. We also organize happenings, demonstrations, actions or participate in the public debate and do non-parliamentary work to ensure that the students are heard. To have the best education system possible, it is important that the students are organized locally in their student council. Thus, DGS also exist to strengthen the individual student councils in schools and offers help for upskilling the student council.

DGS holds regional and national meetings which has the purpose to equip the individual student to improve the student democracy at their own school. Each year DGS also helps students with absence rules, grades or other problems, DGS also offers a lot of courses for your student council.

DGS is always good to have by your side - not only if trouble arises at your school. It is also a strong community consisting of committed persons throughout the country. For example, we also offer student council management courses etc., where you have an opportunity to exchange experiences so you can be inspired by other schools' day-to-day running of the student council and events.

Our organization

In schools the students are represented by the student council. Around the country the student councils are organized in regions. Here students from different schools meet and discuss various issues and exchange experiences. It is in the regions, that DGS' many events and campaigns are carried out. DGS' policy and work plan are determined by high school students at two annual general meetings which are DGS' highest authorities. Here high school students from all over the country can have an influence on what DGS should represent of opinions, which campaigns we should carry out as well as who should sit in the General Board.

CONTACT US:

At DGS there are always people ready to help in every possible way. On our website www.gymnasieelever.dk you can find many people to contact. You can find the daily management, the secretariat, and the regional managers.

On Facebook, DGS has a group - DGS' message board. Here you can always put up a notice about bigger and smaller problems, discuss and give innovative ideas for others. Everyone is welcome in the group, so please fee request.

YOU CAN ALSO ALWAYS CONTACT US HERE

The Union of Danish Upper Secondary School Student
e-mail: kontakt@dgsnet.dk

Phone number: 0045 50 77 48 02

Vibevej 31, 3rd floor, 2400 Copenhagen NV



**the union of danish
upper secondary
school students**