

SELWYN COLLEGE FAITH GROUPS POLICY

1. Selwyn College exists by statute to be a place of education, religion, learning and research.
2. The College is committed to valuing diversity including the diversity of faiths and beliefs represented within the college community. It is committed to being an inclusive, open and safe community free of discrimination.
3. Wherever possible and consistent with statutory responsibilities the College will support individuals wishing to follow their religious faith.
4. The College Chapel, whilst being a dedicated, consecrated Christian space in line with the College's foundation, is nonetheless a place where all are welcomed openly. All of any faith or none are welcome to attend services and events there, and whenever the Chapel is open and not otherwise in use, anyone may use it for private, silent prayer or reflection.
5. Any individuals or groups wishing to use the Chapel other than for silent prayer and reflection must seek permission from the Dean of Chapel in accordance with the College's *Chapel Management Policy*.
6. Any individuals wishing to hold small gatherings or events of a religious character, not involving visiting speakers, may of course do so in their own rooms subject to the requirements laid down by the College Dean and the Student Handbook and Guides.
7. Any individuals or groups wishing to hold gatherings or acts of worship or events of a religious character at which there is a visiting speaker must follow the College's policy on the *Management of External Events and External Speakers*. This includes, among other things, requirements for the upholding of academic freedom of speech, the appropriate management of events at which controversial views may be expressed, the management of visiting speakers, and the approvals required. This applies both to formally booked events in the College's public areas and to smaller gatherings in student rooms. See paragraph 10 of the Policy on the Management of External Events and Speakers.
8. When the Dean of Chapel considers approving a faith group's request to meet in the Chapel, or when the Dean and Bursar (or a nominated member of staff with delegated authority) consider approval for an event with a visiting speaker, they will always do so, in consultation where appropriate with the Prevent Lead, mindful, among other things, of:
 - a) the College's strong commitment to the principle of freedom of speech and expression;
 - b) the risk to the health and safety of college members or the general public;

- c) the requirement of colleges to comply with the duties set out in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and the *Prevent* duty guidance issued by government alongside the duties of the College under the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023.
- 9. All student societies, including faith-related ones, are under an obligation to be open to all members of College under the College's Policy on Student Clubs and Societies. All faith-related bookings by such societies must be open to all members of the College who wish to attend, and any departure from this expectation will need to be justified to the Dean and Dean of Chapel when making any booking.
- 10. The College is firmly committed to upholding the principle of freedom of speech and expression. Although the views and beliefs held and expressed by some may cause offence to others, the College is also committed to providing an inclusive community in which all its members may live and work unhindered and with respect for one another. The law, however, recognizes various common law and statutory qualifications to absolute freedom of expression. Notwithstanding, students, staff and Fellows who hold religious and other beliefs which may conflict with the beliefs of others must respect the views and dignity of others in the expression of their own views. Failure to do so could, in certain circumstances, be regarded as liable to action under the College's policies on discipline, bullying and harassment and general behaviour.
- 11. Any complaint about the use of the Chapel shall be directed in the first instance in writing to the Dean of Chapel, who shall normally send a response within seven days to the complainant, copied to the Master.

AMR
MJS
November 2025