The Prevent duty

A monitoring toolkit for governing boards in schools and academy trusts

Prevent is a core component of the government's counter-terrorism strategy (known as CONTEST). The Prevent duty requires specific authorities – including education settings, local authorities, police and healthcare – to help prevent the risk of people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

Terrorism is an action or threat designed to influence the government or intimidate the public. Prevent's first objective is to tackle the ideological causes of terrorism – the ideological component of terrorism is what sets it apart from other acts of serious violence. Examples of terrorist ideologies include Islamist, Incel, and Extreme Right-Wing. Prevent referral data provides further information on relevant types of concern.

The Prevent duty in schools

The Prevent duty in schools and academy trusts forms part of wider safeguarding and welfare responsibilities, as set out in 'Working together to safeguard children' and 'Keeping children safe in education'.

Compliance with the Prevent duty will reflect existing safeguarding good practice. Statutory Prevent duty guidance provides an overview of requirements.

Definitions

- **Radicalisation** – the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence.

- **Ideology** – a terrorist 'ideology' is a set of beliefs, principles, and objectives to which an individual or group purports to adhere and attempts to instil in others to radicalise them towards becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. There are several concepts or 'tools' that often feature in terrorist and extremist ideologies, including: narrative, propaganda, grievances, and conspiracy theory.

See Prevent duty glossary

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How to use this toolkit

1. If you're new to this topic, we recommend that you [watch this short video from the DfE](#) which outlines the role education settings play in protecting pupils from radicalisation.

2. Use the following checklist to support your board's monitoring of the Prevent duty and to find relevant resources and training – it may be useful for your safeguarding link governor/trustee to discuss specific focus areas with your school/trust designated safeguarding lead.

3. Refer to the [example questions to ask](#) to check your learning and to prompt your conversations with school/trust leaders.

Monitoring checklist

Area	Monitoring priorities	Helpful resources
1. Policy	• Prevent duty requirements and practices should be included within the school/trust safeguarding and child protection policy. • This policy should be updated annually as a minimum (in line with changes to guidance and in response to emerging threats). • Other school/trust policies (such as the behaviour policy) should align with – and support – Prevent delivery.	• [DfE Prevent self-assessment template](#) (can help schools understand how well embedded their Prevent policies and practices are) • [Implementing the Prevent duty – a toolkit from the London Borough of Ealing](#) • [NGA safeguarding guidance](#)
2. Leadership responsibility	• The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) – and any deputies – are responsible for overseeing Prevent policy and practice. • The governing board's safeguarding link governor/trustee takes the lead on monitoring this area, working closely with the DSL and reporting back to the governing board.	• [Subscribe to regional Prevent newsletters](#) (likely to be of interest for DSLs and link governors/trustees in particular) • [NGA Safeguarding link governor role description](#)

Area	Monitoring priorities	Helpful resources
3. Assess risks affecting pupils	• Schools should complete a risk assessment to evaluate how pupils may be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism and how risks will be addressed. • The school (led by the DSL) should build partnerships with key partners including the local authority Prevent lead, children's services and the local policing team. • Risk assessments (which may be specific to Prevent or incorporated into wider risk assessments) should take into account the national threat picture as well as local risks, informed by local partnerships. • The governing board should read the risk assessment to understand what the key risks are and how these are being addressed. For example, the behaviour policy might specifically refer to the need to tackle racist or misogynistic language if this has been identified as an issue. • Regular monitoring of different types of safeguarding and behaviour incidents will help the governing board to identify any trends and to ask relevant questions about how risks are being managed. For example, an increase in racist language should prompt discussions between the board and school leaders about the circumstances and what is being done to address this.	• [DfE Prevent duty risk assessment templates and guidance](#) • DfE guidance – [Understanding and identifying radicalisation risk in your education setting](#) • [ACT (Action Counters Terrorism)](#) has identified key signs of radicalisation • DfE guidance – [Managing risk of radicalisation in your education setting](#) • [NGA board reporting templates](#) demonstrate the type of information boards should receive and monitor in relation to safeguarding and behaviour

Area	Monitoring priorities	Helpful resources
	• **In multi academy trusts**, risk assessments will be carried out by individual schools, however, the trust board should have an understanding of the risk profile across all schools and ensure that plans are appropriate and proportionate.	
4. Training and development	• All staff should understand what radicalisation means and why pupils may be susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. This means knowing what to look for and which pupil groups may be at a greater risk or more vulnerable. • All staff and the governing board should receive appropriate training on Prevent. This is often delivered as part of annual safeguarding training and should be updated as needed.	• DfE guidance – [The Prevent duty: an introduction for those with safeguarding responsibilities](#) • [Home Office Prevent awareness e-learning](#) (an introductory course) • [Regional Prevent education coordinators](#) (RPECs) offer virtual training sessions
5. Staff know what to do if they have a concern	• All staff should look out for concerning changes in behaviour and report them to the DSL, following the school's existing child protection procedures. The safeguarding policy should make this clear. • The DSL should be aware of local procedures for making a Prevent referral. • Records should be kept of Prevent-related concerns and referrals (as per the school's wider safeguarding and child protection procedures).	• [Home Office Prevent referrals e-learning](#) (primarily designed for DSLs)

Area	Monitoring priorities	Helpful resources
6. **Building pupils' resilience to extremist ideologies and radicalisation**	**The curriculum** The school's curriculum should provide opportunities for pupils to learn: • How to build healthy, positive relationships (covered within PSHE and relationships and sex education) • British Values, including mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs • Online safety (governing boards should ensure IT filtering and monitoring systems are effective) **Beyond the curriculum**, schools should be working to create an environment where pupils understand and can discuss sensitive topics. For example, during assemblies, through peer-mentoring and debating clubs. Governing boards should also ensure that pupils feel able to speak up if they feel something is wrong. Certain pupil groups may be more vulnerable and need additional support, including those with a special educational need and, in particular, pupils with social, emotional, and mental health needs.	• Educate Against Hate resources for teachers • NGA British Values guidance • UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools – resources help teachers to talk to children about the big issues facing the world today • DfE guidance on Political impartiality in schools

Questions to ask

1. How are the school/trust's duties in relation to Prevent included in the safeguarding and child protection policy?

2. How is Prevent included in the safeguarding updates the DSL provides to the governing board?

3. How does the school develop relationships with key partners including the local authority Prevent Lead, children's services and the local policing team?

4. Does the school complete a risk assessment (which considers the national and local picture) to evaluate how pupils may be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism and how risks will be addressed?

5. What (anonymised) data does the board receive and can this data be used to identify trends and emerging risks?

   Examples of relevant data include:

   - Behaviour incidents – e.g. racist or homophobic bullying
   - Safeguarding concerns that highlight specific vulnerabilities or high-risk online behaviour
   - Pupils' online activity – e.g. a summary of IT filtering report findings

6. What training have staff received to ensure they understand their duties in regard to Prevent and how to support pupils?

7. When was the last time our school/trust made a Prevent referral?

8. How do we keep staff knowledge and understanding of the Prevent policy and referral process up to date? (Important to consider if a referral has not been made in some time.)

9. Are all staff aware of how to report any concerns they may have?

10. How does our curriculum build pupils' resilience to extremist ideologies and radicalisation?