

The Prevent duty Departmental Advice for schools and childcare providers Department for Education June 2015

Commentary

PREVENT guidance from Department from Education June 2015

In response to the Prevent duty on schools set out in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, the DfE have published guidance to help schools implement the duty. For schools inspected by Ofsted, it will be helpful to read this guidance in conjunction with Ofsted's Inspecting Safeguarding 2015. Whilst this guidance is non-statutory, all schools, whatever their status, have to implement the Prevent duty and should find this guidance useful.

Commentary

The guidance is clear that extremism and radicalisation are safeguarding concerns and should be dealt with using the school's existing safeguarding procedures. The DfE says that the Prevent duty should not be 'burdensome'.

There are challenges in the implementation of this Prevent duty guidance, not least the possible tension between the rights of parents to withdraw their child from the teaching of RE, and the need for schools to ensure that children understand the 'diverse...religious and ethnic identities in the UK'.

There are some interesting comments in this guidance document. For example, 'the Prevent duty does not require teachers...to carry out *unnecessary* intrusion into family life' (my italics). Whilst school staff may make referrals to the (voluntary) Channel programme, it is not clear what part parents play in such referrals.

This guidance does suggest that Local Safeguarding Children Boards will be including radicalisation and extremism into their threshold documents, but this may not happen quickly. I imagine that LSCBs will aim to include extremism and radicalisation on their website, but this may take time.

This departmental advice on the Prevent duty offers useful support to schools, but it is not a comprehensive toolkit. This is a sensitive topic and teachers do need support to tackle extremism with confidence.

Briefing Note: How social media is used to encourage travel to Syria and Iraq

Published alongside this guidance is a briefing note for schools: 'How social media is used to encourage travel to Syria and Iraq' (Home Office/DfE). This document gives useful information to help staff, parents and pupils understand how they might be at risk online and to understand the methods online recruiters use.

It would be useful to make this document easily available to staff, perhaps on noticeboards, intranets or, in higher risk areas, by issuing individual copies to staff.

KEY POINTS

Themes

There are four themes within the Prevent duty:

Risk assessment

Working in partnership

Staff training

IT policies

Identifying 'at risk' pupils

see also National Risk Register of Civil Emergencies 2015 (Cabinet Office)

Local authorities and police will have contextual information

No single way to identify a young person who is at risk.

Small changes in behaviour might indicate there are concerns about their wellbeing.

Even very young children might show signs of radicalisation

Schools should act 'proportionately': the prevent duty does not require teachers to 'carry out unnecessary intrusion into family life'.

Ofsted

The Common Inspection Framework makes explicit reference to the duty to prevent radicalisation and extremism.

It is, of course, important to remember that Ofsted will be looking at impact, not just at what the school is doing.

Policy and procedures

Schools need clear policies and procedures to address concerns about radicalisation

Not necessary to have a distinct policy

Referrals

Schools should know how to make a referral to either the Prevent team or the child protection assessment team (as appropriate) when there are concerns about a child

Schools should know how to make a referral to the voluntary 'Channel' programme

Online training about Channel can be found here:

www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/onlinechannel

Schools should find out their local referral route, before they need it. If there is a quick contact sheet or flowchart, the extremism contact should be added there.

Working in Partnership

LSCBs to co-ordinate local agencies responses to safeguarding children from extremism or radicalisation.

LSCBs will refer to radicalisation or extremism concerns in their threshold guidance

The Home Office has funded Prevent co-ordinators to work in the community, including with schools.

Effective partnerships with parents to signpost them towards sources of support.

Training

Home Office has developed a training package called WRAP – Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent

Individual schools should decide their own training needs

As a minimum, Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) should undertake Prevent awareness training

DSLs should be able to offer advice and support to other staff

IT

IT filtering prevents extremist material being accessed in schools (be aware of pupils using community languages to circumvent filtering)

Internet safety

Develop an awareness of online risks and how extremists use social media to engage with young people

Every teacher needs to be aware of the online activity of extremist and terrorist groups

Building resilience to radicalisation

Schools should offer a 'safe environment' to explore sensitive or controversial topics

Schools should 'satisfy themselves' that any resources they use are suitable for pupils

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC)

British values

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)

Time to consider sensitive or controversial topics

Give pupils skills and knowledge to understand and manage difficult situations

Learn to recognise and manage risk

Learn to make safer choices

Deal with peer pressure when it threatens their personal safety or well-being

Citizenship

Understand political and social issues

Learn about democracy, government and how laws are made

Learn about diversity and the wide-range of ethnic identities in the UK

Learn about the need for mutual respect and understanding

What to do if you have a concern about individual pupils

Identify concern

Inform Designated Safeguarding Lead in the usual way

The DSL will refer to Social Care or the local Prevent lead

For non-urgent concerns, the local police can be called on 101.

Department for Education Helpline

Dedicated telephone helpline for extremism

Telephone: 020 7340 7264

Email: counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk

Download Links

Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

The Prevent duty: departmental advice for schools and childcare providers

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-children-from-radicalisation-the-prevent-duty>

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Contact Andrew Hall on **01223 929269** to arrange training or consultancy at your school or college.