



CODE OF PRACTICE ON FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Responsible:	Director
Date Reviewed:	January 2025
Review Period:	Annually
Approval Authority:	Director
External Release:	Yes

Kingfisher Education Group (the “Schools”) places a duty on every individual and body of persons to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for staff and students at the schools.

This Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech (the “Code”) is applicable to all staff, students, visitors, and contractors to the schools.

There are several policies, procedures and codes of practice which sit alongside this Code of Practice. Some of these are as follows: Equality and Diversity Policy, Guidance on addressing Alleged Abuse (including bullying), Prevent Policy and Procedure, and Statement of Principles regarding Academic Freedom.

The schools endorse the principle of freedom of speech and has adopted the following Code to secure freedom of speech within the law for all Schools activities.

The obligation of educational institutions is to safeguard the freedom of speech, even when it involves contentious topics, challenges established beliefs, or may be deemed offensive, if it complies with the law. Accordingly, the Schools should endeavour to refrain from limiting access to their premises for any staff member, enrolled student, or group based on the following criteria.:

- the beliefs or views of that member of staff, registered student, or person so invited; or
- the policies or objectives of any group.
- except as far as the expression of such belief, views, policies, or objectives shall be unlawful and where it is anticipated that the unlawful expression of such beliefs, views, policies, or objectives might occur on the relevant occasion.
- Therefore, any exercise of freedom of speech that includes incitement to religious or racial hatred, unlawful discrimination, harassment, incitement to public disorder or terrorism, solicitation of support for terrorism, or behaviour endangering the safety of individuals within the school premises will be subject to reasonable restrictions enforced by the institution.
- Failure to adhere to the stipulations outlined in this Code will subject both staff and students at the schools to potential disciplinary measures in accordance with the pertinent disciplinary regulations.

- External bodies or individuals may be liable to contractual or other legal sanctions or prosecution for breach of the law.
- The freedom of speech safeguarded in this Code is restricted to lawful expression.
- The schools advocate for the freedom of speech for all employees, students, visitors, and contractors, ensuring that individuals can express themselves without apprehension of reprisal, if their expressions align with legal parameters.

1.

Individuals, whether students, staff members, visitors, or contractors of the schools, are prohibited from intentionally or recklessly obstructing, disrupting, or impeding lawful activities and operations of the educational institution.

Any individual responsible for organising a meeting or event on school premises must ensure, to the best of their ability, that such gatherings are conducted in a manner that upholds order and academic discipline. Moreover, these activities should not result in property damage or violate any legal regulations.

The schools are not legally obligated to conduct public meetings or events on their premises. Any requests to use the schools' facilities for gatherings, whether intended for the public, school staff, or students exclusively, need to be formally submitted in writing or via email to the Director. These requests must adhere to the regulations outlined in this Code.

Designated Activities ("Designated Activities") are those meetings or other events which take place on Schools' premises, or are Schools' events hosted at another location, and which could possibly;

- compromise freedom of speech within the law; and/or
- cause a breach of the peace; or
- cause problems, difficulties, or disturbances if the Designated Activity takes place.
- The organisers of a Designated Activity must appoint one individual, typically a student or an employee of the schools, as the principal organiser ("Principal Organiser").
- An event or meeting can qualify as a Designated Activity, even if the speaker is an employee, visiting academic, or registered student at the schools. The Principal Organiser is required to fill out a Designated Activity Request Form following the guidelines outlined in this Code for any such Activity.
- For instance, Designated Activities may involve visits by external speakers whose perspectives have incited controversy in the past or whose topics are anticipated to be deemed offensive, objectionable, or contentious by certain students, staff, and/or participants.
- In those circumstances, at least 15 working days before the Designated Activity, the Principal Organiser must: -
- Send a completed Designated Activity request form to the Director.
- Not advertise or promote internally or externally the Designated Activity. The Principal Organiser may be required to provide such other information as may be required by any member of the Director.
- The approval of a Designated Activity or the granting of approval with specific conditions will lie with the Director. This decision-making process will encompass considerations of the stipulations outlined in the Education (No. 2) Act 1986, the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, along with any pertinent legislation or directives. Moreover, the director will weigh the principles and requirements delineated in this Code, the venue's maximum capacity, and various safety considerations when arriving at a conclusion.

2. The Director may, after full consideration of possible mitigating actions, decide there are grounds for refusing a request.

These may include, but are not limited to:

- that the speaker has links to or represents a proscribed terrorist group or organisation or it is believed that the speaker is intending to invite support for such an organisation or its activities.
- After reviewing feedback from the Director regarding health and safety considerations, specifically fire safety, and consulting with relevant stakeholders, the Management Team, law enforcement, Regional Prevent Coordinator, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Prevent Lead, community

organisations, and other institutions with prior experience hosting or declining the speaker, it is deemed necessary for public safety, prevention of disorder or crime, or safeguarding individuals lawfully present on the school premises that the event be cancelled.

- that following appropriate input from relevant parties, the consideration of available evidence and the requirement to secure freedom of speech provided the expression of beliefs, views, policies, or objectives is within the law, the Director has concluded that reasonable steps cannot be taken to prevent the speaker from:
 - expressing views that are contrary to the law; or
 - encouraging, assisting or committing criminal acts; or

putting forward views or ideas that are unlawful and infringe the rights of others or place the schools in breach of its equality obligations.

If the Designated Activity has been approved, the Principal Organiser and any other organisers shall ensure that all conditions imposed by the Director are complied with.

Such conditions may include, but are not limited to:

- a requirement to limit the number of tickets to be issued;
- that an adequate number of suitable stewards/security staff are available;
- relocating the Designated Activity to an alternative venue;
- the admission (or non-admission) of members of the public;
- verifying the identities of individuals participating in the Designated Activity.
- the admission or exclusion of media;
- imposing conditions on how the event is advertised;
- restricting what materials are available at the event;
- ensuring a translator is available for the school staff during the event;
- requiring a speaker with an opposing viewpoint to speak at the event to provide a balanced debate; and/or
- that additional information is provided.

3.

The Director will reach a decision within five working days upon receiving the Designated Activity Request Form, or any additional information if requested, and communicate it in writing to the Principal Organiser.

The Designated Activity can only be advertised or promoted internally or externally after obtaining permission for its execution.

The director retains the authority to request, prior to the scheduled Designated Activity, a list of attendees, copies of the speaker's speech, and any promotional materials.