

MUD GANG

Mud Gang CIC

Freedom of Speech Policy

Freedom of expression and equality are foundational rights, whose realisation is essential for the enjoyment and protection of all human rights¹. Mud Gang Pottery CIC directors believe that freedom of artistic expression and freedom are at the heart of its mission and must be fully reflected in both its policies and practices.

Our approach is to enable and promote free speech and encourage debate of all kinds, consistent with Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Consistent with Article 10(2), restrictions on free speech may be permitted where the restriction is necessary to protect the reputation or rights of others, or in the interests of national security or public safety. This may include where speech which incites hatred or violence, is otherwise unlawful (e.g. harassment/discrimination), or where the exercise of free speech raises serious concerns regarding the safety of students, staff or members of the public.

This means that there must be an atmosphere of free and open discussion. Mud Gang Pottery CIC supports the view of the European Court of Human Rights that freedom of expression constitutes one of the essential foundations of a democratic society and that such freedom is applicable not only to information or ideas that are favourably received, but also to those that have the potential to offend, shock or disturb the listener. Staff, members and students primarily determine the subjects and topics of discussion that take place in the studio. Pluralism, tolerance and broadmindedness are essential components of a democratic society, and all views, including those that can be difficult to hear, should be able to be expressed and heard with tolerance and mutual respect.

The studio supports the right to discuss controversial topics. There is freedom to challenge or debate the law, moral or other issues but this does not give permission to break the law.

The principle of free speech has the potential to be abused, including through incitement to violence or to breaches of the peace, or by the use of threatening words or behaviour (including the display of writing, signs or other visible representations) which are intended to provoke racial or religious hatred or hatred on grounds of sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or gender expression, or to encourage or draw people into terrorism. All of our staff and students have a responsibility to consider these issues in the course of their work.

As a social enterprise, the studio is mindful of its responsibilities to ensure that its premises are not being used for unlawful purposes, including those which may negate the enjoyment of that freedom for others. When permitting its premises to be used, the directors must therefore consider what may be said. Mud Gang Pottery is not obliged to allow its premises to be used by members of the public or by organisations which might wish to do so, nor is it obliged to admit members of the public to meetings taking place on its premises (providing that it does not exclude on a discriminatory basis) and must take account of other legal obligations, including those around the bounds of lawful speech and assemblies that may lead to serious disorder or breaches of the peace. Peaceful protest is a protected form of expression, however such protest should not be allowed to shut down debate or infringe the rights of others.

Signed:

A handwritten signature consisting of the letters 'R' and 'N' in a cursive, black ink style.

Date: 05/03/2024

Review date: 05/03/2026

Article 19 (2009) Camden Principles of Freedom of Expression and Equality. London: Article 19. Page 3. Accessed 04/03/16 from <https://www.article19.org/data/files/pdfs/standards/the-camden-principles-on-freedom-of-expression-and-equality.pdf>