RHODES AVENUE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Guest Speaker Policy

Date policy last reviewed:	Autumn 2025

Signed by:

M. Panayiotou	Headteacher	Date:	September 2025
FGB	Chair of governors	Date:	September 2025

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Statement of intent

Rhodes Avenue Primary School believes in the use of guest speakers and external agencies to enrich the learning experience of our pupils. All speakers and agencies considered are scrutinised to ensure that they are suitable and do not contradict the ethos of the school, or conflict with the legal framework outlined in the Prevent duty and the school's wider safeguarding duties.

The school fully supports freedom of speech and is aware of the broad range of views and ideas that are needed in the course of a pupil's development. It endeavours to provide pupils with a balanced view of events, ideas and beliefs.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Education Act 2011
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'
- DfE (2023) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2023) 'The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation'
- DfE (2013) 'Tackling extremism in the UK'
- DfE (2014) 'Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools'
- HM Government (2011) 'Prevent Strategy'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Lettings Policy
- Visitor Policy
- Data Protection Policy

2. Ethos

The school will 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 will 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 will recognise 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 will aim 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 will be sensitive to the fact that pupils may sometimes express views or ideas that are discriminatory, prejudiced or extremist. All members of staff will be trained to deal with these instances appropriately and proportionally.

3. Assessing suitability

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 will remain 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 will conduct background research (e.g. online presence on social media) 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 will actively attempt to strengthen pupils' abilities to engage in informed debate. The school will empower pupils to challenge these views in an active and constructive manner.

Careful consideration will be given to the suitability of an external speaker or external organisation to enrich pupil's education, and the headteacher will make the final decision as to the suitability of any guest speaker or external organisation.

The speaker will be briefed before the visit on the school, its ethos, the nature of its cohort, how many people will be present for the visit and any issues which should be avoided. The headteacher will reserve the right to request a transcript from the speaker prior to any speech being made. Any technical arrangements necessary for the speaker will be arranged in advance.

Other than safeguarding issues, there will be several other factors that are considered when evaluating the suitability of a guest speaker or external group. The school will consider whether:

- The visit adds value to the pupils' learning experiences and education.
- The age-appropriateness of the speaker and what is going to be delivered
- The speaker or group has the expertise in the subject they are delivering.
- The planned activities meet the health and safety guidelines.
- The individual or group has the required DBS checks.
- Relevant references have been provided and checked.

Before the visit, a full risk assessment will be carried out and submitted to the headteacher.

4. During the visit

The ID of external speakers will be checked upon arrival and the school will ensure that the visitor has had the appropriate DBS check or received confirmation that the appropriate checks have been conducted from the speaker's employer, where appropriate. All visits will be handled in line with the Visitor Policy.

The headteacher will use their professional judgement to determine the need for external speakers to be supervised or escorted on school premises.

Guest speakers will be made aware that their speech is recorded or filmed.

No recordings or videos will be made public unless written permission is granted by the speaker. All personal data will be handled in line with the Data Protection Policy.

The headteacher or a senior member of staff will be present during the speech or group activity, to oversee that the relevant guidelines are followed.

Intervention will be considered if the member of staff feels it is necessary.

Any reasons for intervention will be recorded for future reference.

The school will keep a back-up plan to ensure pupils' education is not disrupted in the event a speaker cancels on the day of the visit or fails to attend for any reason.

5. Balanced presentation

Improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development at the school offers a balanced presentation of opposing views. This will remain applicable when a guest speaker is expressing overtly political, e.g. furthering the interests of a political party or seeking changes to the laws of this or another country, or partisan views.

The school will ensure a balanced approach through:

- Discussions in class.
- Presentations by staff.
- Extracurricular activities.
- Assigning homework to pupils.
- Other methods deemed appropriate by the headteacher.

The final decision as to whether the subsequent learning activities carried out after the visits have been balanced will be made by the headteacher.

6. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the DSL and the headteacher. The scheduled review date for the policy is autumn 2027.