

EXTERNAL SPEAKER POLICY & PROCEDURE

POLICY / DOCUMENT PURPOSE STATEMENT

This document details the College's responsibilities and procedures in place to ensure that any speakers invited to the College are not advocating violence and/or hatred or causing offence whilst allowing for freedom of expression. This is for the protection of staff, students, the local community and the reputation of the College.

APPLICATION

The policy and procedure apply to all staff, students, governors and visitors.

INTERPRETATION

Further guidance on the use or interpretation of this policy may be obtained from the Marketing team.

LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES / DOCUMENTS

Preventing Radicalisation Guidance
 Freedom of Expression Policy
 Safeguarding Policy
 The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
 Preventing Radicalisation Guidance
 Single Equality Scheme
 Professional Code of Standards
 Disciplinary Policy

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Owner / Area	Lee Goodway Student Services
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EXTERNAL SPEAKER POLICY & PROCEDURE

1. Introduction

Fircroft College is committed to creating an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and where diversity is valued. This policy outlines the procedures relating to events involving the use of external speakers regardless of who is organising them.

It also details our approach to ensuring that we are protecting both staff and students and the reputation of the College whilst following the legislation that we are responsible for upholding. This policy is written with reference to the Prevent Duty contained within Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. The Duty states that specified authorities including Adult Education Colleges, in the exercise of their functions, must have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.

2. Objectives

- To provide an environment where freedom of expression and speech are protected balanced with the need to ensure that our community is free from harm and that incitement to hatred is never acceptable.
- To provide a supportive, inclusive and safe space for students
- To provide clearly defined and effective procedures to ensure that the law is upheld.
- To collaborate with others to reach sound, evidenced judgments about proposed external speakers ensuring that the College can meet their legal obligations
- To encourage and provide a balance of opinion at any academic discussion or debate
- To communicate to all members, volunteers, staff and visitors, that it is our mutual responsibility to comply with equality and safeguarding and that both the College and the individual can be held liable if they contravene the law.
- To provide clear instructions for organising an event with external contribution e.g. speaker, representatives, film and guidance for researching an external speaker.

3. Freedom of speech and expression

- 3.1. Freedom of speech and expression are basic human rights that are protected by law. Freedom of speech and freedom of expression are not absolute freedoms but freedoms within the law. Universities and College have a history of being open to debate and ideas with students at the forefront of pushing the limits of freedom of expression. 'Academic freedom' is a term used to describe the law that allows for open and honest debate in an academic context.
- 3.2. However, we have a duty to ensure the safety and welfare of our staff, students and communities. The freedom to express views needs to be balanced with the need to secure freedom from harm for students and communities. We want all of our events, activities and initiatives to be safe; without risk to the reputation of the College; and within the law. (See separate Freedom of Expression Policy).
- 3.3. Sometimes an external speaker or their topic of discussion has the potential to go against our conditions for a safe event. We're committed to working together with event organisers and in some cases, external speakers themselves, to make sure that we reach a judgement that is reasonable, informed and within the law.

4. External speakers and their responsibilities

- 4.1. An external speaker or visitor is used to describe any individual or organisation who is not a student or staff member Fircroft College or one of its contracted partners and who has been invited to speak to students and/or staff. This includes any individual who is a student or staff member from another institution. It also includes the main contact from any external venue hire client who is paying to use College facilities.
- 4.2. An event is any event, presentation, visit, activity or initiative organised by a student group/society, individual or staff member that is being held on the College premises or where the College is being represented by a stand on non-College premises e.g. at an exhibition, school event or fair. It also includes events where external speakers are streamed live into an event or a pre-recorded film is shown. It also includes activity being held on the College premises but organised by external venue hire clients
- 4.3. All speakers or visitors should be made aware by the person or group arranging the event that they have a responsibility to abide by the law and the College's policies including that they:-
 - Must not advocate or incite hatred, violence or call for the breaking of the law
 - Are not permitted to encourage, glorify or promote any acts of terrorism including individuals, groups or organisations that support such acts
 - Must not spread hatred and intolerance in the community and thus aid in disrupting social and community harmony
 - Must be mindful of the risk of causing offence to or seek to avoid insulting other faiths or groups, within a framework of positive debate and challenge

- Are not permitted to raise or gather funds for any external organisation or cause without express permission of the College (which should be sought from the Director of Student Services & Inclusion or his/her nominated deputy)
- All speakers or visitors are expected to abide by the law and the College's policies. Hence, they will be expected to sign the College `Expectations and Guidelines For External/Guest Speakers`