



**Bishop  
Hogarth**

Catholic Education Trust

# **Political Indoctrination & Visiting Speaker Policy**

**THIS POLICY APPLIES ACROSS ALL TRUST SCHOOLS AND SERVICES**

**Document Management:**

Date Policy Approved: 5 April 2017

Date Reviewed: November 2023

Next Review Date: November 2026

Version: 2

Approving Body: Standards Committee

**Introduction**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy.

Independent schools (including academies and free schools) must meet the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development standard set out in the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014. A commitment to make changes to strengthen the SMSC standard was included in the Government's Prevent strategy to ensure that schools:

- encourage pupils to respect specified fundamental British values;
- do not promote extremist views, or partisan political views, through their curriculum and/or teaching, and
- offer pupils a balanced presentation of views when political issues are brought to their attention.

The following definitions drawn from DfE Advice for Improving the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils are referred to in this policy:

- Partisan - in a case relating to the alleged promotion of partisan political views in maintained schools the judge considered that the best synonym for "partisan" was "one-sided".
- Political views – views expressed for a political purpose.
  - A political purpose is either directly or indirectly:
    - to further the interests of a particular political party; or
    - to procure changes to the laws of this or another country; or
    - to procure the reversal of government policy or of particular decisions of governmental authorities in this or another country.

### **The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014**

[The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#) details how the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils are met by:

(a) actively promoting the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;

(b) ensuring that principles are actively promoted which:

(i) enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence;

(ii) enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England;

(iii) encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated and to society more widely;

(iv) enable pupils to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England;

- (v) further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures;
  - (vi) encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the [Equality 2010 Act](#); and
  - (vii) encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic process, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England;
- (c) precluding the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school; and
- (d) taking such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils:
- (i) while they are in attendance at the school,
  - (ii) while they are taking part in extra-curricular activities which are provided or organised by or on behalf of the school, or
  - (iii) in the promotion at the school, including through the distribution of promotional material, of extra-curricular activities taking place at the school or elsewhere, they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views.

### **Improving the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils**

Guidance given by the Department for Education (DfE) for [Improving the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural \(SMSC\) Development of Pupils](#), details how political views are handled. The standard for SMSC is to prevent the political indoctrination of pupils through the curriculum.

The aim is not to prevent pupils from being exposed to political views or from discussing political issues in school but pupils should not be actively encouraged by teachers or others to support particular political viewpoints.

Concepts such as democracy and the historical development of the political process in society cannot be meaningfully taught without reference to political belief and practice, and the use of concrete examples is normally helpful in promoting understanding. Teaching staff will not exploit pupils' vulnerability by seeking to convince them that a particular political position is necessarily correct, or by trying to impose their own views on pupils. Such action may amount to a breach of Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards on personal and professional conduct, in particular:

- not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

- ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.

The Trust will ensure that teachers are aware of the [Teachers' Standards](#) applying to them.

Although the Trust does not preclude the presentation of controversial political viewpoints to pupils, schools and individual teachers should ensure that views are not promoted which are inconsistent with the requirements of any other part of the SMSC development of pupils (for example views which are derogatory of particular ethnic groups or faiths, or which are actively in opposition to the fundamental British values).

The DfE has published non-statutory guidance on [Political Impartiality in Schools](#). The guidance, although not introducing any new legal requirements, has been produced to:

- Support staff in schools to understand and comply with their legal duties.
- Clarify the role of specific bodies and individuals subject to the legal duties.
- Improve understanding of how schools' legal duties on political impartiality can be met, including in difficult and sensitive circumstances where the boundaries of what is and is not appropriate may be unclear.

### **Visiting Speakers – Assessing their Suitability**

Our schools have a responsibility to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism; this includes violent and non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism, and can popularise views which terrorists exploit.

Our schools are a safe space where children can understand and discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideologies.

Before inviting an external agency or guest speaker, the school will conduct background research into the relevant parties, ensuring that:

- Any messages communicated to pupils support fundamental British values.
- Any messages communicated to pupils do not seek to glorify criminal activity or violent extremism and are not shared by terrorist groups.
- The group or person is not attempting to narrow the views of pupils through extreme or narrow views of faith, religion, culture or ideology.
- The subject matters being raised are appropriate for the specific age group.

Careful consideration will be given to the suitability of an external speaker or external organisation to enrich pupil's education. The Headteacher will make the final decision as to the suitability of any guest speaker or external organisation.

Other than safeguarding issues, there are several other factors that the visit organiser and Headteacher will consider when evaluating the suitability of a guest speaker or external group. These will include whether:

- The visit adds value to the pupils' learning experiences and education.
- The age-appropriateness of the speaker and what is going to be delivered
- The speaker or group has the expertise in the subject they are delivering.
- The planned activities meet the health and safety guidelines.

Before the visit, the External Speaker Booking Form should be completed submitted to the headteacher.

### **During the visit**

Guest speakers will be made aware if their speech is to be recorded or filmed.

No recordings or videos are made public unless written permission is granted by the speaker.

The Headteacher or a senior member of staff will be present during the speech or group activity, to oversee that the relevant guidelines are followed.

Intervention is considered if the member of staff feels it is necessary.

Any reasons for intervention are recorded for future reference.

### **Balanced presentation**

Improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development at the school offers a balanced presentation of opposing views. This is applicable when a guest speaker is expressing overtly political, e.g. furthering the interests of a political party or seeking changes to the laws of this or another country, or partisan views.

The school ensures a balanced approach through:

- Discussions in class.
- Presentations by staff.
- Extra-curricular activities.
- Assigning homework to pupils.
- Other methods deemed appropriate by the headteacher.

The final decision as to whether the subsequent learning activities carried out after the visits have been balanced are made by the Headteacher.

If a member of staff wishes to use an external speaker to talk to the pupils the school will vet them in case they hold views which go against the requirements of any part of the SMSC standard, and if still used, the school will ensure that the content of their presentation is agreed beforehand. See **Appendix 1** for detailed guidance on the procedure for organising an external speaker.

### **Procedure for Organising an Event with an External Speaker**

The organiser will conduct a short check into all potential speakers using an open source check: searching the speaker and any organisation the speaker is affiliated with, on a suitable Search Engine and look at the first three pages of results. They will then repeat the search with 'controversy' added to the search terms.

If the speaker has a history of, or has in the past been accused of:

- Inciting hatred, violence or calling for the breaking of the law;
- Insulting or making derogatory remarks to other faiths or groups;
- Using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour;

Then the details for the booking will to be sent to the schools' Single Point of Contact (SPOC) / Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), for further investigation and guidance. The event will not go ahead as planned.

If no issues are identified, then, subject to the approval of the Headteacher, the event organiser will proceed with event confirmation.

Reasons for details to be shared with SPOC/ DSL may include but are not limited to any of the following:

- any person or group on/or linked to the UK Government list of proscribed terrorist organisations talks by organisations generally considered to be extremist by Home Office, Cleveland & Durham Police, and related organisations
- 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 staff or students
- a link or links, to any person or group that has, in those Google listings, 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.

The booking form at **Annex 1** will be ~~emailed to external speakers or~~ completed by the event organiser.

**External Speaker Booking Form**

This form should be completed by any member of staff ~~or student~~ wishing to bring an external speaker into school. It is not to stop such a person coming to speak. It is instead to ensure that the correct arrangements can be put in place to allow such an event to take place safely.

All forms must be submitted by email to (*insert name of SPOC/ DSL*) - 14 days prior to the planned date of the event. One form must be submitted for each speaker wishing to attend.

Name of Activity/ Group: .....

Name of event organiser:  
.....

Contact Email: .....

Contact Telephone Number: .....

Name of Speaker: .....

Date of Event: .....

Title of Event: .....

Planned Event Venue: .....

Cohort and numbers attending the event: .....

**Speaker details:**

Please give as much detail as possible. Please include information about the speaker's position and organisations they're affiliated with, the subject they will be speaking about and any other information you think we need to be aware of.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

The event organiser should ensure that the Visiting Speaker Agreement (see **Annex 2**) are passed to the speaker and that they fully understand the implications contained therein.

Office Use Only

Authorised by: ..... (Headteacher) Signed: .....

Date: .....

**Visiting Speakers Agreement**

Thank you for agreeing to come visit our school, we appreciate the contribution you make.

At (INSERT NAME OF ACADEMY) we understand the importance of visitors and external agencies to enrich the experiences of our students.

In order to safeguard our children we expect all visiting speakers to read and adhere to the statements below. (please tick)

	Any messages communicated to students are consistent with the ethos of the school and do not marginalise any communities, groups or individuals
	Any messages communicated to students do not seek to glorify criminal activity or violent extremism or seek to radicalise students through extreme or narrow views of faith, religion or culture or other ideologies
	Activities are properly embedded in the curriculum and clearly mapped to schemes of work to avoid contradictory messages or duplication.
	Activities are matched to the needs of students
	Visitors will also be accompanied by a member of staff at all times
	Any messages communicated to students support British Values and our school values

**Name:** .....

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....

**Please return to:** .....