



EXTERNAL SPEAKERS POLICY

Policy approved & adopted by	Principal & Directors
Date	August 2023
Review schedule	3 yearly
Last review	Sept 2024
Next review	Sept 2027

Scope

The policy applies to the whole College community which includes staff, learners and external visitors.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the College's determination to ensure that all learners can enjoy the college learning community in a safe and secure environment free from bullying of any kind, physical or emotional directly or cyber bullying.

Valley 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 events involving the use of external speakers regardless of who is organising them. It also details our approach to ensuring that we are protecting both staff and learners and the reputation of Valley College whilst following the legislation that the college is 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. The Duty states that specified authorities including Colleges, in the exercise of their functions, must have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".

Objectives

- To 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.
- To provide a supportive, inclusive and safe space for learners
- To provide clearly defined and effective procedures to ensure that the law is upheld.
- To collaborate with others to reach sound, evidenced judgments about proposed external speakers
- To communicate to all directors, volunteers, staff and visitors, that it is our mutual responsibility to comply with equality and safeguarding and that both Valley College and the individual can be held liable if they contravene the law.
- To provide clear instructions for organising an event with external contribution

Freedom of 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.

However, we have a duty to ensure the safety and welfare of our staff, learners and communities. The freedom to express views needs to be balanced with the need to secure freedom from harm for learners 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 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 learner or staff member for Valley College or one of its contracted partners and 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 or staff member that is being held on the Valley College premises or where Valley College is being represented by a stand on non-College premises e.g. at an exhibition, school/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 Valley 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 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 organisation or cause without express permission of the College
 - The Teachers/Tutors will make external speakers aware of this policy and request details of any external speakers, presentations or any other material that they are bringing in. (see Appendix 1) This information should be provided no later than 12 days before the booking goes ahead.
- Valley College reserves the right to cancel, prohibit or delay any 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 in doubt as to the suitability of speakers, the College Business Lead should refer the decision to the:

- Principal (Prevent Coordinator)

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 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.

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Safeguarding Policy

Appendix 1: External Speakers Form

Staff Name:		PACE group	
Number of learners			
Age of Attendees (select all that apply)	16-18 <input type="checkbox"/>	19+ <input type="checkbox"/>	
Staff Member Taking Responsibility for the Event			
Name of guest speaker(s) and the organisation they represent			
Address of Organisation			
Telephone Number		Email	
Is there any known or likely media interest in the proposed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If yes, please detail			
Background checks – are there any matters that require further investigation / action?			
Source	Agreed		
Website checked			
Printed Literature checked			
Resources to be presented			
Google search completed			
Other colleges recommended			
Other checks, please state			
What topic or event will the speaker be holding?			
How will the learners benefit? ie how does this fit with the PACE agenda			
Date of event		Room of event	
Start time		End time	
Name of applicant		Date of submission	

Name of Senior Leader Approval		Consent approval signature	
---	--	---------------------------------------	--