

# CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL EXTERNAL AGENCIES 3<sup>RD</sup> PARTIES AND CHARITIES INVOLVED IN WORK AT REDBRIDGE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Redbridge Community School is a highly inclusive school that is proud of the diverse cultures, religions, races, genders and disabilities amongst our school population. Therefore, it is essential that in preparation for life in modern Britain that we offer a wide, balance of experiences and information as part of our student development as 'citizen's ready for the ever evolving 21<sup>st</sup> Century'. It is incumbent on all of us who work with young people that students receive balanced and impartial information so they can formulate their own beliefs, views and opinions; free of implied, suggested, discreet or forceful pressure – seeking to deliberately bypass impartiality from a group or person that has the privilege of working in our school.

## **So, what does the law say?**

The Education Act 1996 Section 406 states:

“The governing body and the Headteacher shall forbid...

(b) The promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school.”

And

“The governing body and the Headteacher shall take such steps as are reasonably practicable to secure that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils when they are in attendance at a maintained school or taking part in extracurricular activities, which are provided or organised for registered pupils at the school by or on behalf of the school. They are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views”.

## **What this means in practice**

Content (presentations, worksheets and other mediums) present information in a balanced and impartial way. One sided political narratives and theories are in fact unlawful in schools in England and must be avoided.

However, this school based code of conduct has been written to guide third parties and charities who work with young people. This guidance does not seek to impede or supersede:

- The Equality Act 2010 – of which outlines protected characteristics
- Human Rights Act 1998 – that sets out the human rights all individuals have
- Prevent duty – to identify and mitigate extremist views

Over recent years, social media platforms have grown in their number and it has become part of everyday life. Given the number of platforms (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok etc) and their popularity; it allows for a range of diverse, polarising and biased views to be portrayed as 'fact, evidence and truth'.



Redbridge Community School uses a broad and balanced curriculum to monitor factually incorrect views being offered as the 'facts, evidence and truth'. It also challenges misconceptions; offering an alternative view. We understand that social media platforms can create an 'echo chamber' of narrowed views, which when added to the volumes of followers or the 'likes' and 'shares' can easily give an incorrect impression these are majority wide accepted views. Our legal duty as a school is to address these online 'echo chambers'. Often these are at odds with wider public opinion and consensus; and are in fact narrow and dangerous.

Therefore, this document has been written to guide and advise on these contentious views by outlining the expectation and the conduct expected with outside agencies, third parties, charities or other organisations.

This also covers implied (use of symbols and flags etc), direct political statements and its phrasing and comments made.

If you are unsure how to uphold the impartiality of an issue please seek guidance from the school's Headteacher or the senior management team (SMT). This guidance covers and includes all materials such as leaflets, books, videos, You Tube clips, flags and songs that are used or shared.

### **Meritocracy**

Our school values support meritocracy in that any student, regardless of any characteristic, can achieve and go as far as they wish to.

### **Political Theory/ Politics:** (Party politics, Brexit and world events e.g. Palestine and Ukraine)

When presenting you must be mindful of making statements that can be seen to be overtly political.

As adults, we regularly exercise our right to vote, but for 11-16 years old they are only beginning their journey to develop their political views. Therefore, extra care must be taken to mitigate political views. For example, "Liz Truss is another unelected Tory PM". Whilst this may be true, in the UK we do not elect a Prime Minister. Therefore you could rephrase "The Conservatives have been in power for 12 years, Liz Truss is our new PM – who you think would be a better PM – Liz Truss or Kier Starmer?" This way you can tease out both the pros and the cons of each; widening the debate to looking at politics and the views students may already hold and what each political parties offer.

#### **Example 2:**

Brexit was the biggest exercise in political voting seen in a generation with ordinary people exercising their right to vote. In this respect it was truly democracy in action. Referendums always offer a polarising choice, often at the end of the spectrum, without much in the middle. Therefore, Brexit views must be avoided and derogatory names such as "gammon" and "remoaner" should be avoided at all costs. In fact, this could create an excellent debate about referendums and how the question asked is often polarising – understanding the reasons for and against.

Therefore, this could be presented as a question:

Brexit pros and cons - would allow both sides of the political debate to be discussed free from partisan views. There is an opportunity to discuss the evidence from each side and in doing so understanding the limitations of data.

Example 3: Palestine/ Israel

This history of the holy lands is complicated and over thousands of years has been brought into sharp focus, given its history of conflict in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. To truly understand the current issues requires a much deeper historical appreciation. Often this cannot be achieved in a one off session. In this respect, organisations, third parties are asked not to make any references to the Palestinian/ Israeli conflict, unless it is part of an agreed standalone reference lesson in a sequence of other balanced lessons.

Example 4: Ukraine

At the time of writing, there is a war in continental Europe for the first time since 1945. Whilst it is accepted to raise awareness of the humanitarian costs involved. The school does have students of both Ukrainian and Russian heritage. Teasing out views is complex and often our views are drawn from the conflict will take more consideration that predates the conflict to the 1917 Russian Revolution.

Focussing on the human cost of both sides and discussion about the use of war is an angle that could easily be discussed.

### **The School Curriculum:**

The school curriculum and how it is taught is governed by the law and the national curriculum and this sets out what must be taught at Key Stage 3 in all subjects taught and the relevant required skills. At Key Stage 4 the content is determined by exam board specifications for relevant GCSEs, BTECs and City and Guilds specifications.

Therefore, under no circumstances should any student be asked for any information regarding curriculum content including coverage, breadth, themes or texts. Nor should there be the questioning of students regarding diversity (race, religion, LGBTQ+ and gender) in the school curriculum or the mechanisms of content selection.

Curriculum information is published on our website and this includes content, sequences, tests and materials. Any concerns must be addressed to the Headteacher.

### **Race Relations: (Anti-Semitism; including Critical Race Theory)**

Redbridge Community School is proud of the race diversity within our school and this makes the school a more dynamic and exciting place to be. The whole school community can be part of its meritocratic principles by allowing students to learn about the differences between races, religion and cultures in a supportive and empathetic way.

Issues of race, identity and racial history is taught in PSHE and history, but is relevant to other subjects too. Race relations and the teaching of history is complicated and should be taught sensitively and appropriately so that it does not divide us, but rather seeks to be underpinned by our school values, to bind everyone together, resulting in the celebration of differences. All students are treated without fear or favour. Therefore, political concepts of 'white privilege' are unacceptable in our school, given our context. Critical Race Theory is a Marxist political ideology, of serving an area of high indices of deprivation, and runs contrary to the law in schools. Therefore, we ask that you avoid terms such as white privilege and any inferences to suggest that any student is inherently racist; purely based on skin colour. Any advice should you need any at Redbridge Community School, should be sought from the Headteacher. Any overt statements of racism witnessed must be reported to a member of staff in line with our policies.

Anti-Semitism: Whilst our numbers of Jewish students is exceptionally low, the school will continue to promote Judaism in Religious Education. Any derogatory comments must be challenged; including historic/ contextual jokes and comments on Palestine or Israel responses are witnessed.

#### **LGBTQ+:**

Redbridge Community School is proud of its diversity within LGBTQ+ school community. The school has a diverse range of staff and students within the LGBTQ+ community and this includes: same sex relationships (and those with children), gay, lesbian, and bisexual and transgender. Our school is proud to have a LGBTQ+ adviser, paid for by the school, an LGBTQ+ policy, supported by a policy enhancing the rights of the same sex staff with our ground breaking 'routes into parenthood' policy. These can be found on our website for perusal. The use of rainbow lanyards and flags are acceptable because they are not overtly political. Additions of other colours for 'Black Lives Matter' are overtly political and cannot be on display in school.

**However**, some students struggle to understand who they are conflicting feelings about their identity, especially during puberty. Our experience shows many students need time to process and understand these feelings and what they mean. It takes time and sensitivity to understand if these are feelings of sexual identity or a deeper related issue such as transgender.

This means that when you work with our young people you should refrain from asking any student their preferred pronouns. For some of our students they are unsure and they must not feel as if they have to offer these. If a student wants to share their preferred pronouns, they will. Please trust them.

However, for clinicians in a 1:1 session it is acceptable to ask a pupil for their preferred pronouns and preferred names to support clinicians in their work. In all group work, the preferred pronoun question must not be used, unless the work is pertinent specifically to the group e.g. a small support group of transgender students where this would be acceptable.

If you have any concerns, we encourage you to contact our LGBTQ+ coordinator, Ms Kelly Hunt, in the school.

#### **Information recording on referrals to third party agencies:**

It is incumbent on all of us to be sensitive in the tone and language we use when recording details in our com school, events, pupils, notes, child protection cases and details and other documents when they

relate to a student on roll at Redbridge. It is therefore advisable not to use accusatory and pejorative language that offers an opinion about parents/ carers. Entries must be factual and routed in evidence. This applies to agencies who work in the school and this applies to counselling, child protection matters and other agencies who work within the school.

Redbridge Community School hopes that this has answered many of the questions you may have. Consequently, any infringement of these expectations may result in the termination of and the ending of our working relationship. This may also result in the immediate cessation of the event or activity and in extreme circumstances, being asked to leave the school site.