OFG Education

Protecting Children & Young People from Radicalisation & Extremism (Prevent Duty) Policy

Brinksway School

PROTECTING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE FROM RADICALISATION AND EXTREMISM (PREVENT DUTY) POLICY

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Terminology

- "Our teams" and" "team member/s" include everyone working in Outcomes First Group's settings and services in a paid or unpaid capacity, including employees, consultants, agency staff, trainees and contractors. For Blenheim schools, volunteers are included in this definition.
- "Parents and carers" refer to the person or -people with legal parental responsibility for the child/young person
- "Students" refers to all children and young people being educated and supported at the setting or service

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The safety and wellbeing of our students is our highest priority, and we are committed to ensuring they are effectively safeguarded from all forms of harm. We recognise the significant risk of radicalisation and extremism in today's world. Prevention, early identification and intervention are essential in preventing students from being drawn into harmful ideologies that can have serious consequences for their safety and future. We recognise the increased risk for students who are looked after, neurodivergent, or have additional needs and/or disabilities and remain vigilant in providing informed support and appropriate safeguards.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all of the settings and services in the Outcomes First Group.

Residential settings must ensure that their response to the risk and reality of radicalism and extremism is consistent across the setting and that all team members working with children and young people have the appropriate training and understanding to help protect them from radicalisation and extremism.

3.0 POLICY FRAMEWORK

This policy must be read in conjunction with national government guidance, including Keeping children safe in education (KCSiE) 2026, and relevant policies including:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Exploitation Policy
- Web Filtering & Monitoring policy
- Staying Safe Online Policy
- Mobile & Smart Technology Policy
- Serious Incident Notification Policy
- Low-level Concerns Policy

Team members involved in recruitment must read and apply the Group's *Safer Recruitment Policy*

Regional Directors/ Operations Directors should also be aware of the Single Central Record Checklist Guidance & template.

Headteachers, Principals, Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL), and other senior leaders must familiarise themselves with:

CONTEST Strategy
The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation
A new definition of extremism 2024

For schools:

Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales (especially paragraphs 57-76), or
Prevent Duty Guidance in Scotland (especially paragraphs 44-56)

For colleges and schools providing post 16 provision:

Prevent Duty Guidance- for Further Education Institutions in England & Wales or
Prevent Duty Guidance for Further Education Institutions in Scotland

The different UK nations have also provided the following resources:
The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation - England
Respect and resilience developing-community cohesion - Wales
Safeguarding Prevent in Education – Scotland

4.0 RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

4.1 All team members must be safely recruited and have all relevant checks completed and on file. The Group's ***Safer Recruitment Policy*** must be followed.

4.2 All team members must complete the ***Exploitation - An Introduction*** course which includes information on Prevent and this must be refreshed every 3 years.

4.3 The DSL and Deputy DSLs must complete Level 1 (Awareness) and Level 2 (Referral), of Prevent Training. They must keep their knowledge up-to-date and refresh the courses every 2 years.

5.0 DEFINITIONS

- **Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.
- **Terrorism** (as defined in the Terrorism Act 2000) is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat is designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.
- **Extremism** is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, which aims to:
  - negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; or
  - undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or
  - Intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results in (1) or (2).

  (New definition of extremism (2024))

6.0 WHAT IS THE PREVENT DUTY?

6.1 **Prevent** is part of the UK's overarching counter-terrorism strategy known as CONTEST. The purpose of Prevent is to safeguard and support vulnerable people to stop them from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

It aims to:

- Tackle the causes of radicalisation and respond to the ideological challenges of terrorism;
- Safeguard and support those most at risk of radicalisation through early intervention; identifying them and offering support; and
- Enable those who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate.

6.2 Under Section 26 Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, schools and colleges in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This is known as the Prevent duty. Please see: Revised Prevent Duty Guidance: for England & Wales/ Revised Prevent duty guidance for Scotland

6.3 Schools and colleges have a duty to take a proactive and preventative approach to safeguarding students from the risks of radicalisation and extremism. Team members must remain vigilant and work to protect students from these risks in the same way they would safeguard them from any other form of exploitation. This includes helping students to develop critical thinking, resilience and the confidence to challenge extremist ideologies, while promoting the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs.

British values are defined as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. These values should be promoted through the curriculum, daily practice, positive role modelling and creating providing a safe space with opportunities for respectful discussion and debate.

Further resources can be accessed at: EducateAgainstHate

6.4 In order to fulfil the Prevent duty, it is essential to be able to identify children and young people who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and know what to do when they are identified. Protecting students from radicalisation is part of the setting's wider safeguarding responsibilities. Radicalisation should be considered alongside other safeguarding concerns including child exploitation, serious violence, online harms, harmful sexual behaviour, missing education and extra-familial harm.

7.0 CHANNEL

7.1 In addition, Sections 36-41 of the *Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015*, sets out a duty on local authorities and partners to establish and cooperate with a local Channel Programme (in England and Wales)/ PMAP in Scotland) to provide support for anybody vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

7.2 Channel is a voluntary, confidential support programme through which individuals consent to receive support to address their vulnerabilities and reduce the risk to them. It focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

Prevent referrals may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. A representative from the setting may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with this assessment. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.

7.3 Team members should use their professional judgement in identifying students who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately, which may include making a referral to the Channel Programme in England and Wales/ PMAP in Scotland.

8.0 PREVENTING RADICALISATION AND EXTREMISM

8.1 Protecting students from the risk of radicalisation and extremism must be part of the whole-setting approach to safeguarding. The Headteacher/Principal must ensure that team members:

- strive to prevent radicalisation on a day-to-day basis;
- are alert to indications and risks ;
- have a curriculum that addresses the issues involved in radicalisation;
- and conduct is consistent with preventing radicalisation.

Any concerns about a team member in relation to radicalisation or extremism must be reported to the DSL and the Regional Director/Operational Director must be informed. This should also be reported to safeguarding@ofgl.co.uk and peopleadvice@ofgl.co.uk and the safeguarding process followed, which may include a Local Authority Designated Officer referral

8.2 Team members must be aware that radicalisation does not refer to any one religion or faith. Young people can be groomed into holding extremist views politically as well as religiously. Team members have a duty to promote an environment within the setting that is diverse and multicultural, but extreme views and any expressions that single out a particular faith, religion, race or gender will not be tolerated. Team members must challenge any form of discriminatory language.

8.3 Headteachers, Principals, DSLs and senior leaders must ensure that their approach is in line with the Contest Strategy best practice guidance, and that the **'four P' approach** is understood:

Prevent: to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.
Pursue: to stop terrorist attacks.
Protect: to strengthen our protection against a terrorist attack.
Prepare: to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack.

They will periodically review:

- prevent referrals
- radicalisation concerns
- training compliance
- filtering and monitoring reports
- curriculum provision relating to Prevent and British Values
- findings from the Prevent self-assessment process.

The timing of reviews should be in line with the setting's risk assessment.

8.4 Team members must work with and educate students to help them develop understanding around the risks of radicalisation and ensure that they create a safe space where they are able to discuss issues relating to radicalisation and extremism.

Team members must have an awareness and understanding of radicalisation and that it is similar to other forms of exploitation and involves grooming and coercing young people, sometimes with violence and aggression being used.

Team members must be able to protect vulnerable young people from extremist ideology and intervene to prevent those at risk being radicalised.

9.0 RISK-BASED APPROACH

There is no single route to radicalisation and no single way to identify whether a student is likely to be susceptible; background factors combined with specific influences, such as family and friends may contribute to a student's vulnerability. Radicalisation is not a linear process and can occur through many different methods and combinations of methods, such as, online, via social media or in settings, such as, within the home, local groups etc.

To safeguard students who are vulnerable to radicalisation, team members need to take a risk-based approach and consider an individual's behaviour in the context of wider influencing factors and vulnerabilities.

9.1 Understanding the context

The DSL must understand the risk of radicalisation in their area and setting. This risk will vary greatly and can change quickly but nowhere is risk free.

The DSL will engage with local safeguarding partners including the police, local authority and local and regional Prevent Co-ordinators (where applicable) to develop up-to-date understanding of the local risks and context.

The DSL will complete a Prevent duty risk assessment for the school/ college. The Headteacher/Principal is responsible for ensuring an appropriate Prevent risk assessment is in place and acted upon. The risk assessment should be a working document, that is regularly reviewed and updated when circumstances change.

Radicalisation can occur within peer groups, communities, online spaces and social networks and should be considered within the wider context of extra-familial harm.

'Peer relationships are increasingly influential during adolescence, setting social norms which inform young people's experiences, behaviours and choices and determine peer status. These relationships are, in turn, shaped by, and shape, the school, neighbourhood and online contexts in which they develop. So, if young people socialise in safe and protective schools and community settings, they will be supported to form safe and protective peer relationships. However, if they form friendships in contexts characterised by violence and/or harmful attitudes these relationships too may be anti-social, unsafe or promote problematic social norms as a means of navigating, or surviving in, those spaces' (Contextual safeguarding Briefing, Carlene Firmann, 2017).

Young people's peer groups, communities and social media activity are either key risk factors or key protective factors. For example, if a young person socialises with peers who have a positive influence on their thinking and behaviours, this will more than likely protect them within their communities and neighbourhoods. Likewise, if young people socialise with peers who are themselves involved in risky activities or who hold extremist views, this too may impact on the young person's safety and wellbeing in the community and their neighbourhoods.

9.2 Potential indicators of risk

Schools and colleges have a duty to assess the risk presented to students in their settings around the risks of being drawn into extremism. Team members must be aware of student's vulnerabilities, their family contexts as well as the risks in the local communities. There are often several risk factors present that, when seen together, can cause concern. Team members must have an understanding of how to recognise and support those who are at risk or extremism.

There is no obvious profile of a person likely to become involved in extremism. The process of radicalisation is different for everyone and can take place over an extended period or within a very short timeframe. Some of the known ways that children and young people can be drawn into violence, or can exposed to the messages of extremist groups include:

- Through the influence of family members or friends
- Direct contact with extremist groups and organisations or extremist literature
- Grooming – where the vulnerabilities of a young person are exploited to form an exclusive friendship which draws the young person away from other influences that might challenge the radical ideology.
- Through the internet and social media, which may normalise radical views and promote content that is shocking and extreme. Children and young people can be trusting and may not necessarily appreciate bias, which can lead to being drawn into such groups and to adopt their extremist views.

Any child or young person can be vulnerable to radicalisation and extremism. However, certain personal, social and environmental factors may increase their susceptibility to extremist ideologies or influence. These may include:

Personal vulnerabilities

- Being looked after or previously looked after.
- Being neurodivergent or having Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).
- Experiencing mental health difficulties, emotional distress or low self-esteem.
- Having difficulty developing empathy or understanding the consequences of their actions.
- Behavioural difficulties or challenges in forming positive relationships with others.
- Experiencing a significant traumatic event or adverse childhood experiences.

Identity and belonging

- Feeling isolated, lonely or socially excluded.
- Having a sense of not belonging or struggling with their identity or place in society.
- Becoming distanced from their cultural, religious or family background.
- Experiencing racism, discrimination or community tensions.
-

Family and social circumstances

- Difficulties within the home or family environment.
- Associating with individuals, including family members or peers, who hold extremist views or are involved with extremist groups.
- Exposure to one-sided or extremist narratives, particularly online or through social networks.

Education, exploitation and safeguarding concerns

- Persistent absence from school or college.
- Spending significant unsupervised time online.
- Experiencing exploitation, including criminal exploitation, county lines or serious violence.
- Involvement in criminal activity or gangs.

External influences

- National or international events that affect the student, their family or community and may increase feelings of grievance, vulnerability or isolation

It is important to understand that vulnerability to radicalisation can arise from a combination of personal, social, emotional and environmental factors and should never be assumed based on a single characteristic.

As with managing other safeguarding risks, team members should be alert to changes in student's behaviours which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:

- Showing sympathy for extremist causes
- Glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures
- Making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies
- Evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
- Out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships (involvement via online groups, narratives, programmes and networks may be less apparent)
- Secretive behaviour, losing interest in friends and activities
- Online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles
- Intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality
- Graffiti, artwork or writing that displays extremist themes
- Attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
- Verbalising anti-Western or anti-British views
- Advocating violence and/or messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups

The Government provides a list of terrorist groups or organisations banned under UK law, and details of proscription criteria. Proscribed terror groups or organisations

It is important that team members are aware of student's vulnerabilities, their family contexts and the risks in the local communities and understand how to support those at risk.

Team members must always be alert to **changes** in student's behaviours which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection.

Please also see:
Managing risk of radicalisation in your education setting for further information about risk indicators,

and

Understanding and identifying radicalisation risk in your education setting for further information on the push and pull factors that can make a learner at risk of extremism or radicalisation.

Team members must remain professionally curious where behaviours, language, online activity, peer associations or changes in presentation indicate a possible risk of radicalisation, even where these concerns may initially appear low level.

10.0 PREVENT DUTY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

DFE have produced a self-assessment tool to help schools and colleges in England review their responsibilities under the Prevent duty, which can be found here:
Prevent duty self-assessment

The Welsh Government provides the Respect and resilience self-assessment tool for schools

The tools help schools and colleges to understand how well embedded their existing policies and practices are, and to encourage a cycle of continuous review and improvement. They contain requirements and recommend good practice activities to meet those requirements.

Schools and colleges should complete the Self-Assessment Tool annually and following any significant safeguarding incident relating to extremism or radicalisation.

11.0 ONLINE SAFETY

Please also see ***Staying Safe Online Policy*** and ***Web Filtering and Monitoring Policy***

11.1 Children and young people do not need to meet people to become involved in extremist views and beliefs. The internet and the use of social media is increasingly being used by extremist groups to radicalise young people. These groups will often offer young people solutions to their feelings of being misunderstood, not listened to, or being treated unfairly.

Team members should recognise that radicalisation may occur entirely online. Students may encounter extremist narratives through social media, livestreaming platforms, gaming platforms, encrypted messaging services, online forums, video-sharing sites and AI-generated content. Online content can normalise hatred, violence and intolerance and may be used to groom vulnerable individuals into extremist ideologies.

Online content may reinforce prejudice, normalise harmful beliefs, promote violence or encourage isolation from protective influences. Students may be exposed to extremist content through social media, algorithm-driven recommendations and content, gaming platforms, online forums, messaging services and emerging technologies. Exposure can be deliberate or accidental. Team members should understand that radicalisation may be gradual and can occur through repeated exposure to harmful narratives rather than direct contact with extremist groups. Any Concerns must be reported in accordance with the ***Safeguarding Policy***.

11.2 The setting has an appropriate web filtering system in place and a clear policy on the use of ***Mobile and Smart Technology*** in school/college. Team members must be vigilant when students are using their mobile phones and other devices. Any concerns about content must be reported immediately to the DSL.

11.3 The Headteacher/ Principal must ensure that there are arrangements in place for the monitoring of student's use of the internet. Any concerns regarding inappropriate or unsafe internet use must be immediately reported to the DSL and documented onto the electronic recording system. Please see the ***Web Filtering & Monitoring Policy***.

11.4 All team members must ensure that students are supported and helped to understand about staying safe online. Please see the Staying Safe Online Policy.

12.0 WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS

If a child, young person or others are in immediate danger, you must phone the Police 999 immediately.

12.1 The DSL must ensure that team members understand the issues of radicalisation and extremism, that they are able to recognise the signs of vulnerability or radicalisation and extremism and know how to refer their concerns. The DSL must receive all safeguarding concerns about students in the setting who may be vulnerable to the risk of radicalisation or are showing signs of radicalisation.

The DSL is the main point of contact for referring concerns about radicalisation to the appropriate agencies, including Prevent. (Please also see 13.0 Local Procedures below).

12.2 The DSL must report any concerns or issues regarding radicalisation to the Chair of Governors for the school – Ed Hall and to Senior Leadership Team meetings. The Group Head of Safeguarding/Safeguarding Adviser must also be informed of any concerns by emailing safeguarding@ofgl.co.uk

12.3 The DSL must ensure that they are aware of any local or community issues which may impact on possible radicalisation. They must ensure that they share any local information with team members.

12.4 Team members throughout the setting must understand the issues of radicalisation and extremism be able to recognise the signs of vulnerability, radicalisation and extremism.

12.5 Team members must refer all concerns about a student who show signs of vulnerability or radicalisation to the DSL within **one working day**.

12.6 If there are immediate concerns regarding the safety of a student or other people, team members must report the concerns to the DSL **immediately** where they will be supported to refer their concerns to the police. Such concerns must be documented on the electronic recording system no later than the end of the working day. When there are significant concerns about a student, the DSL in liaison with the Headteacher/ Principal will make a referral to the local Prevent Team.

Radicalisation concerns must always be considered within the setting's wider safeguarding responsibilities. Where a Prevent referral is made, the DSL must also consider whether a referral to Children's Social Care, the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), local safeguarding partners or other relevant safeguarding agencies is required.

A Prevent referral should not be viewed as a substitute for safeguarding intervention. Where there are concerns regarding a child's welfare, vulnerability, exploitation, mental health, family circumstances, extra-familial harm, or other safeguarding needs, an appropriate safeguarding referral must also be made in accordance with local safeguarding procedures.

If a Prevent referral is not accepted, or no Channel intervention is offered, the DSL must ensure that the child's safeguarding needs continue to be assessed and supported through the setting's safeguarding processes and through relevant local safeguarding agencies where appropriate.

12.7 The ***Serious Incident Notification Policy*** outlines the expectations of the internal process for notifying serious incidents to senior leaders and the Executive Team. Team members must be familiar with these policies and ensure they followed.

14.0 LOCAL PROCEDURES

The DSL (and any deputies) must be aware of local procedures for making a Prevent referral. The local procedures are:

The local authority safeguarding referral procedure is Contacting the MASSH - Stockport Council Stockport Safeguarding Children Partnership. Phone calls can be made to 0161 217 6028 or an online referral form stating the urgency of need.

For all referrals regarding radicalisation Individuals at risk from radicalisation and extremism - Stockport Council

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14.0 FURTHER HELP AND RESOURCES

More resources and practical advice can be found at:

- ACT - Action Counters Terrorism
- The Active Change Foundation (ACF) provides a confidential helpline to prevent British nationals from travelling to conflict zones. ACF Confidential helpline telephone number is **020 8539 2770**
- The Anti-Terrorist Hotline is **0800 789 321**
- Crime Stoppers can be called anonymously on **0800 555111**

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