

MIHSG
PARTISAN POLITICAL VIEWS POLICY AND PRACTICE
Reviewed June 2016

Staff members should demonstrate courtesy to colleagues and pupils at all times and refrain from expression of strong personal and political views. Please note that expression of partisan political views must be avoided in all aspects of teaching.

Staff members are courteously requested to ensure personal views are not directly or indirectly imparted through delivery of the curriculum.

This policy derived from the inspection regulation, brought in to deliver the commitment made in the government's *Prevent* strategy.

- A)** The regulation refers to the systematic promotion of partisan views in a way that is likely to exert undue influence on the views of pupils.
- B)** This does not mean that political ideas cannot be discussed. However, for our school to meet Regulations 5(c) and (d) of the Independent School Standard from 5 January , pupils 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.
- C)** In particular, subjects such as history, PSHEE, and religious studies cannot be taught effectively without reference to the political context. What is required by this regulation is that pupils are not indoctrinated or unduly influenced by the promotion of partisan political views.
- D)** 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 pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.'
- E)** The policy aims to prevent the political indoctrination of pupils through the curriculum. This does not mean to prevent pupils from being exposed to political views or from discussing political issues in school. Pupils should not, however, be actively encouraged by teachers or others to support particular political viewpoints.
- F)** 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.
- G)** Unlike other parts of the SMSC standard, this part of the standard does not require the school to promote positive outcomes. It is about preventing a negative outcome for pupils.

- H) 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.
- I) However, teaching staff should not exploit pupils' vulnerability by seeking to convince them that a particular political position is necessarily correct, or by trying to impose their own views on pupils.
- J) 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.
- K) It is the responsibility of all teaching staff to be aware of the professional standards applying to them and the requirements of this standard.
- L) While this part of the standard does not preclude the presentation of controversial political viewpoints to pupils, MIHSG should 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).
- M) All visiting speakers must be vetted by the assembly CO before they are allowed to address pupils. If they may hold views which are inconsistent with the requirements of any part of the SMSC standard, and if still used, the assembly CO must ensure that the content of their presentation is agreed beforehand (***see visitors' policy***)
- N) The school must 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 pupils. An up-to-date version of this list must be available to Inspectors at the time of the school's inspection.
(***See visitor's policy***)
- O) MIHSG will take reasonable practicable steps to ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils:
 - (i) while they are in attendance at the school;
 - (ii) while they are taking part in extra-curricular activities which are provided or organised by or on behalf of the school; or
 - (iii) in the promotion at the school, including through the distribution of promotional material, of extra-curricular activities taking place at the school or elsewhere;

Pupils are offered a balanced presentation of opposing view

- P) Staff are expected to take steps, in every aspect of their work, to ensure that when political issues are discussed or arise, pupils are made aware that there

are normally countervailing views and a balance is struck between the opinions and beliefs discussed. This may be during lessons, or when extra-curricular activities within the school such as debates take place, or through the use of external speakers. The word balanced means nothing more than 'fair 'and dispassionate'.

- Q)** Where a speaker has expressed partisan political views on a subject, the Assembly Co in liaison with the Head teacher presents opposing views on the subject to pupils in the course of subsequent class teaching or in a whole school assembly. It would not be necessary to challenge the speaker's views at the time or arrange for a speaker with opposing views to address pupils at a later date.
- R)** The above also relates to the use of promotional literature in the school building for events which are not part of the curriculum, which pupils might see and as a result wish to attend. Although such events may be political in nature, MIHSG aims to ensure that they are not unbalanced (for example by advertising events held only by one political party or proponents of one particular view) and that they do not risk breaches of other SMSC standards (for example, by advertising speakers who are promoting anti-democratic beliefs).

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

Partisan

The best synonym for "partisan" is "one-sided".

Political views

Views expressed for a political purpose. A political purpose is either directly or indirectly to:

1. further the interests of a particular political party; or
2. procure changes to the laws of this or another country; or
3. procure the reversal of government policy or of particular decisions of governmental authorities in this or another country.

Related policies

- ❖ Curriculum
- ❖ Visitors
- ❖ PSHEE

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