

Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College

Prevent Strategy

Safeguarding Students Who Are Vulnerable To Extremism & Radicalisation

Background/Context

Colleges have a vital role to play in protecting students from the risks of extremism and radicalisation. This is underpinned by the Counter-Terrorism & Security Act 2015 (and updated in December 2023) which states that colleges must have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.' This is a statutory duty.

The Government's Prevent Strategy has raised awareness of the specific need to safeguard children, young people and families from violent extremism. This is linked to cases where extremist groups have attempted to radicalise vulnerable young people to adopt extreme views including those 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 susceptible to future radicalisation.

The first objective of the Prevent duty is to 'tackle the ideological causes of terrorism'. The ideological component of terrorism sets this act apart from other acts of serious violence.

During all staff development training and during Prevent education for students, elements of ideology will be a key feature of Prevent training.

Ideological causes of terrorism are tackled through the 'Reducing Permissive Environments' theme highlighted in December 2023, which is achieved by creating an environment limiting exposure to radicalisation both on and off line and one where ideologies are challenged.

Training materials will include updated official terminology (December 2023) which clarifies that the guidance only applies to non-violent extremism where it can be reasonably linked to terrorism or could draw people into terrorism. A person's susceptibility to radicalisation may be linked to their vulnerability. A person can be vulnerable if they need special care, support or protection because of age, disability, risk of abuse or neglect. A person's vulnerabilities may be relevant to their susceptibility to radicalisation and to the early intervention approach that is required to divert them away from radicalisation.

The College determines who the appropriate members of staff are and how frequently training should occur, being proportional to the risk of terrorism and extremism in their local area. It also considers what type of training is needed for staff in different roles. Leads with designated Prevent responsibilities receive more in-depth training, including on extremist and terrorist ideologies to enable them to train and advise other staff and support making informed referrals to Prevent where necessary.

The risk and threat landscape has been updated in line with the counterterrorism strategy (CONTEST) 2023. The risk and threat picture is broader than that of 2015, the threat from Islamist terrorism remains the primary concern.

The College performs a risk assessment which assesses how its learners or staff may be at risk of being radicalised into terrorism, including online. Where specific risks are identified, an action plan to set out the steps they will take to mitigate the risk is carried out.

Information sharing on Prevent should be treated the same as wider safeguarding. The National Referral Form is rolled out nationally with the aim for all Prevent partners to adopt this approach. The referral form means that there is greater consistency of outcome both within and across a local authority. The College continues to follow its existing processes for sharing information about learners susceptible to radicalisation and is aware of the Prevent referral process in its local authority. Where appropriate, as with any other safeguarding concern, any Prevent concerns are securely transferred when a child moves college.

The College's DSL receives Educate Against Hate newsletters, which includes the latest news, blogs and resources to help teachers, school leaders and designated safeguarding leads protect students from radicalisation.

Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College values freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs and ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society's values. Both students and teachers have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions. However, with that freedom comes 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 which value freedom of speech. Free speech is not an unqualified privilege; it is subject to laws and policies governing equality, human rights, community safety and community cohesion.

The current threat from terrorism in the United Kingdom includes the exploitation of vulnerable people, to involve them in terrorism or in activity in support of terrorism. The normalisation of extreme views may also make young people vulnerable to future manipulation and exploitation. There is recognition that non-violent extremism can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists then exploit. Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College is clear that this exploitation and radicalisation should be viewed as a safeguarding concern.

Definitions of radicalisation and extremism and indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation are included in Appendix A.

Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College seeks to protect children and young people against the messages of all violent extremism including, but not restricted to, those linked to Islamist ideology, to Far Right / Neo Nazi / White Supremacist ideology, Left Wing, Anarchist and Single Issue Terrorism in the UK, Irish Nationalist & Loyalist paramilitary groups and extremist Animal Rights movements. In the local area, the College has been informed by Counter-Terrorist agencies that the greatest risk is posed by far right-wing extremist groups.

Risk Reduction

The Governors, the Principal, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Safeguarding Manager and other members of the Senior Management Group will assess the level of risk within College and put actions in place to reduce any identified risks.

Procedure

Keeping students safe from these risks is a safeguarding matter and should be approached in the same way as safeguarding young people from other risks - see the College's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures. When any member of staff has concerns that a student may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they should speak with Theresa Amarawansa who is the College's Prevent Single Point of Contact (SPOC) and the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Appendix B details the role and responsibilities of the SPOC.

Numerous factors can contribute to and influence the range of behaviours that are defined as violent extremism, but most young people do not become involved in extremist action. For this reason the appropriate interventions in any particular case may not have any specific connection to the threat of radicalisation, for example they may address mental health, relationship or drug/alcohol issues. The College will ensure that there is appropriate support available to students who are at risk.

Possible factors: background factors and specific influences such as family and friends. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods such as social media or the internet and settings (such as within the home) (Keeping Children Safe In Education 2023)

Policy to Protect Students from Extremism and Radicalisation

Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College is committed to protecting students from extremism and radicalisation.

- The College will work with other agencies and professional bodies to ensure the safety of students and to engage staff with the Prevent Agenda which is part of the wider safeguarding duty.
- The DSL will seek advice or refer cases to the children's or Adults' Social Care and the Prevent Team as required following local procedures.
- The DSL will refer a case to the Channel Panel when required.
- Students will be informed of who they can speak to if they have any concerns about radicalisation or extremism, both inside College and on a national level.
- The College will endeavour to provide a learning environment where students can safely discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and extremist ideas and ensure that they understand these issues and learn how to challenge such ideology.
- British values will be promoted through the curriculum.
- Students will complete a certificated online Prevent course provided by the ETF to develop their understanding of the ways in which individuals might be drawn into extremism or radicalisation and how to check the provenance of the information they might receive, including from online sources.
- Members of staff will complete a Visiting Speakers' form when students are addressed by external visitors to the College and will take reasonable steps to check the background of such speakers.

The principal objectives are that:

- All governors, teachers and support staff will have an understanding of radicalisation and extremism and why there is a need to be vigilant in College.
- All governors, teachers and support staff will be familiar with the College policy/strategy on anti-radicalisation and extremism and will follow the appropriate procedures when issues arise.
- All parents and students will be informed that the College has policies in place to keep students safe from harm and that the College regularly reviews its systems to ensure they are appropriate and effective.

Guidelines

1. To comply with its statutory duty, the College will actively engage with partners such as the Police, the Prevent Co-ordinator and the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership.
2. A risk assessment will be carried out to assess where or how students or staff may be at risk of being drawn into terrorism and actions will be put in place to reduce any identified risk, which may include a referral to Children's Access Point and the Prevent Team.
3. Appropriate training for staff and governors will be organised to take forward the Prevent agenda, including developing the curriculum to challenge and educate about extremism and exemplify British values.
4. IT policies and procedures will incorporate the Prevent duty, and filters will be used to restrict access to harmful content which could draw individuals into terrorism. This will also support the identification of those learners who may be vulnerable to radicalisation.
5. The College will seek to engage with and consult students about plans for implementing the duty.
6. The College's pastoral care and welfare services will be used to support students who are at risk.
7. The College will communicate and promote the importance of the duty to all stakeholders through its website and other publications.
8. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be the College's Single Point of Contact (SPOC).
9. In relation to the duty, the College will regularly review security and safety arrangements and procedures linked to the hiring out of College premises/ facilities.
10. The College's Strategy and Policy for Protecting Students from Extremism and Radicalisation will be reviewed annually and reported on to governors as part of the Safeguarding Report.

Supporting Documents

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy & Procedures
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Student Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Online safety Policy & Procedures
- QE Expects
- Tutorial Programme
- Complaints Procedure
- Whistleblowing Policy

- Health & Safety Policy
- Letting (hiring of College premises/facilities) Procedures
- Risk Register
- Disaster Recovery Plan
- Visiting Speakers Policy

Appendices

- A. Indicators of Vulnerability to Radicalisation
- B. Role and Responsibilities of the Single Point of Contact (SPOC)

Further support

Due Diligence and Counter Extremism Group (DDCEG) Helpline - 020 7340 7264 - for College staff and governors to raise concerns relating to extremism directly and in confidence.

Durham Constabulary Prevent Team 0191 375 2234

National referral form <https://www.durham.police.uk/Report-It/Terrorism/Prevent.aspx> The referral form should be e-mailed to FIMUNorth@CTPNE.police.uk

Channel panel chair – Alison Poulter/Lavender Head of Service – Children’s Front Door and Early Intervention 01325 406022

To report illegal information, pictures or videos found on the internet www.gov.uk/report-terrorism

Prevent Duty Guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-strategy-2011>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

<http://www.preventtragedies.co.uk/>

<http://www.familiesmatter.org.uk/>

Anti-terrorist hotline: 0800 789 321

Appendix A

Indicators of Vulnerability to Radicalisation

1. Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.
2. Extremism is defined by the Government in the Prevent Strategy as:
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. Also included in the definition of extremism are calls for the death of members of the armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.
3. Extremism is defined by the Crown Prosecution Service as:
the demonstration of unacceptable behaviour by using any means or medium to express views which:
 - Encourage, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs;
 - Seek to provoke others to terrorist acts;
 - Encourage other serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts;
 - Foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK.
4. 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.
5. Students 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 College staff are able to recognise those vulnerabilities.
6. Indicators of vulnerability include:

Identity Crisis – the student is distanced from their cultural/religious heritage and experiences discomfort about their place in society;

Personal Crisis – the student 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's country or region 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 may have perceptions of injustice, a feeling of failure or rejection of civic life.

Experiences of Criminality – may include involvement with criminal groups, imprisonment and poor resettlement / reintegration.

Individual Needs – students may experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with others, understanding the consequences of their actions and awareness of the motivations of others.

This list is not exhaustive, nor does it mean that all young people experiencing the above are at risk of radicalisation for the purposes of violent extremism.

7. 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;
 - Significant changes to appearance and/or behaviour;
 - Experiencing a high level of social isolation resulting in issues of identity crisis and/or personal crisis.

Appendix B

Role and Responsibilities of the Single Point of Contact (SPOC)

The SPOC for Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College is the Vice Principal, Theresa Amarawansa who is responsible for:

- Ensuring that staff are aware of her role in relation to protecting 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 about the role and responsibilities of Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College in relation to protecting students from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism;
- Organising staff training to give the knowledge and confidence to identify students at risk of being radicalised and drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.
- Ensuring that students can safely discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and extremist ideas, that they understand these issues and learn to challenge such ideology.
- Monitoring the College's curriculum, Enrichment and Tutorial Programmes to ensure that they are used to promote British values, community cohesion and tolerance of different

faiths and beliefs. This is in conjunction with Assistant Principal, Meirion Baker who has responsibility for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

- Ensuring that students are safe from accessing terrorist and extremist materials online in College and that IT Policies and Procedures expressly refer to the Prevent duty. This is in conjunction with the work done by Vice Principal Theresa Amarawansa who also has responsibility for online safety.
- Liaising with the Estates Manager, Mark Anderson, in relation to policies and procedures for health & safety and lettings.
- Raising awareness within College about the safeguarding processes relating to protecting students from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism.
- Acting as the first point of contact within College for case discussions relating to students who may be at risk of radicalisation or involved in terrorism.
- Collating relevant information in relation to referrals of vulnerable students into the Channel* process;
- Attending Channel* meetings as necessary and carrying out any agreed actions;
- Reporting progress on actions to Channel* and sharing any relevant additional information in a timely manner.

* Channel is a multi-agency approach to provide support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorist related activity.

Channel aims to:

- Establish an effective multi-agency referral and intervention process to identify vulnerable individuals;
- Safeguard individuals who might be vulnerable to being radicalised, so that they are not at risk of being drawn into terrorist-related activity;
- Provide early intervention to protect and divert people away from the risks they face and reduce vulnerability.