



## Freedom of Speech & Visiting Speakers Policy

### 1. Introduction

Freedom of speech has fundamental importance for colleges as places of education, learning and the pursuit of truth. The college is also required under Article 11 of its Articles of Government to have regard to the need to ensure that academic staff have freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions without placing themselves at risk of losing their jobs or any privileges they may have at the college. Colleges have a responsibility, so far as is reasonably practicable, to protect and advance the principle of academic freedom.

Trustees, students and employees of the college must conduct themselves so as to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for everyone including visiting speakers. The freedom protected by the Code of Practice issued under 43 of the Education (No 2) Act 1986, is confined to the exercise of freedom of speech within the law.

Future Horizons Leeds recognises the value that external speakers bring to the college and its students. The college seeks to encourage enrichment opportunities for students and staff through exposure to high quality visiting speakers and organisations as well as meeting our statutory obligations of the Prevent Duty 2015.

The college confirms its commitment to freedom of speech in the college. This policy seeks to reduce the likelihood that visiting speakers or organisations might seek to promote extremist views or attempt to radicalise students and staff.

The college is committed to ensuring a balance of differing views is achieved across time from visiting speakers. A record of the speakers and their message is kept and reviewed on a termly basis by Future Horizons Leeds Senior Leadership Team.

### 2. Context

Future Horizons Leeds recognises and affirms its commitment to freedom of speech and expression within the law. The college must however take account of its other legal obligations beyond those imposed by the Act. For example, a speaker who incites violence, racial hatred or breach of the peace would be acting contrary to public order legislation and would therefore not be regarded as lawful within the remit of this policy. Speakers must respect the rights and freedom of others as protected by the law and must not, for example, make statements that are actionable for defamation.

### 3. Additional Requirements of the Act

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- The Education (No 2) Act 1986 (the 'Act') requires that every individual and body of persons concerned in the government of any further education institution to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for students and employees and for visiting speakers.
- There is a requirement that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the use of college premises shall not be denied to any individual or body of persons on grounds connected with the beliefs or views of that individual or any member of that body.
- Every individual and body of persons concerned in the governance of the college is required to take such steps as are reasonably practicable, including where appropriate disciplinary measures, to ensure compliance with the Act and this policy.
- Clear guidance is required to students, staff, governors and external agencies, as to how the college manages freedom of speech as part of its Prevent Duty Guidance and in line with the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

## 4. Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech

The Code of Practice issued under section 43 of the Education (No 2) Act 1986 applies to all directors, governors, students and employees of the college, in respect of all college premises. Outdoor as well as indoor meetings and other events on college premises are included.

An intentional or reckless breach of this Code of Practice may be the subject of disciplinary action.

Where the acts of individuals involve alleged breaches of criminal law, the college will assist the prosecuting authorities in implementing the due process of law and any internal disciplinary proceedings may be deferred or suspended pending the outcome of criminal proceedings.

## 5. Procedures for Visiting Speakers

This policy applies to all guest speakers visiting the college whether the visit has been arranged by a member of staff or students.

Organisers of a visiting speaker or event should, in advance of the event, complete the visiting speaker/organisation checklist (Appendix 1) which includes consideration of the speaker(s) and content of any presentation and the potential audience to whom it is intended to be delivered.



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Visiting speakers must have due diligence checks conducted to ensure that the material they are speaking about fits the remit of the college and does not lead to students being at risk of being drawn into terrorism or terrorist ideology.

Where a speaker or organisation requests to visit the college to speak to students and/or staff, the member of staff who is contacted or the member of staff who leads the event, should complete the checklist.

The checklist should be discussed with a member of the college senior leadership team prior to confirmation of the visiting speaker. If the member of the senior leadership team has concerns about the speaker's content, or any other aspect of the event, s/he should discuss concerns with the college's designated safeguarding lead.

The checklist should be completed and submitted for authorisation at least 5 working days before the proposed event.

Copies of the checklist will be held online by the senior leadership team and a copy lodged at the college Reception in advance of the event.

Where any visiting speakers or organisations address students, the organiser must ensure that the college has at least one member of staff present, who has received Safeguarding and Prevent training, present at the event, to ensure that any extremist views presented at the event can be challenged. It must be made clear to any visiting speaker(s) that the presentation will be brought to an early end, by staff, if the content proves unsuitable.

All visiting speakers will be informed, at the point of booking, by the staff leading the event that there must be no attempt to raise funds without the prior written permission of the college principal.

The speaker(s) must be accompanied at all times and not be left alone with students and to have completed the college's sign in and out procedures.

It is the duty of all staff, students and Trustees not to impede any person entitled to be present from entering or leaving a place where the right to freedom of speech is being or is to be exercised.

College premises used for meetings by visiting speakers must be left clean and tidy. The visiting speaker may be charged for any additional cleaning and for any repairs which are necessary should the premises be damaged or not left clean and tidy.

### **6. Legal Requirements**



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The college is mindful of its pro-active duties under quality legislation. The right to freedom of speech is constrained by laws protecting others from discrimination, victimisation and harassment. Protecting national security and public safety, preventing of disorder of crime, protecting the reputation and rights of others, and preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence.



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## Appendix 1

### Visiting Speaker/Organisation Checklist

Staff name:			
Students groups attending:		Student numbers attending:	
Name of guest speaker(s) and organisation they are representing:			
Address of organisation:			
Website, email and telephone number of organisation:			
Checks to carry out	Completed?		
Website checked			
Printed literature checked			
Resources to be presented			
Google search completed			
Recommendations from other colleges/schools			
Discussed with member of SLT			
Other checks (please state)			
Topic of the event:			
How will students benefit:			
Date of event:		Venue:	



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Start time(s):		End time(s):	
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## Approval

<b>Name of SLT member approving the event:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
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1. Complete all boxes and ensure the form/event is discussed with a member of the college senior leadership team
2. Once approved the form must be saved and stored online for record keeping