

External Speaker Policy		
Lead: Group Safeguarding Lead		Status: Approved
Version: V4		Date of Version: August 2025
Approving Body: Executive Team		Supersedes: V3 August 2022
Approved on: 21 October 2025		Next Review date: October 2028
Equality analysis tool ¹		
1.	Is the policy relevant to the public sector equality duty?	Yes
2.	Have any concerns previously been raised about this policy or practice?	No
3.	Is likely to result in discrimination against a protected group?	No
4.	Does this policy positively contribute to the participation of under-represented groups in the College's activities?	Yes
Version Control		
Version	Date	Change(s)
V4	August 2025	
Access		
Location	Address/Link	
Sharepoint		
Service Centre		
Document Centre		
Communication		
Medium	Audience	
e.g. Senior Managers Meeting, Team Briefings, Principal's Briefings, estates team	All staff, students and venue hire clients.	

¹ The Screening Template relating to the External Speaker Policy can be found on page 7 of this document.

External Speaker Policy

Review Cycle: **Every 3 years**

Next Review Date: **October 2028**

Person Responsible: **Safeguarding Lead**

Approving Body: **Group Executive Team**

1. Introduction

The Heart of Yorkshire Education Group 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 students and the reputation of The Heart of Yorkshire Education Group whilst following the legislation that we are 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 Further Education Colleges, in the exercise of their functions, must have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.

2. Objectives

- To provide an environment where freedom of expression and speech are protected balanced with the need to ensure that our communities are free from harm and that incitement to hatred is never acceptable.
- To provide a supportive, inclusive and safe space for students.
- 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 ensuring that the Group can meet its legal obligations.
- To encourage and provide a balance of opinion at any academic discussion or debate.
- To communicate to all members, volunteers, staff and visitors, that it is our mutual responsibility to comply with equality and safeguarding and that both the Group and the individual can be held liable if they contravene the law.

- To provide clear instructions for organising an event with external contribution e.g. speaker, representatives, film and guidance for researching an external speaker.

3. Freedom of speech and expression

3.1 Freedom of expression and speech are basic human rights protected by law. Freedom of speech and freedom of expression are not absolute freedoms but freedoms within the law. Universities and Colleges have a history of being open to debate and ideas with students at the forefront of pushing the limits of freedom of expression. ‘Academic freedom’ is a term used to describe the law that allows for open and honest debate in an academic context.

3.2 However, we have a duty to ensure the safety and welfare of our staff, students and communities. The freedom to express views needs to be balanced with the need to secure freedom from harm for students and communities. We want all of our events, activities and initiatives to be safe; without risk to the reputation of the Group; and within the law.

3.3 Sometimes an external speaker or their topic of discussion has the potential to go against our conditions for a safe event. We are 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.

4. External speakers and their responsibilities

4.1 An external speaker or visitor is used to describe any individual or organisation who is not a student or staff member of The Heart of Yorkshire Education Group, or one of its contracted partners, and who has been invited to speak to students and/or staff. This includes any individual who is a student or staff member from another institution. It also includes the main contact from any external venue hire client who is paying to use the colleges’ facilities.

4.2 An event is any event, presentation, visit, activity or initiative organised by a student group/society, individual or staff member that is being held on The Heart of Yorkshire Education Group premises or where any of the colleges is being represented by a stand on non-college premises e.g. at an exhibition, school event or fair. It 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 the Heart of Yorkshire Education Group, premises but organised by external venue hire clients

4.3 All speakers or visitors should be made aware by the person or group arranging the event (by referring visitors to this policy on the Group website) that they have a responsibility to abide by the law and the Group’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 Group Executive Team.

5. Guidance for The Heart of Yorkshire Education Group staff and students organising an event with an external speaker or venue hire client

5.1 Curriculum/Support/Service leads must be informed of any events that involve external speakers through this procedure. No event involving any external speakers may be publicised or considered confirmed until the speaker has been cleared through the procedure detailed in this policy. This includes advertisement through any social media platform.

5.2 The Heart of Yorkshire Education Group reserves the right to cancel, prohibit or delay any event with an external speaker if the policy is not followed or if health, safety and security criteria cannot be met.

5.3 Any room booking/event organisation with an external speaker involved must be made no later than 14 days before the date of the event. This is to allow for the organizer to have made adequate safeguarding checks as well as allowing time for alterations to the event if necessary. Any request made outside of this timeframe will be rejected unless there are extreme extenuating circumstances.

5.4 The individual/group organising an external speaker should conduct brief research into the proposed speaker. General advice is to use at least 2 search engines if completing internet searches. If in doubt as to the suitability of a speaker, they should refer the decision to Curriculum/Support/Service lead. 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 students or staff; a link or links to any person or group that has been connected with any such controversy; 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.

5.5 In the event of referral, one of the following decisions will be made:-

1. To fully permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead unrestricted
2. To permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead on the basis of regulatory steps designed to reduce risk. These may include observation;

independent filming; the inclusion of opportunities to debate or challenge the view being held.

3. To not permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead.
4. To not permit the external speaker to attend the event (if it is a wider event).

5.6 In making recommendations, Curriculum/Support/Service leads may consult on a wider basis with the Heart of Yorkshire's Safeguarding Development Group and risk will be assessed on the following basis:

1. The potential for any decision to limit freedom of speech.
2. The potential for the event going ahead to cause reputation risk to the Heart of Yorkshire Education Group.
3. The potential for the speaker's presence on site to cause fear or alarm to students or members of staff AND/OR to give rise to breach of peace.

5.7 The External speaker request/approval form
<https://forms.office.com/r/sFNW0P6YzV>
should be completed and approval sought from relevant Curriculum/Support/Service leads no later than 14 days before the planned event.

5.8 All managers are responsible for ensuring that their staff team and students are aware of and support the policy.

5.9 Compliance with the policy will be monitored by the Heart of Yorkshire's Safeguarding Development Group.

6. Additional Guidance for Venue Hire Clients organising an event with external speakers

- 6.1. The Estates Administration team will make external venue hire clients aware of this policy and request details of any external speakers and presentations/leaflets etc. if appropriate, that they are bringing in. This information should be provided no later than 12 days before the booking goes ahead. They will also be signposted to this policy via the website.
- 6.2. The Heart of Yorkshire Education Group reserves the right to cancel, prohibit or delay any venue hire booking with external speakers if the policy is not followed, requested information not produced or if health, safety and security criteria cannot be met.
- 6.3. If in doubt as to the suitability of speakers, the Estates Administration team should refer the decision to Director of Estates. Reasons may be as outlined in 5.4.
- 6.4. In the event of referral, one of the following decisions will be made:-
 1. To fully permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead unrestricted
 2. To permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead on the basis of regulatory steps designed to reduce risk. These may include observation; independent filming; the inclusion of opportunities to debate or challenge the view being held.
 3. To not permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead

4. To not permit the external speaker to attend the event (if it is a wider event)
7. This policy will be monitored by the Heart of Yorkshire's Safeguarding Development Group.

Linked Policies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safeguarding Policy• Health and Safety Policy• Security and Access Policy• DBS and Safe Recruitment Practice Policy
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Appendix One: Screening Tool

Public sector equality duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires College to have **due regard** for the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups; this involves considering the need to:
- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- meet the needs of people with protected characteristics;
- encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in activities where their participation is low; and to
- foster good relations between people from different groups - this involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups.

Consequently, we need to assure ourselves that our policies will not have an adverse differential impact on any particular group. This pre-screening section will enable you to identify whether your policy is likely to have an adverse differential impact.

Please use the following template to help determine whether an equality analysis is required

Name of the policy	External Speaker Policy
Author(s):	Carol Price

Author(s) of Equality Analysis:
Name: Carol Price
Job title: Group Safeguarding Lead
Date: 21/10/2025
Signature: C.Price

In order to decide whether the policy requires further action, please complete the following questions:

1. What are the main aims, purpose and outcomes of the policy?

To provide an environment where freedom of expression and speech are protected, balanced with the need to ensure that our community is free from harm and incitement to hatred and ensure we comply with duties placed upon us and the law.

2. Will these aims affect our duty to:

	Yes / No	How?
advance equality of opportunity?	Yes	Positively
eliminate discrimination?	Yes	Positively
eliminate harassment?	Yes	Positively
foster good relations between people from different groups?	Yes	Positively
tackle prejudice and promote understanding between people from different groups?	Yes	Positively

3. What aspects of the policy, including how it is delivered, or accessed, could contribute to inequality?

Implementation of this policy could have a negative impact on a range of groups, predominantly race and faith groups, so staff following this policy need to act with discretion and sensitively especially where they have concerns that are not upheld.

4. Will the policy have an impact (positive or negative) upon the experience of people, including those who share a protected characteristic?

4.1 Please complete the following table:

Protected characteristic	Meet needs of people with this characteristic	Encourage participation (if under-represented)	Remove or minimise disadvantages	Possible negative impact
Race	X	X		X
Gender	X			
Disability	X			
Religion / belief	X	X		X
Sexual orientation	X			
Gender reassignment	X			
Pregnancy /maternity	X			
Age	X			
Marriage / civil partnership*	X			

Evidence:

4.2 In addition, please consider whether this policy may indirectly discriminate against young adult carers (16-24). Although not a legally protected group, this group often suffers disadvantage due to their caring responsibilities and we have a moral duty to protect them.

Evidence: This policy will not impact upon Young Adult Carers

4.3 What different needs, experiences or attitudes are particular communities or groups likely to have in relation to this policy?

Decisions not to host a particular speaker or event, or to impose restrictions on such an event may lead to feelings of discrimination. This could happen where there are concerns around the speaker or topic that cannot be addressed or managed, or could harm the reputation of the group.

Next steps

If your answers to these questions have identified potential negative impacts, then you should consider further consultation or action to minimise the differential impact. Please contact the Executive Director Quality and Planning for support.

If no further action is required, please sign the declaration below and include with all published copies of the policy.

Declaration

The policy does not have a significant impact upon equality issues and therefore does not require any further action.

Author(s) of EA.

Name: Carol Price

Job title: Group Safeguarding Lead

Date: 21/10/2025

Signature: C.Price