

Visiting Speaker Policy

Introduction

St Mary's School ('the School') often invites speakers from the wider community to give talks to enrich our pupils' experience. The School recognises the enormous benefit gained by pupils from speakers from all walks of life. Both the School and pupils greatly appreciate the time and effort that Visiting Speakers put into their presentations.

The purpose of this Policy is to set out the School's legal obligations when using Visiting Speakers and to set out the standards of behaviour expected from Visiting Speakers.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Safeguarding Policy, which is available on the School's website www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/about/policies. Visiting Speakers will also be made aware of essential safeguarding information when signing in.

This policy refers to Visiting Speakers both attending the School in person or addressing pupils of the School via an online medium such as Zoom or Teams.

Overview

The Prevent statutory guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>) expects schools to have clear protocols for ensuring that any Visiting Speakers are appropriately supervised and suitable. This policy was therefore drawn up having had regard to the Government's Prevent Duty guidance and the School's wider safeguarding obligations.

The School's responsibility to pupils is to ensure that they can critically assess the information that they receive as to its value to themselves, and that such information is aligned to the ethos and values of the School and British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

The procedure

Note- this does not apply to staff, volunteers, visiting /peripatetic tutors, work experience or study placements

All requests for outside speakers from whatever source must be discussed initially with the Principal, Head of Senior School or Head of Lower School, as appropriate.

The organiser completes sections 1-7 of the Risk Assessment/Checklist for Visiting Speakers and sends it to the Head of Finance & Operations. A template is located in the staff shared drive (see also Appendix below). Ideally, this should be with a minimum of 2 weeks' notice (or longer if possible). The Head of Finance & Operations will aim to process the form within 5 School days.

It is possible that for reasons beyond their control, the organiser will require a quicker turnaround time for a decision to be made. In that event, every attempt will be made to do so.

The School will undertake the risk assessment before agreeing to a Visiting Speaker attending the School. This will take into account any vetting requirements considered appropriate in the circumstances and may include an enhanced DBS check if appropriate. The School may also conduct research on the Visiting Speaker and/or their organisation, as appropriate. The School will not use a Visiting Speaker where any link is found to extremism, such as extremist groups and movements.

The School will attempt to obtain an outline of what the speaker intends to cover in advance of the Visiting Speaker's visit. In some cases, the School may also request a copy of the Visiting Speaker's presentation and/or footage in advance of the session to ensure it is appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils to be in attendance and neither undermines British values nor the ethos and values of the School.

On the School premises

On arrival at the School, Visiting Speakers will be required to show an original current identification document including a photograph such as a passport or photo card driving licence and will be asked to sign the visitor's book. The Office will note the visitor's book to verify that the ID has been checked and approved. The Visiting Speaker will be issued with a visitors' badge and card attached which contains essential safeguarding information which they must wear at all times whilst on school site. Visiting Speakers will also be reminded about the School's Safeguarding Policy and briefed regarding the evacuation procedure.

Visiting Speakers will be supervised by a School employee (who has been appropriately vetted) whilst on School site. At no point will a Visiting Speaker be left unsupervised on the School site whilst pupils are present.

A member of school staff will be present during the visit/talk and they will monitor what is being said to ensure that it aligns with both the values and ethos of the School and also British values. In the unlikely event that the talk/presentation does not meet this requirement, Visiting Speakers will be informed that School staff have the right and responsibility to interrupt and/or stop a presentation. The member of staff will report this to the Principal, another SLT member or Designated Safeguarding Lead, as soon as reasonably practicable after the talk/visit.

Register

The School will keep a formal register of Visiting Speakers. Any information gathered will be kept in accordance with the School's Data Protection Policy.

Review

This policy will be reviewed either annually or as required by relevant regulatory changes, whichever is sooner.

Reviewed/Approved: March 2024
Next review: Spring 2025



Risk Assessment / Checklist for Visiting Speakers

Not to be used for Staff, Volunteers, Visiting /Peripatetic Tutors, work experience or study placements

Organiser to complete 1-7 & pass to the Head of Finance & Operations		
1.	Name of the organiser responsible for booking the Visiting Speaker	
2.	Name of person responsible for supervising the Visiting Speaker whilst they are on site	
3.	Name of Visiting Speaker and organisation (if they are representing one)	
4.	Visiting Speaker and/or organisation contact details <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone, email • Address (if possible) 	
5.	Date of visit/presentation	
6.	Audience details e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil year(s) • Parents • School staff 	
7.	Details of presentation to be provided (have they provided it in advance?)	
Head of Finance & Operations to complete 8-17		
8.	Will the Visiting Speaker be supervised whilst they are on site by St Mary's staff (someone who is in Regulated Activity) and not left alone with pupils? If no, complete 15 below and inform the DSL	Yes / No
9.	The Visiting Speaker Policy has been sent to the Visiting Speaker	Yes / No
10.	The Visiting Speaker has been briefed on the School's Safeguarding Policy	Yes / No
11.	Is there a biography available for the Visiting Speaker?	Yes / No

12.	Is there information regarding the Visiting Speaker's organisation and other affiliations?	Yes / No
13.	Details of research undertaken on Visiting Speaker (i.e. check the internet for any recent published reports, statements or speeches made by the individual, any retractions or public apologies etc).	
14.	Are you satisfied that the content seen in response to 12 & 13 above is not in any way contrary to the School's Equality Policy, the ethos of inclusion of the School, British values or any concern in relation to the Prevent Duty? If such concerns exist, discuss with the Principal	Yes / No
15.	Speaker's enhanced DBS certificate with Children's Barred List details if required (see 8)	DBS number: Date of issue:
16.	Confirm a copy of this form has been included on the Single Central Register if required (see 8 & 14)	Yes / No
17.	Confirm that a copy of this form has been sent to the DSL	Yes / No

Signed:

Print name:

Position in School:

Date: