

Freedom of Speech Code

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Version Log

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Quality and Standards Committee – 13.08.24	Head of Education & Curriculum	1.3 (updated 26th June 2024)	October 2024	Page 5 : Amended role names (Head of Music School & Facilities or the Head of Education & Curriculum)

Related Documentation

Document Reference No. (Policy version / Supporting doc. #)	Document Type	Link or Dept. Owner	Document Title
24	<i>Policy</i>	<i>Human Resources</i>	<i>Grievance Policy</i>

Freedom of Speech Code

1. Point Blank values, upholds and advocates freedom of speech within the law. In line with the obligations placed upon the School by Section 43 of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986, all members, staff and students are expected to respect and uphold this Code. Accordingly, throughout the daily operations of the School, every effort will be made to secure the rights of free speech for staff members, students and externals. Every individual and all groups connected with the School will be required to respect and uphold:
 - a. The freedom to express opinion, views, ideas and beliefs, regardless of the difference of views and controversy
 - b. The recognition of the importance of respect and equal rights of all staff and students when exercising their right to freedom of speech
 - c. The recognition that the freedom and liberty of people, expression and academic pursuit is necessary in enabling innovation, independence, and a successful academic community
 - d. The recognition of the importance of respecting the dignity and freedom of others, even in the expression of sensitive and controversial issues
 - e. Respect for the reasonable demonstration and expression of views by peaceful means

2. In keeping with the above rights and values and in line with the School's Academic Freedom policy, these freedoms must be exercised within Point Blank's professional values, academic quality and standards and professional standards. The School, staff members, students and externals are expected to:
 - a. Uphold mutual respect of colleagues and fellow students when carrying out their duties, during discussion or disagreements and to promote respect
 - b. Refrain from the expression of views which could be interpreted as discriminatory
 - c. Maintain respect and uphold ethics when acknowledging the work of colleagues and students, including during the involvement of external collaborators
 - d. Maintain due respect and the necessity of impartiality, confidentiality, evidence and fairness, particularly in the occurrence of disagreements and the expression of an opposing opinion by an individual or group
 - e. Ensure that staff members and students have freedom of speech within the law to question and test received wisdom, and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions, without placing themselves in jeopardy or the loss of privileges they may have at their institutions
 - f. Make every effort to ensure that individuals or groups are not hindered in using their rights to contribute to social change on matters of public interest

3. Point Blank maintains and reserves the right to deny the right of free speech to others to those who:
 - a. Attempt to hinder or stop others from speaking, or censor the expression of others

- b. Are intolerant, aggressive or violent towards others and other people's utilisation of their right of free speech. In line with the Equality Act 2010, the School will not tolerate any harassment.
- c. Advocate or engage in violence to further political, religious, philosophical or other beliefs
- d. Hold and spread views that undermine the maintenance of liberty under the rule of law in the UK or advocate or engage in the violent overthrow of democracy in the UK
- e. Is not supportive towards the good governance and democracy of the School
- f. Violates the School's Academic Freedom policy or attempts to prevent the academic pursuit of any staff member
- g. Attempts to stop or prevent attendance at any academic activity or event because the views, ideas or beliefs are controversial or unpopular; or instigates actions that may result in disruption or disorder.
- h. Places at risk the safety of students, staff or the public

4. Events on School property

- 4.1. At events on property controlled by the School, this code also applies to any person lawfully on the premises for the event.
- 4.2. If a person or group intends to hold an event on the School's property which includes the expression of views or beliefs by a speaker, they must request permission of the School in writing with at least 21 days of notice to support@pointblankmusicschool.com.
- 4.3. The School will provide a response within 10 days, and conditions may be provided as a requirement for approval. Examples of conditions may be, but not limited to, related to reasons of safety, safeguarding, security, availability and time restrictions.
- 4.4. Point Blank Music School will not refuse permission unless the activity is unlawful, or the following reasons are considered legitimate. In keeping with the values within this code, the expression of opinions or undertaking of any activities which are offensive, controversial or unpopular will not be disallowed or considered unlawful.
- 4.5. The School may refuse consent or withhold facilities for an event:
 - a. If evidence is brought to the attention of the School that the organisers or speakers intend to create disorder, commit a crime, and/or concern occurs that public safety and order may be jeopardised
 - b. If the event or activities will result in the School failing in its wider legal duties (e.g. To promote equality of opportunity)
 - c. If Point Blank is within its right to deny the right or free speech in keeping with this code, or the views likely to be expressed by participants are contrary to the School's values of academic freedom and free speech
 - d. The event or participants will promote an organisation contrary to the School's values of academic freedom and free speech

- e. The views likely to be expressed by a speaker are contrary to the law
 - f. The event organisers or a speaker may incite breaches of the law or peace
 - g. The participants or attendees are members or associated with groups or organisations listed on the UK Government's list of terrorist groups or organisations banned under UK law;
 - h. The participants or attendees intent to promote an illegal organisation or purpose;
- 4.6. If you believe that the School's refusal of consent or withholding of facilities is unreasonable, please notify the School at support@pointblankmusicschool.com to enable us to resolve the matter informally first as soon as possible. Support is available and following this informal resolution, should you still be dissatisfied, you may raise a complaint via the Complaints policy.
- 4.7. Any occurrences of actions not in keeping with this code will be investigated. A resolution will normally be attempted via informal mediation and reconciliation first. If necessary, it will be adjudicated under the relevant disciplinary School policy.
- 4.8. Students may progress an issue through the stages outlined in the Complaints Policy
- 4.9. If relevant to academic processes, students may choose to progress an issue through the Academic Appeals policy, or raise a concern with the Head of Music School & Facilities or the Head of Education & Curriculum
- 4.10. Students or staff may progress an issue or complaint through the Student Disciplinary policy;
- 4.11. Staff members may progress an issue through the staff Grievance policy.
5. Point Blank will assist the Police and the Crown Prosecution as necessary regarding any occurrences against the law. Criminal charges are expected to take precedence over School disciplinarys.