

Duty on schools to prevent extremism/terrorism

The *Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015* came into force this February and includes a new duty on schools.

Under s26 of the Act, schools have a duty to "*have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism*".

This is explained in the *Prevent Duty Guidance*, which can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417943/Prevent_Duty_Guidance_England_Wales.pdf

Below are key points from this Guidance.

This duty applies to the education and childcare specified authorities in Schedule 6 to the Act, including:

- the proprietors (governors) of maintained schools, non-maintained special schools, maintained nursery schools, independent schools (including academies and free schools) and alternative provision academies
- pupil referral units
- registered early years childcare providers

It also applies to further education colleges and sixth forms.

You are expected to demonstrate activity in the following areas.

Risk assessment

You are expected to assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideology. This should be based on a joint understanding with partners of the potential risk in the local area.

'Being drawn into terrorism' includes both violent and non-violent extremism. All forms of terrorism are covered from Islamist extremism to the white supremacist ideology of right wing extremists. The Guidance defines extremism 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. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces*".

You will need to demonstrate that you are protecting pupils from being drawn into terrorism by having robust safeguarding policies in place to identify children at risk and to intervene as appropriate. You will need to consider the level of risk to identify the most appropriate referral.

Your policies should set out clear protocols for ensuring any visiting speakers are suitable and appropriately supervised, whether invited by staff or students.

Risk assessments should look at existing policies regarding welfare, equality and diversity and safety. They should address the policies and procedures to manage events held by students, staff and visitors, and policies to manage relationships with external bodies and community groups who may use the premises or work in

partnership with you. Further education institutions should take this into account in particular.

You must have clear and visible policies and procedures for managing whistleblowing and complaints.

Working in partnership

Governing bodies and proprietors of all schools should ensure safeguarding arrangements take into account the policies and procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Staff Training

You should make sure staff have training that provides them with the knowledge and confidence:

- to identify pupils at risk of being drawn into terrorism;
- to challenge extremist ideas;
- to know where and how to refer pupils for further help, such as to Children's Social Services or the Chanel Programme .

You should encourage students to respect others with particular regard to the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010.

Pastoral care/ chaplaincy support

You should have sufficient pastoral care and welfare support available for all students.

If your school has a prayer room or faith related facilities, then you should have clear and widely available policies for managing the facilities and mechanisms to address any issues that may arise relating to the use of the facilities.

IT Policies

You should ensure pupils are safe from extremist material when accessing the internet at school, including by having the appropriate filters in place. You should check your existing IT Policy and ensure this specific duty is referred to.

You must have clear policies in place for students and staff using IT facilities to research terrorism and counter terrorism on the course of learning.

Monitoring and enforcement

OFSTED inspections already have regard to how schools keep pupils safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, and what the school would do if it is suspected that pupils are vulnerable to these.

You must comply with the monitoring and enforcement duty and are expected to maintain appropriate records to show compliance with your responsibilities and provide reports when requested.

Leaders should:

- establish or use existing mechanisms for understanding the risk of radicalisation;
- ensure staff understand the risk and build the capabilities to deal with it;

- communicate and promote the importance of the duty; and
- ensure staff implement the duty effectively.

You should make sure your existing policies cover the issues noted above, and should amend as necessary.

The Guidance notes that the *Prevent* duty is not intended to limit discussions surrounding sensitive topics including terrorism and extremist ideologies, as schools should be safe places for young people to discuss and understand these issues. When doing so, you should be mindful of your existing duties to forbid political indoctrination and secure a balanced presentation of political issues (s406 and s407 Education Act 1996).