

MYC Election Policy

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures for the elections run by the Medway Youth Council. This policy should be reviewed at the MYC Annual Review meeting. This policy covers both internal and external elections.

Elections

Elections are held for positions within the Medway Youth Council, in addition to the two UK Youth Parliament elections.

Any young person aged between 11-18 that lives, works or studies in Medway is entitled to cast a vote in these elections. The system works with one person, one vote. The voting system used is First Past The Post, whereby candidates with the most votes are returned to the respective office.

Votes

Organisations with an elected structure, e.g. school councils are entitled to vote for a candidate on behalf of their constituents. However it should be emphasised that all young people within an organisation should have the opportunity to vote and cannot be denied the chance to vote. These votes should be recorded accurately, with schools responsible for returning results.

School councils and other similar representative bodies may cast an overall member majority vote, however this counts for only two votes (per candidate), hence we encourage that as many young people as possible should get the chance to vote.

An individual can also submit votes through the MYC contact form - if their identity is verifiable, it shall be counted. If they participated in a school council vote they may not vote again.

MYC Members and Community members are entitled to cast their votes through Discord.

Delivery of the election

The Medway Youth Council, with support from the Medway Youth Service, will facilitate the elections organised by MYC. This includes the provision of resources to schools/ youth centres so young people can take part.

Election resources can include a manifesto, video and other appropriate material. Where election resources, provided by a candidate, are altered in any way before being published, the candidate must be contacted to approve the change.

In order for election resources to be used effectively, it is best that the candidates provide a short bio of several paragraphs, with the word count being no more than 300 words. Full manifestos and videos should be sourced in the bio and the returning officers should ensure that these are shown to voters. Candidates accept full responsibility for the hosting of web based manifestos.

Enfranchisement

The Medway Youth Council will endeavour to reach as many young people as possible to ensure they have the chance to vote. This includes building links with schools, youth centres and other organisations that work with young people.

While MYC will reach out to build these links so that more young people have the opportunity to vote, we appreciate support in ensuring the widest election can occur.

If a young person wishes to cast a vote but has not had the opportunity to do so for whatever reason, they should contact MYC through the website to receive more information.

Candidate withdrawal

The Medway Youth Council respects the candidate's right to withdraw from the election, where possible we will ensure that this is prevented as this can result in wasted votes. Should a candidate wish to withdraw from any election they must make the Chair/Youth worker aware so that arrangements can be made. Votes which were cast for the candidate will be discarded and they will be removed from the election. Once a candidate has made it known they wish to withdraw from the election, they cannot then re-join the same election.

If a candidate fails to attend compulsory training sessions without fair reason or does not respond to communication from the Chair or Youth Worker, it is assumed that they do not wish to stand and will be removed from the ballot.

Candidate removal

If a candidate violates the MYC code of conduct then a discussion will be had in consultation with the Chair and Youth Worker.

MYC has the discretionary right to remove a candidate from an election.

Incorrect declaration

In the highly unlikely situation that a returned member was not the winner of an election, the cabinet will meet with candidates to explain the situation. The correct member must be replaced in the position with the wrongly returned member stepping down. A full investigation must then take place.

Complaints

The Medway Youth Council accepts the right of both candidates and voters to make a complaint regarding an election. Where there is a ruling required on any matter, the Chair has the ultimate discretionary power to make that ruling. Election complaints cannot go any higher than the Medway Youth Council, except for UKYP elections in which case the British Youth Council would be responsible for this. MYC welcomes all feedback during the election process.

Social media

When standing for, and after, an election, candidates accept their responsibility to ensure that their social media use is in line with the MYC codes of conduct.

Internal Elections

This refers to the procedure of elections for MYC cabinet members and Members of UK Youth Parliament.

Who can stand for cabinet?

Only Members of the Medway Youth Council are permitted to stand for cabinet positions. The reason being that for the effective working of the cabinet, members should have experience and be actively involved in the Medway Youth Council. There is no requirement to the length of time as a member and number of meetings attended while at the youth council before being permitted to stand for a cabinet position.

Who can stand for Chair/Vice Chair?

Members of MYC who wish to stand for either Chair or Vice-Chair must be nominated by another member. They may indicate their intention to stand but must have a current named member's support to be in the election.

Who can stand for MYP?

Any young person aged 11-18 that is living, working or studying in Medway is allowed to stand for Member of Youth Parliament.

Mid-term elections

Should a cabinet position become vacant for any reason it is vital that an election can be held at the earliest possible opportunity to allow the cabinet to fulfil its role. Membership will be given at least 2 weeks' notice that an election will be held for the cabinet position. At the earliest Full Council meeting following these two weeks, the youth council can cast votes for the candidates. In order to keep the election cycle consistent, mid-term elected cabinet members will end their term at the same time as the incumbent cabinet.

As per the constitution, if the Chair steps down then the Vice-Chair assumes control until an election for the chair is determined. A mid-term election for the Chair will operate in the same way that elections for mid-term cabinet members occur. A new term election for the Chair will operate in the same way the UKYP elections occur.

Uncontested Election

In the event that the Chair or Vice-Chair election is uncontested, then young people in Medway must have the chance to witness the election speeches made by the candidate and have their feedback provided to candidates. If the MYC votes to (RON), Re-Open Nominations, then there must be another election held, first, before this is sent to the wider community.

Failed election

An election can be declared as failed if: no votes for any candidates are cast, the most votes are to reopen nominations, no candidates are put forward, and if all candidates have withdrawn. In this unlikely situation a new election will be held at the earliest possible time, and in order to prevent vacancies, an interim member will be decided by the democratically elected cabinet, to fill this position.

Election dates

There is no fixed date for when elections will be held for MYC cabinet positions, however these will be around May/June time. A full timetable will be provided by the cabinet when nearing the election cycle. As per the constitution, cabinet must be elected yearly.

Returning officer

The Chair, with support from the Youth Worker, will be the returning officer for all elections, meaning they are responsible for declaring the result. All election data, for example the number of votes cast, will remain confidential and will not be declared to any candidate or member. Once the result has been declared there is no opportunity for recounts or review of the election. The Chair is also responsible for ensuring candidates are briefed and understand the procedures around the election.

Transition period

The incumbent cabinet will determine a transition period of around a month, subject to need, to allow the new cabinet to shadow the old cabinet allowing them to effectively transfer their briefs. A date will be agreed where the new cabinet assumes control of the briefs. This date ideally will be fixed but can be brought forward if needed.

The UKYP election is separate and dates are organised by the British Youth Council and UK Youth Parliament. MYC may hold elections earlier than required but will register members into their positions when possible.

Agreed by Cabinet on 08/02/2019

Revision effective 26/04/19

Revised by Anna McGovern MYP 27/07/2019

Witnessed by Angela Taylor