

Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy



The Cottesloe School

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This policy is part of the school's **suite of safeguarding policies**, including:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy

It ensures The Cottesloe School continues to provide a **safe, inclusive, and resilient learning environment** for all students.

The health, safety and welfare of all the people that work or learn at The Cottesloe School are of fundamental importance. We aim to provide a safe, secure and pleasant environment for everyone where people are supported to fulfil their potential. The governing body, as an employer, takes responsibility for the health and safety of all our students, members of staff and others who visit our premises.

1. What is Prevent?

Prevent is part of the UK government's **Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST)**. Its aim is to stop individuals from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism by working collaboratively with government departments, local authorities, schools, and community organisations.

Prevent is relevant to everyone.

There are four pillars of the strategy:



2. Introduction

The Cottesloe School is committed to providing a secure environment for all students, where children feel safe and are kept safe. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, irrespective of the role undertaken or whether there is direct contact with children.

The governing body expects the Headteacher and staff to maintain a caring, respectful atmosphere in which students can feel happy, secure, and supported to achieve their potential.

This policy forms part of the school's overall safeguarding arrangements, drawing on the statutory guidance:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Prevent Duty Guidance](#)
- [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)
- Local guidance from [Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

3. Definitions - follow Home Office Guidance

Terrorism: Acts that endanger life, involve serious violence, cause significant damage, or disrupt public safety or infrastructure.

Extremism: Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Radicalisation: The process by which a person adopts or supports terrorism and extremist ideologies.

Extremist Ideology: Beliefs based on hatred, violence, or the justification of harmful actions.

Ideological Threat Categories (2023 Prevent Guidance):

Islamist Extremism: Political movements claiming to base governance on Islam; this is distinct from the religion itself.

- **Far-Right Extremism:** Groups advocating nationalism, racism, religious intolerance, or xenophobia.

- **Far-Left Extremism:** Groups promoting revolutionary anti-capitalist or anarchist agendas.
- **Mixed, Unclear, or Unstable Ideologies:** Individuals or groups with poorly defined extremist motivations.
- **Other Emerging Threats:** Including incels and other ideological or online-driven radical narratives-

4. Aims:

The main aims of this policy statement are to:

- Ensure that all staff and governors are vigilant for the signs of radicalisation
- Promote awareness of Prevent within the school and wider community.
- Provide clear procedures for identifying and responding to concerns about extremism and radicalisation.
- Support students to build resilience to extremist influences through education, pastoral support, and external agencies when necessary.

5. Objectives:

1. All staff, governors, and volunteers will understand the nature of radicalisation and extremism.
2. All staff, governors and volunteers will follow this policy when concerns arise, in line with safeguarding procedures.
3. The policy will be accessible to parents, carers, and the wider community via the school website and in hard copy from the reception upon request.

6. Ethos and Practice

There is no place for extremist views in our school, whether expressed by students, staff, governors, parents, or external visitors. Our students see our school as a safe place where they can explore controversial issues safely and where our teachers encourage and facilitate this - we have a duty 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 students.

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.

The Cottesloe School:

- Provides a **broad and balanced curriculum** that promotes tolerance, mutual respect, and British values.
- Ensures that exposure to extremist material or influences is treated as a **safeguarding concern**.
- Encourages **critical thinking, open discussion, and debate** through PSHCE, assemblies, and the wider curriculum.
- Actively **challenges prejudice, discrimination, and derogatory language** in line with the Behaviour for Learning and Use of reasonable Force Policy and the staff Code of Conduct.
- Supports students who may be vulnerable through internal mechanisms (TEAM Hub) and external agencies, including the local authority.

As part of wider safeguarding responsibilities, school staff will be alert to:

- Disclosures by students 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 students have not actively sought these out;
- 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;
- Partner schools, local authority services, police reports of issues affecting students in other schools or settings;
- Students voicing opinions drawn from extremist ideologies and narratives;
- Use of extremist or 'hate' terms to exclude others or incite violence;
- Intolerance of difference, whether secular or religious or, in line with our equalities policy, views based on, but not exclusive to, gender, disability, homophobia, race, colour or culture;
- Attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others;
- Anti-western or Anti-British views.

The Cottesloe School have determined Healthy Relationships to be:

- **Others:** Respect, equality, empathy

- **Community:** Tolerance, democracy, opportunity
- **Self:** Responsibility, honesty, excellence

As a school, we aim to develop and nurture these by:

- Planning a vibrant, engaging Assembly programme with core ethical values and beliefs at its heart.
- A well-structured PSHCE programme which addresses all of the requirements of the programmes of study (looking at Democracy, British Values, Human Rights and responsibilities). Our PSHCE education programme will equip students with a sound understanding of risk and with the knowledge and skills necessary to make safe and informed decisions.
- The curriculum also drives the development of Healthy Relationships through its specific subject content.

The curriculum, assemblies, and PSHCE programmes are designed to:

- Equip students with understanding of **risk and safe decision-making**
- Promote **fundamental British values** and engagement in civic life
- Enable students to **recognise extremist narratives and online risks**
- Develop **resilience to radicalisation**

7. Curriculum and 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.

We will ensure that all of our teaching approaches help our students build resilience to extremism and give students a positive sense of identity through the development of critical thinking skills. We will ensure that all of our staff are equipped to recognise extremism and are skilled and confident enough to challenge it.

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

1. **Building connections** with students through student-centered learning.
2. Providing a **safe space** for dialogue about controversial issues.

3. Equipping students with the **skills, knowledge, and awareness** to resist extremist influences.

Our goal is to build mutual respect and understanding and to promote the use of dialogue not violence as a form of conflict resolution. We will achieve this by using a curriculum that includes:

- Open discussions and debates in PSHCE and assemblies.
- Embedding anti-violence and restorative approaches throughout the curriculum.
- Use of external agencies or speakers, carefully vetted and aligned with school ethos.

We will help support students, particularly those that are most vulnerable to such influences as part of our wider safeguarding responsibilities and where we believe a student is being directly affected by extremist materials or influences, we will ensure that students are offered support through TEAM Hub. Additionally, if necessary our school will seek external support from the Local Authority and external agencies.

The Cottesloe School has a 'share a concern' button on the school website which encourages students, parents and carers to inform the leadership team of any concerns that they may have, which may include bullying.. As a school we also encourage our students to respect other people with particular regard to protected characteristics: disability, race/ethnic identity, religion/beliefs, gender, sexual orientation and age.

Through a broad and balanced curriculum and the opportunities that lessons create, the staff and Governors of The Cottesloe School believe students are able to demonstrate:

- Their ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong and respect the civil and criminal law of England.
- Their acceptance of and engagement with the 'fundamental British values', and demonstrating the skills and attitudes that allow them to participate and contribute to life in modern Britain.
- Their understanding of the range of cultures within the school "and further afield" as preparation for life in modern Britain.

8. Use of External Agencies and Speakers

At The Cottesloe School, we encourage the use of external agencies or speakers to enrich the experiences of our students, however we will consistently positively vet those external agencies, individuals or speakers who we engage to provide such learning opportunities or experiences for our students.

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

- Any messages communicated to students 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 students 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 students;
- Activities are carefully evaluated to ensure that they are effective.

We recognise, however, that the ethos of our school is to encourage students 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.

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

9. Indicators

There are no definitive indicators, but increased risk may be associated with:

Identity and Personal Circumstances:

- Disconnection from cultural or religious heritage
- Family tensions, low self-esteem, isolation
- Perceived injustice or unmet aspirations
- Experiences of criminality or poor reintegration
- Special educational needs affecting social understanding

Behavioural and Attitudinal Changes:

- Increased anger, secrecy, or withdrawal
- Changes in friendship groups or appearance
- Sympathy for extremist causes or ideologies
- Online activity with extremist content
- Advocacy of violence or intolerance of difference

Online Risks:

- Accessing extremist content or forums

- Use of multiple online identities or secret groups
- Exposure to disinformation or conspiracy theories

Staff should remain vigilant and raise concerns through the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)** or another member of the school's safeguarding team.

10. Recognising extremism:

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 outside school (but there are also very powerful narratives, programmes, and networks that young people can come across online so particular individuals / groups may not become apparent)
- Evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
- Advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups
- Out of character changes in dress, behaviour, and peer relationships
- Secretive behaviour
- 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 towards others

11. Behaviour Indicators

The early identification of safeguarding risks and subsequent intervention activity to protect and divert people away from the risks of radicalisation is a key element of the Prevent strategy. Key indicators may be identified in children and young people which fall into a number of areas and whilst it would be unwise to make generalisations about a young person's behaviour or jump to any rash conclusions, concerns should be raised when a number of these behaviours are observed as they may indicate that an individual is at risk of being radicalised. The list below is not exhaustive and could indicate a range of safeguarding issues. It would also be unwise to adopt a prescriptive or formulaic approach to safeguarding as every case must be treated individually.

Attitude and Experiences

- Increased levels of anger
- Becoming increasingly argumentative
- Using language you wouldn't expect them to know.

- Refusing to listen or discuss different points of view
- Unwilling to engage with children who are different
- Becoming abusive to children who are different
- Using racist language
- Embracing conspiracy theories
- Feeling persecuted
- Changing friends and appearance
- Distancing themselves from old friends
- Change of routine
- No longer doing things they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion
- Being secretive and reluctant to discuss their whereabouts
- Sympathetic to extremist ideologies and groups
- Legitimises/justifies violence/extreme groups
- Expresses opinions of absolute truth
- Closed to new ideas
- Fixated on a topic
- Asking inappropriate questions
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- Low self-esteem
- Victims of bullying or discrimination

Online activity

- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use.
- Changing online identity
- Having more than one online identity
- Spending a lot of time online or on the phone
- Researches and engages with conspiracy theories and discourse to an unhealthy degree
- Researches the logistics of conducting violent/ hateful acts
- Using public forums to exchange heated arguments with others about ideological differences
- Watching, sharing or creating films online which are linked to religious, political or racial hate.
- Joining or trying to join an extremist organisation
- Uses online tools (including communication platforms) to plan and research travel to conflict zones where violent extremist groups are known to be active
- Exploring new and unusual websites, chat forums and platforms.
- Joining new or secret groups since isolation.

Actions

- Possession of material or symbols associated with extremism
- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- Displays symbols of affiliation or support associated with violent extremist groups
- Adopts behaviour which diverges from family practices
- A sudden change in daily habits

- Takes part in a group that is considered extreme
- Actively seeks to recruit individuals to a group with questionable motives
- Plans and discusses violent/ hateful acts
- Heightened interest in acquiring and using illegal weapons
- Questionable Artwork / Story themes / Play

Social

- Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Getting a new friendship group
- Identity crisis – distancing themselves from cultural / religious heritage and feeling uncomfortable with their place in society
- Becomes closer to individuals or groups known to be violent extremists
- In contact (online and/or offline) with a group or network of individuals known to be violent extremists

Travel

- Plans or discusses a trip to a conflict zone in which violent extremist groups are known to be active
- Significant amount of unexplained time spent away from school/ place of work

12. Online Risks

Social media has been identified as the most important tool in the sharing of extreme material and propaganda, to radicalise and to recruit for their cause. Extremists operate predominantly online and the scale and ease of access to online extremist driven content is proving to be particularly difficult to counter.

Online risks are constantly evolving and shifting. These risks can be broadly split into three categories: extreme content, online networks and disinformation.

Extreme content

Content, or propaganda, produced by extremists is designed to spread quickly, identify supporters, influence public opinion and generate an emotive response.

Examples could include: graphic videos glorifying terror attacks; political speeches/sermons/ lectures; memes, images or gifs designed to spread hatred and/or advocate violence.

Once made aware, mainstream platforms will remove content that breach their terms of use, however this will not stop content being saved and circulated by users on alternative platforms.

Online networks

Popular social media, messaging apps, chat forums, online gaming platforms and other communication tools are used by extremists to recruit vulnerable individuals. Many of these sites are unmoderated and unchecked allowing extreme messages to be seen by wider audiences.

We have seen a rise in social media influencers who repackage extreme messages. They use subtle tactics to draw people in and move them to lesser known spaces, normally unmoderated platforms. They are extremely relatable, using topics that are likely to interest young people, and have the ability to reach large numbers on mainstream media.

Education establishments should raise awareness of grooming processes and encourage young people to use technology in a safe and secure way. Working with parents can ensure that protective measures are put into place at home, such as managing an account's privacy settings and reducing exposure to strangers.

Disinformation

Disinformation, also known as 'fake news', is used by extremists to gain support for their cause. Producers of disinformation use a variety of tactics to deceive users into believing a story has credibility. For example: sophisticated web design, doctored videos/ images, sensationalist headlines, quotes and images taken out of context.

Education establishments should consider how to equip their young people with resilience and critical thinking skills to minimise the impact of disinformation.

The schools monitoring software is programmed to alert members of the schools safeguarding team to any concerns linked to extremism and terrorism.

13. Procedure for referrals:

The Point of Contact is the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead or other member of the safeguarding team, who is responsible for:

- Ensuring that staff of the school are aware and work together to protect students from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism
- Maintaining and applying a good understanding of the relevant guidance in relation to preventing students from becoming involved in terrorism, and protecting them from radicalisation by those who support terrorism, or forms of extremism, which lead to terrorism

- Raising awareness within the school about the safeguarding processes relating to protecting students from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism
- Acting as the first point of contact within the school for case discussions relating to students who may be at risk of radicalisation or involved in terrorism
- Attending Channel¹ meetings as necessary, or ensuring that the school is represented, and carrying out any actions as agreed
- Sharing any relevant additional information in a timely manner with appropriate personnel and/or local agencies.

14. Whistleblowing

Where there are concerns of extremism or radicalisation, students, staff and governors will be encouraged to make use of our internal systems to “whistleblow” or raise any issue in confidence.

They must inform the Headteacher straight away (or if it relates to the Headteacher inform the Chair of Governors). Please see the school’s Whistleblowing Policy.

15. Safeguarding

Extremism and radicalisation are treated as **safeguarding issues**. Staff must report any risk of harm, neglect, or radicalisation to the safeguarding team via the **Safeguard database**.

At The Cottesloe School, our Safeguarding reporting arrangements are set out fully in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Training

Whole school in-service training on Safeguarding and Child Protection will be organised for staff every year and will, in part, include training on extremism and radicalisation and its safeguarding implications. All staff, volunteers and governors are required to complete the government’s online Prevent training as part of their induction.

16. Role of Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- undertake appropriate training to ensure that they are clear about their role and the parameters of their responsibilities as governors, including their statutory safeguarding duties.

¹ Channel is a multi-agency approach to safeguarding, supporting and protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults at risk of radicalisation, extremism or terrorist related activity.

- support the ethos and values of our school and will support the school in tackling extremism and radicalisation.

In line with the provisions set out in the DfE guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' the Governing Body will challenge the Senior Leadership Team on the delivery and effectiveness of this policy in line with KCSiE

17. Review

This policy will be reviewed in two years (earlier if any legislative change).