



STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM

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

Kingfisher Education's mission is to be open to people, places, methods and ideas.

All members of the school's academic community, both students and staff, have freedom within the law to:-

- Express and hold opinions;
- Question and test established ideas or received wisdom;
- Develop new ideas or innovative proposals;
- Present controversial or unpopular points of view;

In exercising this freedom, we recognise that as participants in a welcoming and inclusive community, we hold responsibilities towards one another and the broader society to: -

- Embrace diversity and acknowledge that individuals offer unique perspectives, ideas, knowledge, and cultural backgrounds, which collectively enhance our strength.
- Show courtesy and respect towards others, confront inequalities, and proactively address varying needs and situations.
- Honor the rights of individuals to hold differing beliefs and viewpoints, allowing them to express these through meaningful contributions to discussions and academic debates.

Communicate clearly, respectfully, accurately, and in a timely manner, demonstrating transparency and fostering constructive dialogue.

This means that:-

- We will maintain a high level of academic rigor, supporting our perspectives with evidence and scholarly reasoning while being open to acknowledging the gaps and weaknesses in our arguments.
- While advocating for our ideas, we will take all reasonable steps to reduce the risk of any physical or psychological harm to individuals, institutions, or communities.

Staff members can enjoy these academic freedoms without the fear of jeopardising their employment or privileges at Kingfisher Education.

The school's Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom is based on the 'Chicago Principles':-

Because Kingfisher Education is committed to free and open inquiry in all matters, it guarantees all members of the School community the broadest possible latitude to speak, write, listen, challenge, and learn. Except insofar as limitations on that freedom are necessary to the functioning of the School, the School fully respects and supports the freedom of all members of the School community "to discuss any problem that presents itself."

Of course, the ideas of different members of the school community will often and quite naturally conflict. But it is not the proper role of the School to attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive. Although the School greatly values civility, and although all members of the School community share in the responsibility for maintaining a climate of mutual respect, concerns about civility and mutual respect can never be used as a justification for closing off discussion of ideas, however offensive or disagreeable those ideas may be to some members of our community.

The freedom to debate and discuss the merits of competing ideas does not, of course, mean that individuals may say whatever they wish, wherever they wish. The School may restrict expression that violates the law, that falsely defames a specific individual, that constitutes a genuine threat or harassment, that unjustifiably invades substantial privacy or confidentiality interests, or that is otherwise directly incompatible with the functioning of the School. In addition, the School may reasonably regulate the time, place, and manner of expression to ensure that it does not disrupt the ordinary activities of the School. But these are narrow exceptions to the general principle of freedom of expression, and it is vitally important that these exceptions never be used in a manner that is inconsistent with the School's commitment to a completely free and open discussion of ideas.

In a word, the School's fundamental commitment is to the principle that debate or deliberation may not be suppressed because the ideas put forth are thought by some or even by most members of the School community to be offensive, unwise, immoral, or wrong-headed. It is for the individual members of the School community, not for the School as an institution, to make those judgments for themselves, and to act on those judgments not by seeking to suppress speech, but by openly and vigorously contesting the ideas that they oppose. Indeed, fostering the ability of members of the School community to engage in such debate and deliberation in an effective and responsible manner is an essential part of the School's educational mission.

As a corollary to the School's commitment to protect and promote free expression, members of the School community must also act in conformity with the principle of free expression. Although members of the School community are free to criticize and contest the views expressed at the School, and to criticize and contest speakers who are invited to express their views at the School, they may not obstruct or otherwise interfere with the freedom of others to express views they reject or even loathe. To this end, the School has a solemn responsibility not only to promote a lively and fearless freedom of debate and deliberation, but also to protect that freedom when others attempt to restrict it.

Source: 'Chicago Statement' University of Chicago via policyexchange.org.uk, 2018.

This version V2.0 updated December 2024 Board of Governors Next update due December 2027

I confirm I have read and understood the **Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom**

Name:

Signed:

Date: