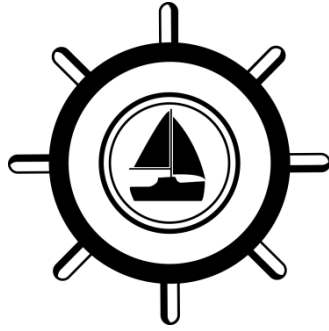




Whitstable Junior School

GUEST SPEAKER POLICY

Governors' Committee Responsible: FGB

Review Period: 3 years

Date approved: November 2025

Reviewed: July 2028

Next review date: July 2031

Mission Statement

At Whitstable Junior School, our mission is to enrich the educational experience of all pupils by welcoming guest speakers who inspire, inform, and broaden horizons. We are committed to upholding our core values throughout these engagements:

- **Be Kind:** We expect all guest speakers to foster an environment of mutual respect, empathy, and understanding, ensuring that every member of our school community feels valued.
- **Be Safe:** The safety and wellbeing of our pupils and staff is paramount. All guest speaker engagements are carefully planned and risk-assessed to maintain a secure learning environment.
- **Be Responsible:** We ensure that all guest speakers uphold our high standards of professionalism and integrity, delivering content that is appropriate, inclusive, and supportive of our school's aims.

By living our values—Be Kind, Be Safe, Be Responsible—we ensure that every external contribution supports the positive ethos of Whitstable Junior School and benefits our pupils' development.

1. Purpose

To ensure all guest speakers support our ethos, values, and statutory safeguarding duties. This policy helps the school meet duties under:

- Education Act 1996 sections 406–407
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025
 - Prevent Duty Guidance 2023
 - Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty section 149)
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2. Scope

This policy applies to all external visitors invited to speak or deliver sessions to pupils, whether in-person or remotely.

3. Aims

- Safeguard pupils and promote their welfare in line with KCSIE
- Ensure content is age-appropriate, accurate, and inclusive
- Uphold the school's values and statutory duties
- **Comply with our duty under Section 406 of the Education Act 1996** to forbid the promotion of partisan political views and ensure that where political issues are brought to pupils' attention, they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views

- Foster good relations between pupils with and without protected characteristics, in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty
- Provide pupils with opportunities to hear from diverse, inspiring speakers who broaden their horizons

4. Ethos:

- The school does not tolerate any person who intentionally or unintentionally demeans individuals and groups defined by their ethnicity, race, religion or belief, sexuality, gender, disability, age or lawful working practices.
- The school does not tolerate any speech that gives rise to an environment where people experience, or could reasonably fear, harassment, intimidation or violence.
- The school does not accept the use of offensive or intolerant language by guest speakers.
- The school values freedom of speech and opinion, but recognises that, in the interest of the whole learning community, this must exist within formal guidelines.
- The school recognises that extremism and exposure to extremist beliefs can lead to poorer outcomes for pupils. The school aims to use the power of education to counteract extremism through the promotion of fundamental British values, such as tolerance and freedom of speech.
- The school is aware that pupils may sometimes express views or ideas that are discriminatory, prejudiced or extremist. All members of staff have been trained to deal with these instances appropriately and proportionally.

5. Procedures

a. Request & Approval

- Staff must gain authorisation from a Co-Headteacher at least **2 weeks in advance** of any proposed guest speaker visit.
- Staff should complete an **Impartiality Risk Screen** (tick-box checklist) for sessions covering political or sensitive topics, asking:
 - Is the topic political or potentially controversial?
 - Are multiple perspectives planned or available?
 - Is content age-appropriate for the year group(s)?
 - Are claims evidence-based?
 - Who funds the speaker/organisation?

- Does the speaker have any affiliation or financial interest that could affect impartiality?
- The Co-Headteacher (or a delegated member of SLT) will approve or decline the request after reviewing:
 - The speaker's credentials and background
 - The content and purpose of the session
 - Whether the session supports the school's aims and values
 - Whether safeguarding requirements can be met
- **Decision criteria and grounds for refusal** include:
 - Inability to ensure balanced presentation of political/controversial issues
 - Identified safeguarding risk
 - Speaker's refusal to accept the school's conditions
 - Content deemed inappropriate, inaccurate, or not age-appropriate
 - Concerns about promotion of partisan views or extremist ideology

b. Pre-Visit Checks

- **Staff Supervision:** Staff must remain present during the session at all times. Speakers will not be left unsupervised with pupils unless an enhanced DBS check with barred list information has been obtained.
- **Parent Notification:**
 - Parents will be informed of upcoming guest speaker visits via the school newsletter.
 - Parents may request to view materials used in sessions in line with our commitment to transparency.

C. Prevent Duty

- According to the Prevent duty, schools have a responsibility to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism; this includes violent and non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism, and can popularise views which terrorists exploit. The school is a safe space where children can understand and discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideologies. Before inviting an external agency or guest speaker, the school conducts background research into the relevant parties, ensuring that:
 - Any messages communicated to pupils support fundamental British values.
 - Any messages communicated to pupils do not seek to glorify criminal activity or violent extremism and are not shared by terrorist groups.

- The group or person is not attempting to narrow the views of pupils through extreme or narrow views of faith, religion, culture or ideology.
- The subject matters being raised are appropriate for the specific age group. All members of staff actively attempt to strengthen pupils' abilities to engage in informed debate. The school believes that the best way to combat extremism and intolerance is to empower pupils to challenge these views in an active and constructive manner

d. On the Day

- **Visitor Management:**

- All visitors must sign in at reception and wear a visitor badge at all times.
- Visitors must show photographic ID on arrival - Guest speakers do not require DBS checks when they are supervised by a staff member at all times. If, in exceptional circumstances, a speaker needs to be left unsupervised with pupils or will be engaging in regulated activity, an enhanced DBS check (including barred list information) must be obtained before the visit. The school will make this determination during the approval process.
- The school will check the identity of all contractors and visitors.

- **Session Introduction:**

- A staff member will introduce the speaker and remain present throughout.
- Staff should use an opening script such as: *"Today's session reflects a range of perspectives on [topic]. Our job is to think critically and respectfully about what we hear and consider different viewpoints."*

- **Safeguarding Briefing:**

- Before the session begins, the supervising staff member will inform the speaker of:
 - The identity of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
 - The requirement to report any safeguarding concerns immediately to the supervising staff member
 - That pupils may make disclosures during or after the session
 - How confidentiality will be handled (i.e., staff cannot promise to keep concerns secret)
 - The school's expectations regarding appropriate language, behaviour, and content

- **Incident Response:**

If concerns arise during a session, staff will follow this **Incident Response Ladder**:

- **Pause** – Staff may pause the session to clarify a point or redirect the discussion
- **Remind** – Remind the speaker of the agreed conditions and expectations
- **Halt** – Temporarily stop the session to consult with SLT
- **Remove** – End the session and ask the speaker to leave (decision by DSL or SLT)
- **Safeguarding Referral** – Make an immediate referral to the DSL if safeguarding concerns arise
- **Record** – Document the incident on CPOMS within 24 hours
- **Inform** – Notify parents where appropriate (decision by DSL/SLT)

Decision-making authority: The supervising staff member may pause or halt a session immediately if concerns arise. The decision to remove a speaker, make a safeguarding referral, or bar future visits must be made by the DSL or a member of SLT. All incidents must be documented on CPOMS within 24 hours, including the nature of the concern, actions taken, and who was informed.

- **Concerns During or After the Visit:**
 - Any concerns during or after the visit must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
 - If material or conduct raises concerns about radicalisation, staff will stop the session and escalate to the DSL/Prevent Lead in line with Prevent Duty guidance.

e. Follow-Up

- The school will review any safeguarding or quality issues and update this policy as needed.
- **If concerns arise about political balance, safeguarding, or inappropriate content:**
 - The school will investigate promptly (within 2 working days for serious concerns)
 - Parents will be notified of the concern and the outcome of the investigation
 - For safeguarding concerns, immediate action will be taken in line with the school's Child Protection Policy
 - For concerns about political balance, the school will consider how to provide alternative perspectives in future sessions

6. Safeguarding

- **Allegations and concerns:**
 - Allegations about adults/speakers are handled under KCSIE Part 4 (Allegations that may meet the harms threshold)
 - Low-level concerns about speakers are handled under KCSIE Part 4 (Low-level concerns)

- All concerns must be reported to the DSL immediately
 - **Prevent Duty:**
 - If material or conduct raises concerns about radicalisation or extremism, staff will stop the session immediately and escalate to the DSL/Prevent Lead in line with Prevent Duty guidance
 - The school will assess all speakers for potential risks related to extremism during the approval process
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7. Political Representatives & Campaigning

1. **Civic Education Visits:** Visits by elected representatives (MPs, councillors) are permitted for civic education purposes only, not for campaigning or party-political promotion.
 2. **Ensuring Balance:** When inviting elected representatives, the school will consider whether to invite representatives from other parties to ensure balance, either within the same session or across the academic year. A record will be kept of all political visits to demonstrate our commitment to balance over time.
 3. **Staff Responsibility:** Staff will ensure balanced presentation by:
 - Inviting contrasting viewpoints over the year, or
 - Framing the session with a neutral teacher-led introduction and follow-up discussion that explores alternative perspectives
 4. **Prohibited Activities:** During any visit by a political representative:
 - No fundraising or membership recruitment
 - No distribution of campaign materials or merchandise
 - No promotion of partisan political views
 - No requests for pupils to take political action
 5. **Pre-Election Periods:** Additional caution will be applied during pre-election periods (typically 6 weeks before an election). Senior leader sign-off will consider timing and sensitivity, and may defer visits to avoid perceived partiality.
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8. Equality, Diversity, and Conduct

1. **Zero Tolerance:** The school has zero tolerance of discrimination, harassment, or behaviour that undermines the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation).
2. **Response to Concerns:**
 - If concerns arise during a visit about discriminatory language, harassment, or inappropriate content, staff will follow the Incident Response Ladder (Section 4c)
 - After the visit, if concerns have been raised, pupils will be debriefed during an age-appropriate discussion (e.g., circle

- time for younger pupils, class discussion for older pupils) and given the opportunity to share any concerns or worries
- Staff will be invited to log any concerns on CPOMS within 24 hours
3. **Proportionate Sanctions:** Depending on the severity of the concern, sanctions may include:
- Ending the session immediately
 - Barring future invitations to the speaker/organisation
 - Reporting to relevant professional bodies or authorities
 - Safeguarding referral where appropriate
4. **Expectations:** All guest speakers are expected to:
- Use content, language, and examples that respect all protected characteristics
 - Deliver age-appropriate material
 - Model respectful and inclusive behaviour
 - Challenge stereotypes and promote understanding
 - Avoid making assumptions about pupils' backgrounds, beliefs, or family circumstances
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10. Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
 - Behaviour Policy
 - Equality and Diversity Policy
 - Relationships and Sex Education Policy
 - PSHE Policy
 - Online Safety Policy
 - Visitors Policy
 - Prevent Duty Policy
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11. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if:

- There are changes to relevant legislation or statutory guidance
- A serious incident occurs related to a guest speaker visit
- Feedback from staff, pupils, parents, or governors indicates the need for revision

Next review date: September 2028

Version Control:

Version	Date	Author	Changes Made
1.0	September 2025	[Name]	Initial policy created

Policy approved by Full Governing Body: [Date]

Signed (Chair of Governors): _____ Date: _____

Signed (Co-Headteacher): _____ Date: _____

Signed (Co-Headteacher): _____ Date: _____