

THE TONBRIDGE FEDERATION



EXTERNAL SPEAKER & PUBLIC SPEAKING POLICY

School in which policy applies:	HUGH CHRISTIE & LONG MEAD
Date written:	March 2021
Date agreed by Governing Body:	May 2021
Date of renewal:	May 2024
Senior member of staff with oversight:	Head of School
Governor with oversight:	Sue Mason

Note: Throughout this policy, all references to schools or the Tonbridge Federation, relates to both Long Mead Primary School and Hugh Christie School, unless otherwise stated.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the Federation's determination to ensure that all students can positively engage in and learn from assemblies and events delivered by staff or external guests in a safe and nurturing environment.

Policy Comment:

Visitors are welcome to the Tonbridge Federation and make a contribution to the life and work of the school in many different ways. The learning opportunities and experiences they bring are encouraged and appreciated. It is the school's responsibility, however, to ensure that the security and welfare of the pupils is not compromised at any time. The school is equally responsible to the whole school community for ensuring that visitors comply with the guidelines.

It is our aim to safeguard all children whether it be during school time or extra-curricular activities which are arranged by the school. We aim to ensure all pupils at the Tonbridge Federation can learn and enjoy extra-curricular experiences, in an environment where they are safe from harm.

It is our objective to establish a clear protocol and procedure for the admittance of external visitors to the school which is understood by all staff, proprietors, visitors and parents and conform to child protection guidelines.

The school is deemed to have control and responsibility for its pupils anywhere on the school site, during normal school hours, during after school activities and on school organised (and supervised) off-site activities.

The Tonbridge Federation 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. It also details our approach to ensuring that we are protecting both staff and students and the reputation of the Federation whilst following the legislation that we're responsible for upholding.

Scope:

This policy applies to:

- All teaching and non-teaching staff employed by the school.
- All external visitors entering the school site during the school day or after school activities (including peripatetic tutors, sport coaches, and topic related visitors e.g. business people, authors, artists etc.).

- All proprietors of the school.
- All parents/carers.
- All pupils.
- Educational personnel (Local Authority Staff, Inspectors).
- Building and Maintenance Contractors.

This policy applies to all visitors invited to the Tonbridge Federation.

Objectives:

- 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 that incitement to hatred is never acceptable.
- To provide a supportive, inclusive and safe space for students to explore ideas both within and outside of the national curriculum.
- 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 school can meet their 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 Tonbridge Federation 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.

External Speakers and their Responsibilities:

An external speaker or visitor is used to describe any individual or organisation who is not a student or staff member of the Tonbridge Federation 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 College facilities.

An event is any event, presentation, visit, activity or initiative organised by a student or staff member that is being held on the Tonbridge Federation premises or where the Tonbridge Federation is being represented by a stand on non-school premises e.g. at an exhibition, school event or fair. It also includes events where external speakers are streamed live into an event or a pre-recorded film is shown.

All speakers or visitors should be made aware by the person or group arranging the event (by referring visitors to this policy on the school website) that they have a responsibility to abide by the law and the Federation'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.
- Are not permitted to promote a specific political viewpoint without giving a balanced argument.
- 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 Head of School.

Guidance to School Staff and Students Organising an Event with an External Speaker

Senior Line Leaders 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.

The Tonbridge Federation 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.

Any room booking/ event organisation with an external speaker involved must be made no later than 7 days before the date of the event. This is to allow for the organiser 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 may be rejected unless there are extreme extenuating circumstances.

The individual organising an external speaker should ask for appropriate documentation. This may include:

- Detailed information about the organisation / company.
- References from other schools.
- Risk Assessment.
- Any safeguarding certificates

The individual organising an external speaker should conduct brief research into the proposed speaker. This may include:

- An internet / social media search.
- An exploration of the person's / company's website.

- Phone call to venues at which the person has previously presented.

If in doubt as to the suitability of an external speaker, they should refer the decision to the Head of School or SLT.

Reasons for doubt could be (but are not restricted to) the following:

- 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 speaker accepted in mainstream as being highly controversial.
- A link or links to any person or group that has been connected with any controversy of a negative or positive nature.
- A speaker from a political party during an election purdah.
- A speaker who is unable to provide sufficient evidence to enable a proper safeguarding check to be carried out.
- If required, a speaker who is unable to provide a suitable risk assessment.

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

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

In making recommendations, the staff leader should consult with the SLT and consider:

- The potential risk of harm to the staff and students.
- The potential risk of harm and to the reputation of the school.

Reflection

After the presentation a post event evaluation will be completed which will include feedback from staff, noting any contentious subject areas or comments and state whether the speaker should be booked again in the future.

The Federation will assess the suitability and effectiveness of input from external agencies or individuals to ensure that:

- Any messages communicated to pupils support fundamental British Values and our school values.

External Speaker Policy

- Any messages communicated to pupils are consistent with the ethos of the school and do not marginalise any communities, groups or individuals.
- Any messages communicated to pupils do not seek to glorify criminal activity or violent extremism or seek to radicalise pupils through extreme or narrow views of faith, religion or culture or other ideologies.
- Activities are properly embedded in the curriculum and are clearly mapped to schemes of work to avoid contradictory messages or duplication.
- Activities are matched to the needs of pupils.

We recognise, however, that the ethos of our school is to encourage pupils to understand opposing views and ideologies, appropriate to their age, understanding and abilities, and to be able to actively engage with them in informed debate, and we may use external agencies or speakers to facilitate or support this. Therefore by delivering a broad and balanced curriculum, augmented by the use of external sources where appropriate, we will strive to ensure our pupils recognise risk and build resilience to manage risk themselves where appropriate to their age and ability but also to help pupils develop critical thinking skills needed to engage in informed debate.

Visiting speakers will be made aware that their presentation will be brought to an early end, if the content proves unsuitable.

VISITING SPEAKER RISK ASSESSMENT

General Information	
Name of the event and guest speaker:	
Date of the Event:	
Nature of the Event (talk, demonstration, interactive learning):	
Outline of the Content to be Delivered:	
Staff Organiser / Main Contact:	
Potential Risks	
Risk:	Mitigation Procedures:
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
Has the organiser received appropriate documentation from the guest speaker?	YES / NO
Has the organiser conducted some background checks of the guest speaker?	YES / NO

Signed: (Staff Organiser):

Signed: (SLT):

Name of SLT:

Date Signed: