

External Speakers Policy

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Policy Statement

Barnet and Southgate College is committed to providing high quality education and training and to ensuring that our students achieve to the very best of their ability.

The College recognises its role in preparing students for life, employment and progression in the UK and in undertaking this responsibility students may be exposed to a variety of events, facilitators and visitors that will help to broaden their thinking and views. The College positively encourages this on condition that appropriate checks have taken place to ensure that visitors, facilitators and events are lawful, inclusive of the entire college community and do not represent organisations that advocate violence, hatred of any nature or could be potentially harmful.

The safety of our students and college community remains our priority.

Introduction

Barnet and Southgate College is committed to honesty and openness amongst the College community whilst also driving to achieve a College environment where everyone feels safe to express their views.

The College is committed to providing students an opportunity to express themselves freely in a manner that is respectful to everybody and must not in any way promote violence, hatred of any type and be within English and EU law. It is everyone's right to feel safe within the College and this is of paramount importance.

In the context of this policy '*external speakers*' '*events*' '*facilitators*', '*visitors*' and other such descriptors are defined as; an individual, group or organisation invited to address members of the College community ie students, staff, governors, volunteers and those who enter into a letting contract.

1. Aims and Links to College Values

This policy sets out to:

- Provide guidance regarding staff responsibilities when inviting external speakers/visitors/facilitators or organisations to the college
- Provide guidance to achieve an environment where freedom of expression or speech are protected yet balanced with the safety and welfare of our community; where hatred, violence and incitement are never acceptable
- To ensure that the messages that external speakers, visitors and organisations give are compliant with the College's Policies, Procedures and Ethos including Equality & Diversity, Safeguarding & Prevent and Freedom of Expression
- To inform staff where to record the information that they have gathered in order to verify the authenticity of and messages that the external speaker is giving to the College Community
- Communicate to external speakers/visitors/facilitators their responsibility to adhere to the College's wider policies and procedures, which include but are not limited to; Health and Safety Policy; Safeguarding & Prevent Policy/Procedures, Equality and Diversity Policy, Lettings and External Hire Policy/Procedures and Freedom of Expression
- To inform external speakers about what information the College gathers' records and stores in order to complete verification checks.

Barnet and Southgate College are committed to Freedom of Expression as a basic human right and this is protected in law. Alongside this, everyone regardless of background or circumstances should expect to feel:

- Respected
- Listened to
- Free to speak openly
- Welcome
- Fairly treated
- Included and part of the college community
- Subject to the laws of the UK and EU

2. Actions and responsibilities

Guidance for External Speakers, facilitators, visitors

All speakers, facilitators and visitors should be aware of the College's policies and procedures (via. the event organiser and College website) and their responsibility to abide by these and by the law. This includes, but is not limited to:

- not advocating or inciting hatred, violence or a call to break the law
- not allowing encouragement, glorification or promotion of any acts of terrorism including individuals, groups or organisations that support such acts
- promoting intolerance in the community thus disrupting social harmony
- being mindful of the risk of causing offence to any group and avoid this within a framework of positive debate
- fund raising without the knowledge of the event organiser and/or ELG

Guidance for Staff and Students organising an event or external hire

- Permission should be sought through Curriculum Managers
- The event organiser should conduct research into the proposed speaker, visitor, individual or group to ensure suitability.* This could include (but is not limited to); seeking references, gathering examples of resources used, DBS checks and viewing social media or online presence.
- ***No event including external groups, speakers or individuals should be advertised until the necessary checks have been completed***
- Risks around events should be considered with regards to:
 - reputational damage
 - people's safety and welfare
 - security of premises
 - interruption of students and staff work not involved in event
 - ability to ensure appropriate behaviour of speakers/ facilitators
- Where there are concerns as to suitability these should be *referred* to the Head of Department, Safeguarding Lead or an ELG member for advice. Concerns may consist of:
 - Groups, individual or organisation linked to the Government list of Proscribed terror organisations:<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations>
 - talks by organisations widely 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 link or links to any person or group that has been connected with any controversy
 - a speaker who has significant profile and attracts a following that could create crowd control and/or health and safety issues
 - a speaker from a political party during sensitive periods ie election campaigns
- The College reserve the right to refuse, cancel, prohibit or postpone an event if this policy or Health and Safety; Equality and Diversity, Lettings and Conditions of External Hire, Freedom of Expression are not adhered to
- Record the information and evidence gathered when carrying out research into the suitability of a speaker, visitor, individual or group on the central database which is found on the [Hub](#). The speaker should be notified that we shall be storing their Information for our records.

***The decision must be authorised by the member of staff's line manager.**

In the event of referral of concerns (see above), one of the following decisions will be made:

- To not permit the event
- To not permit the external speaker to attend the event (if it is part of a larger event)
- To 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 agreed steps designed to reduce risk. These may include observation; independent filming; the inclusion of opportunities to debate or challenge the view being held

When referring and making recommendations (see above) the member of ELG, Safeguarding Lead or other staff, as appropriate, will consider:

- The potential for any decision to limit freedom of speech
- The potential for the event going ahead to cause reputation risk to the College
- The potential for the speaker's presence on site to cause fear or alarm to students or members of staff AND/OR to give rise to breach of peace

Head of Departments and Curriculum Managers are responsible for ensuring that their staff team and students are aware of and support the policy.

The information and evidence gathered when carrying out research into the suitability of a speaker, visitor, individual or group will be recorded on the College's central database which is found on the staff Hub.

The evidence that should be recorded includes but is not limited to:

- Name and contact details of the speaker and/or organisation
- Date, location and timings of the visit
- Member of staff responsible for requesting information from the speaker
- Topic of discussion
- Verification of sign-posting to the College's Visitors leaflet, Equality and Diversity Policy and Safeguarding Policy including the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults,
- Sight of valid DBS record where appropriate
- Copies of resources, leaflets, presentations due to be delivered

The College will address any questions that an external speaker or organisation has in relation to collection and storage of information.

Additional Guidance for External Hire Clients organising an event with external speakers

The staff member responsible for external room hire will make potential clients aware of this policy and request details of any external speakers, presentations etc. that they are bringing in as detailed in the Lettings and External Hire Policy.

3. Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside other college policies which includes but is not limited to;

Safeguarding Policy including the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults, Equality and Diversity Policy, IT Acceptable Use, Student Code of Conduct, Staff Code of Conduct, Working with Students a Guide for All Staff, Lettings and External Hire Policy.