



Suffolk
New
College

EXTERNAL SPEAKERS POLICY

Policy Title:	External Speakers & Events Policy
Approval Date (m/y):	September 2022
Author(s):	Vice Principal
Approved by:	Operational Safeguarding & PREVENT Committee
Review date:	September 2025
Related Policies and Procedures:	Lettings Policy PREVENT Policy



Equality Impact Assessment Tool

Name of Policy: External Speakers Policy

		Yes/No	Comments
1	Does the policy/guidance affect one group less or more favourably than another on the basis of:		
	Race or ethnicity	N	
	Disability	N	
	Gender	N	
	Religion or belief	N	
	Sexual orientation	N	
	Age	N	
	Marriage and Civil Partnership	N	
	Maternity and Pregnancy	N	
	Gender Reassignment	N	
2	Is there any evidence that some groups are affected differently?	Y	Depending on the requests. Some groups may feel they are being treated differently and therefore it will be important to show how decisions are reached and to be consistent in the application of regulations
3	If you have identified potential discrimination, are any exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable?	Y	The College has a duty of care to protect students and staff and its reputation.
4	Is the impact of the policy/guidance likely to be negative?	N	
5	If so, can the impact be avoided?		
6	What alternatives are there to achieving the policy/guidance without the impact?	N	No viable alternatives as need an appropriate Policy in place to manage risks.
7	Can we reduce the impact by taking different action?	N	

External Speakers & Events Policy

1. Introduction

Suffolk New College welcomes events and opportunities for individuals or organisations to speak to students and staff. This includes ones organised by the College's Students' Union. It is our responsibility to make sure that everyone attending an event feels safe. This Policy provides the framework, guidance, advice and also reminders on the law in place to protect staff, students, visitors and the reputation of the College. In the context of this Policy, External Speakers are defined as anyone who is an individual or organisation wishing to use the College (including Students' Union) for events, and individuals or organisations / bodies wishing to hire or use the College's buildings. This policy applies across all college sites and includes speakers at events booked on college sites/buildings.

2. Freedom of Expression

Freedom of expression and speech are basic human rights that are protected by law. Student safety and welfare is at the heart of the College's policies and practices. The freedom to express views need to be balanced with the need to secure freedom from harm for students and communities. The College expects all activities to be safe, without risk to the reputation of the College and within the law. In allowing speakers to attend events and for College buildings to be used for events they will be approved based on the understanding that they act within the law and regulations set by the College.

Staff and students of Suffolk New College and all other persons attending meetings held on the premises must behave in a lawful manner and avoid taking any action or using any language which is offensive or provocative. Our objective to promote freedom of speech is limited by legislation which protects individuals and groups of individuals from hate speech. This includes communication which is hateful, threatening, abusive or insulting and is intended to harass, alarm or distress. Communication which targets a person based on their skin colour, race, nationality, ethnicity, religion or sexuality is forbidden. All speakers as well as event attendees must be respectful of the beliefs and opinions of others. The College also reserves the right to refuse an external or internal event or speaker where it is felt the content is inappropriate for the College's students under 18 or that a connection with it would impact on the College's reputation as a College predominantly for 16-18 year old students.

3. Assessing and Managing Risk

Risks around events will be considered and where they include but are not limited to; reputational damage; security of premises; safety of persons attending or in the vicinity; interruption of the work of students and staff not directly involved; welfare of students and staff and the ability to ensure good conduct of speakers and participants.

With regards to the need to manage and mitigate risks to protect the College staff and students and its Students' Union there may be occasions where conditions are attached to the approval of external speakers. These conditions may include:

- Requesting submission of speeches, presentations, discussion topics or questions in advance of the meeting.
- Limitation on attendees, either by number or status.
- Limitations on promotion and advertising of the event by approval of any advertising material, restriction of where material can be placed, or limitation of what types of material can be used.
- Declaration of attendees in advance of the meeting.
- Stewards to be provided by the organisation.
- Presence of College staff to ensure good order.
- Limitation on what attendees may bring to the event.
- Not allowing banners, flags or place cards or similar items into the building or onto relevant parts of the site.
- Closing down of the event if there is reasonable need, even if the event is already underway.
- Limiting the presence of press/media or media production equipment.

An event may also be cancelled if there are concerns that the event may risk student safety, violation of health & safety requirements or if the event risks violating legislation regards hatred, discrimination or incitement.

They are also not permitted to raise or gather funds without express permission in advance from the College's Executive Team.

4. Our Procedure

Any room booking with an external speaker involved must be made no later than 14 days before the date of the event. Any request made outside this timeframe will be rejected. When making an external booking for a room the appropriate booking form needs to be completed.

No event involving any external speakers may be publicised or considered confirmed until the speaker has been cleared through the procedure detailed in the Policy below.

The College reserves the right to cancel, prohibit or delay any event with an external speaker if the Policy has not been followed.

Where an external booking is made the following information must be provided:

- A brief description of the session including title.
- Name and contact details of the speaker.
- Date and time of the session.

- Brief biography of the speaker.

The information should be passed to the Head of Facilities & Estates who will check the details, group links and other connections.

If there is cause for a referral then the details should be shared with a member of the Executive Team for further investigation and guidance. Reasons for a referral are any of the following:

- Any person or group on / or linked to the UK Government list of proscribed terrorist organisations.
- A speaker tour.
- Talks or representatives by organisations generally considered to be extremist.
- A speaker who is known to have spoken previously at another institution on a topic that has caused fear or intimidation of students or staff.
- A speaker accepted in mainstream as being highly controversial;
- A speaker known to/or likely to cause harm to a specific group of students.
- A link/or links to any person or group that has been connected with any controversy of a negative or positive nature.
- A speaker who has significant profile and attracts a following that could create crowd control and health & safety issues.
- A speaker from a political party during an election period.

5. Speaker Validation

In most cases the College's Head of Facilities & Estates will ratify a speaker but in cases where a referral is needed the following will apply.

The relevant member of Executive will conduct a short investigation into the speaker and the event. They may take one of the following decisions:

- To not permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead.
- To fully permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead unrestricted.
- To permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead on the basis of regulatory steps designed to reduce any risks. This decision will be communicated in writing to the event organiser and the College reserves the right to terminate the event with no notice if the decision is not adhered to.

6. This policy also relates to events booked on college sites/buildings and the same checklist for validating nature of the event and appropriateness applies. The Risk Assessment for events should be completed as part of the booking request process and this document is an appendix to the policy. The same assessment process applies as is in place for speakers to determine the risk

and purpose of an event and its appropriateness. The college reserves the right to refuse or cancel a booking where a concern is identified.

7. Review of Policy

This Policy has been prepared to protect the College, its staff and students but it is not intended to restrict the freedom within the law to question and test, put forward new ideas, controversial or unpopular opinions.

Any queries with regards to the contents of the Policy should be raised with a member of the Executive Team.

The Policy will be regularly considered with regards to changes in legislation.

Information on any external speakers or events which have been a concern will be included in reports to the Operational Safeguarding & PREVENT meeting.

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