Policy Name

REF NO. INF-LSS-031

Approved by Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

Strategy/Policy Responsibility: SLT

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External Speakers

1. Introduction

Sutton College is committed to providing a safe, supportive, healthy and secure environment for learners and staff on the College premises and in online classes. To achieve this, all learners, staff and visiting speakers and/or guests are expected to conduct themselves to ensure freedom of speech and expression is confined within the law.

The College believes that a culture of free, open and robust discussion can be achieved only if all concerned avoid needlessly offensive or provocative action and language.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that open debate remains central to the culture of academic freedom and the development of learners' ideas and understanding without causing offence or harm to others.

The College has an expectation that any visiting/guest speakers and those taking part in meetings or protest activities respect College values, and are sensitive to the diversity of its community and show respect to all sections of that community.
Similarly, any event which is likely to give rise to an environment in which one could be at risk of radicalisation, fear, harassment, intimidation, verbal abuse or violence, particularly because of their ethnicity, race, nationality, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender, disability or age, is also likely to be unlawful.

As such, freedom to express views needs to be considered alongside existing safeguarding policies and procedures and the level of risk assessed and where possible reduced.

3. Legislative/Quality Framework

- Equality Act 2010
- Terrorism Act 2000
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Bill 2015 (including the Prevent Duty)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024

4. Scope

This policy applies to all staff across the College, including those on subcontracted programmes who work from the College main site or external, community venues. All staff are expected to have read, understood and adhere to this policy and related documents when they are either planning their own, or supporting students to plan for an external guest speaker.

5. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions will be used:

An external speaker or guest is used to describe any individual or organisation not a learner or College staff member or one of its contracted partners who has been invited to speak to learners and/or staff. This includes any individual who is a learner or staff member from another institution.

An event is any event, presentation, visit, activity or initiative organised by a learner group, individual or staff member that is being held on the College premises, in an online class 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 a class an event or a pre-recorded film is shown.

Talks by organisations generally considered to be unsuitable may include a speaker who is known to have spoken previously at another institution on a topic that has caused fear or intimidation of learners or staff; a speaker accepted in mainstream as being highly controversial; 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 and safety issues; a speaker from a political party during an election purdah.

Main Site is the Sutton Centre.

Online Courses Any visitors to online sessions should be carefully vetted in line with online safety policy and this External Speakers Policy the additional guidance from the Prevent Co-ordinator about bookings. If any doubt, please discuss with the ALK DSO or Prevent team.

External/Community Venues are any venues not owned/let by the College, where learning is delivered by College staff.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

• All Staff should be aware of and follow the procedure and good practice guidance for organising an external speaker. This includes conducting brief research into the proposed speaker. If in doubt as to the suitability of a speaker, they should refer the decision to the Principal, who should discuss who is the designated safeguarding lead. (*doubt could be (but are not restricted to) the following: - any person or group on/or linked to the UK Government list of prescribed terror organisations)

[Home office - Proscribed Terrorist Groups or Organisations](#)

• **The member of staff overseeing the activity** must ensure that the speaker/guest does not use the session to:
  ● Incite hatred, violence or call for learners to break the law
  ● Encourage, glorify or promote any acts of terrorism including individuals, groups or organisations that support such acts
  ● Spread hatred and intolerance in the community and thus aid in disrupting social and community harmony
  ● Within a framework of positive debate not insult other faiths or beliefs
  ● Raise or gather funds for any external organisation or cause without expression permission of the Principal

Not all external speakers or facilitators utilised by the College will be DBS checked. Where an external speaker or facilitator is present with a group of learners then a current member of staff must stay in the room/area of the activity to oversee it and ensure appropriate safeguarding of the learners concerned. Any violation of this requirement will be dealt with under the staff disciplinary procedure.

● **The Safeguarding Team** will offer staff support relating to the policy, procedure and forms. They will raise any concerns over the suitability of the proposed external/guest speaker with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

● **The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** should investigate all concerns in relation to actual or potential harm, including the radicalisation of learners or staff on college premises as part of the college safeguarding procedures and report to the relevant authorities.

● **The Principal and Senior Leadership team** to retain the right to cancel or prohibit any event on its premises.

7. Management Responsibility

The Principal has overall management responsibility for this policy with Sutton College. Day to day management responsibility for this policy has been devolved to the Director of Learner Services.

External Guest/Checklist

● Who is to be an external or guest speaker?
● Name and contact of main organiser
● Name and details of speaker– basic details recorded to include speakers contact address, phone number and organization details.
● Who do they represent? - The identity of the speaker has been confirmed and their organisation is bona fide and are known.
● Why have been invited in to the College as an external speaker?
● Who are the target audience and how many learners/staff are expected to be present?
● Checks on the internet undertaken to confirm the status of the speaker to include websites, You Tube, or social media

- The speaker is from the area and are UK citizens or from overseas travelling specifically for this event
- Have they visited the College in person or online before?
- Date, time and place of visit
- Expected arrival and departure time
- Number likely to attend confirmed and previous or similar events either locally or online checked

What is the topic?

- Topic for the event and marketing details confirmed. Level of marketing agreed: local, regional, national?
- How will the event be advertised?
- Conditions and management such as tickets, open event?
- What media will be present?

Wider considerations

- The speaker's reputation and the interest they may generate?
- Does the speaker agree to follow the Sutton College's regulations, values and vision?
- Any risk associated to the topic or location?
- The potential for the speaker to use language that may be unlawful
- Any Health and Safety regulations that may be required

Any member of staff arranging an external speaker needs to email SLT providing details of the external speaker as shown above. Please allow seven working days for SLT approval.