

Bleakhouse Primary School

Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Guidance

Date: June 2024

Ratified by the Governing Body on:

Review date: June 2025

Signed: Original signed by S. Wilton (Chair of Governors)

Signed: Original signed by J.E. Bates (Head/Principal)

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1. Introduction

Since 2010, when the Government published the Prevent Strategy, there has been an awareness of the specific need to safeguard children, young people and families from violent extremism. There have been several occasions both locally and nationally in which extremist groups have attempted to radicalise vulnerable children and young people to hold extreme views, including, views justifying political, religious, sexist or racist violence, or to steer them into a rigid and narrow ideology that is intolerant of diversity and leaves them vulnerable to future radicalisation.

Bleakhouse Primary School values freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs / ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society's values. Both students and teachers have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions. However, freedom comes with responsibility and free speech that is designed to manipulate the vulnerable or that leads to violence and harm of others goes against the moral principles in which freedom of speech is valued. Free speech is not an unqualified privilege; it is subject to laws and policies governing equality, human rights, community safety and community cohesion.

Bleakhouse Primary School is committed to providing a secure environment for pupils, where children and young people feel safe and are kept safe. All adults at the school recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility irrespective of the role they undertake or whether their role has direct contact or responsibility for children or not.

Our school's Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy is one element within our overall school arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in line with our statutory duties set out at S157/S175 of the Education Act 2002.

Our school's Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy also draws upon Department for Education (DfE) Guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', the HM government document 'Revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales' and the 'Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015'.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 contains a duty on specified authorities, which includes all schools including Early Years providers, academies, free schools, maintained schools, alternative provision and independent schools to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". The new legislation will be measured through various inspection frameworks, with schools and children services measured through OFSTED. The 'Prevent Duty Guidance' 2015 helps schools deliver the required standards (issued under section 29 of the Act).

Justin Nixon is the Prevent Education Officer for Sandwell Council and offers support and challenge in relation to the Prevent agenda. To contact Justin Nixon please call 07790396643 or email justin_nixon@sandwell.gov.uk

The Department for Education has set up a helpline for teachers who have questions and/or concerns about extremism.

Teachers can call: 0207 340 7264.

2. School Ethos and Practice

When operating this policy, the school uses the following accepted Governmental definition of extremism which is (taken from the Counter Extremism strategy, 2015):

'Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs; and/or calls for the death of members of our armed forces'.

There is no place for extremist views of any kind in our school, whether from internal sources (pupils, staff or governors) or external sources (school community, external agencies or individuals). Our pupils see our school as a safe place where they can explore controversial issues safely and where our teachers encourage and facilitate this – there is curriculum guidance to ensure this happens.

As a school we recognise that extremism and exposure to extremist materials and influences can lead to poor outcomes for children and so should be addressed as a safeguarding concern as set out in this policy. We also recognise that if we fail to challenge extremist views we are failing to protect our pupils.

Extremists of all persuasions aim to develop destructive relationships between different communities by promoting division, fear and mistrust of others based on ignorance or prejudice and thereby limiting the life chances of young people. Education is a powerful weapon against this; equipping young people with the knowledge, skills and critical thinking, to challenge and debate in an informed way.

Therefore, the school will provide a broad and balanced curriculum, delivered by skilled professionals, so that our pupils are enriched, understand and become tolerant of difference and diversity and to ensure that they thrive, feel valued and are not marginalised.

Please see notes on associated terminology on **appendix 3**

3. The Counter Terrorism and Security Act July 2015

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 was published on 12th March 2015. Section 26 of the Act places a duty on schools in England (and Wales) to prevent people being drawn into terrorism. This duty applies to all schools, whether publicly-funded or independent, and organisations covered by the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. The duty also applies to children's homes and Childcare providers. Statutory guidance has been published and comes into force on 1st July 2015.

Schools leaders (including governors) must:

- establish or use existing mechanisms for understanding the current risk of extremism
- ensure staff understand this risk and build confidence to challenge extremism
- communicate and promote the importance of the duty
- ensure staff implement the duty effectively

Other duties on schools include:

- effective partnership working with other local agencies, e.g. Local Authority (LA), Local Safeguarding Childrens Board (LSCB), police, health, etc.
- appropriate information sharing
- maintaining appropriate records
- assessing local risk of extremism (all forms of extremism)
- demonstrating they are protecting children
- developing clear protocols for visiting speakers - school buildings must not used to give a platform to extremists
- safeguarding policies that take account of LSCB policies and procedures
- training staff to give them knowledge and confidence
- ensuring there is robust ICT protocols that filter out extremist materials and influence

Ofsted are responsible for monitoring how well schools are implementing this duty.

4. Recognising the indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation

There is no such thing as a “typical extremist”. Those who become involved in extremist actions come from a range of backgrounds and experiences, and most individuals, even those who hold radical views, do not become involved in violent extremist activity.

Pupils may become susceptible to radicalisation through a range of social, personal and environmental factors - it is known that violent extremists exploit vulnerabilities in individuals to drive a wedge between them and their families / communities. It is vital that school staff are able to recognise those vulnerabilities.

Indicators of vulnerability include:

- Identity Crisis – the student / pupil is distanced from their cultural / religious heritage, has a misinterpretation of this and/or experiences discomfort about their place in society;
- Personal Crisis – the student / pupil may be experiencing family tensions; a sense of isolation or low self-esteem; they may have dissociated from their existing friendship group and become involved with a new and different group of friends; they may be searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging;
- Personal Circumstances – migration; local community tensions; and events affecting the student / pupil’s country or region of origin may contribute to a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy;
- Unmet Aspirations – the student / pupil may have perceptions of injustice; a feeling of failure; rejection of civic life;
- Experiences of Criminality – which may include involvement with criminal groups, exploitation in other areas, imprisonment, and/or poor resettlement/reintegration;
- Special Educational Needs – students / pupils may experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with others, understanding the consequences of their actions and awareness of the motivations/actions of others.

More critical risk factors could include:

- Being in contact with extremist recruiters;
- Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element;
- Possessing or accessing violent extremist literature;
- Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage;
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues;
- Engaging in separatist or anti-establishment narratives
- Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations; and
- Radical changes to appearance and / or behaviour with no explanation;
- Experiencing a high level of social isolation resulting in issues of identity crisis and/or personal crisis.

Any prejudice, discrimination or extremist views, including derogatory language, displayed by pupils or staff will always be challenged and where appropriate dealt with in line with our Behaviour Policy for pupils and the Code of Conduct/Behaviour policy for staff.

We will ensure that all our staff are equipped to recognise extremism and are skilled and confident enough to challenge it. All staff will receive appropriate and up to date Prevent awareness training. The recommended Prevent awareness training for professionals in Sandwell is the Sandwell Council LA Prevent Awareness training. Radicalisation and extremism will be an integral part of annual staff safeguarding training.

Our school is required to identify a Prevent Single Point of Contact (SPOC) who will be the lead within the organisation for safeguarding in relation to protecting individuals from

radicalisation and involvement in terrorism. The SPOC for Bleakhouse Primary School is R.L. Soudani.

When any member of staff has concerns that a pupil may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they should speak with the SPOC or head/principal. We will help support pupils who may be vulnerable to such influences as part of our wider safeguarding responsibilities and where we believe a pupil is being directly affected by extremist materials or influences we will ensure that that pupil is offered assistance. Additionally, in such instances our school will seek external support from the LA and/or local partnership structures working to prevent extremism.

Our school will closely follow the locally agreed procedure as set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board for safeguarding individuals vulnerable to extremism and radicalisation.

5. Teaching Approaches

We will all strive to eradicate the myths and assumptions that can lead to some young people becoming alienated and disempowered, especially where the narrow approaches children may experience elsewhere may make it harder for them to challenge or question these radical influences. In our school this will be achieved by good teaching, primarily via Citizenship, PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic) and RSE (Religious and Sex Education) sessions; but also, by adopting the methods outlined in the Government's guidance '[Teaching approaches that help build resilience to extremism among young people](#)' DfE 2011. These approaches include setting targets for young people to build a sense of ownership; creating a safe space for dialogue between staff and pupils; building resilience in pupils; improving pupil skills for collaborative work; improving pupils' ability to interact with each other and a peer mentoring scheme. We will ensure that all of our teaching approaches help our pupils build resilience to extremism and give pupils a positive sense of identity through the development of critical thinking skills. The school will promote the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs. We will teach and encourage pupils to respect one another and to respect and tolerate difference, especially those of a different faith or no faith. It is indeed our most fundamental responsibility to keep our pupils safe and prepare them for life in modern multi-cultural Britain and globally.

We will also work with local partners, families and communities in our efforts to challenge extremist views and to assist in the broadening of our pupils' experiences and horizons.

6. Use of External Agencies and Speakers

The school encourages the use of external agencies and/or speakers to enrich the experiences of our pupils; however we will positively vet those external agencies, individuals or speakers who we engage to provide such learning opportunities or experiences for our pupils. This includes checking the DBS of all external providers, viewing material that will be used beforehand and conducting a due diligence check on such agencies or individuals.

Such vetting is to ensure that we do not unwittingly use agencies that contradict each other with their messages or that are inconsistent with, or are in complete opposition to, the school's values and ethos.

Our school will assess the suitability and effectiveness of input from external agencies or individuals to ensure that:

- Any messages communicated to pupils are consistent with the ethos of the school and do not marginalise any communities, groups or individuals

- Any messages do not seek to glorify criminal activity or violent extremism or seek to radicalise pupils through extreme or narrow views of faith, religion or culture or other ideologies
- Activities are properly embedded in the curriculum and clearly mapped to schemes of work to avoid contradictory messages or duplication.
- Activities are matched to the needs of pupils
- Activities are carefully evaluated by the school to ensure that they are effective

Therefore, by delivering a broad and balanced curriculum, augmented using external sources where appropriate, we will strive to ensure our pupils recognise risk and build resilience to manage any such risk themselves where appropriate to their age and ability but also to help pupils develop the critical thinking skills needed to engage in informed debate.

7. Whistleblowing

Where there are concerns of extremism or radicalisation pupils and staff will be encouraged to make use of our internal systems to whistle blow or raise any issue in confidence. Please refer to the separate Whistleblowing Policy.

8. Recruitment

The arrangements for recruiting all staff, permanent and volunteers, to our school. The school will follow government guidance on safer recruitment best practice in education settings, including, but not limited to, ensuring that DBS checks are always made at the appropriate level, that references are always received and checked and that we complete and maintain a Single Central Record of such vetting checks.

We will apply safer recruitment best practice principles and sound employment practice in general and in doing so will deny opportunities for inappropriate recruitment or advancement. We will be alert to the possibility that persons may seek to gain positions within our school to unduly influence our schools character and ethos. We are aware that such persons seek to limit the opportunities for our pupils thereby rendering them vulnerable to extremist views and radicalisation as a consequence.

Therefore, by adhering to safer recruitment best practice techniques and by ensuring that there is an ongoing culture of vigilance within our school and staff team we will minimise the opportunities for extremist views to prevail.

9. Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body of our school will undertake annual training led by the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that they are clear about their role and the parameters of their responsibilities as Governors, including their statutory safeguarding duties. The Governing Body of our school will support the ethos and values of our school and will support the school in tackling extremism and radicalisation.

The governing body will challenge the school's senior management team on the delivery of this policy and monitor its effectiveness.

Governors will review this policy regularly prior to the start of a new academic year (on an annual basis) but may amend and adopt any amendments outside of this timeframe in accordance with any new legislation or guidance.

10. Standards for Teachers

The 2011 (updated 2021) Standards for Teachers (part two) states:

A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements, define the behaviour and attitudes that set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher's career.

Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school by:

- **Treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect**, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
- **Having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions**
- **Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others**
- **Not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs**
- **Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways that detriment pupils' broad outlook on the world, exploit pupils' vulnerability, or might lead them to break the law.**

Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality. They must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks that set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

NB the phrase '**fundamental British values**' refers to the definition of extremism as articulated in the Prevent Strategy, which was launched in June 2011 and updated recently in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. It includes the need for schools to explore with pupils and students '**democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs**'.

11. Policy Adoption, Monitoring and Review

This Policy was considered and adopted by the Governing Body in line with their overall duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children as set out in the DfE guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and duties as set out in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

Parents/carers will be issued with a hard copy of this Policy on request. This Policy will also be made available to parents/carers via the school's website. Governors will review this policy annually prior to the start of a new academic year but may adopt any amendments outside this timeframe in accordance with any new legislation or guidance.

12. Supporting children who are travelling/have travelled abroad to specific locations

If a student/parent/carer seeks permission to travel abroad and this falls within the academic school term, then the family should be provided with advice and guidance generally as from the attendance and prosecution officer/service at the LA. The dangers of travelling for terrorism (or Forced Marriage or Female Genital Mutilation) are becoming increasingly apparent and concerning. While this guidance refers to children and young people returning; there is an absolute desire to stop them travelling wherever possible. School staff must also

be alert and refer cases of potential concern if they become aware that a student/pupil is intending to travel to these locations during school holidays.

If the school have concerns post or pre-travel or identify any concerns in relation to extremism as identified above, please refer to your local MASH and/or PEO. If any indicators of concern are noted upon return, then consideration may include a Prevent/Channel referral. If adopted at Channel, the Channel panel will suggest appropriate intervention if required. This will be from a safeguarding perspective around issues that encompass vulnerabilities to extremism.

LINKS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

HO Foreign Travel Advice -

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

How social media is used to encourage travel to Syria and Iraq (schools briefing note)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/440450/How_social_media_is_used_to_encourage_travel_to_Syria_and_Iraq.pdf

Home Office in the media: Factsheet: Syrian travellers

<https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2019/02/15/fact-sheet-returnees-from-the-conflict-zone-in-syria/>

Promoting British Values through SMSC

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380595/SMSC_Guidance_Maintained_Schools.pdf

Tackling extremism in the UK - Task Force report (see pages 5 - 7)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-extremism-in-the-uk-report-by-the-extremism-taskforce>

Channel Guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-guidance>

Departmental Advice for Schools and Childcare Providers

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-children-from-radicalisation-the-prevent-duty>

Guidance for designated safeguarding leads to help keep young people safe from radicalisation

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-prevent-duty-safeguarding-learners-vulnerable-to-radicalisation>

Keeping Children Safe in Education – updates in force September 2022

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2#history>

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