

# Ridgefield High School Student Government

700 North Salem Road  
Ridgefield, CT 06877

Vidur Hareesh, President

Claybrook Vaughan, VP of Rights & Responsibilities

Gabriella Puchall, Vice President of Activities

Anna Kelemen, Secretary

Kenneth Choi, Treasurer

Rachel Bodner, Public Relations Officer

Emily Parker, Community Outreach Officer

Jennifer DeJulio, Advisor

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## Constitution

### Preamble

The Student Government at Ridgefield High School that seeks to form a working relationship between students, administrators, faculty, and the community. There shall be two representative bodies in Student Government: the Executive Board which governs and leads the entire student body, and the four Class Councils that represent and lead each class. Together they seek to produce changes within the school to benefit the entire school community; to organize activities and programs; to help solve problems of the school, and to represent the views and opinions of the student body of Ridgefield High School to the Board of Education, administration, faculty, and the community. All Student Government positions are major time commitments and should be considered as such.

### Article I: Student Government Executive Board

#### *Section 1*

The Executive Board shall be comprised of the following officers: the Student Body President, the Vice President of Rights and Responsibilities, the Vice President of Activities, the Secretary, the Treasurer, Public Relations Officer and the Community Outreach Officer. In addition, the Vice President of each Class Council will attend Executive Board meetings.

#### *Section 2*

The President shall preside over all Student Government and Executive Board meetings as the Chair. It is their responsibility to plan and conduct meetings with other officers in a productive, useful, orderly, and democratic manner. It is also their responsibility to coordinate the work of the Executive Board with the other officers and committees while giving assistance, guidance and by showing appreciation when work is completed. They must be the facilitator of the conversation to help clarify information for other members. It is the President's

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approval and changes. It is important that the President follows the Robert's Rules of Order Revised. The President is responsible for working closely with the advisor and maintaining frequent contact with the administration, faculty, community, and all other student clubs and organizations. It is also their responsibility to ensure that all other Class Council Officers are fulfilling their respective jobs. The President shall notify the Vice President of Rights and Responsibilities of any absence from meetings in advance. The President will serve as the non-voting member of Student Government Meetings. In the event of a tie, they shall hold the deciding vote. The President shall not serve as a voting member at Executive Board meetings. The President shall report to all staff council meetings they is invited to. If the President is unable to attend, it is their responsibility to notify the Vice President of Rights and Responsibilities to attend in their place. The President shall attend all Board of Education meetings. they shall be accompanied by the appointed Board of Education liaison to every meeting. If the President is unable to attend, it is their responsibility to notify the Vice President of Rights and Responsibilities to attend in their place. \*Experience requirement: Held office for at least two years on an elected council.

### *Section 3*

The Vice President of Rights and Responsibilities shall guide students in the areas of curriculum, discipline, and service. The guidance includes the conception and implementation of new programs in these areas by delegating power through appointed committee chairs. The Vice President of Rights and Responsibilities shall take attendance at Student Government Meetings and be responsible for the implementation of the attendance policy for both the Executive Board and Class Councils. It is also the responsibility of this officer to preside over all meetings in case of the absence of the President. The Vice President of Rights and Responsibilities shall serve as a Student Representative to the Board of Education meetings during the absence of the President. \*Experience requirement: Held office for at least one year on an elected council.

### *Section 4*

The Vice President of Activities shall supervise all activities sponsored by the Executive Board. they must work closely with the administration, faculty, and advisor when planning an event. Programs shall run through the delegation of power and the appointment of committee chairs. This officer will oversee the functions and work in conjunction with the respective parties in planning the activities. they will keep updated binders of events which include information on organization of events. They are also responsible for the submission of proposals prior to events. \*Experience requirement: Held office for at least one year on an elected council.

### *Section 5*

The Secretary shall conduct all Executive Board correspondence, record the minutes at all Executive Board and Student Government Meetings and keep all information on file in the Student Government Office. These files shall be available to all members of the Student Government or Class Councils, Board of Education, Administration, Faculty, and Advisor at any time. Minutes should be typed and submitted to the Student Government Advisor, and Executive Board after every meeting. An electronic copy of the minutes shall be shared with the advisor within three days after a scheduled meeting. they must also keep an inventory of supplies needed for the Student Government Office. The Secretary must work with the Public Relations Officer in writing articles and press releases for newsletters and newspapers. \*Experience requirement: Held office for at least one year on an elected council.

### *Section 6*

The Treasurer shall keep accurate financial records and shall present a financial report to the Executive Board and entire Student Government at each meeting. The Treasurer shall be responsible for all transactions regarding Student Government operations. The Treasurer shall work with the committee chairs on establishing a budget and shall receive a financial report from the chairs showing how the money was spent within one week of conclusion of the committee's work. The Treasurer must keep the council updated on financial situations by providing a

financial report at every meeting. The Treasurer is responsible for working with the RHS Bookkeeper to ensure all financial information presented is accurate. \*Experience requirement: Held office for at least one year on an elected council.

#### *Section 7*

The Public Relations Officer shall be responsible for writing articles and press releases for the local papers, PTSA newsletters, RHS Roar, and other publications. It is the Public Relations Officer's responsibility to stay in close contact with the RHS Roar and update the newspaper after every meeting about developments regarding the council. It is the Public Relations Officer's responsibility to organize and prepare posters and flyers for Student Government events. The Public Relations Officer has the power to delegate council members to assist in public relation tasks. they is also responsible for publicizing the times, days, and locations of meetings. Prior to releasing student names and images it is the responsibility of the Public Relations officer to consult with their advisor and ensure no students are on the "opt out" list. \*Experience requirement: Held office for at least one year on an elected council.

#### *Section 8*

The Community Outreach Officer will work with both RHS, PTSA, and Town of Ridgefield Administrations in order to foster close cooperation and collaboration between the Town of Ridgefield and the RHS Student Body. Responsibilities include presented a proposal to the principal prior to meetings with town leaders, as well as meeting with town leaders to create and execute projects on a town wide level. In order to be considered for the position, students must stand out as leaders within the school community with a responsible and diplomatic reputation. \*Experience requirement: Held office for at least one year on an elected council.

#### *Section 9*

The Advisor shall be a member of the faculty. they shall not vote or assume any of the responsibilities that have been delegated to the Executive Board, or any other Class Council member. The Advisor shall assist and advise the Student Government. The Advisor will only vote when asked to do so by the President during the Executive or General Meetings. A detailed list of Advisor responsibilities is shown in Attachment 1.

#### *Section 10*

There shall be no shared officer positions on the Executive Board.

### **Article II: Student Government Class Councils**

#### *Section 1*

Each Class Council shall be comprised of the following officers: a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Public Relations Officer, at most six elected senators and four appointed senators, and two advisors. A historian may also be appointed at the discretion of the council.

#### *Section 2*

The President shall preside over all Class Council meetings. It is their responsibility to plan and conduct meetings with other officers in a productive, useful, orderly, and democratic manner. It is also their responsibility to coordinate the work of the council through the other officers and committees while giving assistance, guidance and show appreciation when work is completed. The President shall have a typed agenda to be distributed for all meetings. they must be the facilitator of the conversation to help clarify information for other members. The President is responsible for working closely with the advisors and maintaining frequent contact with the administration, faculty, community, and executive board. It is also their responsibility to ensure that all other Class

Council Officers are fulfilling their respective jobs. The President will also serve as the non-voting member of the Class Council meetings. In event of a tie, they shall hold the deciding vote according to the Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised. If the President is unable to attend Class Council meetings, it is their responsibility to notify the Vice President that they must run the meeting. \*Experience requirement: Held office for at least one year on a Class Council, except for incoming freshmen running for office.

### *Section 3*

The Vice President shall serve as second in authority. If the President is not present, it is their responsibility to assume responsibility. They shall work closely with committees during the planning and execution of events. It is their responsibility to attend all Executive Board meetings and report back to the Class Council with decisions made by the Executive Board. The Vice President is also responsible for keeping attendance records at all class meetings and reporting any absences, excused or unexcused, to the Vice President of Rights and Responsibility.

### *Section 4*

The Secretary shall conduct all Class Council correspondence, record the minutes at all Class Council meetings and retain all of the information. Minutes should be typed and submitted to the Class Advisor, Student Government Advisor, and Executive Board Secretary after every meeting. An electronic copy of the minutes shall be shared with the advisors within three days after a scheduled meeting. The files shall be available to all members of the Student Council, Board of Education, Administration, Faculty, Executive Board, and Advisors at any time. At the conclusion of every meeting, it is the Secretary's responsibility to supply each member of the council with the minutes from the meeting. They must update the RHS Roar on any important votes and general news regarding the council.

### *Section 5*

The Treasurer shall keep accurate financial records and shall present a financial report to the Student Government and the Class Council at each meeting. The Treasurer shall be responsible for all transactions regarding Class Council operations. The Treasurer shall work with the committee chairs to collect all receipts and ensure all vendors are paid in a timely fashion. The Treasurer is responsible for working with the RHS Bookkeeper to ensure all financial information presented is accurate.

### *Section 6*

There shall be ten Senators on each Class Council. Six senators will be elected through the annual election process. The remaining Senator positions may be voted upon by the Class Council. All non-elected members whose names appeared on the election ballot are eligible to be appointed to any open senate positions. In the case that there are no non-elected members seeking a senate seat, it is the class council's decision to consider outside candidates. Senators shall serve as voting members of the Class Council. Individual Senators will be delegated powers to complete necessary tasks for the Class Council. Senators must work closely with the Vice President during the planning of events and programs. Senators also have voting rights at general Student Government meetings.

### *Section 7*

The Public Relations Officer shall be responsible for writing articles and press releases for the local papers, PTSA newsletters, RHS Ridgefielder, school announcements, and social media presence. It is the Public Relations Officer's responsibility to organize and prepare posters and flyers for Student Government events. The Public Relations Officer has the power to delegate council members to assist in public relation tasks. They is also responsible for publicizing the times, days, and locations of meetings. Prior to releasing student names and images it is the responsibility of the Public Relations officer to consult with their advisor and ensure no students are on the "opt out" list.

### *Section 8*

The position of Historian may be appointed by the President and class advisors. The Historian shall be responsible for compiling data and photos of the entire class for senior celebrations. Files must be shared with class advisors.

### *Section 9*

The Advisor shall be a member of the faculty. They shall not vote or assume any of the responsibilities that have been delegated to the Class Council, or any other Student Council member. The Advisor shall assist and advise the Class Council. The Advisors will only vote when asked to do so by the President during the Class Council meetings. There shall be two advisors for each class council who will travel with their grade from freshman year through graduation. A detailed list of Advisor responsibilities is shown in Attachment 1.

### *Section 10*

There shall be no shared officer positions on Class Councils.

## **Article III: Elections**

### *Section 1*

Elections shall be held for the following year during the month of May. Two elections will take place: Executive Board and Class Councils. Candidates may only run for one position per election. Campaign information will be distributed in April. Executive Board elections shall take place prior to the Class Council elections. Freshman Class elections shall be conducted in September. Voting will be completed through the use of a secure online program. Candidates must meet all requirements in the election packet regarding eligibility to run for office.

### *Section 2*

If a position other than a Senator has not been filled, the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer may vote one of the elected six Senators to fill the position. If there is a vacant Senator position, the existing Class Council may vote to fill the position.

### *Section 3*

If a council member is removed from office, the student may not run for any office the following year. They may run again in two school years.

### *Section 4*

Once student government election forms are handed in, that candidate is held to the same standards as an elected student government member. Therefore they are bound to the rules of the Constitution.

### *Section 5*

All candidates must run positive campaigns. Negative campaigning includes, but is not limited to, portrayals of other school members and general mean spiritedness. Additionally, handouts and excessive campaign expenditures are unacceptable. All election behaviors are subject to review by Student Government advisors and the school administration.

## **Article IV: Meeting Procedures**

### *Section 1*

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, shall govern the Student Government in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Constitution of the Student Government and any special order the Student Government may adopt.

## **Article V: Attendance**

### *Section 1*

Attendance at meetings is an important component of the duties of an officer. Officers should make every effort to attend all meetings and to participate in them. However, officers must recognize that their primary responsibility at RHS is academics and that academic responsibilities must take priority.

### *Section 2*

Many Student Government meetings are scheduled during the school day. If a meeting conflicts with a class, the officer must ask prior permission from their teacher to be absent for that period. Officers are responsible to make up all missed work.

### *Section 3*

Officers who will miss a scheduled meeting must inform the person taking attendance (Advisor and VP) of their planned absence prior to the meeting via email by 9:00 pm on the previous day. The VP of Rights and Responsibilities must be informed for all General Assembly meetings. Advisors must be CCed on emails for class council meetings. The Class Vice President must be informed at Class Council meetings. Committee Chairs must be informed for Committee Meetings. Class Vice Presidents and Committee Chairs shall report all unexcused absences to the Vice President of Rights and Responsibilities on a weekly basis.

### *Section 4*

For an absence to be excused, officers must provide a reason for their absence. Excused absences will be validated at the discretion of the advisor.

## **Article VI: Resignation**

### *Section 1*

Any Officer who wishes to resign from office shall appear before the VP of Rights and Responsibilities, Class President, Class Advisor, and Student Government Advisor to state their reason for the resignation.

### *Section 2*

Any Person resigning from a position shall give the Executive Board and the Class Council at least two weeks' notice.

## **Article VII: Removal From Office**

### *Section 1*

Failure to fulfill duties or to comply with the Constitution are grounds for a due process removal from office. Due process includes identification of reasons for removal and an appeal process.

### *Section 2*

An officer will receive demerit(s) if they do not comply with the rules set forth in the Constitution including but not limited to; failure to comply with job description, failure to complete assigned work as committee member or chair, failure to notify proper person of an absence from a meeting, failure to maintain a 2.5 GPA, or suspension from Ridgfield High School. See Attachment 2 for a complete list of Demerits.

### *Section 3*

Demerits may be assigned by the Executive Board, Class Councils, and/or Advisors according to Attachment 2. Assignment of demerits will take into consideration all aspects of the situation and the rules outlined in the Constitution. Written notification by email will be provided by the Vice President of Rights and Responsibilities for all assigned demerits. A copy of such notification will be sent to: Class President, Student Government President, Class Advisor, Student Government Advisor, and Student Life Coordinator.

### *Section 4*

Any officer who receives 6 or more demerits during the school year (the school year runs from the time elected to the following school year's elections, from May to May) will be referred to a dismissal hearing. The hearing will take place before a board of review consisting of a Class Advisor, Student Government Advisor, Student Life Coordinator, and an Administrator prior to the member's dismissal. An officer will be informed of their dismissal hearing by email from the Vice President of Rights and Responsibilities. Demerits will not transfer over from previous school years. Any officer so removed by this clause will not hold any further Student Government office for the remainder of the current and next school year. Removed officers will not be eligible to run for office in the next general election.

### *Section 5*

Any officer removed by this Article may appeal their removal to a board of review consisting of a Class Advisor, Student Government Advisor, Student Life Coordinator, and an Administrator. Upon the request of the student, the board of review will set a date and time for the officer's hearing. If the student does not request a hearing within ten school days, the student shall be dismissed by vote of the board of review without further hearing.

### *Section 6*

The officer will attend the dismissal hearing with a Class Advisor, Student Government Advisor, Student Life Coordinator, and an Administrator. However, the member may choose to submit a written statement in lieu of a hearing before the board of review. Teachers/administrators who have assigned Demerits to the removed student will be rescued from the review board and replaced by a like person. The member will be permitted to attend the hearing with their parent(s) or guardian(s), but the parent(s)/guardian(s) shall have the right to attend only. The parent(s)/guardian(s) shall not have any right to speak at the hearing unless asked to do so by the board of review. Legal counsel on behalf of the student shall not be permitted at the hearing. The removed officer and advisors who have assigned demerits are permitted to present information during the appeal. After due consideration of any mitigating factors, the appeals board may reverse the removal only by a unanimous vote.

Procedure:

- The board of review will use the Ridgefield High School Dismissal Hearing Agenda as outlined below during the member's hearing.
- The Student Government Advisor or their designee shall state the charges leading the board of review to consider dismissal of the member.
- The member has the opportunity to present their defense either in person or via a written statement presented in lieu of the face-to-face hearing.
- The board of review may ask questions of the student.
- The student will be permitted to give a final statement.
- The student and/or their parent(s)/guardian(s) will be excused for the board of review to privately deliberate.

**Article VIII: Student Government Office**

*Section 1*

The use of B104 is a privilege for all student government members. The purpose of the room is to conduct student government business. At no time shall non-student government members enter the room. To access the room, a key must be signed out in SLO. The Executive Board President and Senior Class President will also have keys to open the office. This room must be kept clean. Failure to follow the rules of B104 will lead to the privilege being revoked.

**Article IX: Amendments**

*Section 1*

Proposed amendments to the Constitution will only be accepted for voting if the proposal is submitted with the signatures of 25 officers and the Student Government Advisor. All proposals will be provided to the RHS Administration for review and comment prior to submittal for voting.

*Section 2*

If a proposal is submitted with the appropriate number of signatures, the proposal is then moved to the next phase for voting. Only Class Council officers may vote on the proposal. Passage of a proposal requires a 2/3's acceptance vote by Class Council officers.

*Section 3*

Once a proposal has received a 2/3's majority vote by the Class Council officers, the Executive Board has one week to review and approve or reject the proposed Amendment. Approval by 2/3's of the Executive Board is required for passage.



Once a proposal has received a 2/3's majority vote by the Class Council officers, the Executive Board has one week to review and approve or reject the proposed Amendment. Approval by 2/3's of the Executive Board is required for passage.

*Section 4*

If the proposed Amendment is accepted by a majority of 2/3's among the Class Councils and Executive Board, the proposal will be signed by the Executive Board and be added to the Constitution.

*Section 5*

All Amendments made to the Constitution will take effect one week after passage by the Executive Board.



**Vidur Hareesh, President**



**Claybrook Vaughan, VP of Rights & Responsibilities**



**Kenneth Choi, Treasurer**



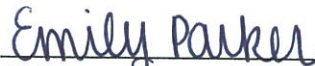
**Gabriella Puchall, Vice President of Activities**



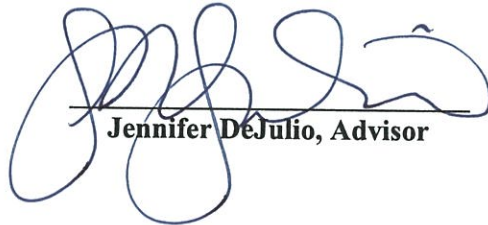
**Rachel Bodner, Public Relations Officer**



**Anna Kelemen, Secretary**



**Emily Parker, Community Outreach Officer**



**Jennifer DeJulio, Advisor**

## **Attachment 1: Student Government & Class Council Advisor Responsibilities**

General Description: The Advisor(s) of all Student Government positions acts as a guide and resource person for students involved in their club. The advisor(s) assists students in planning activities as well as serves as the liaison with the Student Activities Office and the administration. The experience is an exciting way of getting involved in co-curricular activities and creating a positive school environment.

### **Performance Responsibilities:**

1. Attend all general and planning meetings with students.
2. Attend and oversee all planned events.
3. Assist officers in planning Student Government functions and events.
4. Meet with officers in a setting conducive to serious conversation.
5. Maintain communication with class council members and SLO.
6. Ensure that arrangements for use of facilities for activities are made through Student Life Office (SLO) and RHS Administration, and that proper supervision is arranged.
7. Supervise the collections of funds, approve the expenditure of funds and help plan the budget. (All money must be kept in the organization's account.)
8. Review all student submitted proposals with SLO for time, place, purpose and outcomes.
9. Discuss all activities, projects and publicity releases, and school announcements with students before approval is given.
10. Update the principal & SLO; report any problems or extraordinary occurrences at any sponsored activity.
11. Act as liaison between students, faculty, SLO, other Student Government Advisors, and the administration.
12. Assign demerits when necessary.

## Attachment 2: List of Demerits

### **Attendance (assigned by Executive Board or Class Councils)**

1 Demerit	First unexcused absence from a Student Government, Class Council, or Committee meeting
1 Demerit	Second unexcused absence from a Student Government, Class Council, or Committee meeting
1 Demerit	Third unexcused absence from a Student Government, Class Council, or Committee meeting
2 Demerits	Fourth unexcused absence from a Student Government, Class Council, or Committee meeting
2 Demerits	First unexcused absence from an assigned work position or event
3 Demerits	Second unexcused absence from an assigned work position or event
6 Demerits	Absent for any reason from more than 50% of meetings in the year

**\*It is up to the discretion of an advisor to overturn an attendance demerit in response to the student's request, which must be made in a timely manner**

### **Conduct and Behavior (assigned by Advisors)**

2 Demerits	Failure to abide by the rules of the Student Government Office (B104)
2 Demerits	For acts of disrespect or insubordination, either in person or electronically, towards classmates, council members, faculty, advisors, and/or administration
Demerits	Any Officer suspended from Ridgefield High School will receive 2 Demerits for each day of in-school or out-of-school Suspension
6 Demerits	Any officer who is involved in a situation involving illegal substances and/or hazardous materials as identified in the Student Handbook

### **Conduct and Behavior (assigned by Advisors, Class Councils, or Executive Board)**

1 Demerit	First failure to perform officer duties
2 Demerits	Second and further failure(s) to perform officer duties

### **Academics (assigned by Advisors)**

2 Demerits	For each act of plagiarism
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6 Demerits      Failure to maintain a 2.5 GPA per quarter

**\*Administration has the right to remove students without due process.**