Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy

1.   Purpose and Scope

Ambitious about Autism and Ambitious About Autism Schools Trust is committed to providing a secure environment for children and young people where they feel safe and are kept safe. All the staff in our charity(s) recognise that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility irrespective of the role they undertake or whether their role has direct contact or responsibility for children and young people or not.

In adhering to this policy and procedures staff, visitors and volunteers will contribute to our delivery of the outcomes to all children and young people, as set out in s10 (2) of the Children Act 2004. This Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy is one element within our overall school/college/charity arrangements to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of all Children and Adults in line with our statutory duties set out at s175 of the Education Act 2002 (s157 of the Education Act 2002).

Our Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy also draws on:
*   Guidance in the "London Child Protection Procedures"
*   DfE Guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2015" DCSF Resources "Learning Together to be Safe", "Prevent: Resources Guide", "Tackling Extremism in the UK"
*   DfE's "Teaching Approaches that help Build Resilience to Extremism among Young People" and the Report into Allegations concerning Birmingham Schools arising from the 'Trojan Horse' letter (Clarke, P., 2014)

This policy covers all aspects of the charity's work with children and young people, and work involving young people conducted in other parts of the charity, such as its policy and influencing work.

This policy such be read in conjunction with the following organisational policies:
*   Adult and Child Safeguarding Policies
*   Whistle Blowing Policy
*   Equality and Diversity Policy
*   Behaviour Policy
*   Professional Code of Conduct
*   E Safety Policy

2.   Ethos and Practice

The Government Prevent Strategy defines extremism as the

'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, college or charity, whether from internal sources –children and young people, staff, volunteers, governors, trustees or external sources – the community, external agencies or individuals such as parents/carers or Faith Leaders such as Imams, Rabbis etc.

Our children and young people see our school/college/charity as a safe place where they can explore controversial issues safely and where our staff encourage and facilitate this – we have a duty to ensure this happens.

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As an organisation we recognise that extremism and exposure to extremist materials and influences can lead to poor outcomes for children and young people 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 children and young people.

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. We therefore will provide a broad and balanced curriculum, delivered by skilled professionals, so that our pupil/learners/learners are enriched, understand and become tolerant of difference and diversity and also to ensure that they thrive, feel valued and are not marginalised.

We are also aware that children and young people can be exposed to extremist influences or prejudiced views from an early age which emanate from a variety of sources and media, including via the internet, and at times pupil/learners may 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 pupil/learners or staff will always be challenged and where appropriate dealt with in line with our Behaviour Policy for pupil/learners and the Code of Conduct for staff. Where misconduct by a teacher is proven the matter will be referred to the National College for Teaching and Leadership for their consideration as to whether a Prohibition Order is warranted.

As part of wider safeguarding responsibilities staff will be alert to:
- Disclosures by children and young people 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 children and young people have not actively sought these out.
- Graffiti symbols, writing or art work promoting extremist messages or images
- Children and young people accessing extremist material online, including through social networking sites
- Parental reports of changes in behaviour, friendship or actions and requests for assistance
- Partner schools, colleges, local authorities services, and police reports of issues affecting children and young people in other schools or settings
- Children and young people 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.

We will closely follow any locally agreed procedure as set out by the host Local Authorities and/or our Safeguarding Children/Adult Boards' agreed processes and criteria for safeguarding individuals vulnerable to extremism and radicalisation. In the event of concerns about a person becoming radicalised consideration will be given to using the relevant LA Channel process.[1]

3.   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 and young people may experience elsewhere may make it harder for them to challenge or question these radical influences. In our school, college and charity this will be achieved by good teaching,

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[1] Channel is a bespoke panel which meets to address issues of individuals who have been identified as being at risk of radicalisation but have not committed any terrorism offence. The Channel Panel meets when a referral has been made and referrals can be made by anyone.

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primarily via PSHE but also by adopting the methods outlined in the Government's guidance **'**Teaching approaches that help build resilience to extremism among young people'

We will ensure that all of our teaching approaches help our children and young people build resilience to extremism and give children and young people a positive sense of identity through the development of critical thinking skills. We will ensure that all of our staff are equipped to recognise extremism and are skilled and confident enough to challenge it.

We will be flexible enough to adapt our teaching approaches, as appropriate, so as to address specific issues so as to become even more relevant to the current issues of extremism and radicalisation. In doing so we will apply the 'key ingredients'[2] for success ensuring the we:
- Make a connection with young people through good [teaching] design and a pupil/learner centred approach.
- Facilitate a 'safe space' for dialogue, and
- Equip our children and young people with the appropriate skills, knowledge, understanding and awareness for resilience.

Therefore this approach will be embedded within the ethos of our school and college so that children and young people know and understand what safe and acceptable behaviour is in the context of extremism and radicalisation. This will work in conjunction with our school's/college's approach to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children and young people as defined in Ofsted Common Inspection Framework Handbook. Our goal is to build mutual respect and understanding and to promote the use of dialogue, not violence, as a form of conflict resolution.

We will achieve this by using a curriculum that includes:
- Citizenship programmes
- Open discussion and debate, where appropriate for our children and young people
- Work on anti-violence and a restorative approach addressed throughout curriculum
- Focussed educational programmes.

We will also work with local partners, families and communities in our efforts to ensure our school, college and charity understands and embraces our local context and values in challenging extremist views and to assist in the broadening of our pupils'/learners' experiences and horizons. We will help support children and young people who may be vulnerable to such influences as part of our wider safeguarding responsibilities and where we believe a pupil/learner is being directly affected by extremist materials or influences we will ensure that that pupil/learner is offered support. Additionally, in such instances our school/college/charity will seek external support from the Local Authority and/or local partnership structures working to prevent extremism.

In our schools/college/charity(s) we 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 children and young people 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 children and young people safe and prepare them for life in modern multi-cultural Britain and globally.

4.   Use of External Agencies and Speakers
We encourage the use of external agencies or speakers to enrich the experiences of our children and young people; however we will positively vet those external agencies, individuals or speakers who we engage to provide such learning opportunities or experiences for our children and young people and who offer training to our staff team. To do this we will use our Local Authority's guidance for Managing the Work of External Agencies.

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[2] See appendix 1 of this policy. Extract from 'Teaching Approaches that help build resilience to extremism among young people'

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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, our values and ethos. We must be aware that in some instances the work of external agencies may not directly be connected with the rest of the curriculum so we need to ensure that this work is of benefit to all children and young people.

Our schools/college/charity(s) will therefore assess the suitability and effectiveness of input from external agencies or individuals to ensure that:
- Any messages communicated to children and young people are consistent with the ethos of the school/college/charity 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 children and young people 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 children and young people
- Activities are carefully evaluated by school/college to ensure that they are effective

We recognise, however, that the ethos of our schools/college/charity(s) is to encourage children and young people to understand opposing views and ideologies, appropriate to their age, needs, understanding and abilities, and to be able to actively engage with them in informed debate, and we may 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 children and young people recognise risk and build resilience to manage any such risk themselves where appropriate to their age and ability but also to help children and young people develop the critical thinking skills needed to engage in informed debate.

5. Whistle Blowing
Where there are concerns of extremism or radicalisation children and young people 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 Ambitious about Autism Whistle Blowing Policy.

6. Child and Adult Safeguarding Policies and Procedures
Staff will be alert to the fact that whilst Extremism and Radicalisation is broadly a safeguarding issue there may be some instances where a child or young person may be at direct risk of harm or neglect. For example; this could be due to a child or young person 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/young person's family that may equally place a child/young person at risk of harm. (These examples are for illustration and are not definitive or exhaustive). Therefore all staff at our school/college (including visiting staff, volunteers, contractors, and students on placement) are required to report instances where they believe a child/young person may be at risk of harm or neglect to the appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead.

7. Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead
The Designated Safeguarding Leads are the local 'experts' for staff, and others, who may have concerns about a child's/young person's safety or well-being and are the first point of contact for external agencies.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead for TreeHouse School is the Headteacher(Kerry Sternstein) and the Deputy in her absence.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead for Ambitious College is the Principal (Viv Berkeley) and her Vice Principals in her absence.

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The Designated Safeguarding Lead for other Ambitious about Autism/Ambitious about Autsim Schools Trust activities is the Chief Executive (Jolanta Lasota) and one of the other Designated Safeguarding Leads and/or deputies.

For clarity The Designated Safeguarding Lead for The Rise Free School operated by Ambitious about Autism Schools Trust is the Headteacher (Sarah Roscoe) and the Deputy in her absence.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead works in line with the responsibilities as set out at Annex B of the DfE Guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.

For clarity the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the The Rise Free Schools is the Chief Executive (Jolanta Lasota)) and one of the other Designated Safeguarding Leads and/or deputies.

8. Training

Training on Child and Adult Safeguarding is organised for staff and governors at least every three years and will comply with the prevailing arrangements agreed by the Local Authority and the Safeguarding Children/Adult Board and will, in part, include training on extremism and radicalisation and its safeguarding implications. The Designated Safeguarding Leads will attend training courses as necessary and the appropriate inter-agency training organised by the Safeguarding Children/Adult Board at least every two years, again this will include training on extremism and radicalisation and its safeguarding implications.

9. Recruitment

The arrangements for recruiting all staff, permanent and volunteer, will follow guidance for 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 charity so as to unduly influence our school/college/charity's character and ethos. We are aware that such persons seek to limit the opportunities for our children and young people 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 on-going culture of vigilance within our school and staff team we will minimise the opportunities for extremist views to prevail.

10. Role of Governing Bodies

The Governing Bodies of our TreeHouse School, Ambitious College and The Rise Free School will undertake appropriate training to ensure that they are clear about their roles and the parameters of their responsibilities as Governors, including their statutory safeguarding duties. The Governing Bodies will support the ethos and values of our school/college and will support the school/college in tackling extremism and radicalisation.

Details of our Governing Bodies will be published on our website to promote transparency.

The Governing Bodies will challenge the senior management team on the delivery of this policy and monitor its effectiveness.

Governors will review this policy regularly (every two years) and may amend and adopt it outside of this timeframe in accordance with any new legislation or guidance or in response to any quality assurance recommendations pertaining to the delivery of this policy and the overall safeguarding arrangements made.

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APPENDIX 1

PUSH FACTORS — factors that push an individual/ make an individual vulnerable to extremist messages

Lack of excitement; frustration

Lack of *sense* of achievement — seen as significant. 'lack of purpose' // Confidence in the future, life goals.

Lack of an outlet for views.

Gaps in knowledge or understanding of Islam — both young people and their parents

Sense of injustice

Actual or perceived humiliating experiences. (including bullying, racial discrimination as well as perceived humiliating experiences. Perhaps linked closely to sense of injustice)

Exclusion — lack of belonging to peer or community networks, associations etc.

Below the line: factors that are out of scope of this study

Disruptive home life. Disaffection with wider societal issues

KEY INGREDIENTS

Teacher confidence in many cases it will be the use of existing teaching skills and methods which may well be the most effective approach. From prison settings, staff who are more confident in their abilities tend to perform much better even though they have not received specialist training

Teacher attitudes and behaviours

- Willingness to admit you don't know
- Acknowledging controversial issues exist
- Awareness that I have a role to play
- Willingness to turn to others for help when you don't know about something

Specific knowledge:

- Understanding other cultures and religions as well as alternative values and beliefs (whilst being careful to avoid 'othering')
- Knowledge of an alternative values framework

Teaching practice/pedagogy:

- Boosting critical thinking (seeing through propaganda, singular messages etc)
- Helping to see multiple perspectives
- Using multiple resources/methods
- Embedding or sustaining dialogue following specialist interventions.
- Enabling students to tackle difficult issues.

- Linking school work to the wider community
- Drawing evidence from across the curriculum
- Developing in young people a sense of multiple identities. help young people become aware of, and comfortable with, multiple personal identity

Other factors

Support from senior leaders

Pupil support processes

PULL FACTORS - Factors that draw young people into extremist messages

Charismatic/confident individuals (recruiters).

Networks/sense of belonging

Broader community views which enable or do not oppose extremism.

Persuasive, clear messages. Exploiting knowledge gaps

Sense of dignity and importance and loyalty

Exciting (non-teaching) activities.

Sense of purpose in life

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