## Purpose:

Medway Adult Education (MAE) is committed to providing a safe, accessible, and equitable learning environment in which learners can thrive. This includes promoting an environment where freedom of speech, academic enquiry, and debate are valued. This policy outlines the expectations and guidelines for managing visiting speakers to ensure MAE maintains a safe place in which to learn and work for learners, employees, and the wider community.

All events involving guest speakers will be subject to safeguarding protocols to ensure that no one is exposed to harmful, inappropriate, or unlawful content.

This policy applies to all staff and learners seeking to invite guest speakers to speak at events or deliver training at MAE premises.

It aims to:

* Ensure guest speakers uphold MAE’s safeguarding requirements and the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 document.
* Provide a clear framework for assessing the suitability of guest speakers via an External Speakers Risk Assessment.
* Protect learners and staff from speakers who may promote hate speech, violence,, or discrimination.
* Ensure compliance with legal requirements including the Prevent Duty, the Equality Act 2010, and compliance with MAE’s Safeguarding and Prevent Policy, and Equality and Diversity Policy.

## Freedom of speech and academic freedom:

MAE recognises all external speakers are entitled to express their views freely, provided they remain within the bounds of UK law and do not incite violence, hatred, or discrimination. Speakers should engage in a balanced and respectful debate, offering different perspectives, where appropriate.

## Prevent Duty Compliance

MAE is committed to meeting our responsibilities under the Prevent Duty. As part of the Government’s counter terrorism strategy, Prevent requires educational institutions to safeguard learners and the wider community from being drawn into extremism or terrorism. This policy ensures that guest speakers do not promote views that encourage extremism or undermine the British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. All visitors must abide by MAE’s Safeguarding Policy.

## Process for Inviting Guest Speakers

Any MAE employee wishing to invite a guest speaker to an event must complete an ESRA. This must be signed off by a Senior Manager. The ESRA includes the following details:

* The name and organisation of the proposed guest speaker.
* A brief outline of the purpose of the visit.
* The date, time, and location of the event.
* Any promotional material related to the event.
* The nature of the subjects to be discussed.

All external guest speaker requests must be submitted to a Designated Safeguarding Officer with sufficient time for the relevant checks to be completed and signed off by a member of SMT.

Upon receiving a guest speaker request, MAE will conduct a risk assessment to ensure that:

* The proposed speaker does not pose any risks to the safety and welfare of learners or staff.
* The speaker’s views comply with UK law, including regulations on hate speech, terrorism, and equality.
* Appropriate security measures are reviewed to ensure the event’s safety.

If a significant risk is identified, the application for the event will be denied, or held with additional safeguards (e.g., security personnel).

The Senior Management Team will make decisions on whether to approve or reject a guest speaker request. MAE reserves the right to deny any guest speaker request if it fails to meet the requirements of this policy or poses a risk to learners, staff, or the wider community. The decision to reject a speaker will be based on a detailed and evidence-based risk assessment (ESRA). All decisions will be communicated to the event organiser within 5 working days of the request submission.

## Event Management

Where a guest speaker event is approved the event organiser must ensure that:

* The event is conducted in an orderly and respectful manner.
* No unlawful or harmful speech is allowed.
* Security measures, if required, are implemented.
* A MAE staff member is present to monitor the event, ensuring compliance with this policy, as well as the MAE Safeguarding Policy

Guest speakers or visitors must not be left unsupervised with learners during their visit. MAE retains the right to cancel or terminate an event if it becomes clear that the speaker or audience is not complying with MAE policies.

## Responsibility of Speakers

All guest speakers are expected to:

* Help us in providing supportive opportunities for learners to talk and learn
* Only talk in a professional manner
* Never promise unconditional confidentiality to a learner
* Where concerns exist about a learner’s safety because of their contribution to a discussion or lesson with an external visitor the concern must be referred immediately to the member of staff in the room or a Designated Safeguarding Officer.
* Follow the MAE safeguarding arrangements as set out in the safeguarding policy.
* Adhere to UK laws on freedom of speech and expression.
* Avoid any speech that could be considered unlawful, such as incitement to hatred, violence, or terrorism.
* Respect the diversity of MAE’s community and refrain from promoting discrimination or extremist views.
* Advise MAE if they require and Personalised evacuation plans to be put in place.

## Monitoring and Review

MAE will regularly review this policy to ensure it remains compliant with KCSiE and Prevent duty requirements, and other relevant legislation. The policy will be updated periodically and where necessary to reflect changes in law, guidance, or MAE practice.

## External Speaker Risk Assessment (ESR)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name and job title of organiser:** |  | **Signature & Date:** |  |
| **Name and job title of Senior Management Team reviewing speaker/organisation according to procedure:** |  | **Signature & Date:** |  |
| **Class(es)/Group(s) attending:** |  | **Date of session/event** |  |
| **Aim of the session/event** |  | **Time of event** |  |
| **Name of the visiting speaker(s) and their organisation who will be speaking/attending** |  | **Speaker’s contact details** |  |
| **Name and signature of staff member present throughout the session/event:** | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No** | **Activity** | **Risk Y/N** | **Action to be taken/already in place to mitigate risk** | **Action completed?** | **Date** |
| 1 | **External Speakers/Events**  Have the external speaker’s background checks been conducted by the staff responsible for the booking using:   * Google * Any relevant literature * Telephone conversations |  |  |  |  |
|  | Have all resources and literature, including any flyers/posters, been checked to ensure they respond to MAE’s Equality and Diversity Policy? |  |  |  |  |
|  | Confirm there are plans in place to always monitor speakers at both internal and external events during their delivery to learners? |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | **Charities**  If you engage with a charity, please conduct the following:   * Confirm the charity is registered. * Please include the registration number * If monies are raised, please confirm that the money will be sent to the above charity |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | **Freedom of speech/debate**  Any speakers/events which are directly relevant to the Prevent Agenda need approval from the Head of Service |  |  |  |  |

**ESRA passed – Yes/No If not, has the ESRA and any other relevant information given to the Safeguarding Team – Yes/No**

**Name of person completing this risk assessment: Name…………………………………………………………………………………. Signature………………………..……………………… Date: ......................**

**Note: this form, once completed must be added to the safeguarding log by a Designated Safeguarding Officer/Lead, who must also update the visiting speaker register.**