



Name of Policy:	<b>External Speakers and Events Policy</b>
Last Approved:	March 2022
Approved By:	
Consultation	Directors of Student Care, Guidance and Progression; DSL; Estates Operations Manager
SMT Owner:	Assistant Principal

## 1. Policy Statement

As an institution of Further Education, Long Road Sixth Form College is committed to the principle of freedom of speech and expression, and believes that an atmosphere of tolerance is essential to enable open discussion and to engage our students with a wide variety of ideas.

However, our legal requirement to secure freedom of speech is balanced with the need to ensure that our community is inclusive and free from harm, where incitement to hatred is not acceptable.

This Policy details our approach to ensuring that we protect both staff and students and the reputation of the College whilst following appropriate legislation. The Policy is written with reference to the Prevent Duty contained within Section 26 (1) of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in particular the requirement that Further Education Colleges, in the exercise of their functions, must have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.

Therefore, this External Speakers & Events Policy exists in order to protect the rights and freedoms of our students, staff and visitors and is issued in accordance with our statutory duty at section 43 of the Education [No 2] Act 1986 for the following purposes:-

- To identify the **reasonably practicable steps** that must be taken to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for all students, staff and visitors; and
- To specify **procedures for the planning and management** of meetings and events involving visiting speakers on College premises.

## 2. Objectives

This policy sets out the rights and obligations inherent in supporting the principles of freedom of speech and expression on Long Road Sixth Form College premises, and provides clearly defined and effective procedures to enable staff to ensure that the law is upheld in

the organisation and management of events with external speakers.

The policy's objective is to ensure that Long Road continues to be a supportive, inclusive and safe space for students by;

- Encouraging the provision of a balance of opinion in any academic discussion or debate (including over time) by providing organisers with clear guidance on legal duties;
- Communicating to all staff, governors, students and visitors that it is our mutual responsibility to comply with principles of equality, diversity and inclusion and safeguarding, and that both the College and the individual can be held liable if they contravene the law;
- Providing clearly defined and effective procedures to ensure that the law is upheld;
- Providing clear instructions for risk assessing an event with an external contribution (e.g. external speaker, representatives, film or media) and guidance for researching an external speaker.

### **3. Freedom of speech and expression**

Freedom of speech and expression are basic human rights that are protected by law. These are not absolute freedoms but freedoms within the law. Colleges 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.

Whilst the law promotes and protects freedoms of speech and debate, the law also places limits on those freedoms. Crucially the protection of freedom of speech does not extend to allow a speaker to break the law or breach the lawful rights and freedoms of others e.g. using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour, particularly with a view to incite hatred or draw others into extremism or terrorism.

So far as is reasonably practicable, Long Road shall not deny access to any individual or body of persons on any grounds connected with the beliefs or views of that individual or body, or the policy or objectives of that individual or body.

Controversial, offensive or distasteful views which are not unlawful per se would not normally constitute reasonable grounds for refusing an event. The expression of views which some people may find objectionable or offensive is not prohibited generally by law.

However, we have a duty to ensure the safety and welfare of our staff, students and communities. The College may therefore refuse the holding of an event where it reasonably believes it is likely to:

- Incite a breach of the law;
- Lead to an expression of views which are contrary to the law;
- Promote or support an illegal organisation including any proscribed organisation;<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Under the Terrorism Act 2000, a 'proscribed organisation' is deemed by the Home Secretary to be one that commits or participates in acts of terrorism; prepares for terrorism; promotes or encourages terrorism (including the unlawful glorification of terrorism); is otherwise concerned in terrorism. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations--2>

- Be in the best interests of public safety, the prevention of disorder or crime, or the protection of those persons lawfully on College premises, that the event does not take place.

Where an external speaker or their topic of discussion has the potential to go against our conditions for a safe event, we commit 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**

An **external speaker** is used to describe any individual or organisation who is not a student or staff member for Long Road Sixth Form College 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.

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 Long Road Sixth Form College premises including a teaching or learning setting or in the context of extracurricular activity. It also includes situations where Long Road Sixth Form College is being represented by a stand on non-College premises (e.g. at an exhibition, school event or fair); events where external speakers are streamed live into an event or a pre-recorded film is shown; and activities held on Long Road Sixth Form College premises but organized by external venue hire clients.

All **external speakers** should be made aware by the person or group (**Organiser**) 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.

It is the responsibility of the Organiser to ensure that all external speaker(s) have read this Policy.

#### **5. Guidance for Long Road Sixth Form College staff and students organising an event with an external speaker**

No event involving any external speakers may be publicised or considered confirmed until the speaker has been cleared through the risk assessment procedure detailed in this Policy. This includes advertisement through any social media platform.

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The majority of external speaker requests will be straightforward and can be handled entirely at a local (departmental) level, pending approval by the Estates Operations Manager.

However, some may be more complex and may require referral to the Assistant Principal/Prevent Lead for further consideration. The referral process below will only apply in a minority of circumstances, where external speakers are deemed to be higher-risk.

### **Risk and mitigation**

Prior to the confirmation of any external speaker (and at least **21 days** in advance of any proposed event), the event organiser will be responsible for undertaking brief research and assessing the proposed speaker.

The proposed speaker should be assessed against the following questions. Are they:

- Linked to the UK Government list of proscribed extremist organisations: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations--2>;
- Member of an organisation generally considered to be extremist;
- Known to have spoken previously at another institution on a topic that has caused fear or intimidation of students or staff;
- Accepted in mainstream as being controversial;
- Linked with any person or group that has been connected with any controversy of a negative or positive nature;
- Has a significant public profile and attracts a following that could create crowd control and health and safety issues;
- Member of a political party during an election period.

### **Referral Process:**

If the answer to **any** of the questions above is **yes**, or is unclear, then the Organiser must refer the decision to the Assistant Principal/Prevent Lead.

To do this, complete the **External Speaker Referral Form**, and submit to the Assistant Principal/Prevent Lead for approval by emailing to [student.services@longroad.ac.uk](mailto:student.services@longroad.ac.uk). This must be submitted no later than **21 days** before the planned event.

In the event of referral, one of the following decisions will be made:-

- The event may **not** go ahead.
- The wider event may go ahead, but the proposed external speaker is **not permitted** to attend or contribute.
- The event may **go ahead** with the proposed external speaker as planned.
- The event with the proposed external speaker may go ahead **on the agreement that regulatory steps designed to reduce risk are implemented**, e.g. the inclusion of opportunities to debate or challenge the view being held.

In making recommendations, the Assistant Principal/Prevent Lead may consult on a wider basis with the College staff and risk will be assessed on the following basis:

1. The potential for any decision to limit freedom of speech;
2. The potential for the event going ahead to cause reputational risk to the College;
3. The potential for the speaker's presence on site to cause fear or alarm to students or members of staff and/or give rise to breach of peace.

Following receipt of a positive decision from the Assistant Principal/Prevent Lead, the Organiser must complete and submit a **Visiting Speaker Proposal & Risk Assessment** to the **Estates Operations Manager**, no later than 14 days before the event, following the standard risk assessment process below.

#### **Risk Assessment Process:**

If the answer to **all** questions is '**no**', then the Organiser should follow the standard risk assessment procedure. A **Visiting Speaker Proposal & Risk Assessment** Form (on Moodle) should be completed and submitted to Head of Department for signature. It should then be passed to the **Estates Operations Manager** no later than 14 days before the planned event for logging and approval.

If a larger room is required, please contact Student Services for help with room bookings. N.B. it is advisable to confirm room availability before proceeding with event planning.

The Organiser must inform Reception with names/time of arrival of external speaker(s) well in advance of the event, and arrange to meet them at Reception at the correct time to be signed in. External speakers must wear a visitor badge at all times.

The Organiser must take responsibility for their visitor during their time on the College site. External speakers must not be left alone with students at any time, nor allowed to wander the site on their own.

Any request made outside of these timeframes will usually be rejected unless there are extreme extenuating circumstances.

## **6. Cancellation**

Long Road Sixth Form College reserves the right to cancel, prohibit or delay any event with an external speaker if the policy is not followed or if health, safety and security criteria cannot be met.

## **7. Additional Guidance for Venue Hire Clients organising an event with external speakers**

The **Estates Operations Manager** will make external venue hire clients aware of this policy and request details of any external speakers and media and/or presentations that they are planning to deliver. This information should be provided no later than 12 days before the booking goes ahead.

Long Road Sixth Form College reserves the right to cancel, prohibit or delay any venue hire booking with external speakers if the policy is not followed, requested information not produced or if health, safety and security criteria cannot be met.

If in doubt as to the suitability of speakers, the Health & Safety Manager should refer the

decision to a member of SLT.

In the event of referral, one of the following decisions will be made:-

- The event may **not** go ahead.
- The wider event may go ahead, but the proposed external speaker is **not permitted** to attend or contribute.
- The event may **go ahead** with the proposed external speaker as planned.
- The event with the proposed external speaker may go ahead **on the agreement that regulatory steps designed to reduce risk are implemented**, e.g. the inclusion of opportunities to debate or challenge the view being held.

Amended: February 2022

## External Speaker Referral Form

*Please refer to the External Speaker & Events Policy before completing this form.*

<b>Part 1: Organiser details:</b>
Name:
Department:
Contact details (tel no. and email)
<b>Part 2: Proposed event details:</b>
Proposed event title:
Proposed event time/date:
Proposed venue:
Brief description of event (including event format):
Target audience (profile and size).
<b>Part 3: The External Speaker(s)</b>
Name of proposed External Speaker(s):
Organisation:

Has the speaker spoken at LRSFC before? If YES, when?

Title of talk/description of content

**External Speaker(s) – further information:** *Please include links to biographical information and indicate if any of your proposed speakers have previously been prevented from taking part in an event at a similar establishment.*

I, the Organiser, have read and understand the External Speakers & Events Policy.

Please send to Student Services to [student.services@longroad.ac.uk](mailto:student.services@longroad.ac.uk)