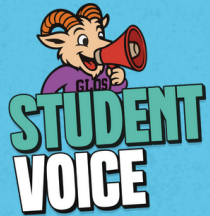


STUDENT COUNCIL

Disagreeing Respectfully



Disagreement is a normal and valuable part of Student Council. It shows that people are thinking carefully, bringing different experiences to the discussion and wanting the best outcome for students. The goal is not for everyone to agree all the time. The goal is to explore ideas fairly, test assumptions and reach decisions that are balanced, realistic and rooted in student experience. Respectful disagreement helps the Council make better decisions and keeps the space safe for everyone to participate.

Before disagreeing, pause and check that you fully understand the proposal or point being made. Ask clarifying questions if needed and try to separate the idea from the person presenting it. You can disagree with a proposal, suggestion or argument without criticising someone's identity, intentions or lived experience.

When speaking, use calm and neutral language that focuses on the issue rather than emotion or blame. It helps to explain your reasoning so others can see where you are coming from. You may want to reference student feedback, evidence, risks, cost, impact or practicality. It is also helpful to recognise strengths in the idea, even if you do not support the full proposal.

You might find it helpful to use phrases such as:

- I see where this is coming from, and I'd like to share a different view
- I think there may be risks we need to consider, especially around...
- I agree with the aim, but I'm unsure about the suggested action
- Could we look at a smaller or alternative approach
- I'm worried this might not include all students, for example...

Once Council reaches a decision, all members support that position publicly as part of collective responsibility. This does not mean your perspective was not valued. It means the Council has agreed on a shared direction so the SU can speak with one clear voice.