

P17 Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism Policy

1. Introduction

The Purcell School is committed to providing a secure environment for all of our students, staff and stakeholders. The current threat from terrorism and extremism comes from both global groups (notably including Islamic militant groups) but also home-grown groups e.g. far right extremists or climate activist or animal rights groups. The School has a duty to protect students and educate about all forms of terrorism and extremism while promoting freedom, tolerance, equality and British values. In the United Kingdom, terrorism can involve the exploitation of vulnerable people, including children, young people and vulnerable adults to involve them in terrorism or activity in support of terrorism.

The Prevent Strategy raises awareness and creates a specific duty to safeguard children, young people and families from all forms of extremism. There have been high profile occasions 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.

In adhering to this policy, and the procedures therein, staff, governors, volunteers and visitors will contribute to The Purcell School's commitment to the safeguarding of all students.

This policy has been developed in line with our statutory duties under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the Prevent duty) and should be read in conjunction with Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026) and our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. We follow the Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales (2023 revision) and work closely with local partners including Hertfordshire Police and the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership to fulfil our responsibilities.

2. Ethos and School Values

The School promotes the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs (known as fundamental British values). We 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 fundamental to our duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of students and to prepare them for life in modern multi-cultural Britain and globally.

Central to The Purcell School are the values of respect and individual responsibility. The School will educate students to respect people of different beliefs and faiths and to respect the right to freedom of expression as being a key British Value. It will help to build students' resilience to challenge those who threaten this. Equally, the School will promote the responsibility of being part of a community and keeping all within that community safe from extreme beliefs.

The Purcell School values freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs/ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society's values. Both students and staff 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 on 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.

3. School Approach

The Purcell School promotes community cohesion, tolerance and freedom of expression. There is no place for extremist views of any kind in our School, whether from internal sources (e.g. students, staff or governors) or external sources such as external agencies, groups or individuals.

It is imperative that students and parents see the School as a safe place where they can discuss and explore controversial issues safely and in an unbiased way and where our teachers encourage and facilitate this. As a school we recognise that extremism and exposure to extremist materials and influences, as well as failing to challenge extremist views, puts students at risk. We recognise, therefore, that our responsibility to keep students safe from extremism and radicalisation is a safeguarding issue.

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 knowledge, and the skills of critical thinking, to challenge and debate in an informed way.

3.1 Local Context

The Prevent strategy is designed to address a variety of issues including both violent and non-violent extremism depending on local context.

While The Purcell School is located in an area not considered high-risk for extremism, we remain vigilant to all forms of radicalisation, particularly given the wide range of locations where students' homes are found. Our local context requires emphasis on:

- Online radicalisation and exposure to extremist content via social media and gaming platforms
- Far-right extremism and hate-based narratives, including misogyny and misandry
- Conspiracy theories and misinformation
- Incel (involuntary celibate) ideology and misogynistic extremism
- Climate activism that may cross into extremism
- Islamist extremism
- Hate crime, racism and discrimination
- Bullying and online safety
- Serious violence, including physical assault and carrying, threatening with, or using weapons

We work closely with Hertfordshire Police and the local Prevent coordinator to ensure our understanding of local and national threats remains current. This assessment is reviewed annually and updated in response to local or national incidents.

The Purcell School provides a broad and balanced curriculum and PSHEE programme to help students understand and become tolerant of difference and diversity and to ensure they thrive, feel valued and not marginalised. We recognise that students can be exposed to extremist influences or prejudiced views from an early age through various sources and media, particularly online platforms.

3.2 Teaching Approaches

The School works hard to eradicate the myths and assumptions that can lead to some young people becoming alienated and disempowered. Students will follow a curriculum which will give them the knowledge to and develop the confidence to challenge the narrow approaches children may experience, and to support them to challenge or question these radical influences. In our School, this will be achieved by good teaching (primarily during PSHEE and Tutor time).

The School will ensure that teaching approaches help our students build resilience to extremism and give students a positive sense of identity through the development of critical thinking skills. Where possible, teaching approaches will be adapted to address specific issues so as to become even more relevant to the current issues of extremism and radicalisation.

This approach will be embedded within the safeguarding culture of our School so that students know and understand what safe and acceptable behaviour is in the context of extremism and radicalisation. This will work in conjunction with our Schools approach to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students and will include a programme of assemblies dedicated to promoting fundamental British values to help further promote this rounded development of our students.

4. Monitoring and Enforcement

All Schools must work to implement the Prevent Strategy. Prevent has three main objectives:

- 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 sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation which we need to address.

The Purcell School fully supports these objectives and embeds them within existing safeguarding systems and procedures. At times, students themselves reflect or display views that may be discriminatory, prejudiced or extremist, including using derogatory language. Any prejudice, discrimination or extremist views, including derogatory language, displayed by students, staff, visitors or parents will always be challenged and, where appropriate, dealt with. Where misconduct by a teacher is proven, the matter will be referred to the Teaching Regulation Agency for their consideration as to whether a Prohibition Order is warranted.

As part of wider safeguarding responsibilities School staff will be alert to:

- Disclosures by students of their exposure to the extremist actions, views or materials of others outside of School, such as in their homes or community groups, especially where students have not actively sought these out.
- Graffiti symbols, writing or art work promoting extremist messages or images
- Students accessing extremist material online, including through social networking sites
- Parental reports of changes in behaviour, friendship or actions and requests for assistance
- Local schools, Local Authority services, and police reports of issues affecting students in other schools or settings
- Students voicing opinions drawn from extremist ideologies and narratives
- Use of extremist or 'hate' terms to exclude others or incite violence
- Intolerance of difference, whether secular or religious or, in line with our equalities policy, views based on, but not exclusive to, gender, disability, homophobia, race, colour or culture
- Attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
- Anti-Western or Anti-British views
- Students carrying or using weapons, or expressing intent to do so, and report any such concerns to the DSL or deputy immediately
- Misogyny or misandry as forms of extremist behaviour
- Modern slavery and financial exploitation
- Use of AI-generated content to spread extremist narratives or misinformation

5. Prevention and Safeguarding Arrangements

The early identification of safeguarding risks and subsequent intervention activity to protect and divert people away from the risks of radicalisation is a key element of the Prevent strategy. Staff at The Purcell School will be alert to the fact that whilst extremism and radicalisation is a safeguarding issue there may be some instances where a child or children may be at direct risk of harm or neglect. For example; this could be due to a child displaying risky behaviours in terms of the activities they are involved in or the groups they are associated with or staff may be aware of information about a child's family that may equally place a child at risk of harm. These examples are for illustration and are not definitive or exhaustive.

The School will ensure that all staff are equipped to recognise extremism and are skilled and confident enough to challenge it. Governors will also be made aware of the Prevent duty. All adults working in The Purcell School (including visiting staff, volunteers, contractors and students on placement) are required to report instances where they believe a child may be at risk of harm or neglect or if they have concerns that a student may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism.

The School 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 responsibilities of the SPOC are described in Appendix Two. The SPOC at The Purcell School is the Lead DSL. Any staff with concerns about radicalisation or extremism should report a concern to the Designated Safeguarding Team on MyConcern.

5.1 Reporting Concerns

If any further or new information comes to light while a referral is being assessed, this must

be passed to the police. Should concerns require support from other agencies there are a number of ways that issues relating to terrorism and extremism can be reported.

Internal Reporting:

- All staff should report concerns via MyConcern to the Safeguarding Team
- The DSL, as Prevent Lead, will assess the concern and take appropriate action

External Reporting channels:

- Hertfordshire Prevent Team: prevent@hertfordshire.gov.uk
- Action Counters Terrorism Early Support Line: 0800 011 3764
- Use the iREPORTit app to report online content (available for [Android](#) and [iOS](#) devices)
- Department for Education Due Diligence & Counter Extremism Group: 020 7340 7264
- Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111
- Report suspicious activity to MI5: www.gov.uk/report-suspicious-activity-to-mi5
- Report online terrorist material: www.gov.uk/report-terrorism
- ACT Early www.actearly.uk (support and advice for families and friends concerned about radicalisation)

5.2 Online Safety and Digital Radicalisation

The internet and social media are increasingly influential in young people's lives and have been identified as important tools in the sharing of extremist material. Extremist groups actively use online platforms to inform, share propaganda, radicalise and recruit for their cause.

Current online risks include:

- Social media platforms (including TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, X/Twitter)
- Encrypted messaging apps (WhatsApp, Telegram, Signal)
- Gaming platforms and chat functions
- Live streaming services
- AI-generated content and deepfakes used to spread misinformation
- Algorithm-driven content that can create 'echo chambers' of extreme views
- Generative AI applications that can simulate harmful online interaction

The School's online safety measures include:

- Web filtering to prevent access to extremist content when using school networks
- Monitoring software to identify concerning online behaviour with effectiveness reviewed at least once every academic year by the DSL
- Education through our PSHEE curriculum about critical evaluation of online content
- Regular updates to filtering and monitoring in response to emerging threats

Students are taught to:

- Critically evaluate online information and identify misinformation

- Recognise extremist narratives and propaganda techniques
- Report concerning content they encounter
- Understand their digital footprint and online responsibilities
- Understand risks associated with deepfakes and AI-generated content

To report terrorist-related online material, visit www.gov.uk/report-terrorism

5.3 Staff Training and Awareness

All staff at The Purcell School receive training to help them identify and respond appropriately to signs of radicalisation and extremism. All staff must read Part 1 of KCSIE 2026 in full.

Training requirements:

- Staff are offered the opportunity to complete the Home Office's free online Prevent training module: www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk
- Prevent awareness is refreshed annually as part of safeguarding training updates
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead receives enhanced training on Channel referral processes
- Governors receive Prevent awareness training to enable them to effectively challenge and support the school's approach

Training covers:

- The Prevent duty and its application in schools
- Indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation
- How to recognise extremist behaviour and rhetoric
- The school's referral processes
- The Channel programme and how it operates
- British values and how they are promoted in school
- Current threats and local context
- Understanding misogyny and misandry as forms of extremism

The Lead DSL maintains records of all Prevent training completed by staff and governors.

6. Working in Partnership

The School will work closely with local partners, families and the community in our efforts to ensure our School understands and embraces our local context and values in challenging extremist views and to assist in the broadening of our students' experiences and horizons.

When supporting students who may be vulnerable to such influences, as part of our wider safeguarding responsibilities the School will work closely with external agencies and seek expert advice. Where there is a concern that a student is being directly affected by extremist materials or influences we will ensure that that student is offered appropriate support. This may include external support from Hertfordshire Police and/or local partnerships working to prevent extremism.

Prevent Interventions may take many forms. Police activity can be utilised when delivering intervention activity but more often it is partner agency activity that can be the most effective form of intervention. Individuals who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into any form of extremism that could lead to terrorist related activity may be referred into Prevent for appropriate support. Channel is a key element of the Prevent strategy. Channel is a multi-agency approach to protect people at risk from radicalisation. Channel uses existing collaboration between local authorities, statutory partners (such as the education and health sectors, social services, children's and youth services and offender management services), the police and the local community to:

- Identify individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism
- Assess the nature and extent of that risk
- Develop the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned.

Channel is about safeguarding children and adults from being drawn into committing terrorist-related activity. It is about early intervention to protect and divert people away from the risk they face before illegality occurs.

7. Use of Volunteers, External Agencies and Speakers

The Purcell School encourages the use of external agencies or speakers to enrich the experiences of our students. Such individuals or agencies will be vetted prior to being engaged to provide such learning opportunities or experiences for our students. Such vetting is to ensure that the School does 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 School will assess the suitability and effectiveness of input from external agencies or individuals to ensure that:

- Any messages communicated to students support fundamental British Values
- Any messages communicated to students are consistent with the ethos of the School and do not marginalise any communities, groups or individuals
- Any messages communicated to students 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

Before engaging any external speaker or agency, the School will:

- Conduct online research into the individual/organisation
- Check for any concerning affiliations or previous controversial statements
- Require advance sight of any materials or presentations
- Ensure a member of staff is present throughout any session
- Brief the speaker on the school's values and expectations
- Provide an opportunity for balanced discussion and challenge of any views presented
- Debrief with students after sessions to address any concerns

Due to changes in the Crime and Policing Act 2026, any volunteer who teaches, trains, instructs or supervises children frequently or more than 3 days in a 30-day period is now in regulated activity and requires an enhanced DBS check with barred list information.

The ethos of the School is to encourage students to understand opposing views and ideologies, appropriate to their age, understanding and abilities and to be able to actively engage with them in informed debate. To achieve this it may be appropriate to use external agencies or speakers to facilitate and support this. 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.

8. Risk Reduction

8.1 Whole School Risk Management

The Designated Safeguarding Team will assess the level of risk within the School and put actions in place to reduce that risk. The risk assessment may include:

- consideration of the School's PSHEE and History curriculums,
- policies such as Accessibility, Child Protection, Anti-Bullying and Online Safety
- visiting speakers and volunteers
- the use of School premises by external agencies,
- other issues specific to the School's profile, community and philosophy,
- use of IT software and internet to identify where students may pose a risk/be at risk
- web filtering to prevent access to sites that pose a risk when at School

The School will screen staff, visitors and volunteers to ensure that they will not deliver messages of extremism or radicalisation.

The DSL conducts an annual review which considers:

- Analysis of any Prevent-related concerns raised during the year
- Review of curriculum content relating to British values, critical thinking and resilience
- Effectiveness of online filtering and monitoring systems
- Staff training completion rates and quality
- Feedback from students, parents and external partners
- National and local threat assessments
- Emerging trends in extremism affecting young people, including online radicalisation and AI-generated extremist content
- Risks of serious violence, particularly for students with disrupted education or history of offending

This review informs our safeguarding action plan and is reported to governors annually. The assessment is also shared with the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership as required.

8.2 Individual Students

Individual students will be risk assessed where either:

- they are deemed to either be at risk of being drawn into terrorism
- they are felt to pose a risk due to radicalisation

The School will seek advice from appropriate external agencies such as Hertfordshire Police or the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. Risk assessments for individual students will be completed on a case by case basis.

Appendix 1 – Indicators of Vulnerability to Radicalisation

The early identification of safeguarding risks and subsequent intervention activity to protect and divert people away from the risks of radicalisation is a key element of the Prevent strategy.

1. Radicalisation

The process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.

2. 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. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

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 or foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK.

3. Prevent Strategy

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 School staff are able to recognise those vulnerabilities.

Indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation 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: for example, immigration, local community tensions, 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: this may include involvement with criminal groups,

- imprisonment, and poor resettlement / reintegration
- Special Educational 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. The accepted view is that a complex relationship between the various aspects of an individual's identity determines their vulnerability to extremism. Over-simplified assessments based upon demographics and poverty indicators have consistently demonstrated to increase victimisation, fail to identify vulnerabilities and, in some cases, increase the ability of extremists to exploit, operate and recruit.

These risk factors can create a significant risk when combined with the following:

- 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 2 – Preventing Violent Extremism

1. Roles and Responsibilities of the Single Point of Contact (SPOC)

The SPOC for The Purcell School is the Lead DSL, who is responsible for:

- Ensuring that staff of the School are aware of the SPOC role and its significance 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 The Purcell School in relation to protecting students from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism
- Monitoring the effect in practice of the School's RE curriculum and assembly policy to ensure that they are used to promote community cohesion and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs
- Raising awareness within the School about the safeguarding processes relating to protecting students from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism
- Acting as the first point of contact within the School for case discussions relating to students who may be at risk of radicalisation or involved in terrorism
- Collating relevant information from in relation to referrals of vulnerable students into the Channel process
- Attending Channel meetings as necessary and carrying out any actions as agreed
- Reporting progress on actions to the Channel Co-ordinator
- Sharing any relevant additional information in a timely manner.

2. Channel

Channel is a multi-agency approach to provide support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorist related activity. It is led by the Police Counter-Terrorism Unit and it 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.

Policy author / reviewer:	Policy date / review date:	Next review due:
T Burns	9 January 2020	1 September 2021
K Cayley	September 21	September 2022
K Cayley	September 2022	September 2023
K Cayley	November 2023	November 2024
Z Szafranski	October 2024	October 2025
Ziggi Szafranski	September 2025	September 2026
Ziggi Szafranski	August 2026	September 2027