



Oxford Sixth Form College

A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL

Visiting Speakers & External Speaker Events Policy

Revised: May 2024

Review date: May 2025

Introduction

This policy outlines the procedures relating to events involving the use of external speakers regardless of who is organising them and should form part of the Risk Assessment process for visiting and external speakers.

It also details our approach to ensuring that we are protecting both staff and students and the reputation of Oxford Sixth Form College (OxSFC) whilst following the legislation that we are responsible for upholding. This policy is written with reference to the Prevent Duty contained within Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (updated December 2023). The Duty states that specified authorities including Education Colleges, in the exercise of their functions, must have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.

Equal opportunities

The College is committed to equal treatment for all under the terms of 2010 Equalities Act, regardless of an individual’s race, ethnicity, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, or sexual orientation. We aim to recognise and encourage the valuable and enriching contribution from all who work and learn here and the rights of all individuals who come into contact with the College, such as prospective students and job applicants.

We aim to create a friendly, caring, and reflective environment in which every individual is valued. We believe that people from a range of backgrounds and experiences can enhance the life and development of the institution and that all individuals should be treated on the basis of individual merit and without prejudice. The College expects all employees, Houseparent’s, hosts, students, and associated partner organisations to adopt this policy.

Policy objectives

We recognise that by developing high self-esteem, resilience and confidence our students will be better placed to think independently and challenge extremist ideology.

We will therefore provide:

- An environment where freedom of expression and speech are protected and balanced with the need to ensure that our community is free from harm and that incitement to hatred is never acceptable
- A supportive, inclusive and safe space for students
- Clearly defined and effective procedures to ensure that the law is upheld
- Collaborate with others to reach sound, evidenced judgments about proposed external speakers ensuring that the College can meet their legal obligations
- To encourage and provide a balance of opinion at any academic discussion or debate
- To communicate to all members, volunteers, staff and visitors, that it is our mutual responsibility to comply with equality and safeguarding and that both

OxSFC and the individual can be held liable if they contravene the law.

- To provide a clear process for organising an event with external contribution e.g., speaker, representatives, film, and guidance for researching an external speaker.

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. Universities and College 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, we have a duty to ensure the safety and welfare of our 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 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 our conditions for a safe event. We are committed to working together with event organisers and external speakers to make sure that we reach a judgement that is reasonable, informed and within the law.

External speakers and their responsibilities

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 OxSFC premises or where OxSFC is being represented by on non-College premises. It also includes events where external speakers are streamed live into an event or a pre-recorded film is shown, or an activity being held on OxSFC 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 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 organisations or cause without express permission of the College (The Principal).

Guidance for OxSFC staff and students organising an event with an external speaker or venue hire client.

Your line manager and the Principal must be informed of any events 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.

OxSFC 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 as soon as possible to allow for the organiser to have made adequate safeguarding checks as well as allowing time for alterations to the event if necessary.

The individual/group organising an external speaker should conduct brief research into the proposed speaker. This could include the use of Google and /or contacting a former recipient of the speaker for feedback. If in doubt as to the suitability of a speaker, you should refer the decision to the Principal. 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; 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; a speaker from a political party during an election purdah.

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 Principal may consult on a wider basis with the College's Safeguarding team and the 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 consent form (Appendix 1) should be completed and forwarded to the line manager as soon as possible before the planned event. The Principal will sign off the consent form if it has been agreed with their line manager first. The completed form should be forwarded to the Reception Manager for logging on the Central Record.

Directors of Study (DoS) and the Director of Student Services (DoSS) are responsible for ensuring that their staff team and students are aware of and support the policy.

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

- The Facilities Manager will make external venue hire clients aware of this policy and request details of any external speakers, presentations or handouts that they are bringing in. This information should be provided no later than 5 working days before the booking goes ahead.
- OxSFC 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 there is any doubt as to the suitability of speakers, the Facilities Manager should refer the decision to the Principal.

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 based on regulatory steps designed to reduce risk. These may include observation; independent filming; the inclusion of opportunities to debate or challenge the view being held.

Process

Before completing the External speaker consent form (Appendix 1), the person requesting consent should carry out extensive checks on speaker and/or company the speaker is representing.

If you are satisfied that the speaker and/or organisation is not likely to abide by the law and the College's policies, then you should complete and submit the External speaker consent form to your line manager.



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External Speaker Consent Form

Appendix 1

1. Complete **all** boxes and ensure that you have signed the form
3. Forward to your line manager for consent.
4. If your line manager has approved the event, this form should be sent to the Principal for approval.
5. When complete, this form should be forwarded to the Reception.

Manager for maintaining central records.

Name of person requesting consent:	
Group:	Group size:
Name of staff member leading the event:	
Member of staff staying with the speaker during the event:	
Name of outside speakers/s:	Organisation/s they represent:
Address of organisation/s the speaker represents:	Telephone and email address:
Is there any known or likely media interest in the proposed event? YES/NO	
Have adequate background checks been completed? <i>E.g. Google search, contacted previous facilitators and received feedback. Note, this must be thoroughly researched before submitting the form</i> YES/NO Outline the checks made and provide website links below:	
Are there any matters that require further investigation/action? Supply brief discussion.	

I would like to invite the (group of) speaker(s), as described above:
To present (topic):
Proposed method of delivery with details of video/presentation/film/handouts to be used:
In (room):
On (date):

Consent approval:

Signature of applicant:	Date of submission:
The Line Manager (name):	
The Principal (name):	
Consent approval signature, line manager:	Date of approval:
Consent approval signature. Principal:	Date of approval:

Referral made by:

Reason the application hasn't been approved:
Actions if required:
Manager or Principal signature:
Date of referral: