EPSOM
COLLEGE

ADVICE ON SAFEGUARDING PUPILS WHO MAY BE VULNERABLE TO EXTREMISM
(also known as Prevent Duty Advice)

Introduction:

The Government published the Prevent Strategy in 2010, and updated in December 2023, schools have been required under the Prevent Duty, the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, to safeguard children, young people and families from violent extremism. There have been reported 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.

Policy statement:

Epsom College values freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs/ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society's values. All members of our community have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions, and we do not want this new duty to inhibit teachers' and pupils' ability to express and explore ideas. We will build pupils' resilience by promoting fundamental British values, and enabling them to debate controversial issues. We will provide a safe space where our pupils and staff can understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremist arguments. 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.

The current threat from terrorism in the United Kingdom may include the exploitation of vulnerable people, to involve them in terrorism or in activity in support of terrorism. The normalisation of extreme views may also make children and young people vulnerable to future manipulation and exploitation. Epsom College is clear that this exploitation and radicalisation should be viewed as a safeguarding concern.

Definitions of radicalisation and extremism, and indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation are at the end of this advice document.

Epsom College seeks to protect children and young people against the messages of all violent extremism including, but not restricted to, those linked to Islamist ideology, or to Far Right / Neo Nazi / White Supremacist ideology, Irish Nationalist and Loyalist paramilitary groups, extremist Animal Rights movements, etc.

Risk reduction:

The Governors, Head and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will assess the level of risk within the school, considering the general risks associated with the area, and put actions in place to reduce that risk. Risk assessment may include consideration of the College's Religious Studies and PSHE curriculum, the use of school premises by external agencies, integration of pupils by gender and SEN, anti-bullying policy, and other issues specific to the College's profile, community and philosophy. Mindful of the widespread use of social media and the internet by all pupils, and the increased use by ISIL and others to groom and radicalise young people that way, we will include this aspect in our Acceptable Use policy and encourage all staff and parents to take greater interest in pupils online activity and interest.

Response:

Epsom 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: this will normally be the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The SPOC for Epsom College is Ms Marisa Bosa (Deputy Head: Pastoral). She has undertaken the online general awareness training modules on Channel and Prevent. All teaching staff have taken the online training on Prevent. The responsibilities associated with this are listed at the end.

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 (who is also a DDSL). A consultation with the Channel coordinator will follow.

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.

Indicators of vulnerability to Radicalisation:

1. Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.

2. Extremism is defined by the Government in the Prevent Strategy 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, whether in this country or overseas.

3. Extremism is defined by the Crown Prosecution Service as:
    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.

4.   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.

5.   Pupils 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.

6.   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/pupils may experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with others, understanding the consequences of their actions and awareness of the motivations of others.

7.   However, 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.

8.   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.

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

The SPOC for **Epsom College** is **Chris Filbey (Assistant Head: Pupil Wellbeing)**, who is responsible for:

- Ensuring that staff of the school are aware that you are the SPOC in relation to protecting students/pupils from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism;
- Undertaking training, and applying a good understanding of the relevant guidance in relation to preventing students/pupils 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 Epsom College in relation to protecting students/pupils from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism;
- Monitoring the effect in practice of the school's PSHE & RS curricula and content of assemblies 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/pupils from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism;
- Acting as the first point of contact within the school for case discussions relating to students/pupils who may be at risk of radicalisation or involved in terrorism;
- Collating relevant information from in relation to referrals of vulnerable students/ pupils 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; and
- Sharing any relevant additional information in a timely manner.

*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; and
- Provide early intervention to protect and divert people away from the risks they face and reduce vulnerability.

Visiting Speakers

Epsom College offers a broad curriculum to enhance the learning and achievement of our all our pupils. Visiting speakers and specialist presentations form part of this important learning and pupils and staff are encouraged to invite individuals to speak at the College.

To assist in the protection of our pupils from extremism, the member of staff with responsibility for hosting the Visiting Speaker Event should ensure the following protocols are place:

- Provide the Visiting Speaker with the purpose and aims of the Event;
- Conduct relevant searches with regard to the Visiting Speaker, for example an internet or Professional Body search ensuring the information does not suggest our pupils could be at risk from extremism;
- Ensure the content of the Speaker's presentation is appropriate and meets the purpose and aims of the Event;

- Seek approval from the Assistant Head (Total Curriculum) prior the Event being included in the school calendar;
- The Visiting Speaker should be issued with a visitors' badge, and must be supervised by a member of College staff at all times whilst on campus.

Any concerns prior to the Event or afterwards should be raised immediately with the SPOC (Chris Filbey, Assistant Head: Pupil Wellbeing & DSL).