

Extremism under the Prevent Duty

1. Treat extremism like other safeguarding issues

At West Hill School, we treat extremism like other safeguarding issues such as drug abuse, sexual abuse, female genital mutilation, pornography, gang involvement, bullying and cyber-bullying. As with these issues, we will contextualise the behaviour we are observing and to look at patterns of behaviour rather than one-off "warning signs".

This is not about spying on behavioural changes. It is about pre-emptively guarding those under our duty of care from harmful risks. Just as keeping an eye out for signs of sexual abuse is correctly perceived as proactive protection, rather than spying on the child, so too should safeguarding against extremism.

2. Build up emotional intelligence and critical thinking skills

We aim to teach pupils how to be fair-minded thinkers, who think in a flexible and impartial way. This can protect them against the rigid, black and white narratives that characterise the thought processes of extremist groups. We already have a strong respect agenda at West Hill which will enable us to continue to:

- Build empathy and tolerance for different perspectives to strengthen resilience to the pull of any extreme ideologies.
- Support pupils to explore attitudes and experiences that are different to what they are familiar with
- Draw out empathy for different perspectives and build strong emotional and social skills

3. Facilitate open dialogue and honest realism

Maintaining an ethos and culture for open conversation about difficult issues is crucial for pupils at West Hill and is one we believe is critical for keeping them safe. If a pupil feels like their curiosity or understanding about something complex is not properly fulfilled, they may go elsewhere for information which could be inaccurate or dangerous, especially given their vulnerability.

Staff will help and support pupils in discussing these issues, allowing them to understand that people will have different opinions and this is something to be celebrated. We will continue to encourage openness and nurture pupils' curiosity. Where necessary staff will try to correct misconceptions and misunderstanding on the facts surrounding controversial issues, but allow group discussion to unfold organically.

Adopt an "honest realism" approach when facilitating dialogue on difficult subjects. Frank discussion on current affairs, will allow pupils to understand fact from fiction and how events have an impact on both themselves and the world.

With open discussion some difficult questions could arise. Staff will not shut down such questions. Instead they will enquire as to where the question is coming from in a non-

judgemental manner. Staff will endeavour also to answer questions when they are raised rather than ask them to wait for the PHHCE lesson, for example.

4. Increase pupil knowledge of extremism and its roots

Staff will use the existing curriculum to equip pupils with the appropriate understanding needed to be aware of extremist movements, for example in Time and Place, through PSHCE, ICT and in tutor times.

5. Focus on digital critical thinking and internet safety

Pupils regularly receive training in e-safety as their ability to use the internet in a safe way is the key to protecting them from becoming susceptible to all kinds of social media risks, including propaganda used by extremist groups. Their ability to discern what is propaganda and what comes from a legitimate source is a skill that not only will build their resilience to risk, including extremism, but will equip them with the critical thinking skills that are necessary on a day-to-day basis.

6. Increase awareness of propaganda

It is important to teach our pupils how to recognise and challenge the myths and misconceptions they will come across in everyday life, including conspiracy theories and extremist narratives.

Extremist narratives may contain kernels of truth, but it is important that staff point out how these truths can be manipulated. Continuing this strain of critical thinking training will allow pupils to recognise what information to trust, for example in the media, and what information to take with a pinch of salt or disregard altogether. We believe this approach will ensure a degree of resilience towards extremist materials, as well as a broader competency in knowing where to find trustworthy information.

7. Encourage positive social activism

An often-cited reason for membership of extremist groups is that the individual concerned was struck by the desire to act in the world and wanted to engage with something meaningful.

Staff at West Hill will encourage all pupils to become socially empowered and politically engaged citizens. We will encourage active participation in the school and wider community and will teach them how they can become involved in influencing and affecting change in the world e.g. through participating in mock elections and social enterprise activities.

8. The curriculum

We will use the existing curriculum to implement the outlined methods. This approach will ensure the approach is embedded in order to increase their maximum impact potential.