

ORGANISING EVENTS, EXTERNAL SPEAKERS AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH POLICY

College Policy
June 2022



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INTRODUCTION

Hopwood Hall College is committed to creating an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and where diversity is valued. This policy outlines the procedures relating to all events held at the college which may involve the use of external speakers.

It also details the College approach to ensuring that we protect both staff and students and the reputation of the college whilst following statutory guidance. This policy is written with reference to the Prevent Duty contained within Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. The Duty states that specified authorities including Further Education Colleges, in the exercise of their functions, must have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. This must be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Learner Engagement Strategy and Prevent Strategy.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Provide a supportive, inclusive and safe space for staff and students;
- Provide clearly defined and effective procedures to ensure that the law is upheld;
- Provide an environment where freedom of expression and speech are protected balanced with the need to ensure that our community is free from harm and that incitement to hatred is never acceptable;
- Collaborate with others to reach sound, evidenced judgments about proposed external speakers ensuring that the College can meet their legal obligations;
- Encourage and provide a balance of opinion at any discussions or debate;
- Communicate to all staff, volunteers, staff and visitors, that it is our mutual responsibility to comply with Equality & Diversity and safeguarding and that both the college and the individual can be held liable if they contravene the law;
- Provide clear instructions for organising an event with external contribution e.g. speaker, representatives, activities, film and guidance for researching an external speaker.

This policy applies to all members of the college community including those working on behalf of the college e.g. agency staff, volunteers and contractors. The policy covers all staff and students and any person or organisation who wishes to hold an event on college premises.

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy will not discriminate either directly or indirectly against any individual on grounds of sex, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, disability, inclusion need, gender identity, socio-economic status or any other protected characteristic.

This Policy is not directed to any specific ideology, religion, religious groups or faiths, or at the proponents of any other sets of belief. The aim is to ensure that the college is able

to monitor, manage and deal effectively with the threat posed by any individual or group of individuals engaging in activities that are against the law and the college values. The college commits to the promotion of cohesion and inclusion within the college community which does not allow any particular individual or group of individuals to be marginalised, stigmatised or excluded from college life.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND EXPRESSION

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

However, the College has a duty to ensure the safety and welfare of its staff, students and communities. The freedom to express views needs to be balanced with the need to secure freedom from harm for students and communities. We want all of our events, activities and initiatives to be safe; without risk to the reputation of the College; and within the law.

Sometimes an external speaker or their topic of discussion has the potential to go against the college values and our conditions for a safe event. We're committed 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.

EXTERNAL SPEAKERS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

An external speaker or visitor is used to describe any individual or organisation who is not a student or staff member at Hopwood Hall College or one of its contracted partners and 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 or has agreement to use the 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 the College premises (including its business units and sports facilities) or where the College is being represented by a stand on non-College premises e.g. at an exhibition, college event or fair. It also includes events where external speakers are streamed live into an event or a pre-recorded film is shown. It also includes activity being held on College premises but organised by external venue hire clients.

All speakers or visitors should be made aware by the person or group arranging the event (by referring visitors to this policy on the College website) that they have a responsibility to abide by the law, the College values and its 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;
- Follow the guidance for the multi-faith prayer rooms which is for individual religious and spiritual observance and not for collective prayer;
- Are not permitted to raise or gather funds for any external organisation or cause without express permission of the College (available from the Senior Leadership Team).

Hopwood Hall College reserves the right to audit any events or sessions booked at the college to ensure that they are compliant with this policy.

GUIDANCE FOR STAFF & STUDENTS

Centre Directors, Programme Managers, Wider Management Team, Senior Leadership Team, Principal, Executive Director, Head of Marketing and Communications, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager and the Safeguarding and Welfare Manager or relevant line manager must be informed of any events by their direct reports that involve external speakers through this procedure.

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

Hopwood Hall 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.

Any room booking/ event organisation with an external speaker involved must be made no later than 14 days before the date of the event. This is to allow for the organiser to have made adequate safeguarding checks as well as allowing time for alterations to the event if necessary. Any request made outside of this timeframe will be rejected unless there are extreme extenuating circumstances.

The individual/group organising an external speaker should conduct brief research into the proposed speaker. If in doubt as to the suitability of a speaker, they should refer the decision to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager or a member of SLT. Reasons for doubt could be (but are not restricted to) the following:

Any person or group on/or linked to the UK Government list of proscribed terror organisations <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations--2>;

Talks by organisations generally considered to be extremist;

- Where the speaker or event contravenes the law relating to, but not limited to, terrorism, public disorder, violent, threatening or abusive conduct, conduct inciting

racial or religious or other form of hatred, discrimination, defamation, harassment or trespass;

- 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 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;
- Where the topic of discussion is against the college values;
- A speaker from a political party during an election purdah;
- Incite those attending to commit a criminal act or give rise to a breach of peace;
- Where the event could cause damage to property or risk of harm or injury to others or that it would adversely affect the student experience.

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

- To not permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead
- To not permit the external speaker to attend the event (if it is a wider event)
- 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 risk. These may include observation; independent filming; the inclusion of opportunities to debate or challenge the view being held.

In making recommendations, the college may consult on a wider basis with key partners including the Counter Terrorism Police North West (CTPNW) or the Prevent Steering Group and risk will be assessed on the following basis:

- 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.

The External speaker declaration form (See Appendix) should be completed and forwarded to the relevant Manager no later than 14 days before the planned event. The completed form should be forwarded to Facilities / Administration for logging as a central record.

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

GUIDANCE FOR EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

All bookings for events must be made through the Facilities Team and logged in the SLT calendar. The Sports Arena will manage the bookings for the Sports Arena and will be responsible for ensuring that clients are made aware of this policy.

The Facilities Team will make external venue hire clients aware of this policy and request details of any external speakers, presentations etc that they are bringing in. This

information should be provided no later than 12 days before the booking goes ahead. An agenda or outline of the session would be sufficient in outlining the purpose and content of the event.

A statement of this policy will be made available for Venue Hire Clients and they will also be signposted to the website for the policy. The policy will be proactively shared where the event hire clients are regular users of the college facilities.

The event's organiser(s) must ensure that nothing is done to advertise, publicise or promote the event through any channel unless and until permission for the use of venue is confirmed. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in permission being automatically withheld. The organiser must immediately inform the Facilities Team of any changes to the event or speakers that are contrary to this policy as this may require a reassessment.

Hopwood Hall 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.

Hopwood Hall College reserves the right to audit any events or sessions booked at the college to ensure that they are compliant with this policy. The Facilities Team may also refer to a member of SLT or the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager for guidance on the appropriateness of the event and / or speakers.

If in doubt as to the suitability of speakers, the Facilities Team should refer the decision to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager or the Head of marketing and Communications or a member of SLT.

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

- To not permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead
- To not permit the external speaker to attend the event (if it is a wider event)
- 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 risk. These may include observation; independent filming; the inclusion of opportunities to debate or challenge the view being held.

Monitoring of this policy will be carried out by the Head of Facilities and Risk Management and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager who will report to SLT and the Equality and Diversity Steering Group who have oversight under the Prevent Strategy.

DOCUMENT REVIEW INFORMATION

Policy Date: June 2022

Policy Author: Caroline Street

Date of SLT Sign Off: 20th June 2022

Equality Impact Assessment Completed? **Yes** / No

Equality Impact Assessment Date: 27/05/2022

Next Policy Review Date: May 2024



Booking Request Form

Contact

Name: Address:
 Tel. Email:

Invoice address if different:
 Campus required

Top of Form

<p>Rochdale Conference Room BG01 and the Lecture Theatre BG01 is situated on the ground floor in the Benjamin Rudman Building. It can accommodate 25 delegates conference style and up to 35 theatre style. The room has full presentation facilities and a flipchart. The Lecture Theatre is situated on the 3rd floor of the Benjamin Rudman Building. It has fixed seating for 99 with fold away writing tables attached to the chairs. The room has full presentation facilities, a flipchart and has air conditioning. Car parking is available.</p>	<p>Middleton Middleton Campus – Henry West Conference Rooms There are two adjacent conference rooms situated on the ground floor of the Henry West building. Each room can accommodate 22 delegates in conference style, up to 40 theatre style and 30 island style. There is a partition wall between these rooms which can be opened up to provide a larger venue. This can then hold 90 theatre style and 40 conference style 70 island style Each room has full presentation facilities, flipcharts and have air conditioning. Car parking is available.</p>
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Bottom of Form

Date the room is required:
 if multiple dates are required please give details below or attach a separate sheet.

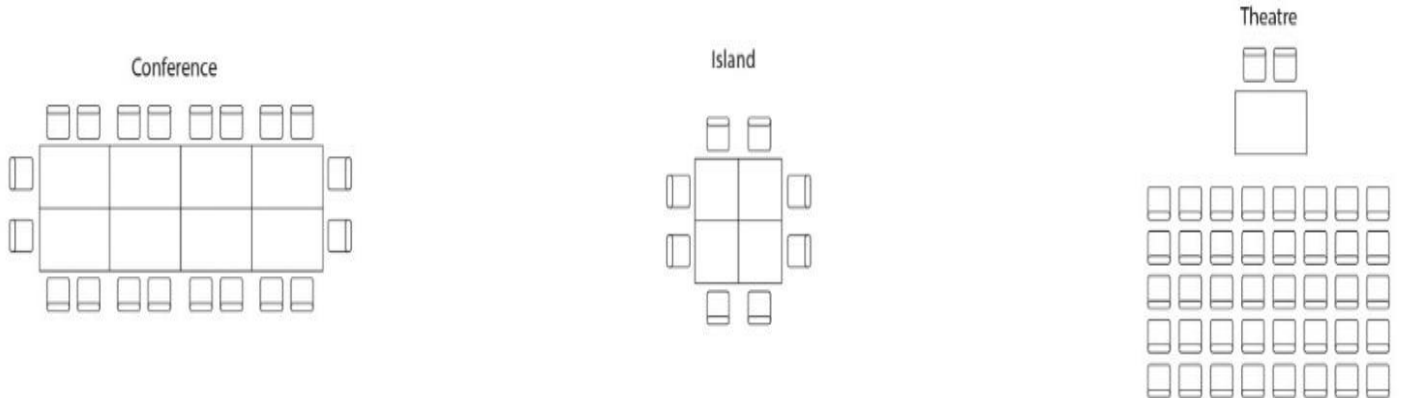
Time the room is required: Start: End:

Please note the start and end time includes your set up and vacation time.

Number of people attending: (approx. number at time of booking)

Nature of the booking, ie, training, meeting:

Set up required:



Top of Form
IT assistance required: Yes/No If yes please give details.

Bottom of Form
Refreshments required: Yes/No If yes please give details (including times to be served)

Additional details:

External Speakers Form

This form should be completed and sent to the Facilities Team or line manager for approval for the use of external speakers in Hopwood Hall College.

By completing this form, you agree to follow the guidelines set out by the college in relation to the use of external speakers and holding of events on college premises, the college values and its equality, diversity, inclusion, safeguarding and commitment to British Values.

Event Title:	
Proposed Timing and Location of Event/workshop:	
Date Start time End time:	
Organiser's full name:	
Organisers contact details: <i>(Status e.g. staff; contact email, website, postal address and telephone)</i>	
What is the target audience and how many people are likely to attend:	
Proposed Speaker's at the Event: <i>Please give details of all speakers and panel members including name, organisation and website URL:</i>	
Title of talk / debate / workshop(s) including breakout sessions:	
Has the speaker(s) spoken at the College or other educational institutions before? If yes, please provide details:	
Has the speaker been refused to speak at the college or at any other educational establishment? If yes, please provide details:	
Is the external company/guest acting on behalf of (name of group, external body or organisation)? If yes, please provide details:	
Is the event likely to generate media interest? If yes, please provide details:	
Does the speaker / event have any political party links or messages or a religious organisation? If yes, please provide details:	
Is there likely to be controversy or threat of disruption at this event? If yes, please provide details:	
Any other details about the event that should be noted	
Organiser's Declaration <i>I/we declare that the information provided here is, to the best of my knowledge, a true and accurate statement of intentions and requirements.</i>	
<i>I/we understand and accept that this event/workshop request is made under the provisions of the College's External speakers and Events Policy, and I/we agree to comply with stipulations for the event/workshop that permission to hold this event/workshop is granted.</i>	
Signature(s)	
Date	

When completed, this form should be submitted for consideration by the relevant Approving Manager not less than 20 working days before the date of the proposed event/workshop

External Speakers Declaration

Hopwood Hall College has both a legal and moral responsibility to ensure that our staff and students are not exposed to views that conflict or undermine fundamental British values including those which might incite others to unlawfully discriminate against racial or gender groups or other protected characteristics or encourage acts of violence or breach our College values which are:

- Integrity
- Nurturing
- Enjoyment
- Ambition
- Encouraging
- Sustainability

For these reasons we ask that you read the statements below and sign the declaration at the bottom of this page. All visiting speakers to the College are be asked to complete this declaration and we trust that you understand and accept that we are acting in the best interests of our college community and that we are not making any kind of unfavourable judgement about visiting speakers or their views and opinions.

Please read the declaration below. Please indicate your response to each statement and sign at the bottom.

I confirm that I have read and understood Hopwood Hall College's External Speakers and Events Policy and agree to comply with this. **Yes/No**

I confirm that I will not incite an audience to violence, breach of the peace or racial or other hatred, and I understand that such words or actions are contrary to public order laws and as such will not be regarded as lawful speech. **Yes/No**

I confirm that I will respect the rights and freedom of others as protected by the law (for example, I must not make statements which are actionable for defamation). I will respect the freedom of speech of others and will ensure that no groups face unlawful discrimination as a result of my words or actions. **Yes/No**

I confirm my support for the College Values and the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. I fully understand that freedom of speech does not extend to individuals or organisations not committed to these values. **Yes/No**

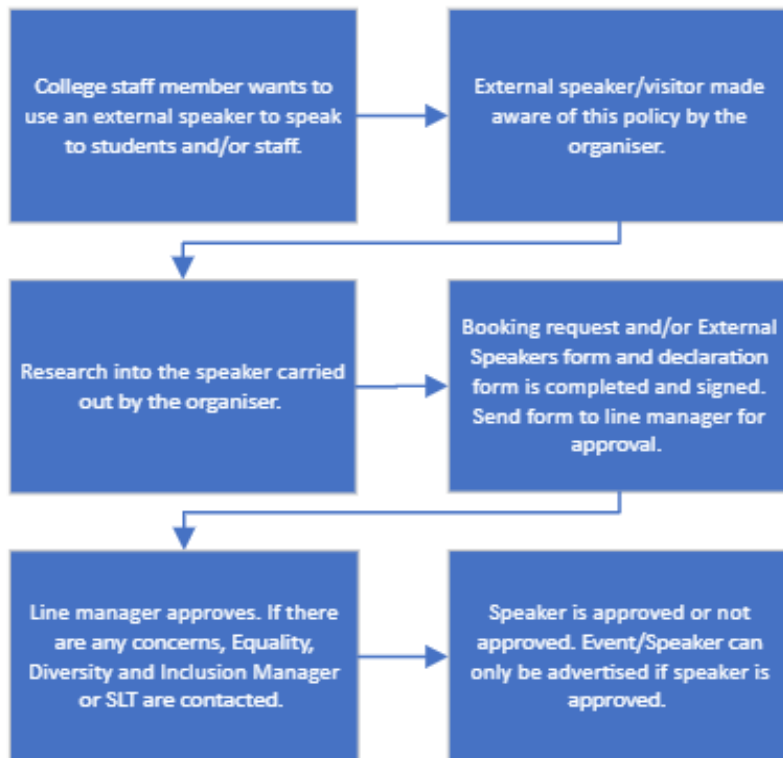
Signed:

Name:

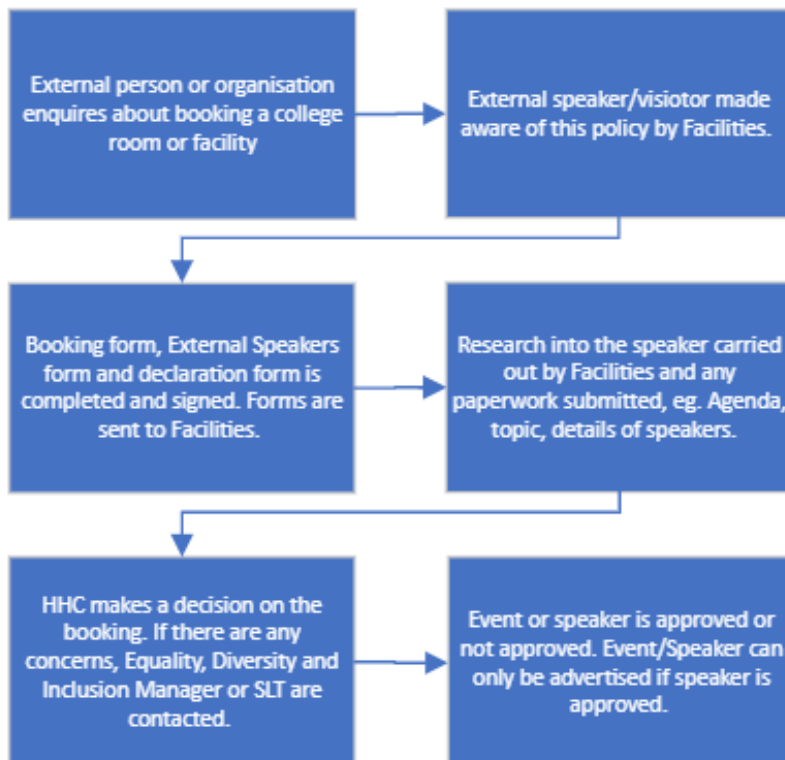
Date:

When completed, this form should be submitted for consideration by the relevant Approving Manager not less than 14 working days before the date of the proposed event/workshop.

College Staff Use of External Speakers



External Bookings of College Rooms and / or Facilities



What do we say when we say “high risk”? Below are some examples of the risk levels. Remember, if you are organising an event you need to research the individual(s) and/or the company and assess which category they would be in. If you have any concerns speak to your line manager in the first instance and escalate to the EDI Manager if further assistance is required.

Risk Level	Examples	Outcome
Low risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject expert coming to talk about the subject • Someone found through a professional body • A subject expert recommended by a colleague or another college • Reputable company with a professional website, including for example contact details, charity registration number or company registration number, presence on multiple platforms 	Fine to proceed; get line manager approval and the advertise the event.
Medium risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A speaker found through internet search • Someone with unclear qualifications or experience 	Find out more information about them using their online presence and speaking to them. Do they seem closer to low risk or to high risk? Get support from your line manager, and speak to the EDI Manager if further support is needed.
High risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speakers on the following topics: party politics, politically divisive issues such as abortion, debates on humanity or human rights. • Media personality without qualification or experience • Unsolicited offers from unknown people • People without an online presence e.g. website, LinkedIn profile 	Refer to the EDI Manager for decision.