



freedom of speech policy

This Code of Practice describes the framework within which staff and students of the school and visitors enjoy the right to freedom of expression.

policy statement

As an institution of language studies, which values freedom, the school is committed to promoting and positively encouraging free debate and enquiry. This means that it accommodates a wide range of views, political as well as academic, even when they are unpopular, controversial or provocative.

In any event, the school has an explicit duty in law to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for members, students, employees and visiting speakers (if any). This duty includes a responsibility to ensure that the use of school premises is not denied to any individual or group on the grounds of the belief or views of that individual or any member of that group or on the grounds of the policy or objectives of the group. The school is, however, under no legal obligation to allow meetings to be open to members of the public.

This does not mean that the right to freedom of expression is unfettered. It is limited, for example, by laws to protect national security and public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, and to prevent the disclosure of information received in confidence. A speaker from an organisation proscribed by law would therefore not be allowed. A significant strand in the regulatory framework is the duty (under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000) to promote good relations between persons of different racial groups. As an educational organisation, we also believe that mutual understanding and acceptance of different beliefs are the way forward to a brighter future.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 also imposes a duty on the school to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. This Code of Practice fulfills the requirement in the Prevent Duty for educational organisation to have policies and procedures in place for the management of events on campus and use of the school's premises.

Freedom of expression also has to be set in the context of the school's values, and the values of a civilised, democratic, inclusive society. The school expects speakers and those taking part in protest activities to respect those values, to be sensitive to the diversity of its inclusive community, and to show respect to all sections of that community. These precepts include the way in which views are expressed and the form of any protest activities.



In considering whether or not to permit its premises to be used for a particular event, the school has to consider:

- Whether the views or ideas to be put forward (or the manner of their expression)
 - Infringe the rights of others, or
 - Discriminate against them, or
 - Constitute views that risk drawing people into terrorism or are shared by terrorist groups. For the avoidance of doubt, the definition of terrorism above is that as set out in the Terrorism Act 2000 (or as subsequently amended).

Under the Education (No 2) Act 1986

- Whether the activity in question
 - Constitutes a criminal offence
 - Constitutes a threat to public order or to the health and safety of individuals
 - Incites others to commit criminal acts, or
 - Is contrary to the civil and human rights of individuals.
- Whether adequate arrangements can be made to safeguard the safety of participants in the event, and other people within the vicinity, and to ensure that public order is maintained.

procedure

meetings

Those booking rooms in the school are taken to have read and agreed to abide by the provisions of this Code of Practice. In addition, they are required to designate a 'Organiser', who must be a member of staff or student of the school and who will be responsible for ensuring that the organisers comply with the obligations placed upon them by or under this Code of Practice. The Organiser shall ensure that appropriate information is provided to the school about the nature and topic of the meeting.

The Organiser is required to notify the School Director – as far as possible in advance of the meeting, and in any case at least two weeks before it – for any meeting to be held on the school premises if the subject matter of the meeting is or might reasonably be construed as 'controversial' (a 'controversial' meeting in this context being taken as either a speaker who might reasonably be construed as having the potential to occasion protest from, or give offence to, any section of the school or wider community, or constitute extremist views, or any speaker from a political party).

The Organiser shall on request provide the School Director with such information as the latter may require – including in particular the name of the principal speaker or speakers at the meeting, the theme(s) of the speech(es), the grounds for notification and the extent to which the speaker's past history suggests that



they might infringe one of the criteria set out in the Policy Statement above, the name and experience of the person who will conduct the meeting, the subject of the address or addresses, the names and experience of any stewards and other logistical information.

The School Director shall grant or withhold permission for the use of school premises (including, as appropriate, spaces at the accommodation premises) for the meeting proposed. Permission will only normally be withheld on the grounds indicated in the Policy Statement above, or if the Organiser cannot or will not ensure compliance with any conditions set by the school director. Such conditions may include requirements:

- (a) That tickets be issued and/or restricting the number of persons attending;
- (b) That an adequate number of stewards be available if needed, in addition to any school staff that the school director may feel should be present, to maintain safety and order;
- (c) As to the venue for the meeting and/or restricting banners;
- (d) As to the admission or exclusion of press, television or broadcasting personnel, and, subject to licensing law, the sale or consumption of alcohol within the premises;
- (e) As to the arrangements for chairing the meeting, and as to the circumstances in which the meeting may or must be terminated prematurely;
- (f) That a speaker be balanced by one or more speakers with opposing views;**
- (g) That the designated meeting or activity be restricted to staff and students of the school;
- (h) That school staff be responsible for all security arrangements connected with the meeting.

It shall in all cases be open to the school to invite the Police to be present at any meeting on school premises. It shall also be open to the School Director to withdraw permission for a meeting if, having originally granted permission, he or she judges that the meeting will not in fact conform to school policy (as outlined in the policy statement above) or that safety or public order cannot be guaranteed or if the Organiser cannot or will not ensure compliance with any conditions set by the School Director.

Premises used for meetings must be left in clean and tidy condition, in default of which the organisers may be charged for any additional cleaning and repairs that are subsequently required. Payment in advance or evidence of ability to pay towards these costs may be required. The school reserves the right to re-charge the organisers of any meeting for any extraordinary expenditure it incurs as a result of that meeting.

protests and demonstrations

Those arranging protests or demonstrations on school premises (whether in relation to a meeting covered by this Code or on any other matter) are taken to have



read and agreed to abide by the provisions of this Code. They are also required to designate an 'Organiser', who will be a student or member of staff, who will be responsible for ensuring that the organisers comply with the obligations placed upon them by or under this Code of Practice.

As long as is reasonably practicable in advance of the event in question, the Organiser shall ensure that appropriate information is provided to the School Director about the nature and theme of the event. Wherever possible, this information shall be provided at least a week before the event. The Organiser shall on request provide the School Director with such information as the latter may require.

The School Director shall grant or withhold permission for the use of school premises for the meeting proposed. Permission will normally be withheld only on the grounds indicated in the policy statement above, or if the Organiser cannot or will not ensure compliance with any conditions set by the School Director.

appeals

Appeals against the rulings of the School Director may be following the school's dispute procedures.

infringements

Any infringements or departures, in whatever respect, may render those responsible liable to disciplinary action under the school's disciplinary procedures.