

Ruling 3 – Privacy of Ballot

As we have repeatedly stressed, the privacy of the ballot is both extremely important and greatly endangered in online elections.

Campaigning to someone who is in the act of voting, or observing how they vote, is strictly forbidden. It is not always possible to tell whether this is occurring. Frequently we are provided with photographs or video where it appears someone is campaigning to someone who has the ballot open. However, when we raise this we are usually told either that the campaigner was not actually campaigning at that time, or the student being campaigned was not voting, but instead had their phones open for other reasons.

Although we acknowledge these defences may sometimes be true, in order to preserve the secrecy of the ballot we are ruling that any talking to a person who is looking at their phone will be treated as being campaigning to someone who is voting unless evidence can be provided otherwise.

We add that trying to persuade someone to vote in front of you is particularly serious breach, as it is hard to identify a reason why a campaigner would do this other than in the hope of violating the secrecy of the ballot of the voter concerned.

Stephen Luntz
Returning Officer
2/9/2024