

Prevent Policy

Meir Heath Academy



Approved by: Mrs M Southern / Mr J Spencer

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Next review due by: April 2026

“Prevent” is part of the government’s counter terrorism strategy to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The Prevent strategy covers all types of terrorism and extremism, including the extreme right wing, religious extremists and other causes.

From July 2015 all schools (as well as other organisations) have a duty to safeguard children from radicalisation and extremism.

At Meir Heath, following staff discussion, we have agreed that the main strands of our Prevent strategy are to:

- ▢ Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it
- ▢ Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support
- ▢ Work with all sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to address
- ▢ Raise awareness with staff, pupils, parents and governors
- ▢ Provide information to staff, pupils, parents and governors
- ▢ Enable learners to make a positive contribution to society
- ▢ Safeguard young people
- ▢ Explore and promote diversity and shared values between and within communities
- ▢ Challenge Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and other prejudices
- ▢ Build ties with all local communities, seeking opportunities for linking with other schools
- ▢ Open up age appropriate safe debate with the children
- ▢ Ensure freedom of expression and freedom from threat
- ▢ Promote open, respectful dialogue

The Prevent strategy is not just about discussing extremism itself, which may not be appropriate for younger children, it is also about teaching children values such as tolerance and mutual respect. The school will make sure any discussions are suitable for the age and maturity of the children involved.

KEY TERMS:

Extremism – vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values such as democracy, the rule of law and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs

Ideology – a set of beliefs

Terrorism – a violent action against people or property, designed to create fear and advance a political, religious or ideological cause

Radicalisation – the process by which a person comes to support extremism and terrorism

The Prevent duty is a safeguarding responsibility

Prevent is similar in nature to the duty to protect pupils from harm caused by, for example, drugs, gangs, neglect or sexual exploitation. Prevent does not require school staff to intrude unnecessarily into pupils' family lives, but staff will take action if they have cause for concern, as with any other safeguarding risk. Many of the things we already do in school to help children become positive, happy members of society also contribute to the Prevent strategy.

The school is already required to teach a "broad and balanced curriculum" that promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development, and prepares them for life's opportunities, responsibilities and experiences; schools are also required to promote community cohesion.

Schools are expected to promote "fundamental British Values", within the wider requirement to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; a focus on fundamental British Values can help schools build pupils' resilience to radicalisation.

British values include:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty and mutual respect
- Tolerance of different faiths and beliefs

Meir Heath Academy's responsibilities under the Prevent strategy

The school works to prevent:

Extremism: 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. This also includes calls for the death of members of the armed forces, whether in the UK or overseas.

Radicalisation: the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

Terrorism: an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people, causes serious damage to property, or seriously interferes or

disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

This is achieved through ensuring the school is a safe space that allows pupils to understand and discuss sensitive topics, such as terrorism and extremist ideas, and enable pupils to challenge these ideas.

The Prevent duty is not intended to limit the discussion of these issues, the school is, however, mindful of the existing duties to forbid political indoctrination and to secure a balanced presentation of political issues.

Pupils are given the opportunity to explore sensitive or controversial issues as part of personal, social and health education (PSHE); PSHE lessons can teach the children "to recognise and manage risk, make safer choices, and recognise when pressure from others threatens their personal safety and wellbeing."

Risks of pupils being drawn into terrorism

Schools are expected to assess the risk of pupils being drawn into terrorism or support for extremist ideas that "are part of terrorist ideology".

This assessment is based on an understanding of local risk and is partly dependent on the schools geographical position and the age of the children.

Is extremism really a risk in our area?

Extremism can take many forms, including political, religious and misogynistic extremism. Some of these may be a bigger threat in our area than others, so we will give children the skills to protect them from any extremist views they may encounter, now or later in their lives.

The local authority and local police are able to provide contextual information to help our school understand the risks in our area, for instance the school is provided with Local Authority information in relation to risks associated with school trips etc.

Safeguarding procedures in place

The school has robust safeguarding policies in place to ensure that pupils at risk are identified and supported.

Where there is a concern, the school considers the level of risk and decides which agency to make a referral to.

This could include Channel*, the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, or children's social services.

Channel* guidance, GOV.UK – DfE

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

Our safeguarding policy sets out protocols for ensuring that visiting speakers are suitable and appropriately supervised and takes into account the policies and procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff are alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. School staff use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately.

Keeping pupils safe

The schools has measures in place to protect pupils from terrorist or extremist material when using the internet at school - there are appropriate filtering systems and a weekly review, by a safeguarding lead, of all sites accessed and all emails sent/received by pupils and staff through key word recognition. All staff undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service check and the school vets all visitors who come into school to work with pupils.