



# Richmond upon Thames College

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Policy Responsibility:	Head of Student Experience
Approved By:	College Leadership Team
For Action By:	All College staff
For Information to:	All College staff
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## Introduction

Richmond upon Thames College is dedicated to promoting our values of honesty, integrity, mutual respect and personal accountability to support our students in becoming fully rounded members of society with a strong sense of social and moral responsibility. We prepare our students for life in Modern Britain by developing an understanding of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and this is reflected in our policies.

Freedom of expression and speech are basic human rights protected by law. Open debate is central to the culture of academic freedom, the development of student ideas and understanding, and is protected by an act of parliament relating to freedom of speech and academic freedom on campus. Student safety and welfare is at the heart of RuTC's policies and practices. The freedom to express views can sometimes be tempered by the need to secure freedom from harm for students and communities.

All speakers will be made aware of their responsibility to abide by the law, and the College's principles.

- They must not incite hatred, violence or call for the breaking of the law;
- They are not permitted to encourage, glorify or promote acts, of extremism or terrorism including individuals, groups or organisations that support such acts;
- They are not permitted to support any views on such extremism or terrorism in whatever context.
- They must not spread hatred and intolerance in the community and thus aid in disrupting social and community harmony;
- Within a framework of positive debate and challenge, they must seek to avoid insulting other faiths or groups;
- They are not permitted to raise or gather funds for any external organisation or cause without the express permission of the Head of Student Services;
- They are not to promote any external groups, meetings, organisations or activities without the express permission of the Head of Student Services;
- They must be aware of the College's duty to promote British values and not undermine these in any way.

Referred Speakers are made aware of their responsibilities through e-mail and need to confirm that they have read and agreed to the policy in writing.

## Procedure

1. The person organising an event that involves external speakers (defined as individuals or organisations that are not part of the College through these procedures) is responsible for informing the Student Liaison Manager of any external speakers invited to the College.

2. No event involving any external speakers may be publicised until the speaker has been cleared through the appropriate procedures as provided in this policy.
3. The College reserves the right to cancel or prohibit any event with an external speaker, without recompense to individuals or groups involved, if the procedures provided herein are not followed or if the relevant health, safety and security criteria cannot be met.

### Initial process

4. The College's 'External Speaker Notification Form' requires the person organising the event to provide:
  - Expected number of attendees.
  - Confirmation of any external speakers' affiliations (specifically where political or religious).
  - Declaration of any knowledge of controversy attracted by the speaker or the topic in the past.
  - Confirmation of website details (where relevant) providing further information on the speaker.
5. The 'External Speaker Notification Form' must disclose full speaker details and be provided to the Student Liaison Manager a minimum of 14 days prior to the event. Failure to comply with the minimum notification period **may** result in an event/booking being cancelled.
6. On receipt of the form, the Student Liaison Manager will vet all speakers. This is done by researching via the internet and personal knowledge, as well as liaising with the local police or Prevent Engagement Officer as appropriate.
7. The Student Liaison Manager will liaise with relevant external agencies and authorities as appropriate.
8. The person organising the event will provide the College Marketing Department with a statement and information regarding the proposed event and visiting speakers, 14 days prior in advance in order that they may, if necessary:
  - Promote the event
  - Issue press releases
  - Manage media/Social Media/public interest
9. In the event of uncertainty about allowing an external speaker on campus, the matter will be referred to the Head of Student Services or College Leadership Team who will ultimately make the decision. Such circumstances could be:
  - The speaker has previously been associated with an event where they have broken the law.

- The speaker, subject or organisation is known to cause controversy, or is associated with a group that is known to cause controversy.

### **Referred speakers**

10. Any events with referred speakers will be further investigated by the Student Liaison Manager who will conduct a short investigation into the speaker and the event that, wherever possible, takes representations from the student group related to the booking.
11. The Student Liaison Manager will report their findings to the Head of Student Services or College Leadership Team, who will make recommendations about the event.
12. In making recommendations they will assess risk on the following basis:
  - The potential for any decision to limit freedom of speech as per the Colleges' code of practice in pursuance of the 1986 Education Act.
  - The potential for the event to cause the College to be in breach of its Equal Opportunities Policy.
  - The potential for the event to cause the College to fail in its wider legal duties.
  - The potential for the event to cause reputational risk to the College.
  - The potential for the speaker's presence on campus to cause fear or alarm to members of the student body.
  - The potential for the speaker's presence on campus to give rise to breach of peace.
13. They may make one of the following recommendations:
  - On the basis of the risks presented, to not permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead.
  - On the basis of the risks presented, to fully permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead unrestricted.
  - On the basis of the risks presented, to permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead on the basis of regulatory steps designed to reduce risk.
14. Regulatory steps designed to reduce risk may include:
  - The event being filmed by an independent body.
  - The event being observed.
  - The event having security on the door.
  - Ensuring that an event promoting a particular point of view includes an opportunity to debate or challenge that view.
  - A copy of any speech to be delivered by the speaker being submitted to the college 5 working days prior to the event.

15. When considering any regulatory steps designed to reduce risk, the potential of those regulations to cause risk themselves (for example, the sense of oppression felt by the imposition of security on the door) should be taken into account.
16. Where students or student groups disagree with the decision made they shall have the right to submit a complaint in the usual way, a remedy to which shall be the option to consider the complaint as an appeal.
17. The College shall keep a record of all referred speakers for 7 years.

**Related policies**

Equality and Diversity Policy

Data Protection Policy

Child and Vulnerable Adult Policy

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