



# **OAK HILL FIRST SCHOOL**

## **PREVENTING EXTREMISM AND RADICALISATION POLICY**

**Date: March 2015**

**Ratified by the Governing Body : September 2015**

**Review date: September 2016**

## **1. Introduction**

Since 2010, when the Government published the Prevent Strategy, there has been an awareness of the specific need to safeguard children, young people and families from violent extremism. There have been several occasions both locally and nationally in which extremist groups have attempted to radicalise vulnerable children and young people to hold extreme views including views justifying political, religious, sexist or racist violence, or to steer them into a rigid and narrow ideology that is intolerant of diversity and leaves them vulnerable to future radicalisation.

Oak Hill First School values freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs/ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society's values. Both pupils and teachers have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions. However, freedom comes with responsibility and free speech that is designed to manipulate the vulnerable or that leads to violence and harm of others goes against the moral principles in which freedom of speech is valued. Free speech is not an unqualified privilege; it is subject to laws and policies governing equality, human rights, community safety and community cohesion.

Oak Hill First School is committed to providing a secure environment for pupils, where children feel safe and are kept safe. All adults at the school recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility irrespective of the role they undertake or whether their role has direct contact or responsibility for children or not.

This Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy is one element within our overall school arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in line with our statutory duties set out at S157 of the Education Act 2002.

Our school's Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy also draws upon the guidance produced by the Worcestershire Safeguarding Board; DfE Guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education 2014" and HM Government document "Prevent strategy: A guide for local partners in England".

## **2. School Ethos and Practice**

When operating this Policy, the school uses the following accepted Governmental definition of extremism which is:

*'Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs; and/or calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.'*

There is no place for extremist views of any kind in our school, whether from internal sources – pupils, staff or governors – or external sources – school community, external agencies or individuals. Our pupils 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 pupils.

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 by skilled professionals, so that our pupils are enriched, understand and become tolerant of difference and diversity and also to ensure that they thrive, feel valued and not marginalized.

### **3. Recognising the indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation**

There is no such thing as a “typical extremist”; those who become involved in extremist actions come from a range of backgrounds and experiences, and most individuals, even those who hold radical views, do not become involved in violent extremist activity.

Pupils may become susceptible to radicalisation through a range of social, personal and environmental factors – it is known that violent extremists exploit vulnerabilities in individuals to drive a wedge between them and their families and communities. It is vital that school staff are able to recognise those vulnerabilities.

Indicators of vulnerability include:

- Identity crisis – the student/pupil is distanced from their cultural/religious heritage and experiences discomfort about their place in society;
- Personal crisis – the student/pupil may be experiencing family tensions; a sense of isolation; and low self-esteem; they may have dissociated from their existing friendship group and become involved with a new and different group of friends; they may be searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging;
- Personal Circumstances – migration; local community tensions; and events affecting the student/pupil’s country or religion of origin may contribute to a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy;
- Unmet Aspirations – the student/pupil may have perceptions of injustice; a feeling of failure; rejection of civic life;
- Experience of Criminality – which may include involvement with criminal groups, imprisonment, and poor resettlement/reintegration;
- Special Educational Need – students/pupils may experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with others, understanding the consequences of their actions and awareness of the motivations of others.

More critical risk factors could include:

- Being in contact with extremist recruiters;
- Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element;
- Possessing or accessing violent extremist literature;
- Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage;
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues;
- Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations; and
- Significant changes to appearance and/or behaviour;
- Experiencing a high level of social isolation resulting in issues of identity crisis and/or personal crisis.

Any prejudice, discrimination or extremist views, including derogatory language, displayed by pupils or staff will always be challenged and where appropriate dealt with in line with our Behaviour Policy for pupils and the Code of Conduct for staff.

We will ensure that all of our staff are equipped to recognise extremism and are skilled and confident enough to challenge it. All staff will receive training on PREVENT and radicalisation and extremism will be an integral part of annual staff safeguarding training.

Our school is required to identify a Prevent Single Point of Contact (SPOC) who will be the lead within the organisation for safeguarding in relation to protecting individuals from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism. The SPOC for Oak Hill First School is Mrs S Harris (also the Designated Safeguarding Lead).

When any member of staff has concern that a pupil may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they should speak with the SPOC or Headteacher. We will help support pupils who may be vulnerable to such influences as part of our wider safeguarding responsibilities and where we believe a pupil is being directly affected by extremist materials or influences we will ensure that that pupil is offered assistance. Additionally in such instances our school will seek external support from the Local Authority and/or local partnership structures working to prevent extremism.

Our school will closely follow the locally agreed procedure as set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board for safeguarding individuals vulnerable to extremism and radicalisation.

#### **4. 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. In our school this will be achieved by good teaching, primarily via Citizenship and PSHE sessions. We will ensure that all of 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. The school will promote the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs. 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. It is indeed our most fundamental responsibility to keep our pupils safe and prepare them for life in modern multi-cultural Britain and globally.

We will also work with local partners, families and communities in our efforts to challenge extremist views and to assist in the broadening of our pupils' experiences and horizons.

#### **5. Use of External Agencies and Speakers**

The school encourages the use of external agencies or speakers to enrich the experiences of our pupils; however, we will positively vet those external agencies for our pupils. This includes checking the DBS of all external providers and viewing material that will be used beforehand.

Such vetting is to ensure that we do not unwittingly use agencies that contradict each other with their messages or that are inconsistent with, or are in complete opposition to, the school's values and ethos.

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 view 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 the pupils.
- Activities are carefully evaluated by the school to ensure that they are effective.

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

## **6. Whistleblowing**

Where there are concerns of extremism or radicalisation pupils and staff will be encouraged to make use of our internal systems to whistle blow or raise any issue in confidence.

Please refer to the separate Whistleblowing Policy.

## **7. Recruitment**

The arrangements for recruiting all staff, permanent and volunteers, to our school will follow government guidance on safer recruitment best practice in education settings, including, but not limited to, ensuring DBS checks are always made at the appropriate level, that references are always received and checked and that we complete and maintain a Single Central Record of such vetting checks.

We will apply safer recruitment best practice principles and sound employment practice in general and in doing so will deny opportunities for inappropriate recruitment or advancement. We will be alert to the possibility that persons may seek to gain positions within our school so as to unduly influence our schools character and ethos. We are aware that such persons seek to limit the opportunities for our pupils thereby rendering them to extremist views and radicalisation as a consequence.

Therefore, by adhering to safer recruitment best practice techniques and by ensuring that there is an ongoing culture of vigilance within our school and staff team we will minimise the opportunities for extremist views to prevail.

## **8. Role of the Governing Body**

The Governing Body of our school will 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, 2014” the governing body will challenge the school’s senior management team on the delivery of this policy and monitor its effectiveness.

Governors will review this policy regularly prior to the start of a new academic year (on an annual basis) but may amend and adopt any amendments outside of this timeframe in accordance with any new legislation or guidance.

## **9. Policy Adoption, Monitoring and Review**

This Policy was considered and adopted by the Governing Body in line with their overall duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children as set out in the DfE guidance “Keeping Children Safe in Education”.

Parents/carers will be issued with a hard copy of the Policy on request. This policy will also be made available to parents/carers via the school’s website.

Governors will review this policy annually prior to the start of a new academic year but may adopt any amendments outside this timeframe in accordance with any new legislation or guidance.



## The Prevent Duty and E-safety in Worcestershire Schools

IBS Schools work closely with Safeguarding Advisors from WCC and also E-safety Consultants to ensure that the products that we develop and offer meet the current requirements of both the Safeguarding and Prevent agendas.

Recently, several Worcestershire establishments working with young people have requested reassurance regarding the level of protection, with respect to the Prevent agenda they are receiving through centrally available services. Clearly, there can be no guarantees that measures provided to protect young people are 100% effective as potential threats emerge continuously.

As the amount of terrorist and extremist content online grows daily, this document seeks to provide guidelines to establishments working with young people in Worcestershire and aid them when asked for information about the steps they are taking in reducing the risk to their users. The internet has been identified as one of the key ways that young people are recruited and conditioned to extremist causes. With the increasing threat of young people being radicalised, specified bodies such as local authorities, schools, colleges and universities among others, are expected to demonstrate activity in line with the Prevent duty to ensure those in their care are not drawn into terrorism.

The penalties for failing to demonstrate activity within the areas of risk assessment, partnership with the LSCB (Local Safeguarding Children Board), staff training and IT policies can be severe.

Establishments using IBS Schools supported Worcestershire Schools' Broadband provision are provided with filtering via **Smoothwall**.

### **Smoothwall protection** ensures:

- Home Office terrorism block lists are used to identify potential issues
- Additions to these block lists are compiled by the Smoothwall categorisation team offering enhanced protection against terrorist and extremist content
- Block lists are updated daily

### **Smoothwall detection** ensures:

- Built in reporting, allowing IBS Schools to monitor and report on all user access in real time
- For establishments with on-site Smoothwall installations detection can be monitored locally

Additionally, Worcestershire establishments subscribing to **Policy Central** from **Future Digital**, initially brokered by the Local Authority, have an active monitoring solution to cover all activity across their digital environment. This sits within the safeguarding arena covering all aspects of potential threats and is updated in line with current government policy and guidance, thus ensuring that all traffic across the establishment's network and outgoing from the establishment is also covered.

The latest version of Policy Central has the capability to ensure that the requirements laid out in the Prevent guidance are met, providing the relevant vocabularies have been activated. Check with your technician if you are unsure.

***It is, of course, the responsibility of the individual establishment to ensure that the Policy Central Console is checked regularly, reported and any subsequent actions recorded.***

An establishment's **e-safety policy** should identify all provision and procedures related to keeping children and young people safe online. An e-safety policy discussion document can be found on Edulink: [www.edulink.networcs.net](http://www.edulink.networcs.net); Teaching and Learning; E-safety.

**OFSTED** will look for evidence of a clear approach to implementing the Prevent duty and keeping all learners safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Failure to provide such evidence can lead to intervention in maintained schools or termination of funding agreements in academies and free schools.

***Establishments that do not use Worcestershire Schools' Broadband and/or are not Policy Central subscribers would be advised to check with their filtering and/or monitoring providers that they are receiving appropriate services to fulfil their Prevent duty.***

This document was compiled by the following:

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