



## NEW ERA SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

### Policy on Student Academic & Co-Curricular Freedom

#### 1. Purpose

This policy establishes the institution's commitment to empowering students with academic and co-curricular freedom, enabling them to explore learning pathways, express creative talents, and participate in intellectual dialogue without fear of censorship, discrimination, or bias.

#### 2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All students enrolled in the school
- Teachers, mentors, coaches, and academic coordinators
- All curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities

#### 3. Guiding Values

The school upholds the following principles:

##### 3.1 Student-Centered Learning

Students learn best when they are encouraged to make meaningful choices in how they explore subjects, ideas, and creative expressions.

##### 3.2 Respect for Individual Voice

Every student has the right to express opinions, thoughts, and perspectives respectfully and confidently.

##### 3.3 Inclusive & Bias-Free Environment

Learning must occur in an environment free from:

- Discrimination
- Bias
- Judgment
- Censorship

##### 3.4 Encouragement of Creativity & Critical Thinking

Students thrive when they can:

- Innovate
- Question
- Debate
- Analyze
- Create

These abilities are fundamental to 21st-century education.



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### 4. Student Rights

#### 4.1 Academic Freedom

Students have the right to:

- Explore academic interests beyond the prescribed curriculum
- Engage in self-directed projects, research, and inquiry-based learning
- Access diverse learning materials, resources, and viewpoints
- Choose learning styles or methods where flexibility is possible (e.g., visual, experiential, collaborative learning)

Teachers may guide but shall not restrict academic curiosity unless necessary for safety or ethical reasons.

#### 4.2 Co-Curricular & Creative Freedom

Students have the right to:

- Participate in arts, sports, clubs, innovation labs, and cultural activities
- Express creativity through music, dance, theatre, writing, or visual arts
- Form interest-based groups or clubs (with appropriate supervision)
- Showcase talent through performances, exhibitions, competitions, and school forums

No student shall be discouraged or penalized for pursuing a non-traditional interest or passion.

#### 4.3 Freedom of Expression in Intellectual Debate

Students may:

- Express opinions, perspectives, and arguments respectfully during class discussions, debates, group projects, and public forums
- Question ideas, propose new thoughts, and challenge concepts academically
- Participate in school debates, MUN events, literary circles, and dialogue forums without fear

The school protects students from:

- Censorship of academically appropriate opinions
- Bias related to personal beliefs
- Discrimination based on background, ability, or viewpoint

Freedom of expression must be exercised responsibly and respectfully.

### 5. Student Responsibilities

With freedom comes responsibility. Students are expected to:

- Communicate respectfully and thoughtfully
- Engage in academic debates without personal attacks



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- Respect cultural, linguistic, and individual diversity
- Use creative freedom ethically and responsibly
- Follow school guidelines for safety and discipline
- Honour academic integrity—no plagiarism, cheating, or misuse of resources

### 6. Responsibilities of School & Staff

The institution commits to:

- Providing a safe, inclusive environment that nurtures student voice
- Encouraging diverse academic and creative opportunities
- Avoiding censorship of legitimate student expression
- Ensuring no student faces retaliation for participating in intellectual debate
- Offering platforms for student leadership and innovation (student council, clubs, competitions, etc.)

Teachers and coordinators must:

- Facilitate respectful dialogue
- Encourage critical thinking
- Support curiosity and creativity
- Avoid bias in evaluation or treatment

### 7. Grievance Mechanism for Students

Students who feel their academic freedom, co-curricular freedom, or freedom of expression has been restricted may file a concern with:

#### 7.1 Reporting Authorities

- **Class Teacher**
- **House Mentor / Club Mentor**
- **Academic Coordinator**
- **Co-Curricular Coordinator**
- **Department Heads (HODs)**
- **School & Administration Coordinator**
- **Vice Principal**
- **Principal**

Students may approach *any* trusted adult staff member, who must then guide them to the correct reporting channel.



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### 7.2 Handling of Complaints

- Complaints will be heard with **confidentiality, empathy, and fairness**.
- Students shall not face retaliation, poor grading, or discrimination for reporting concerns.
- Complaints will be reviewed through:
  - Documentation
  - Neutral inquiry
  - Timely resolution

Corrective or supportive actions will be taken when appropriate.

### 7.3 Appeal Process

If a student or parent is dissatisfied with the resolution, they may appeal to:

- The **School Management Committee**
- The **Governing Body / Trust**

Appeals will be reviewed objectively and transparently.

### 8. Review & Amendment

This policy will be reviewed every **three years**, or earlier if required, to ensure:

- Relevance to evolving educational goals
- Alignment with 21st-century competencies
- Responsiveness to student needs

**Principal**  
**New Era Sr. Secondary School**  
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