

Academic Freedom Policy

Policy No:	3.07	Version Number	V01.1
Version Date	August 2025	Next Review	September 2026
Produced By	The Executive Dean	Approved By	Academic and Quality Board
External Reference Points	Section 43 of the Education (no.2) Act 1986 Education Reform Act 1988 Section 202 Public Interest Governance Principle I		

Contents

1. Background and Scope	3
2. Aims and Objectives.....	3
3. Application.....	4
4. Responsibilities of Academic Freedom	4
5. Practicing Academic Freedom	4
6. Code of Practice for Academic Freedom.....	5
7. External Speakers.....	5
8. Further Assistance	6

1. Background and

This policy aims to ensure that academics and students at LCK Academy (LCKA) can exercise academic freedom without fear of adverse consequences, such as dismissal, loss of promotion opportunities, or other benefits for which they might otherwise be entitled or considered. This policy ensures LCKA is compliant with the Education Reform Act 1988, Section 202, and the Office for Students' [Public Interest Governance Principle I on Academic Freedom](#).

Under this principle, all academic staff, and students at LCKA:

"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 in jeopardy of losing their jobs or privileges they may have at their institutions."

The Programmes Committee and Student Council report on their capacity to freely debate ideas to the Academic and Quality Board (AQB), which, in turn, reports on academic freedom to the Board of Governors. The Executive Dean, as Chair of AQB reports on Academic Freedom to the Board of Governors (BoG).

This policy should be read in conjunction with the LCKA Freedom of Speech Policy, which addresses the broader right to free speech for all stakeholders at LCKA. The Director of Advancement and Operations reports to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) on Freedom of Speech, and the SLT reports on Freedom of Speech to the BoG. For further details, refer to the Freedom of Speech Policy on the Academy's [website](#).

2. Aims and Objectives

LCKA upholds that academic freedom is a fundamental prerequisite for rigorous scholarly work and development. This principle is integral to the Academy's strategy for learning, teaching, and assessment. Accordingly, LCKA aims to:

- Foster an environment that actively encourages the examination of conventional views through academic inquiry and critical thinking.
- Support the lawful expression of views that others may find objectionable or disagreeable.

3. Application

This policy applies to all staff members and stakeholders at LCKA, including permanent, temporary, and advisory staff. It also extends to external visitors invited to speak at the Academy. Its purpose is to provide academic staff with assurance and guidance on the promotion, support, and protection of academic freedom within the Academy.

4. Responsibilities of Academic Freedom

Academic freedom involves the responsibility for both staff and students to avoid discrimination, embrace inclusivity, tolerate differing viewpoints, and uphold high standards of academic integrity. Faculty members are required to treat students with fairness and equity. They are also expected to respect one another's opinions and to promote an environment conducive to free and open debate. When articulating an academic opinion, faculty should clarify that they are not representing the views of the Academy.

Additionally, academic staff should commit to the following:

- Present students with, or ensure they have access to, the widest possible range of perspectives on any topic.
- Encourage students to engage in the free exchange of ideas with faculty and their peers.
- Prevent conflicts of interest by making appropriate disclosures when necessary.
- Be fair and impartial in evaluating the ideas of others.

5. Practicing Academic Freedom

The Academy will uphold Academic Freedom by implementing the following measures:

- Organising events such as debates and inviting a diverse array of speakers with varying perspectives.
- Ensuring that learning, teaching and assessment materials promote critical thinking among students.
- Fostering student involvement in academic decision-making by including student representatives of the Student Council on the Academic and Quality Board.
- Providing ethical oversight of research practices through the LCKA Research Ethics Committee (REC).

6. Code of Practice for Academic Freedom

All staff members are entitled to express opinions that may be perceived as annoying or offensive, provided they are not unlawful. It is generally deemed a violation of this code of practice for academic freedom for any individual at the Academy to act against another person due to their opinion or lawful expression, except through non-violent persuasion.

All staff must adhere to the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 and the Equality Act 2010 to ensure they do not promote extremism or discrimination. The Academy also encourages all stakeholders to exercise respect, tolerance, and kindness towards others. The Academy's foremost priority is always the safety, health, and well-being of its students, employees, other stakeholders, and visiting members of the public.

7. External Speakers

The Academy is dedicated to facilitating events on our campuses that feature external speakers with diverse perspectives. When arranging such events, however, the Academy is obligated to adhere to its Prevent duty, which requires the vetting of all external speakers to assess if there is any risk that they may promote extremism. The Academy will impose minimal restrictions on events and activities organized by students and staff, including those involving guest speakers.

The following conditions must be met:

- Any event involving external speakers that stakeholders wish to organise must be reviewed and approved by a member of the Senior Leadership Team
- All external speakers must undergo Safeguarding and Prevent checks before participating in any events or activities at the Academy. The HR department is responsible for ensuring that all Safeguarding and Prevent checks for external speakers have been completed using the External Speaker Approval Form in Appendix 1 and will maintain these records in accordance with LCKA's Document and Data Retention Policy.

8. Further Assistance

Students may contact members of the Student Council for further information and support on how Academic Freedom is protected and managed at the Academy. Students may also contact the Head of Student Services if they wish to have further information.

Staff may contact their line manager in the first instance if they wish to ask questions about the rights and limitations of stakeholders at the Academy in relation to Academic Freedom. If they are still unclear or have concerns, they may contact the Academic Dean by email.

LCKA - External Speaker Approval Form

To be completed by staff wishing to invite a guest speaker to the Academy to speak to students.

LCKA staff member completing this form	
Date completing this form	
External speaker's full name	
Organisation or affiliation	
Proposed topic for the event	
Date and time for the event	
Who will be invited to attend	

1. There is no reason to believe this person is unsuitable to speak at LCKA **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐
2. LCKA has a copy of the speaker's CV, passport ID and proof of address **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐
3. The speaker is competent to speak on the proposed subject **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐
4. The speaker has either provided a copy of their Prevent Duty certificate **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐
Or
The speaker has been inducted on Prevent by qualified LCKA staff **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐
5. The speaker has read the LCKA Academic Freedom Policy **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐

6. Please comment on the reason for inviting the speaker to LCKA.

--

Approved by a member of the Senior Leadership Team **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐

Name	
Signature	
Date	