

Briefing for schools

A summary of government guidance for schools in England and Wales on protecting children from radicalisation and extremism

October 2017

This briefing outlines government guidance for schools in England and Wales.

What is radicalisation?

In the government guidance for England [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) radicalisation is defined as ‘the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism’ (DfE, 2016).

Statutory guidance and advice for schools

Schools in England and Wales have a duty under section 26 of the [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#) to identify vulnerable children and young people and prevent them from being drawn into terrorism (HM Government, 2015).

The [Prevent Duty](#) guidance for schools in England and Wales was issued under section 29 of the Act and states specifically what action schools should take to prevent and respond to concerns about radicalisation (HM Government, 2015). For schools in England it should be used alongside [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (DfE, 2016). In Wales it should be used alongside [Keeping Learners Safe](#) (Welsh Government, 2015).

What are schools required to do under the Prevent duty?

The [Prevent Duty](#) guidance highlights that protecting children and young people from being drawn into terrorism should be part of a school’s wider safeguarding responsibility and should be included in school policies (HM Government, 2015). Other requirements for schools are summarised in four general themes in the Prevent Duty guidance:

- risk assessment
- working in partnership
- staff training
- e-safety policies.

Risk assessment

As stated in the [Prevent Duty](#) guidance risks of radicalisation of children and young people may vary from area to area. It is important that schools understand these risks so they can respond in an appropriate way (HM Government, 2015).

[Channel Duty](#) guidance provides a vulnerability framework that can be used to identify those who may at risk of becoming radicalised (Home Office, 2015). It also provides a list of possible indicators, some of which include:

- a person changing their style of dress or personal appearance to accord with the group
- a person's day-to-day behaviour becoming increasingly centred around an extremist ideology, group or cause
- a person being in possession of material or symbols associated with an extremist cause.

Online radicalisation through social media and the internet is a particular concern. The Home Office and DfE have published a briefing for schools in England [The use of social media for online radicalisation](#) (DFE, Home Office, 2015).

Working in partnership

As stated in the [Prevent Duty](#) guidance schools should follow the local safeguarding arrangements, policies and procedures of their Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) (HM Government, 2015). In Wales the Local Safeguarding Board is responsible for this.

The Home Office funds dedicated Prevent coordinators to work with communities and schools.

Staff training

The [Prevent Duty](#) guidance states school staff should attend training so they are aware of possible signs that a child may be at risk of becoming radicalised and clear on what action to take (HM Government, 2015).

The Home Office has developed a core training product for this purpose: Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP). There should be professionals within local authorities who are WRAP trained facilitators. Details of WRAP can be found in the [Channel Duty](#) guidance paragraphs 92-95 (Home Office, 2015).

[Channel](#) also has a free online awareness course about extremism that may be useful for staff to complete.

E-safety policies

The [Prevent Duty](#) guidance) requires schools to ensure they have suitable internet filtering software in place to block children from viewing extremist material. Internet safety should be integral to school ICT curriculum and can also be embedded in PSHE and citizenship lessons (HM Government, 2015).

Ways to protect children and young people from radicalisation

Providing a safe environment for debating controversial issues, schools can build pupils' resilience to radicalisation and help them understand how they can influence and participate in decision-making.

PSHE lessons can be appropriate time to explore sensitive and controversial issues. These might include discussions on recognising and managing risk, making safer choices and recognising pressure from others that can threaten personal safety. These discussions can help to develop positive character traits such as resilience, determination, self-esteem and confidence which can help protect young people.

As stated in the [Prevent Duty](#) guidance schools are expected to promote community cohesion and British values as part of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development (HM Government, 2015).

Citizenship lessons can also help pupils gain the knowledge, skills and understanding to enable them play a positive role in society.

E-safety presentations, assemblies and workshops can all highlight the risks and offer strategies for staying safe.

Supporting vulnerable pupils

Getting early help to those at risk is vital and this can be done through pupil support, welfare and pastoral systems.

There is also a specific support programme that schools can refer pupils to. The Channel programme is a multi-agency intervention programme targeted mainly at 15-24 year olds at risk of being drawn into Islamist extremism. This programme involves mentoring and signposting. Further information about the programme can be found in section 3 of the [Channel Duty](#) guidance (Home Office, 2015).

What to do if you have a concern

If a member of staff has a concern that a pupil may be at risk of becoming radicalised they should follow the school's normal safeguarding procedures and if necessary make the appropriate referral to children's social care, the police or Channel as advised in the [Prevent Duty](#) guidance (HM Government, 2015).

The Department for Education also has a dedicated telephone helpline for England for non-emergency concerns about extremism (020 7340 7264). Schools in Wales are advised to contact their local authority for advice.

Resources and information

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

[Keeping Learners Safe](#)

[Prevent Duty](#)

[Channel Training](#)

[Channel Duty](#)

[Lancashire Prevent for Education Group - Prevent for Schools website](#)

[The use of social media for online radicalisation](#)

Online training for schools

- [Child protection in schools](#)
- [Managing sexualised behaviour in primary schools](#)
- [Safer recruitment in education](#)
- [Keeping children safe online](#)

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