



## The Big Debate Club – Year 9

### What is it?

Every week, the form will take part in a structured debate.

### Why are we doing this?

Involving students in meaningful debates helps to develop students' oracy and other essential skills. It helps to build confidence, develop critical thinking skills, and fosters collaboration and respect for their peers.

We want every student to find their voice, foster critical thinking and discussion tools. At a time of deep division in society, young people's voices should be the core to our democracy. This can't only be open to those with the confidence already, or those who grow up in the right environment. Learning to use their voice, and to listen respectfully to other points of view, takes time and support, and a weekly debate is one of the steps we are making to ensure students get this opportunity.

During debates, students learn to think quickly on their feet. When presented with arguments and evidence from the opposing side, they get to practice critical thinking skills as they evaluate the logical soundness of each premise. Students learn to become more objective instead of simply taking in information at face value. In turn, they become better decision makers who make informed decisions, exhibit resilience, and are competent problem solvers.

### What is a Debate?

A debate is a persuasive discussion, the goal of which is to persuade your listeners that your arguments are presented effectively and convincingly.

In a debate there are two opposing sides:

- One side supports the issue/statement
- The other side represents the group that opposes the issue/statement

Both sides must discuss based on facts and support their arguments logically, while also disproving the opposing side's arguments.

Examples of debates in everyday life include:

- Decisions made at a board meeting
- Public hearings on local and national issues
- Assemblies and councils like the UN
- Union meetings and local organisations
- Criminal and civil trials, which feature defence and prosecution 'sides'.

## **Top Tips for Happy Debating**

Tip One: The FACTS of the Matter!

Use facts and examples to back up the points you are saying. How can your opponent understand your point if you don't show them an example of it? E.g. My point is that mental health needs more help in schools. A fact that supports my point is that according to the Children's society, 10% of young people aged 5-16 have a mental health problem - with so many students affected, more help is needed.

Tip Two: Tone Tone Tone!

Make sure you sound confident when speaking, use your voice! Sounding confident and emphasising words make your points sound stronger. E.g Mental health is an IMPORTANT subject that NEEDS to be discussed more.

Tip Three: Listen

Listen to what the other side has to say, some of their points may give you inspiration for your own.