



# The GTA Freedom of Expression Policy

This policy applies to all members of GTA (including staff, learners, volunteers, parents/carers and visitor users) who access training at the GTA

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## **Policy Statement**

The Doncaster, Rotherham, and District Motor Trades GTA (GTA) values the freedoms of speech, thought, expression and assembly - in themselves and as part of our core educational and intellectual mission. If individuals are to cherish freedom, they must experience it.

The very concept of freedom assumes that people usually choose wisely from a range of available ideas and that the range and implications of ideas cannot be fully understood unless we hold vital our rights to know, to express, and to choose. The GTA must be a place where all ideas may be expressed freely and where no alternative is withheld from consideration. The only limits on these freedoms are those dictated by law and those necessary to protect the rights of other members of the GTA community and to ensure the normal functioning of the GTA.

On the GTA grounds, anyone may distribute printed material, offer petitions for signature, make speeches, and hold protests or demonstrations outside buildings. All such activities must be peaceful, avoiding acts or credible threats of violence and preserving the normal operation of the GTA. No event shall infringe upon the rights or privileges of anyone not in sympathy with it, and no one will be permitted to harm others, damage, or deface property, block access to the GTA buildings or disrupt classes. The enforcement of these conditions will not depend in any way on the message or sponsorship of the act or event.

When guests are invited by a recognised organisation, they may express their ideas not because they have a right to do so, but because learners of the GTA have a right to hear, see, and experience diverse intellectual and creative inquiry. Defending that right is a fundamental obligation of the GTA. Controversy cannot be permitted to abridge the freedoms of speech, thought, expression or assembly. They are not matters of convenience but of necessity.

## **Responsibilities**

Freedom of expression must be at once fiercely guarded and genuinely embraced. Those who exercise it serve the GTA community by accepting the responsibilities attendant to free expression. The GTA organisations that sponsor guests to speak are expected to uphold the GTA educational mission by planning carefully to create safe and thoughtful experiences for those involved. Hosts are responsible for the behaviour of their guests and should exercise due care to ensure that all participants abide by relevant GTA policies.

## **Considerations for Planning Events**

Consistent with the rights and responsibilities outlined in the GTA's policy on Freedom of Expression, the GTA hosts must follow all applicable policies related to space reservation, use, safety, and security, keeping in mind the responsibility to have college staff present for any event with 100 or more persons in attendance.

Hosts should consider the items below as guidance in planning events, recognising that not all the items below will apply to all events:

1. A public declaration of the event, its purpose, the identification of sponsors and co-sponsors, and contact information for those seeking further information.
2. A plan for advertising the event, including advance notice to relevant members of the GTA who may wish to co-sponsor, protest, or host other events in response to the planned activity.

3. Where appropriate, a clear and detailed contract with outside speakers, artists, or suppliers of services to ensure continuity of purpose and the ability of the host to reasonably control the event, consistent with the host's intent.
4. A plan for access to the event, including notifying the GTA of reserved seats, ticketing, queuing protocol, or other relevant details or restrictions well in advance of the activity.
5. A provision for security before, during, and after events, managed in coordination with the Doncaster GTA staff. Specifically, non-GTA staff must have their allowable duties delineated, in partnership with the GTA staff, with their role generally limited to personal security and not space management.
6. A plan for participant engagement at the event, such as through a question-and-answer session, if relevant, with a clear delineation of the planned ground rules for the event set out well in advance.
7. A strategy for hosting additional events, discussions, or town meetings before or after a principal event to help provide a context in which the principal event may be best experienced.

The GTA may assist in, or directly coordinate, some aspects of events, such as fostering discussions preceding or following an event, or accommodating an opposing view at an alternative event. It is assumed that the spirit of community, both among people and groups with opposing views, as well as between event sponsors and the learner activities and learner affairs staff, will foster communication and cooperation in the planning of college events. Whenever possible, learner affairs will work in concert with the GTA staff to notify occupants of buildings in advance of any potential disruption caused by such events.

### **Security Personnel Statement**

At times, members of the GTA community or their guests may have a legitimate basis for being accompanied by independent security personnel. It is incumbent upon the host of such an individual to ensure that the GTA staff approve in advance the presence and scope of involvement of any such security personnel.