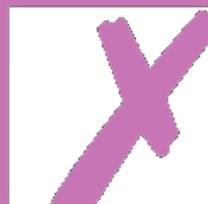


UK YOUTH PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS AND MAKE YOUR MARK 2022: POLLING STATION & VOTING GUIDE

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United Kingdom

Youth Parliament
MAKING OUR MARK

INTRODUCTION

In February 2022 young people across the UK will have the opportunity to vote for their Member of Youth Parliament. Members of Youth Parliament will be elected on a two year term, and will be in office until February 2024. The UK Youth Parliament is an initiative run by the British Youth Council. It provides opportunities for 11-18 year olds to use their voice to campaign for issues that concern them.

In addition to the Members of Youth Parliament elections, in February 2022 Make Your Mark will also take place. Make Your Mark is a nation-wide consultation of young people to understand what issues they are most passionate about. Voting will take place in Schools, Colleges and Youth Groups across the UK and the most voted for issues will form the campaigns Members of Youth Parliament work on for their 2 year term in office.

This handbook aims to assist staff within schools, colleges and youth groups who are facilitating Members of Youth Parliament Elections and/or Make Your Mark. We endeavour for all of your elections to be enjoyable, fair and democratic, therefore within this handbook we will describe procedures to follow in order to make that possible.

PREPARING FOR POLLING DAY

Voting can take place anytime between the 1st-28th February, exact dates are up to you.

Voting can take place either in a large space, or in form groups. You need to think about how quiet the space is, how students will flow in and out of the space, where they will collect their ballot paper, where will they vote and where they will deposit their completed ballot?

You will need: Tables and chairs, polling booths, ballot pencils/string, statutory notices, signs (polling station, way in/out), register of pupils voting, ballot papers, ballot box and seals for securing ballot box.

Students can be involved in running the vote. There are multiple roles required for Polling Day to run smoothly; you may want to select a Polling Station Supervisor and multiple Poll Station Officers either from each year or a team for the whole vote. We recommend students who are running as Members of Youth Parliament should not be able to perform these roles. Below we have outlined the duties of each role which should be carried out with the assistance of Staff:

Polling Station Supervisor:

- Help to organise the layout of the polling station
- Seal the ballot box
- Open the polling station
- Be polite and professional in dealing with voters
- Act impartially at all times
- Be responsible for ballot papers and the ballot box
- Ensure the proper procedure for voting is followed
- Issue ballot papers to voters
- Keep the polling station neat and tidy
- Ensure that all signs and notices are clear, visible and remain in place.

Polling Station Officer:

- Assist with the layout of the polling station and prepare for the opening of the poll
- Be polite and professional in dealing with voters
- Act impartially at all times
- Issue ballot papers to voters
- Check and mark electors in the register of electors (class register)
- Ensure that voters cast their votes in secret
- Maintain the secrecy of the ballot at all times

PREPARING THE POLLING STATION

On the day of the election, you will need to set up your Polling Station. There are a few things to think about:

- When setting out the polling station, the needs of voters with a range of disabilities must be considered, i.e. can a wheelchair user gain access and move easily around the polling station.
- The polling team should position their table and the ballot box in a way that prevents any voter leaving the polling station without passing them
- The polling booth and ballot box should be arranged to ensure they are accessible to voters, and fully visible to polling station staff
- The notices should be accessible for all voters, including voters who may have a disability
- Ensure ballot pencils are sharpened and available in each voting booth.
- The notice 'guidance for voters' is to be displayed inside the polling station and should be the only notice displayed in the polling booth.
- No posters or materials supporting any candidate should be displayed in the polling station
- The election leader should seal the ballot box before the voting begins, after having shown to all others in the Polling Station team that it is empty.

CONDUCTING THE VOTE

1

• The class will line up outside the Polling Station, when they enter the Polling Station Officer will greet the student, they will give their name to the Polling Station Officer, who will check their name on their register by placing a straight line against their entry

- The Polling Station supervisor or a member of the team will hand the ballot paper to the voter and show them where the polling booths are.

2

- The voter marks the ballot paper in the privacy of the polling booth

3

- The student folds there completed ballot paper in two and places it into the ballot box as polling staff thank the voter as they leave



CLOSING THE VOTE

After students have cast their ballot, the Poll will close and the count procedure will begin. This may happen after each year group has voted or when the whole school has voted. Please see below a list of actions to be carried out to close the poll and count ballots in a democratic manner.

- The Presiding Officer must seal the slot of the ballot box in front of the final student to vote.
- The Presiding Officer or appointed person should take the ballot box to the count location
- Do not leave the ballot box unattended at any time



COUNTING UP THE VOTES

1

- The appointed person will break the seals on the ballot box/unlock the ballot box and empty contents onto the table
- Counting staff will unfold the ballot papers keeping the ballot papers face upwards and the same way round, and count how many papers are in the ballot box.

2

- Sort ballot papers for each candidate into piles according to the vote given.
- If the vote has not been marked with a 'X', as long as the intention of the voter is clear it can be accepted
- If the voter has voted for more candidates than they are entitled to then the ballot paper would be rejected and would not be counted
- Once all papers have been sorted into separate candidate piles the ballot papers can be counted for each candidate, keep ballot papers face upwards
- When all the papers have been counted, the total number of votes and rejected papers should equal the number you started with at the first stage, record the information on the result document.

3

- The Make Your Mark results should be reported back to the British Youth Council if you registered your school individually or your Local Authority if you registered via them.
- The Members of Youth Parliament election results should be reported back to your Local Authority.