

ASTON TOWER MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST



NO PLATFORM POLICY

Approved by:	Approved on:	Next Review Date:
Full Trust Board	28 th June 2021	June 2023
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1.0 RESPONDING TO SPEAKERS PROMOTING MESSAGES OF HATRED AND INTOLERANCE

1.1 Introduction

Schools have a range of duties in relation to safeguarding children from extremism. The statutory guidance ***Keeping Children Safe in Education***, most recently updated in September 2020, is the key document for schools, colleges and their staff as part of the wider safeguarding system for children. It provides an overview of their duties regarding preventing the radicalisation of children¹. It recognises that children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation and that protecting children from this risk should be part of a schools' safeguarding approach.

The Government published an overview of the duties on schools in its policy paper ***Preventing Extremism in The Education and Children's Services Sectors*** on 1st September 2015² and Prevent Duty guidance April 2019.

In recent times the Government has taken further action to strengthen the duties on schools, in particular with the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, which placed the Government's "Prevent" Counter-Extremism strategy on a statutory footing, and placed duties on schools to have due regard to the need to prevent children being drawn into terrorism.

The Government has also sought to strengthen a schools' abilities to address a wide range of potential concerns relating to radicalisation, such as the potential for children to be groomed through several mediums and be drawn in to extremist narratives.

1.2 Aims of Policy

This "No Platform Policy" aims to ensure that Aston Tower Multi-Academy Trust balances the right of freedom of speech against the potential use of its facilities for the promotion of extremist ideological, religious or political beliefs. In this context beliefs are considered to be extremist if they include the expression of racist or fascist views; if they incite hatred based on religious interpretations, ideology or belief; or if they promote discrimination on the grounds of political opinion, age, colour, disability, ethnic or national origin, gender, marital status, race, religion or sexual orientation.

This policy provides guidelines on how schools can respond to extremist concerns and conduct research into the background of potential speakers.

¹Department for Education, *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, September 2020

²<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-extremism-in-schools-and-childrens-services/preventing-extremism-in-the-education-and-childrens-services-sectors>

1.3 Definitions

Definitions for the purpose of this policy:

1.3.1 The Terrorism Act 2000³ makes it a criminal offence to:

- 1.3.1.1 Belong, or profess to belong, to a proscribed organisation (section 11 of the Act);
- 1.3.1.2 Invite support for a proscribed organisation (and the support is not, or is not restricted to the provision of money or other property) (section 1(1));
- 1.3.1.3 Arrange, manage or assist in arranging or managing a meeting in the knowledge that the meeting is to support or further the activities of a proscribed organisation, or is to be addressed by a person who belongs or professes to belong to a proscribed organisation (section 12(2)); or to address a meeting if the purpose of the address is to encourage support for, or further the activities of, a proscribed organisation (section 13).
- 1.3.1.4 Wear clothing or carry or display articles in public in such a way or in such circumstances as to arouse reasonable suspicion that an individual is a member or supporter of the proscribed organisation (section 13).

1.3.2 Section 38b of the Terrorism Act 2000 states that an individual has committed an offence if s/he has information which is known or believes might be of material assistance in preventing another person from committing an act of terrorism or securing apprehension, prosecution or conviction of another person for an offence involving the commission, preparation or instigation of an act of terrorism and s/he fails to disclose that information to the police as soon as is reasonably possible.

1.3.3 Extremism as defined in the Prevent and Counter Extremism Strategy by Government is 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. Also included in the Government's definition of extremism are calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

1.3.4 Not every part of this definition must be satisfied or a particular individual or organisation to be regarded as extremist.

1.3.5 The Equality Act 2010⁴ protects nine individual characteristics set out in Appendix 2. All member and employees of the Trust have a duty to not unlawfully discriminate against anyone based on any of these characteristics.

³<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/11/contents>

⁴<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

1.3.6 The Equality Act 2010 also requires the Trust to have due regard to:

1.3.6.1 Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;

1.3.6.2 Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

1.3.7 Trust facilities includes (by way of example):

1.3.7.1 Property and land owned by the Trust, in part or in whole;

1.3.7.2 Property and land leased or licensed by the Trust, in part or in whole;

1.3.7.3 The provision of services, such as IT services (including copying or printing).

1.4 Principles

The Principles on which this policy is based are:

- No person may use the facilities of Aston Tower Multi-Academy Trust to express or promote extremist ideological, religious or political views.
- No person may use the facilities of Aston Tower Multi-Academy Trust to express or promote discriminatory views in relation to the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010.
- Aston Tower Multi-Academy Trust will not allow the use of its facilities by any group or organisation that is proscribed by HM Government.

1.5 Electronic Communications

Aston Tower Multi-Academy Trust will not allow the use of school website, IT facilities or information management processes to:

- Promote discriminatory views in relation to the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010;
- Promote or glorify terrorism; or
- Promote extreme ideological, religious or political beliefs.

The school has a right to exercise control over all activities on its IT facilities, including electronic communications associated with the name of the school and use of school equipment to access external resources. This includes the right to monitor the use of school resources.

1.6 Written and Printed Communication

Aston Tower Multi-Academy Trust has the right to exercise control over the content of any written or printed material that identifies itself as associated with the Trust. It will not allow the use of its facilities in the production of such material, or permit the use of its name, or of any identifying marks relating to the Trust, in such material, if that material appear to:

- Promote discriminatory views in relation to the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010;
- Promote or glorify terrorism; or
- Promote extreme ideological, religious or political beliefs.

1.7 Use of Buildings, Facilities and Property

In deciding whether to allow any group or organisation to make use of its buildings, facilities and property, Aston Tower Multi-Academy Trust will take into account the views, policies and objectives of that group or organisation and may refuse on the grounds that these are incompatible with the policies and objectives of the school. In particular, access will be refused if it appears likely that the proposed activity would promote extremist ideological, political or religious beliefs.

1.8 Accountability

The statutory body of the school Trust Board has ultimate responsibility for this policy. The implementation of the policy is the responsibility of the Headteacher.

Aston Tower Multi-Academy Trust will use the **No Platform Policy of Birmingham City Council** for guidance on conducting research into the background of potential speakers, consulting other schools, other organisations, using search engines, assessing the reliability of information found, identifying risks to community cohesion etc.

1.9 Reporting Concerns

School staff have a responsibility to act on concerns. Staff will have training on how to recognise a potential issue with the promotion of extremism in school.

At Aston Tower Multi-Academy Trust, staff will inform Jonathan Moore, Headteacher if they have a concern.

Any staff member who has raised a concern will be given feedback on the action taken.

If after reporting a concern staff feel that no satisfactory action has been taken, then they should escalate the concern by informing Alex Smith, Chair of Trustees of their concerns.

In addition to in-school safeguarding mechanisms if someone is concerned about someone using school premises to promote extremism, then further advice can be sought by writing to noplatform@birmingham.gov.uk

1.10 Training

Aston Tower Multi-Academy Trust will ensure that school staff and Trustees receive appropriate training in the issues raised by this policy.

NO PLATFORM POLICY – UNDESIRABLE BOOKINGS

Advice and Good Practice for Venue Bookings

Following the steps below to mitigate the risks of undesirable bookings. This document is not a definitive list and should be used in conjunction with other checking mechanisms.

ASK

What's planned and who's planning it?

1. Who is the individual or organisation booking the event?
 - Ask for their name and associated names they operate under
 - Ask for their address and phone number
 - Get details of the individual or the organisations website and associated websites.
2. Do they implement a policy that promotes equality and diversity and challenges all forms of discrimination? Or will they agree to their event subscribing to your equality and diversity policy?
3. Ask for details of the event, including theme; title; agenda; content; speakers; expected audience, numbers and demographics; details of how the event will be promoted (ask for copies of flyers/posters etc.); is the event open to the public or a ticket only event?

CHECK

Undertake due diligence to confirm what you've been told and find out more.

1. Run a check on the individual/organisation/speakers by:
 - Viewing their website, articles or speeches
 - Consider what other people are saying about them (articles/blogs etc.)
2. Ask for a reference from a venue provider previously used by the individual/organisation.
3. If the booking is for a charity, check the charity number of the organisation with the charity commission at the **charity.commission.gov.uk**

DECIDE

Do you let the event go ahead? Or take action to reduce risk?

Use the information collected to inform your decision.

TOP TIPS when taking bookings

- If the booking is being arranged by an event management or other company, make sure you know who their client is
- Be wary of individuals only giving mobile numbers

- If the enquiries are about internet use and bandwidth, investigate whether any speakers will partake remotely
- Be wary of individuals/organisations making large cash payments
- Ensure that in the event of reputational risk you can withdraw from the contract.

TOP TIPS when researching individuals/organisations online

- Complete a thorough investigation on the individual/organisation by:
 - Viewing their website(s)
 - Looking at what other people are saying about them (article/blogs etc.)
- Complete a thorough check on any speakers by looking at what other people are saying about them (article/blogs etc.)
- When you are looking at a website, check that it is being kept up-to-date
- If you are unsure about an organisation, check it has a landline number and a business address
- Where possible use primary evidence – an organisations manifesto or a person speaking on YouTube.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

List of Terrorist Organisations banned under UK Law

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations--2>

The Charity Commission

charity.commission.gov.uk

If you still have a concern about the booking, you can contact your Local Authority

noplatform@birmingham.gov.uk

In case of an Emergency dial 999

If you have any information about suspicious activity or behaviour contact Counter Terrorist Police via:

Gov.uk/ACT or call 0800 789 321

