Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Safeguarding Policy

The Oak Tree Federation

Laughton Community Primary School

Firle Church of England Primary School

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1. Purpose

1.1. This policy should be read alongside the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Online Safety Policy, Behaviour Policy, RSHE Policy, and Staff Code of Conduct.

1.2. The school recognises that safeguarding children from radicalisation and extremism is part of its wider safeguarding responsibilities.

1.3. The school's approach to Prevent is based on safeguarding principles. It is intended to protect children and young people who may be vulnerable to radicalisation in the same way that the school safeguards children from other forms of harm, abuse, exploitation, and vulnerability.

1.4. Radicalisation can affect any child regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, faith, socio-economic background, or personal circumstances.

1.5. The school has a statutory duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism; this duty is commonly referred to as the Prevent Duty.

More information about the Prevent Duty is available on:

- The Government website: Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales (2023) - GOV.UK
- The Department for Education website: The Prevent duty: an introduction for those with safeguarding responsibilities - GOV.UK
- The East Sussex Education Division Czone: Prevent duty - preventing extremism | Czone

2. Legislative and Guidance Framework

2.1. This policy is informed by:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales
- Key Principles of Prevent
- The Prevent Duty: Safeguarding Learners Vulnerable to Radicalisation
- Channel Duty Guidance
- Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures
- East Sussex Prevent Duty Guidance

3.What is Extremism?

3.1. Extremism is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred, or intolerance, that aims to:

- deny 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 outlined in the previous two bullet points.

3.2. It includes the vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, all of which we are committed to upholding and promoting within our school.

4. What is Radicalisation?

4.1. Radicalisation is the process through which a person becomes susceptible to terrorist ideology and comes to legitimise or support terrorist violence or terrorism.

4.2. Radicalisation is often a gradual process rather than a single event.

4.3. Children may be exposed to extremist influences in different ways, including through:

- Exploitation by others, including family members and peers.
- Community influences.
- Social media.
- Online gaming platforms.
- Messaging services.
- Online forums.
- Extremist propaganda and narratives.
- Self-radicalisation through independent engagement with extremist content.

4.4. Radicalisation can involve a range of ideologies and motivations, so staff should remain alert to all forms of extremism and should not focus solely on one ideology or group.

4.5. While ideology is an important consideration when assessing radicalisation and extremism, the presence of a clear identifiable ideology is not required for a Prevent referral. Staff should consider concerns relating to susceptibility to radicalisation, including cases where an individual demonstrates a fascination with extreme violence or other behaviours that may indicate a risk of being drawn towards terrorism or extremist violence.

5. What is Terrorism?

5.1. Terrorism means the use or threat of action designed to influence the government or intimidate the public (or a section of the public), for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial, or ideological cause.

5.2. The action must involve one or more of the following:

- Serious violence against a person.
- Serious damage to property.
- Endangering another person's life.
- Creating serious risk to the health or safety of the public (or a section of the public).
- Serious interference with, or disruption of, an electronic system.

6. The School's Prevent Duty Responsibilities

6.1. The school will fulfil its Prevent Duty responsibilities by:

- Maintaining a clear and up to date Prevent risk assessment.
- Ensuring staff receive appropriate training, dependent on their role and responsibility and informed by the Prevent risk assessment.
- Promoting a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment in which there is no place for any kind of extremist views and where any prejudice, discrimination, or extremist views (including derogatory language) will always be challenged.
- Providing opportunities for pupils to discuss challenging issues safely.
- Teaching critical thinking and media literacy skills.
- Promoting fundamental British values.
- Working with safeguarding partners and local agencies.
- Making referrals where concerns arise, in relation to any member of the internal or external school community e.g. pupils, staff, governors, parents/carers, external agencies, etc.
- Maintaining appropriate safeguarding records.

7. Prevent Risk Assessment

Requirement to Complete a Prevent Risk Assessment

7.1. The school completes, maintains, and regularly reviews its Prevent Risk Assessment.

The risk assessment is a live document which is reviewed:

- At least annually.
- Following significant local or national incidents.
- When new risks emerge.
- Where changes occur within the school community or local context.

Scope of the Risk Assessment

7.2. The Prevent Risk Assessment considers:

Local Context

- Local risks and threats.
- Community tensions.
- Local intelligence and safeguarding information.
- Advice from Prevent partners and safeguarding agencies.

Pupil Vulnerability

- Pupils potentially vulnerable to exploitation.

- Attendance concerns.
- Social isolation.
- Mental health vulnerabilities.
- SEND related vulnerabilities.
- Online vulnerabilities.
- Pupils experiencing significant life events.

Online Risks

- Access to extremist content.
- Use of social media.
- Online grooming and recruitment.
- Misinformation, disinformation, and conspiracy narratives.
- AI-generated extremist content.
- Cyber-radicalisation risks.

Staff Knowledge and Confidence

- Training compliance.
- Understanding of referral pathways.
- Confidence in recognising concerns.

- Confidence in reporting concerns and, where relevant, making referrals.

Curriculum and Culture

- Promotion of critical thinking.
- Opportunities for debate.
- Promotion of inclusion and belonging.
- Teaching of fundamental British values.
- Resilience to extremist narratives.
- Educative interventions for groups or individual children.

7.3. The DSL oversees the Prevent Risk Assessment with the support of senior leaders and governors.

Risk Assessment Considerations for East Sussex for 2026/27

Local Channel referral themes currently include:

- Males aged 13 to 17 years: Think families and future outcomes for younger children.
- Accessing extremist materials on websites and forums and making contact with others on encrypted and gaming platforms.
- Autism traits are often present but should not be considered as the only vulnerability.

- Racist views (comfortable in expressing these openly to peers either online or in person) and other hate themes including religion, sexuality, or disability.

- Mental health difficulties such as anxiety, low mood, depression, and self-harm.

- Experience of bullying behaviour (historic or current) which has left a negative impression on them about their school: how they view their peers, as well as staff who dealt with any incidents, has resulted in a sense of injustice and grievance.

- Being isolated or a loner with few 'real friends' and no sense of belonging.

8.The Role of School Staff

8.1. All staff have a responsibility to safeguard children and should understand that radicalisation is a safeguarding issue.

8.2. Staff should:

- Complete Prevent training so they are equipped to recognise extremism and confident enough to challenge it.

- Remain alert to indicators of radicalisation and maintain professional curiosity.

- Report concerns immediately to the DSL.

- Record concerns promptly.

- Contribute to safeguarding assessments, where required.

- Understand local referral arrangements.

8.3. Staff are not expected to become experts in terrorism or extremism. Their role is to identify concerns and refer them appropriately through safeguarding procedures.

9. The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

9.1. The DSL has lead responsibility for Prevent related safeguarding concerns.

9.2. The DSL will:

- Oversee implementation of the Prevent Duty.
- Maintain the Prevent Risk Assessment.
- Act as the main point of contact for Prevent concerns.
- Provide advice and support to staff.
- Ensure appropriate training takes place.
- Liaise with Prevent partners and safeguarding professionals.
- Make referrals where necessary.
- Maintain accurate records of Prevent concerns and actions.
- Provide safeguarding reports to governors relating to Prevent compliance.

10. Possible Indicators of Radicalisation

10.1. There is no single profile of a child at risk of radicalisation and there is no single pathway into extremism.

10.2. Indicators may include:

- Reports by pupils of their exposure to the extremist actions, views, or materials of others outside of school, such as in their homes or community groups, especially where pupils have not actively sought these out.

- Graffiti symbols, writing, or artwork promoting extremist messages or images.

- Pupils accessing extremist material online, including through social networking sites.

- Reports of changes in behaviour, appearance, friendship, or actions (from parents/carers, staff, and other pupils), including increasing isolation from peers.

- Accessing extremist material online and increased secrecy regarding online activity.

- A sudden rejection of previously held values and a fixation on a particular ideology, and repeated use of extremist narratives.

- Intolerance of difference, whether secular or religious or, views based on, but not exclusive to, gender, disability, homophobia, race, colour, or culture.

- Expressing intolerant, hateful, or extremist views drawn from extremist ideologies and narratives, including Anti-Western or Anti-British views.

- Use of extremist or ‘hate’ terms to exclude others or to incite violence and justify violence to achieve a cause.

- Attempts to impose extremist views or practice on others.

- Partner schools, local authority services, and police reports of issues affecting pupils in other schools or settings.

10.3. The presence of one or more indicators does not necessarily mean a child is being radicalised. Concerns should always be considered within the wider context of the child's circumstances.

11. Vulnerable Children

11.1. Some children may be more vulnerable to radicalisation due to factors including:

- Social isolation.

- Difficulties with identity, belonging, and self-esteem.

- Experiences of bullying behaviour.

- Exploitation by others.

- Trauma.

- Family tensions.

- Race and experiences of discrimination and hate crime.
- Unmet educational needs.
- Mental health difficulties.
- Personal grievances.
- Political grievances.
- Prejudicial behaviour.
- Online influence.
- Peer pressure.
- Involvement in anti-social behaviour and crime.

11.2. These factors do not cause radicalisation but may increase vulnerability to manipulation and exploitation.

12. The Curriculum

12.1. The curriculum plays an important role in building resilience to radicalisation.

12.2. 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.

12.3. We will ensure that all 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.

12.4. We will be flexible enough to adapt our teaching approaches, as appropriate, to address specific issues to become even more relevant to the current issues of extremism and radicalisation.

12.5. The school will provide opportunities for pupils to:

- Develop critical thinking skills.
- Evaluate information critically.
- Understand democracy and the rule of law.
- Discuss challenging and controversial issues safely.
- Understand equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Challenge stereotypes and prejudice.
- Recognise manipulation, misinformation, disinformation, and conspiracy theories.
- Understand how to seek help and support.

12.6. The curriculum should support respectful dialogue whilst ensuring that extremist views are not legitimised or promoted.

13. Online Safety and Radicalisation

13.1. The school recognises that radicalisation increasingly takes place online and that technology is a significant component of many safeguarding and wellbeing issues.

13.2. We recognise that children are at risk of being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content including radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news), and conspiracy theories online.

13.3. The school will:

- Maintain appropriate filtering and monitoring systems to ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in school.
- Teach pupils about online safety risks.
- Promote media literacy.
- Educate pupils about manipulation, misinformation, disinformation, and conspiracy theories.
- Monitor emerging online safeguarding risks.
- Respond to extremist content concerns promptly.

13.4. Staff should be aware that extremist groups may use:

- Social media;
- Livestreaming platforms;
- Online gaming environments;
- Messaging applications;
- Discussion forums;

- AI-generated content;

to engage, influence, or recruit vulnerable individuals.

13.5. The school's Online Safety Policy provides more information on the school's approach to online safety.

14. External Agencies/Speakers and Use of the School Premises

14.1. We encourage the use of external agencies and 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.

14.2. 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, 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 schools to ensure that they are effective.

14.3. We recognise, however, that the ethos of our school is to encourage pupils to understand opposing views and ideologies, appropriate to their age, understanding and abilities, and to be able to actively engage with them in informed debate, and we may use external agencies or speakers to facilitate and support this.

14.4. Where the school premises are used for non-school activities, we will ensure due diligence around those activities to ensure that these do not conflict with the Prevent Duty.

15. Reporting Concerns and Referrals

15.1. Any concern that a child may be vulnerable to radicalisation must be reported immediately to the DSL.

15.2. The DSL will:

- Gather relevant information and fully investigate. This will include speaking with the child/children involved and their parents/carers to gain their views and discuss the concern/s in detail, with the aim of identifying motivating factors and any changes in circumstances.

- Assess risk and vulnerability.

- Consult with safeguarding partners where appropriate.

- Ensure concerns are responded to from a safeguarding perspective alongside, where relevant, the Behaviour Policy or Staff Code of Conduct.

- Consider whether a Prevent referral is required. We follow East Sussex guidance when considering whether to make a Prevent referral and submit a Prevent referral form if needed. The form is screened by the police Prevent team to determine if the young person is vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. If a vulnerability is identified the case will be discussed at the local 'Channel' meeting and support/intervention will be identified and offered, where appropriate.

- Record all discussions, actions, and decisions.

- Attend meetings and work in partnership with other agencies, as required, such as Children's Social Care, the Safer East Sussex Team, Prevent Team, etc.

15.3. If a crime has been committed, then the police will be contacted.

16. Channel

16.1. Channel is a multi-agency safeguarding programme designed to support individuals who are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

16.2. Channel is:

- Voluntary.

- Supportive rather than punitive.

- Focused on early intervention.

- Delivered through partnership working.

16.3. The school will contribute information or attend Channel meetings where a child is receiving support if asked to do so.

17. Training Requirements

17.1. The school will ensure:

All Staff

- Receive Prevent awareness training as part of safeguarding induction.
- Receive regular Prevent updates.
- Understand local referral pathways.
- Know how to identify and report concerns.

DSL and Deputy DSLs

- Undertake additional Prevent training to fulfil their role and responsibilities (such as, the Regional CONTEST Co-ordinators Prevent in Education: Training for DSLs, the Gov.UK Course 2: Referrals, the Gov.UK Course 3: Channel or Prevent Multi-Agency Panel).
- Maintain up-to-date understanding of local risks.
- Participate in ongoing Prevent related professional development.
- Maintain effective partnerships with Prevent professionals and safeguarding agencies.

Governors

- Receive training sufficient to understand the school's Prevent responsibilities (such as the Governor Hub Knowledge The Prevent Duty Course, the Regional CONTEST Co-ordinators Prevent in Education: Training for Governors and Trustees in Schools).

- Monitor compliance with the Prevent Duty.

- Review the Prevent Risk Assessment regularly.

18. Safer Recruitment

18.1. The school is committed to safer recruitment practices and will ensure that all staff, governors, and volunteers are recruited and vetted in accordance with statutory guidance (detailed in Part Three of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026) and the school's Recruitment Policy.

18.2. Recruitment processes will seek to identify and deter individuals who may pose a risk to children, including those who may seek to exploit, radicalise, or otherwise harm children and young people.

18.3. All appropriate pre-employment checks will be completed before an individual begins work within the school.

19. Managing Concerns About Adults

19.1. The school recognises that the conduct and behaviour of adults working with children can have a significant impact on safeguarding and the prevention of radicalisation.

19.2. Any concerns regarding inappropriate behaviour, attitudes, language, conduct, or actions by staff (including supply staff and trainee teachers), governors, contractors, or volunteers that may undermine the school's

safeguarding culture or place children at risk will be managed promptly and in line with the school's Staff Code of Conduct, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and Whistleblowing Policy, and relevant disciplinary procedures.

19.3. Appropriate action will be taken where concerns are identified.

20. Monitoring and Review

20.1. The Governing Board will ensure that:

- A Prevent Risk Assessment is maintained and reviewed.
- Prevent training remains current.
- Safeguarding audits include Prevent arrangements.
- Appropriate policies are implemented effectively.
- Lessons learned from incidents inform future practice.

21. Policy Review

21.1. This policy will be reviewed as required, but at least annually alongside the school’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the school’s Prevent Risk Assessment.