



**LINCOLN COLLEGE**  
**FREEDOM OF SPEECH POLICY**

**POLICY CO/PO/24**

**SPONSOR**

Clerk to the Corporation

## **Equality and Diversity Statement**

Lincoln College strives to treat all its members and visitors fairly and aims to eliminate unjustifiable discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, political beliefs or practices, disability, marital status, family circumstances, sexual orientation, spent criminal convictions, age or any other inappropriate grounds.

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<b>Section</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
1	Purpose	1
2	Aims	1
3	Introduction	1
4	Policy Management	1

# **LINCOLN COLLEGE**

## **FREEDOM OF SPEECH POLICY**

### **1 PURPOSE**

This Policy sets out the rights and obligations inherent within the principles of freedom of speech and expression and academic freedom and shall be construed and applied in the spirit of upholding those principles wherever reasonably practicable within the law.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

2.1 The College recognises and endorses that freedom of speech and expression within the law has fundamental importance for Colleges as places of education, learning and the disinterested pursuit of truth. In particular Colleges are required to take measures to protect freedom of lawful speech and expression. This principle is also enshrined in Article of the Human Rights Act 1998. The College is also required under Article 15 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.

2.2 The rights and obligations shall apply to:

- The College, including members of the Corporation
- All staff working for the College, or undertaking duties on behalf of the College
- All enrolled students of the College, whether full or part time
- All students studying at the College under an agreement with a partner organisation
- Any societies, clubs or associations operating on the College premises
- All persons invited to speak or otherwise take part in events to be held on College premises (the Policy should be read in conjunction with Policy CO/PO/14 – External Speaker Policy and Procedures)

2.3 References to College premises including premises owned by the College and premises not owned but over which the College exercises some degree of control.

### **3 FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND EXPRESSION**

3.1 The College shall take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that freedom of speech and expression within the law is secured for every person to whom this Policy's rights apply

- 3.2 Every person to whom this Policy's obligations apply shall assist the College in upholding this Policy.
- 3.3 The College shall not suppress freedom of thought or expression, however abhorrent certain thoughts and expressions may be to the majority of the members of the College, provided that such thoughts and expressions do not go beyond the articulation of points of view and do not constitute incitement to riot, insurrection, racial hatred, religious hatred, sexual harassment, or other activities which are likely to cause a breach of the peace or public disorder or otherwise to be unlawful and provided that, by allowing such views to be expressed, the College would not be failing in its wider legal duties (for example to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups, between men and women and between people who are and who are not disabled).
- 3.4 The College shall ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the use of College premises is not denied to any individual or body of persons to whom this Policy's rights apply on any grounds connected with:
- 3.4.1 the beliefs or views of such individuals or any member of such body, or
  - 3.4.2 the policy or objectives of such body.
- 3.5 Every person to whom this Policy's obligations apply shall refrain from organising or engaging in, or otherwise being associated with, any conduct (other than by lawful, reasonable and peaceful persuasion) intended to prevent the enjoyment of rights under this Policy.
- 3.6 The College shall take such steps as are reasonably practicable (including where appropriate the initiation of disciplinary measures) to secure that the obligations under this Policy are complied with.

#### 4 Policy Management

- 4.1 On behalf of the Group Leadership Team (GLT), the Clerk is the designated custodian of the College's Policy System.
- 4.2 The Chief People Officer and Head of Student Services are responsible for maintaining an oversight of the College Policies to ensure the appropriate consideration is given to any impact on equality and diversity issues.