

Anti-Radicalisation Policy

POLICY TITLE	Anti-Radicalisation Policy
Policy Area	Safeguarding
Author	DS
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Senior Team Lead	Head of School
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Introduction

The London Acorn School is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its pupils. As a school, we recognise that safeguarding against radicalisation is no different from safeguarding against any other vulnerability. At The London Acorn School all staff are expected to uphold and promote the fundamental principles of British Values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Aims and Principles

The main aims of this policy statement are to ensure that staff are fully engaged in being vigilant about radicalisation; that they overcome professional disbelief that “such issues will not happen here” and ensure that we work alongside other professional bodies and agencies to ensure that our pupils are safe from harm.

The objectives are that:

- All trustees, teachers and non-teaching staff will have an understanding of what radicalisation and extremism are and why we need to be vigilant in school.
- All trustees, teachers and non-teaching staff will know what the school policy is on anti-radicalisation and extremism and will follow the policy when issues arise.
- All pupils will understand the dangers of radicalisation, exposure to extremist views and terrorism; building resilience against these and knowing what to do if they experience them
- All parents/carers and pupils will know that the school has policies in place to keep pupils safe from harm and that the school regularly reviews its systems to ensure they are appropriate and effective.
- All students will be kept safe and will be supported appropriately, according to their needs.

Definitions and Indicators

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups. (During that process, it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being drawn into terrorist-related activity.)

Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British Values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. It also includes calls for death of members to the British armed forces, whether in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Terrorism is 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.

Procedures for Referrals

Although serious incidents involving radicalisation have not occurred at The London Acorn School to date, it is important for us to be constantly vigilant and remain fully informed about the issues which affect the region in which we teach. Staff are reminded to suspend any professional disbelief that instances of radicalisation “could not happen here” and to refer any concerns through the appropriate channels (currently via a Designated Safeguarding Lead).

It is important for the School to be constantly vigilant and remain fully informed about the issues which affect the local area, city and society in which we teach. The School believes that it is possible to intervene to protect people who are vulnerable. Early intervention is vital and staff must be aware of the established processes for front line professionals to refer concerns about individuals and groups. The School must have the confidence to challenge, the confidence to intervene and ensure that it has a strong safeguarding practice based on the most up to date guidance and best practice.

The Head Teacher and the DSL will fulfil their duty to assess the risk of pupils being drawn into extremism within the context of the school. This may take the form of a formal written Risk Assessment but will look at contextual safeguarding requirements of the school and its community (see TLAS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2021).

Staff will be fully brief about what to do if they are concerned about the possibility of radicalisation relating to a pupil, or if they need to discuss specific children whom they consider to be vulnerable to radicalisation or extremist views.

The Head Teacher and DSL will work with Children’s Social Care or the local Channel Panel to decide the best course of action to address concerns which arise. Actions will be proportionate, and the school will work with external agencies, in a multiagency approach, to seek a positive outcome for the child.

The Head Teacher and DSL will conduct a regular risk assessment to ensure that they are aware and are keeping up to date with the risks and potential risks affecting children and young people in their area and record this on the Schools Risk Register.

The Head Teacher will ensure that systems and procedures are robust and that decisions around individual cases are escalated or de-escalated appropriately. This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is robust and current and that procedures for the school are in line with the Local Authority.

The Role of the Curriculum

Our curriculum promotes respect, tolerance and diversity. Students are encouraged to share their views and recognise that they are entitled to have their own different beliefs which should not be used to influence others.

Our PSHE provision is not only taught through distinct PSHE lessons, but also embedded across the curriculum, and underpins the ethos of the school. Students throughout the school learn about a wide

variety of religions and beliefs in a respectful and balanced way. Active debate and questioning is promoted in the delivery of lessons.

It is recognised that students with low aspirations are more vulnerable to radicalisation and therefore we strive to equip our pupils with confidence, self-belief, respect and tolerance as well as setting high standards and expectations for themselves.

E-Safety

Students are regularly taught about how to stay safe when using the Internet and are encouraged to recognise that people are not always who they say they are online. They are taught to seek adult help if they are upset or concerned about anything they read or see on the Internet.

The School has IT policies and ensures that children are unable to access terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in school. Staff are aware of the risks posed by the online activity of extremist and terrorist groups. The TLAS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy outlines the security measures the School takes in safeguarding its pupils.

Staff Training

Through INSET opportunities in school, we will ensure that our staff are fully aware of the threats, risks and vulnerabilities that are linked to radicalisation; are aware of the process of radicalisation and how this might be identified early on. The Head Teacher and DSL will attend PREVENT training as part of the planned training cycle. This training is cascaded to all staff via the DSL or through the Local Authority Prevent Officer.

Through this face to face training the school will ensure that its staff are fully aware of:

- Which pupils are likely to be vulnerable to or at risk of radicalisation, extremism or terrorism
- The threats, risks and vulnerabilities that are linked to radicalisation
- The process of radicalisation and how this might be identified early on
- Aware of how we can provide support as a school to ensure that our children are resilient and able to resist involvement in radical or extreme activities

Staff who join mid-year will complete online training through Educare.

DfE Keep Children Safe in Education - Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges September 2021 provides guidance on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation and should be seen as part of schools' wider safeguarding duties. In particular, staff should be aware of the following:

Indicators of vulnerability include:

Identity

- 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;
- 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 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/pupil may have perceptions of injustice;
- a feeling of failure;
- rejection of civic life
- experiences of criminality
- involvement with criminal groups
- imprisonment; and
- poor resettlement/reintegration on release
- Special Educational Needs
- difficulties in social interaction
- difficulties in empathising with others
- difficulties in 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.

Action to be taken by The London Acorn School governors and staff

If any governor or member of staff has any concerns about a pupil they should refer their concerns immediately to a Designated Safeguarding Lead in the same way that a child protection concern is referred. This may be a very obvious concern (e.g. a pupil has been seen accessing websites promoting violent extremism) or a less obvious concern (e.g. a pupil matches many of the above warning signs or risk factors: they have become isolated, angry, are experiencing family tensions, have changed friendship groups and have begun to justify the use of violence to resolve injustices). All staff and governors will complete the Prevent programme of continuous professional development which is a compulsory prerequisite of working with the children to ensure that all staff know the routes by which to make referrals to the Local Authority, Channel Panel and Children's Social Care.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will deal swiftly with any referrals made by staff or with concerns reported by staff. They should be aware of local procedures for making a Prevent referral.

The Head Teacher has overall responsibility for dealing with concerns about extremism and will discuss the most appropriate course of action on a case by case basis and will decide when a referral to external agencies is needed.

As with any child protection referral, staff must be made aware that if they do not agree with a decision not to refer, they can make the referral themselves and will have access to contact details for the local authority Channel Panel and/or Children's Social Care.

Channel Panel is a voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent referrals may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. A representative from the school may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with this assessment. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.

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 usual vetting of governors via references, social media checks and interviews is important in ensuring the suitability of our Trustees.

The Department for Education has set up a telephone helpline (020 7340 7264) to enable people to raise concerns directly. Concerns can also be raised by email to counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk.

Recruitment

We ensure that the staff we appoint to the school are suitable, our recruitment procedures are rigorous, and we follow the statutory guidance. Vetting and barring checks are undertaken on relevant people, including local governors and volunteers.

Visitors

If any member of staff wishes to invite a visitor in the school, they must first gain approval from the Head Teacher. All visitors will be subject to safeguarding checks (including DBS checks if appropriate) and photo identification. Children are never left unsupervised with unvetted people, and external visitors, regardless of safeguarding check outcomes, will be monitored or supervised by school staff.

Upon arriving at the school, all visitors including contractors, will read the child protection and safeguarding guidance and be made aware of who the DSL is/are and how to report any concerns which they may experience.

If any agreement is made to allow non-school groups or organisations to use the premises, appropriate checks will be made before agreeing the contract. Usage will be monitored and in the event of any behaviour not in keeping with this policy, the school will contact the police and terminate the contract.

School trips and potential terrorist attacks

There has been an increasing number of terrorist attacks at public events and densely populated tourist areas, both in the UK and internationally. When planning a school trip to a high-risk area, the school will adhere to any guidance provided by the Local Authority or from government sources regarding threat level alerts. In the event of a report terrorist incident/disturbance in the local community with the potential to pose a risk to staff and students, lockdown procedures may be

activated as per the 'TLAS Lockdown Procedure' which can be located with the Fire Drill and on-site operational procedures.

Links to other policies

This Anti-Radicalisation policy statement links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act (2015)
- Prevent Duty Guidance (2015)
- Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2015)