

# Prevent: Tackling Violent Extremism

Little Acorns School



Growth Learning Therapies

Approved by:	Barbara Dansey	Date: July 2022
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*Little Acorns School is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its pupils. As a school we recognise that safeguarding against radicalisation is no different from safeguarding against any other vulnerable group. All staff are expected to uphold fundamental British Values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.*

*Although incidents involving radicalisation have not occurred at Little Acorns to date, it is important to be constantly vigilant and remain fully informed about issues surrounding this.*

*This policy establishes formal procedures to enable members of the Company and its Service Users to report concerns they may have about activities or behaviour related to violent extremism.*

This policy is part of our commitment to keeping children safe. Since the 'Education and Inspections Act 2006' schools have a duty to promote community cohesion. Over the last few years global events have led to a growth of extremist viewpoints, including advocacy of violent extremism. Schools have an important part to play in both educating children and young people about extremism and recognising when pupils start to become radicalised. In March 2015 new statutory duties were placed on schools by the 'Counter Terrorism and Security Act,' (2015) which means they must work to prevent children being drawn into extremism. Safeguarding children from all risks of harm is an important part of a school's work and protecting them from extremism is one aspect of that.

### Statutory Duties

The duty to prevent children and young people being radicalised is set out in the following documents.

- Counter Terrorism and Security Act (2015)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)
- Prevent Duty Guidance (April 2024)
- Working together to Safeguard Children (2023)

### Non-statutory Guidance

- Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools: Departmental advice for maintained schools, (DfE 2014).

## 1. Aims and Objectives:

The main aims of this policy are to ensure that all staff are fully engaged in being vigilant about radicalisation; that they overcome professional disbelief that such issues will not Arise at our school and that we work alongside the care setting and other care professionals to ensure all children are safe. The key objectives are that:

- All staff will have an understanding of radicalisation and extremism and why we need to be vigilant.

- All staff know what the policy is and will be able to follow it when issues arise.
- All carers and pupils will know that the school has policies in place to keep pupils safe from harm and that the school regularly review these systems in place.

## 2. Definition and Introduction

Radicalisation is defined as the act or process of making a person more radical or favouring of extreme or fundamental changes in political, economic, or social conditions, institutions or habits of the mind. Extremism is defined as the holding of extreme political or religious views.

- The Government assesses that the UK is a high priority target for international terrorists aligned with Al Qaida and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. In practice this means a threat from British nationals and UK-based terrorists as well as from foreign terrorists planning attacks from abroad.
- In addition to the severe threat posed by Al Qaida-influenced groups, dissident Irish republican terrorist groups who oppose the Northern Ireland peace process still pose a threat to British interests. Other UK-based extremist groups including racist and fascist organisations and far-right extremist groups also pose a threat to public order and the British multicultural way of life. These groups often aspire to campaigns of violence against individuals, families and particular communities and, if unchecked, may provide a catalyst for alienation and disaffection within particular ethnic communities.
- Evidence suggests that the route to violent far-right extremism often begins with organisations seeking to recruit young people and even arranging specific training activities that include encouraging the use of guns and knives.
- The Security Service's appraisal of terrorist threats currently facing the UK can be found at: [www.mi5.gov.uk/output/Page16.html](http://www.mi5.gov.uk/output/Page16.html)
- A list of the groups or movements that encourage the use of violence and meet the conditions for being banned – proscribed – under counter-terrorism legislation is at: [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/security/terrorism-and-the-law/terrorism-act/proscribed-groups](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/security/terrorism-and-the-law/terrorism-act/proscribed-groups)

### What the Government is doing to prevent violent extremism

- The Government has a 'Prevent' strategy as part of its overall approach to countering terrorism with the aim of preventing people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism.
- The Prevent strategy has five strands designed to address the factors that research suggests can cause people to become involved in violent extremism. The five strands are:
  - **challenging** the violent extremist ideology and supporting mainstream voices
  - **disrupting** those who promote violent extremism and supporting institutions where they may be active

- **supporting individuals** who are being targeted and recruited to the cause of violent extremism
- increasing the **resilience** of communities to violent extremism
- **addressing grievances**, both genuine and perceived, that ideologues are exploiting. These can stem from national or international issues i.e. foreign policy, or local experiences of racism or community conflict

## The path to violent extremism

- Evidence suggests that the 'radicalisation' process is not linear or predictable and the length of time taken can differ greatly from a few weeks to a few years. It does not always result in violence.
- The secondary school age period is often when the process of radicalisation starts which eventually tips them into choosing to undertake violent or criminal acts.
- Young people will generally become involved in violent extremist movements under the influence of others. Initial contact could be via peers, older siblings, other family members or acquaintances. The process can often be a social one, where interaction is more likely to be outside school settings, often in unsupervised environments i.e. gyms, café's, or in private homes.
- Evidence suggests that the internet is now playing a much more important role. Both violent extremist videos and propaganda can be accessed via websites or contact via social networking sites.
- Violent extremists of all persuasions usually attract people to their cause through a persuasive narrative. Extremist narratives have the potential to influence views to varying degrees: inspiring new recruits, helping to embed beliefs of those with established extreme views, or persuading others of the legitimacy of their cause.

## Factors that make a young person susceptible to adopting extremist views and supporting violence

- Available evidence suggests there is no single profile of a person likely to become involved in extremism, or single indicator of when a person might move to adopt violence in support of extremist ideas. However it does appear the decision by a young person to become involved in violent extremism:
  - may begin with a search for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging
  - may be driven by the desire for 'adventure' and excitement
  - may be driven by a desire to enhance the self-esteem of the individual and promote their 'street cred'
  - is likely to involve identification with a charismatic individual and attraction to a group which can offer identity, social network and support
  - Adolescents exploring issues of identity can feel both distant from their parents' cultural and religious heritage and uncomfortable with their place in society around them. Extremist ideas can help provide a sense of purpose or feeling of belonging.
  - The young person may have experienced a personal crisis where significant tensions within a family produce a sense of isolation for the young person, from the certainties of family life.

- Migration, local tensions or events affecting families in countries of origin may contribute to alienation from UK values and a decision to cause harm to symbols of the community or state.
- Young people may perceive their aspirations for career and lifestyle undermined by limited school achievement or employment prospects. This can translate to a generalised rejection of civic life and adoption of violence as a symbolic act.
- A young person may have been involved in group offending or, on occasion, have been linked to organised crime and be drawn to engagement in extremist, potentially criminal, activities
- Other factors include – ideology and politics/ provocation and anger /a need for protection/ fascination with violence, weapons and uniforms/ youth rebellion, seeking family and father substitutes/ seeking friends and community and seeking status and identity.

### 3. 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
- 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 (but there are also very powerful narratives, programs and networks that young people can come across online so involvement with particular groups may not be apparent)
- secretive behaviour
- online searching or sharing extremist messages or social profiles
- intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality
- graffiti, art work 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

### 4. Referrals:

Although incidents involving radicalisation have not occurred at Little Acorns to date, it is important to be constantly vigilant and remain fully informed about issues surrounding

this. Staff are reminded to suspend any professional disbelief that instances of radicalisation 'could not happen here' and to refer any concerns through the appropriate channels (DSL/Head Teacher). Staff receive refresher training in this through staff meetings / safeguarding training and the completion of online courses.

Early intervention is vital and staff must be aware of the established processes for frontline professionals to refer concerns about individuals and/or groups. We must have the confidence to challenge, the confidence to intervene, and ensure that we have strong safeguarding practices based on the most up-to-date guidance and best practice.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (Joanna Curley) and Deputy DSL's (Alison Neal and Paris Diamond) will deal swiftly with any referrals made by staff or with concerns reported by staff. They will discuss the most appropriate course of action on a case-by-case basis and will decide when a referral to external agencies is needed.

The DSL's will log all concerns raised and a chronology of these started. These records will be saved on CPOMS.

## 5. Role of the Curriculum:

Our curriculum promotes diversity, tolerance and mutual respect. One of our aims is to ensure that the pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Children are encouraged to share their views and recognise that they are entitled to have their own different beliefs which should not be used to influence others. Our PSHE and SMSC work is embedded across the whole curriculum. Teaching the core British Values alongside the values of the school. Encourage and support the children in making a positive contribution to the development of a fair, just and civil society. Children are regularly taught online safety and how to stay safe.

It is strictly forbidden to use the Company's website or IT facilities for the promotion, planning or execution of violent extremism. These facilities must not be used to engage in any unlawful activity. The Company reserves the right to exercise control over all activities on its IT facilities and networks, including monitoring of systems and electronic communications.

## 6. Role of Designated Safeguarding Lead

It is the role of the designated safeguarding leads to:

- ensure that staff understand the issues of radicalisation, are able to recognise the signs of vulnerability or radicalisation and know how to refer their concerns
- receive safeguarding concerns about children and young people who may be vulnerable to the risk of radicalisation or are showing signs of radicalisation
- make referrals to appropriate agencies with regard to concerns about radicalisation
- liaise with partners, including the local authority and the police

- report to the governing body on these matters.

## 7. All staff will:

- Wherever possible, challenge racist or extremist views or behaviour. This could be in the form of removing hate-related graffiti, challenging views expressed through discussions, or supporting pupils in a key work session or through the restorative justice process.
- Record any minor incident on an incident report on CPOMS.
- Report any major concerns. If staff feel that there are signs that the young person's behaviour or views could be an indicator of their vulnerability to radicalisation or extremism, then the procedure follows that of the CP policy.
- Make an immediate verbal report to the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Officer if out of hours by telephone if necessary.
- Ensure that the words of the young person are used in the report and not the interpretation or understanding of those words by a member of staff.

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## 8. Policy Review:

This policy is reviewed at least every two years or sooner if necessary in the light of specific events or relevant statutory changes.

