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# PREVENTING EXTREMISM AND RADICALISATION POLICY

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| Date approved: | To be ratified by the governors in Nov 2024 |
| Review Frequency: | Every three years |
| Date next review due: | July 2027 |
| Scope of Policy: | This policy applies to all staff, students and volunteers at Riverside School |

**Designated Safeguarding Lead:**

David Wylde

**Governor with responsibility for safeguarding:**

Venilia Amorim

## 1. Introduction

Riverside School is committed to providing a secure environment for students, where young people feel safe and are kept safe. All adults at Riverside School recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility irrespective of the role they undertake or whether their role has direct contact or responsibility for young people or not.

This Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy is one element within our overall school arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all young people in line with our statutory duties.

## 2. School Ethos and Practice

When operating this policy Riverside School uses the following accepted 2024 Governmental definition of extremism which is:

Extremism is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, that aims to:

1. negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; or

2. undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or

3. intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results in (1) or (2).

There is no place for extremist views of any kind in our school, whether from internal sources

- students, staff or governors, or external sources - school community, external agencies or individuals. Our students see our school as a safe place where they can explore controversial issues safely and where our teachers encourage and facilitate this - we have a duty to ensure this happens.

As a school we recognise that extremism and exposure to extremist materials and influences can lead to poor outcomes for 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 students.

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.

Therefore, at Riverside School we will provide a broad and balanced curriculum, so that our students are enriched, understand and become tolerant of difference and diversity and also to ensure that they thrive, feel valued and not marginalised.

Furthermore, at Riverside School we are aware that 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 students may themselves reflect or display views that may be discriminatory, prejudiced or extremist, including using derogatory language. In order to prevent students accessing material of this nature within school, Riverside have filtering systems in place to block such websites. If a student tries to access this material the monitoring system will flag this with the DSL so appropriate intervention can be put in place.

Any prejudice, discrimination or extremist views, including derogatory language, displayed by students or staff will always be challenged and where appropriate dealt with in line with our Behaviour and Discipline Policy for students and Riverside School Staff Code of Conduct.

As part of wider safeguarding responsibilities school staff will be alert to:

- Disclosures by students 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 students have not actively sought these out;
- Graffiti symbols, writing or art work promoting extremist messages or images;
- Students attempting to access extremist material online, including through social networking sites;
- Parental reports of changes in behaviour, friendship or actions and requests for assistance;
- Partner schools, local authority services, police reports of issues affecting students in other schools or settings;
- Students 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.

Our school will closely follow any locally agreed procedure as set out by the Local Authority Safeguarding Children Board's agreed processes and criteria for safeguarding individuals vulnerable to extremism and radicalisation.

## 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 young people may experience elsewhere may make it harder for them to challenge or question these radical influences. In our school this will be achieved by good teaching, but also by adopting the methods outlined in the Government's guidance 'Teaching approaches that help build resilience to extremism among young people' DfE 2011.

We will ensure that all of our teaching approaches help our students build resilience to extremism and give students 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' for success as set out in the Table in Appendix 1 taken from the DfE document above and we will apply the methodologies set out in that document following the three broad categories of:

- Making a connection with young people through good teaching and a student-centred approach;
- Facilitating a 'safe space' for dialogue, and
- Equipping our students with the appropriate skills, knowledge, understanding and awareness for resilience.

Therefore, this approach will be embedded within the ethos of our school so that students 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 approach to the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development of students as defined in Ofsted's School Inspection Handbook and will include the sound use of assemblies to help further promote this rounded development of our students.

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;
- Work on anti-violence and a restorative approach addressed throughout curriculum and the behaviour policy;
- Focused educational programmes.

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

At Riverside School 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 students 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 students safe and prepare them for life in modern multi-cultural Britain and globally.

## 4. Use of External Agencies and Speakers

At Riverside School we encourage the use of external agencies or speakers to enrich the experiences of our students, however we will positively vet those external agencies, individuals or speakers who we engage to provide such learning opportunities or experiences for our students.

These external agencies will be vetted to ensure that we do not unwittingly use agencies that contradict each other with their messages or that are inconsistent with, or are in compete opposition to, the school's 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 school curriculum so we need to ensure that this work is of benefit to students.

Our school will assess the suitability and effectiveness of input from external agencies or individuals to ensure that:

- Any messages communicated to students are consistent with the ethos of the school 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 students 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 students;
- Activities are carefully evaluated to ensure that they are effective.

We recognise, however, that the ethos of our school is to encourage students to understand opposing views and ideologies, appropriate to their age, 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.

Therefore, by delivering a broad and balanced curriculum and enrichment programme augmented by the use of external sources where appropriate, we will strive to ensure our students recognise risk and build resilience to manage any such risk themselves where appropriate to their age and ability but also to help students develop the critical thinking skills needed to engage in informed debate.

## 5. Whistle Blowing

Where there are concerns of extremism or radicalisation Students, Staff and Governors will be encouraged to make use of our internal systems to Whistle Blow or raise any issue in confidence.

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue, or feels their genuine concerns are not being addressed, the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line is available on 0800 028 0285

They must inform the Headteacher and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead straight away (or if it relates to the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors).

## 6. Safeguarding

Please refer to our Safeguarding Policy for the full procedural framework on our Safeguarding and Child Protection duties.

Staff at Riverside School 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 people may be at direct risk of harm or neglect. For example; this could be due to a child 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 family that may equally place a child at risk of harm. (These examples are for illustration and are not definitive or exhaustive).

Therefore, all adults working in Riverside School (including visiting staff, volunteers' contractors, and students on placement) are required to report instances where they believe a child may be at risk of harm or neglect to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, their deputies or the headteacher.

## 7. Role of Governing Body

The Governing Body of our School will undertake appropriate training to ensure that they are clear about their role and the parameters of their responsibilities as Governors, including their statutory safeguarding duties.

The Governing Body of our school will support the ethos and values of our school and will support the school in tackling extremism and radicalisation.

In line with the provisions set out in the DfE guidance 'Keeping Young people Safe in Education, 2014' the governing body will challenge the school's senior management team on the delivery of this policy and monitor its effectiveness.