

BIRMINGHAM INDEPENDENT COLLEGE

Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy

NEXT REVIEW: 01/09/2025

At Birmingham Independent College (BIC) we are committed to creating a safe and inspiring place for all children to learn and develop, where children's rights are respected, their talents are nurtured and they are able to thrive as individuals and as a community. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is at the heart of our ethos and our curriculum.

The four guiding principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the child state that:

- All children are entitled to the same rights without discrimination of any kind.
- All actions concerning children will take into account the best interests of the individual child or group of children as the primary consideration.
- All children have the right to survival and development.
- Children have the right to express their views in all matters affecting them.

BIC is committed to the guiding principles of the Convention and is actively committed to promoting all articles of the convention in all areas of the college and its work. The following articles are protected and promoted through this policy – articles 3, 4, 15, 16, 19, 30, 36 and 39.

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. All schools now have a Prevent duty specified in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015) to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

BIC values freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs / ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society's values. Both students 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.

BIC is committed to providing a secure environment for students , where children feel safe and are kept safe. All adults at the college 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 college 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 draws upon the guidance within 'The Prevent duty' issued by the DfE in June 2015; guidance issued by the Birmingham Local

Safeguarding Children Board; DfE Guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)" and HM government document "Prevent strategy: A guide for local partners in England".

2. College Ethos and Practice

When operating this Policy, the college 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 – students, staff or governors – or external sources – college community, external agencies or individuals. Our students see our college 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 college 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 students.

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 and thereby limiting the life chances of young people. Education is a powerful weapon against this; equipping young people with the knowledge, skills and critical thinking, to challenge and debate in an informed way.

Therefore, the college will provide a broad and balanced curriculum, delivered by skilled professionals, so that our students are enriched, understand and become tolerant of difference and diversity and also to ensure that they thrive, feel valued and not marginalized. We will promote fundamental British values which will enable our students to challenge extremist views.

3. Recognising the indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation

BIC will ensure its staff have the ability to assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism. There is no single way of doing this but staff should be alert to the indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation listed below. As with any other safeguarding risk, staff must take action when they observe behaviour that their professional judgment leads them to be concerned about.

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.

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.

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 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 –
which may include involvement with criminal groups, imprisonment, and poor resettlement /reintegration;
- Special Educational Need –
students / students 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 students or staff will always be challenged and where appropriate dealt with in line with our Positive Behaviour Policy for students 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 Prevent training will be an integral part of annual staff safeguarding training.

Our college 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 BIC is Vivienne Lambert.

When any member of staff has concerns that a pupil may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they should speak with the SPOC or Head of College. We will help support students 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 college will seek external support from the Counter Terrorism Unit, the Local Authority and/or local partnership structures working to prevent extremism. BIC staff will be made aware of the Channel programme which focusses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. This provides a mechanism for BIC to make referrals if we are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation. The SPOC and other relevant staff involved in safeguarding will undertake the online general awareness training module on Channel.

Our college will closely follow the locally agreed procedure as set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board for safeguarding individuals vulnerable to extremism and radicalisation. For example, the LSCB publishes threshold guidance indicating when a child or young person might be referred for support.

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 college this will be achieved by good teaching, primarily via Citizenship and PSHE sessions; but also by adopting the methods outlined in the Government's guidance on the best teaching approaches for tackling issues around radicalisation and terrorism. These approaches include setting targets for young people to build a sense of ownership; creating a safe space for dialogue between staff and students; building resilience in students ; improving pupil skills for collaborative work; improving students' ability to interact with each other and a peer mentoring scheme. We will ensure that all of our teaching approaches help our students build resilience to extremism and give students a positive sense of identity through the development of critical thinking skills. The college 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 students 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 students 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 pupil's experiences and horizons.

BIC will ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in schools. BIC will ensure that suitable filtering and monitoring is in place through the Smoothwall software that is the most up to date version available. Any captures are referred to the Head of College/DSL and the SPOC.

5. Use of External Agencies and Speakers

The college encourages the use of external agencies or speakers to enrich the experiences of our students, however we will positively vet those external agencies, individuals or speakers who we engage to provide such learning opportunities or experiences for our students. This includes checking the DBS of all external providers, their photo id on arrival, viewing material that will be used beforehand and conducting a social media check on such agencies or individuals.

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 college will assess the suitability and effectiveness of input from external agencies or individuals to ensure that:

- Any messages communicated to students are consistent with the ethos of the college 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 students through extreme or narrow views 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 students
- Activities are carefully evaluated by the college 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 students recognise risk and build resilience to manage any such risk themselves where appropriate to their age and ability but also to help students develop the critical thinking skills needed to engage in informed debate.

6. Whistleblowing

Where there are concerns of extremism or radicalisation students 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 college will follow government guidance on safer recruitment best practice in education settings, including, but not limited to, ensuring that 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 college so as to unduly influence our schools character and ethos. We are aware that such persons seek to limit the opportunities for our students thereby rendering them vulnerable 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 college and staff team we will minimise the opportunities for extremist views to prevail.

8. Role of Governing Body

The Governing Body (the Proprietorship) of our college will undertake annual training to ensure that they are clear about their role and the parameters of their responsibilities as proprietors, including their statutory safeguarding duties and Prevent duty. The Governing Body of our college will support the ethos and values of our college and will support the college in tackling extremism and radicalization.

In line with the provisions set out in the DfE guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2024' the governing body will challenge the school's senior management team on the delivery of this policy and monitor its effectiveness.

Proprietors 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 be 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 this Policy on request. This Policy will also be made available to parents/carers via the school's website.

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