Guidance on Partisan Views

**Manchester Vocational and Learning Academy**



|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Approved by:** | Linda Guest |  |
| **Last reviewed on:** | 1st September 2025 |
| **Next review due by:** | September 2027 |

As part of the Independent School Standards, the Proprietor is expected to ‘preclude the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school’.

Schools are required to actively promote the fundamental British values of:

* democracy
* the rule of law
* individual liberty
* mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

**Purpose of this Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that staff members:

* demonstrate respect to other members of the school community at all times
* refrain from the expression of strong personal and political views
* understand that the expression of partisan political views must be strictly avoided in all aspects of teaching and supporting students
* do not impart their personal and political views directly or indirectly through delivery of the curriculum

**Definitions**

The following are definitions of the key terms used in this policy:

***Partisan****:* The best synonym for "partisan" is "one-sided".

***Political views****:* views expressed for a political purpose.

In deciding whether the promotion of a political view is partisan, the factors that could be taken into account include:

* superficial treatment of the subject matter, typified by portraying factual or philosophical premises as being self-evident, with insufficient explanation and without any indication that they may be the subject of legitimate controversy
* the misleading use of data; misrepresentations and half-truths
* deployment of material in such a way as to prevent pupils meaningfully testing its veracity and forming an independent understanding as to how reliable it is
* the exaltation of protagonists and their motives coupled with the demonisation of opponents and their motives
* whether a particular view is advocated as being the ‘right’ view which must be adopted because otherwise certain presupposed consequences follow

A political purpose is either directly or indirectly:

* to further the interests of a particular political party; or
* to bring about changes to the laws of this or another country; or
* to achieve the reversal of government policy or decisions.

Partisan political views are not limited to just political parties. They may also be held by campaign groups, lobbyists and charitable organisations.

**How Manchester Vocational and Learning Academy (MVLA) ensures compliance with this requirement**

This policy aims to prevent the political indoctrination of students through the curriculum. This does not mean to prevent students from being exposed to political views or from discussing political issues in school. Students should not, however, be actively encouraged by teachers or others to support particular political viewpoints.

The school will take all possible steps to ensure that students are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views where political issues are brought to the attention of students:

* while they are in attendance at the school;
* while they are taking part in extra-curricular activities which are provided or organised by or on behalf of the school, or
* in the promotion at the school, including through the distribution of promotional material, of extra-curricular activities taking place at the school or elsewhere.

It is the responsibility of all teaching staff to be aware of the professional standards applying to them and the requirements of this standard. It is expected that all staff will read, understand and adhere to this policy. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

Staff are expected to take steps, in every aspect of their work, to ensure that when political issues are discussed or arise, students are made aware that there are often opposing views and a balance is struck between the opinions and beliefs discussed. This may be during lessons, or when extracurricular activities within the school such as debates take place, or through the use of external speakers.

The regulation refers to the systematic promotion of partisan views in a way that is likely to exert undue influence on the views of students. This does not mean that political ideas cannot be discussed. Students should continue to learn about public institutions and services, including those of a political nature, and be introduced to fundamental values that have a political dimension.

Some subjects cannot be taught effectively without reference to the political context. What is required is that students are not indoctrinated or unduly influenced by the promotion of partisan political views.

Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards (on personal and professional conduct), specifies that teachers must ensure that their personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit students vulnerability or might lead them to break the law. This does not prevent the presentation of political views, if, for example, a history class is shown Nazi propaganda, or a citizenship class is shown a racist film, this is not 'promoting' the views shown, but merely presenting them.

Concepts such as democracy and the historical development of the political process in society cannot be meaningfully taught without reference to political belief and practice and the use of concrete examples is normally helpful in promoting understanding. However, teaching staff should not exploit students' vulnerability by seeking to convince them that a particular political position is necessarily correct, or by trying to impose their own views on students. Such action may also amount to a breach of Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards on personal and professional conduct, which can be taken into account for the purposes of proceedings under the Teachers' Disciplinary (England) Regulations 2012, which apply to teachers in independent schools.

MVLA will take measures to ensure that views are not promoted which are inconsistent with the requirements of any other part of the standard (for example views which are derogatory of particular ethnic groups or faiths, or which are actively in opposition to the fundamental British values referred to in the standard).

**Visitors to school**

All visitors to the MVLA must be vetted by the Proprietor/Headteacher before they are allowed to address students. Where a speaker is booked to visit the school, the content of any talks/presentations will be checked beforehand to ensure that partisan views are not promoted within school.

The school will keep a list of all visiting speakers, giving details of the organisations (if any) that they represent, as well as of any extra-curricular activities organised by or promoted by the school, where political issues are or might be brought to the attention of students. An up-to-date version of this list will be available to Inspectors at the time of the school's inspection.

**Further guidance**

Further guidance about political impartiality in schools is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/political-impartiality-in-schools/political-impartiality-in-schools>