

Shrewsbury High School statement - Preventing Radicalisation

The school constitutes a safe space in which pupils can understand and discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, and learn how to challenge these ideas.

This statement is in line with GDST Hub policy – [linked here](#)

In the context of recent national and international events arising from the radicalisation of individuals and their subsequent involvement in extremist or terrorist activity, schools now have a statutory duty to be aware of and ready to respond to any signs that individuals are vulnerable to radicalisation or being influenced towards supporting terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.

Extremism is defined in the *Prevent* strategy as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values.

The school is committed to working with others to prevent vulnerable people, including children, being drawn into terrorism or activity in support of terrorism. It does this through:

1. School culture

The school promotes the spiritual, moral and cultural development of its pupils. This includes the encouragement and exercise of free speech, and the articulation and discussion of opinions. But with rights come responsibilities. If a pupil were to express discriminatory or extremist opinions or behaviours, these would be challenged as a matter of course.

Mutual respect is central to the ethos of the school, and is modelled by pupils and staff alike. The school promotes respect for others in the classroom and in all other activities. Pupils are encouraged to explore ideas and develop opinions, always understanding that disagreement does not entail loss of respect for and understanding of others' opinions. They are given the opportunity to explore and understand their place in the UK's culturally diverse society, and they are given the opportunity to experience diversity within the school community.

There is no place at the school for the promotion of partisan political views. There are occasions when it is appropriate to present pupils with different political views; in these cases, we undertake to ensure a balanced presentation of those views. Teaching cannot involve the promotion of partisan political views. In discussing political issues, pupils are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views.

2. Curriculum

The school actively promotes the values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Its curriculum incorporates the desired learning outcomes published by the DfE (below). Pupils gain these understandings through

PSHE programmes (where questions about extremism may arise), assemblies and schemes of work in relevant curriculum subjects.

Desired learning outcomes, as defined by the Department for Education:

- *An understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process;*
- *An appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their well-being and safety;*
- *An understanding that there is a separation of power between the executive and the judiciary, and that while some public bodies such as the police and the army can be held to account through Parliament, others such as the courts maintain independence;*
- *An understanding that the freedom to hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law;*
- *An acceptance that people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour;*
- *An understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination.*

3. Safeguarding framework

Identifying and acting appropriately on any evidence that an individual is vulnerable to extremism or radicalisation is part of the broader safeguarding role of the school and its staff. The GDST *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy* and *Safeguarding Procedures* set out in detail the framework, which is supported by other policies, such as *Behaviour*, *Anti-bullying* and the *ICT Acceptable Use Agreement*.

With regard to preventing radicalisation, the school:

- **Prohibits extremist speakers/events at the school;** and has established clear protocols for ensuring that any visiting speakers – whether invited by staff or by children themselves – are suitable and appropriately supervised.
- **Manages access to extremist material** – including through the **Internet**. GDST schools use screening which filters Internet traffic coming through the school. Websites with militancy and extremist content are screened through this system. In addition, the system can monitor requested internet access to radical sites by users of school systems.
- Every effort is made to filter extremist sites and ensure that pupils are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the Internet in school. The key word here is ‘appropriate’, given that pupils need to be educated in the use of the Internet, and too high a level of filtering would impede wider educational aims.
- **Trains its staff** to recognise signs of radicalisation/extremism, and to know what to do; with the result that staff have the knowledge and confidence to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism, and to challenge extremist ideas which can be used to legitimise terrorism and are shared by terrorist groups. Staff know where and how to refer children and young people for further help.
- **Works in partnership:** risk assessments and referrals are made in liaison with other local agencies. *Channel* is the multi-agency process designed to safeguard vulnerable people from being drawn into extremist behaviour, and works in a similar way to existing safeguarding partnerships (see below)
- **Has established referral mechanisms** to identify individuals who are vulnerable to extremism or radicalisation and works with local partners to develop appropriate support strategies.

The *Channel* process.

In the case of concerns about a pupil being at risk of radicalisation, school staff will use their professional judgement and act proportionately, which may include making a referral through the *Channel* programme.

The *Channel* process is part of the government's overall strategy of preventing radicalisation, and sets out a framework within which agencies work together to:

- identify individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism
- assess the nature and extent of that risk
- develop the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned.

The *Channel* referral process requires that concerns should be passed on to the school's Safeguarding Lead, who may consult with the local *Prevent* Officer (Police/Local Authority). If further action is considered appropriate, screening by the police *Channel* Coordinator might take place, followed by a preliminary assessment by the Local Authority's *Prevent* Lead and Police *Channel* Coordinator. Again, if further action is considered necessary, the next step might be the creation of an assessment and action plan by the local Multi-Agency *Channel* Panel, and subsequent implementation of that plan, which would be aimed at re-engaging the individual and preventing radicalisation.

Channel is about safeguarding children and adults from being drawn into committing terrorist-related activity. It involves early intervention to protect vulnerable people and divert them away from the risk they face before illegality occurs. The framework for referral, review and action is not intended to criminalise individuals, but to set a course to avoid precisely that.

An individual's engagement with the *Channel* programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.

Safeguarding children and young people from radicalisation is no different from safeguarding them from other forms of harm. Indicators for vulnerability to radicalisation overlap with those which underlie other vulnerabilities that might give rise to safeguarding concerns, including:

- Family tensions
- Sense of isolation
- Distance from cultural heritage
- Experience of racism or discrimination either personally or as a witness to the event
- Feeling of failure.

The risk of radicalisation may be the product of a number of factors. Identifying this risk requires that we exercise professional judgement, seeking further advice as necessary. Staff are alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection.

Anyone with concerns about a pupil being vulnerable to radicalisation or extremism should contact the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding lead : please refer to our Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for further guidance.

Possible activities or events that would raise initial concerns:

- A pupil disclosing her exposure to the extremist actions, views or materials of others outside of school
- Graffiti symbols, writing or art work promoting extremist messages or images
- Students accessing extremist material online, including through social networking sites
- Parental reports of changes in behaviour, friendship or actions and requests for assistance
- Other local schools, local authority services, and police reports of issues affecting their students
- A pupil voicing opinions drawn from extremist ideologies and narratives
- Use of extremist or 'hate' terms to exclude others or incite violence
- Expressions of intolerance to difference, whether it be religious, gender, disability, sexuality, ethnicity
- Attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
- Expressions of extreme anti-Western or Anti-British views.

The Internet and social media have become a major factor in the radicalisation of young people.

The *Channel* guidance describes the **possible indicators of vulnerability** to extremism and radicalisation, around the three dimensions of engagement, intent and capability:

1) Engagement

- a. spending increasing time in the company of other suspected extremists
- b. changing their style of dress or personal appearance to accord with the group
- c. their day-to-day behaviour becoming increasingly centred around an extremist ideology, group or cause
- d. loss of interest in other friends and activities not associated with the extremist ideology, group or cause
- e. possession of material or symbols associated with an extremist cause (e.g. the swastika for far right groups)
- f. attempts to recruit others to the group/cause/ideology
- g. communicating with others in a way that suggest identification with a group/cause/ideology.

2) Intent

- a. clearly identifying another group as threatening what they stand for and blaming that group for all social or political ills
- b. using insulting or derogatory names or labels for another group
- c. speaking about the imminence of harm from the other group and the importance of action now
- d. expressing attitudes that justify offending on behalf of the group, cause or ideology
- e. condoning or supporting violence or harm towards others
- f. plotting or conspiring with others.

3) Capability

- a. having a history of violence
- b. being criminally versatile and using criminal networks to support extremist goals
- c. having occupational skills that can enable acts of terrorism (such as civil engineering, pharmacology or construction)
- d. having technical expertise that can be deployed (e.g. IT skills, knowledge of chemicals, military training or survival skills).

Local contacts:

Prevent Officer 101

Anti-terrorism hotline 0800 789 321 (in emergencies call 999)

The Anti-Terrorist Hotline is a dedicated number staffed by specialist counter terrorism officers 24 hours a day. Members of the public should call the number if they have any concerns about unusual behaviour or activity in their neighbourhood. The public can play a vital part in providing information that could help disrupt terrorist planning and save lives. Callers to the Anti-Terrorist Hotline can speak in confidence to officers and discuss their concerns.

Non-emergency email : contactus@westmercia.police.uk

- Our Designated Leads for Prevent are John Rowe & Jack Pittaway
- DfE Counter Extremism Helpline: Call: 020 7340 7264
- Email: counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk
- West Mercia Prevent Team: 01386 591835
prevent@warwickshireandwestmercia.pnn.police.uk

The Channel police practitioner will make an initial assessment and advise. If the person is not suitable Channel they can be directed to safeguarding and support services.

Appendix I: Vulnerability / Risk Factors

The following lists are not exhaustive and all or none may be present in individual cases of concern. Nor does it mean that vulnerable people/ young people experiencing these factors are automatically at risk of exploitation for the purposes of extremism. The accepted view is that a complex relationship between the various aspects of an individual's identity determines their vulnerability to extremism. Over-simplified assessments based upon demographics and poverty indicators have consistently demonstrated to increase victimisation, fail to identify vulnerabilities and, in some cases, increase the ability of extremists to exploit, operate and recruit.

There is no such thing as a 'typical extremist' and those involved in extremism come from a range of backgrounds and experiences. The following indicators have been provided to help understand and identify factors that may suggest a child, young person or their family may be vulnerable or involved with extremism.

Vulnerability

Identity Crisis - Distance from cultural/ religious heritage and uncomfortable with their place in the society around them

Personal Crisis – Family tensions; sense of isolation; adolescence; low self esteem; disassociating from existing friendship group and becoming involved with a new and different group of friends; searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging

Personal Circumstances – Migration; local community tensions; events affecting country or region of origin; alienation from UK values; having a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy

Unmet Aspirations – Perceptions of injustice; feeling of failure; rejection of civic life

Criminality – Experiences of imprisonment; poor resettlement/ reintegration, previous involvement with criminal groups

Access to extremism / extremist influences

- Is there reason to believe that the child/young person associates with those known to be involved in extremism - either because they associate directly with known individuals or because they frequent key locations where these individuals are known to operate? (e.g. the child/young person is the partner, spouse, friend or family member of someone believed to be linked with extremist activity)
- Does the child/young person frequent, or is there evidence to suggest that they are accessing the internet for the purpose of extremist activity? (e.g. Use of closed network groups, access to or distribution of extremist material, contact associates covertly via Skype/email etc)
- Is there reason to believe that the child/young person has been or is likely to be involved with extremist/ military training camps/ locations?
- Is the child/young person known to have possessed or is actively seeking to possess and/ or distribute extremist literature/ other media material likely to incite racial/ religious hatred or acts of violence?
- Does the child/young person sympathise with, or support illegal/illicit groups e.g. propaganda distribution, fundraising and attendance at meetings?

- Does the child/young person support groups with links to extremist activity but not illegal/illicit e.g. propaganda distribution, fundraising and attendance at meetings?

Experiences, Behaviours and Influences

- Has the child/ young person encountered peer, social, family or faith group rejection?
- Is there evidence of extremist ideological, political or religious influence on the child/ young person from within or outside UK?
- Have international events in areas of conflict and civil unrest had a personal impact on the child/ young person resulting in a noticeable change in behaviour?
It is important to recognise that many people may be emotionally affected by the plight of what is happening in areas of conflict (i.e. images of children dying) it is important to differentiate them from those that sympathise with or support extremist activity
- Has there been a significant shift in the child/ young person's behaviour or outward appearance that suggests a new social/political or religious influence?
- Has the child/ young person come into conflict with family over religious beliefs/lifestyle/ dress choices?
- Does the child/ young person vocally support terrorist attacks; either verbally or in their written work?
- Has the child/ young person witnessed or been the perpetrator/ victim of racial or religious hate crime or sectarianism?

Travel

- Is there a pattern of regular or extended travel within the UK, with other evidence to suggest this is for purposes of extremist training or activity?
- Has the child/ young person travelled for extended periods of time to international locations known to be associated with extremism?
- Has the child/ young person employed any methods to disguise their true identity? Has the child/ young person used documents or cover to support this?

Social Factors

- Does the child/ young person have experience of poverty, disadvantage, discrimination or social exclusion?
- Does the child/ young person experience a lack of meaningful employment appropriate to their skills?
- Does the child/ young person display a lack of affinity or understanding for others, or social isolation from peer groups? Does the child/ young person demonstrate identity conflict and confusion normally associated with youth development?
- Does the child/ young person have any learning difficulties/ mental health support needs?
- Does the child/ young person demonstrate a simplistic or flawed understanding of religion or politics?
- Does the child/ young person have a history of crime, including episodes in prison?

- Is the child/young person a foreign national, refugee or awaiting a decision on their immigration/national status?
- Does the child/ young person have insecure, conflicted or absent family relationships?
- Has the child/ young person experienced any trauma in their lives, particularly any trauma associated with war or sectarian conflict?
- Is there evidence that a significant adult or other in the child/young person's life has extremist view or sympathies?

More critical risk factors could include: -

- Being in contact with extremist recruiters
- Articulating support for extremist causes or leaders
- Accessing extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element
- Possessing extremist literature
- Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues
- Joining extremist organisations
- Significant changes to appearance and/or behaviour