

Radicalisation and extremism

What is it?

[Radicalisation is the process](#) by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups. Extremism is vocal or active opposition to the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

The Prevent duty addresses all forms of terrorism, including Islamist radicalisation, school massacre and those with mixed, unclear or unstable ideologies. Over the last few years, right-wing radicalisation has become the most common case type referred to Channel, which is the government's programme for providing support to people at risk of radicalisation.

What are our school's statutory duties?

Schools have a duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism, under [section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#).

As a school, we also have a duty to protect the welfare of our pupils and make sure they have the best outcomes.

How does radicalisation happen?

Increasingly, radicalisation happens online. For example:

- Extremist groups use videos on YouTube to share conspiracy theories and disinformation
- Far-right groups use social media to spread disinformation about Muslims and other marginalised groups
- Extremists also use chat platforms in and about online games to target people, including children

Once they've established communication, extremists will typically try to groom children using increasingly extreme language and content. Sometimes, they'll use meme images or videos to share their ideas.

Who's more at risk?

Any child is at risk of being radicalised. But children who are more at risk may:

- Have low self-esteem
- Be victims of bullying or discrimination

They might feel isolated or lonely and want to belong.

Pupils affected by the increased cost of living might be at an additional risk. These pupils might spend more time:

- Online, and be exposed to more risks online, such as radicalisation and extremist ideas
- Out and about, making them more available and vulnerable to extremists to find and target

What to look for

Signs that a pupil is being radicalised can include:

- Becoming increasingly argumentative
- Refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different to themselves
- Becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution
- Changes in friendship groups and appearance
- No longer doing things they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion
- Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- An unwillingness or inability to discuss their views, or refusing to listen to different points of view
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- Increased levels of anger or secretiveness, especially around internet use
- Expressions of sympathy for extremist ideologies and groups, or justification of their actions
- Accessing extremist material online
- Spending a lot more time online or on their phone
- Being in contact with extremist recruiters and joining, or seeking to join, extremist organisations

What to do if you have a concern

- Tell the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), and make a written record, following our school's procedures. Always take action if you're worried
- **[Insert any local procedures staff should know about here]**
- The Department for Education has a dedicated telephone helpline to enable school staff to raise concerns about extremism directly: 020 7340 7264. You can also email counter.extremism@education.gov.uk
- Call **999** if you think someone is in **immediate danger**

Sources

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) and [Protecting children from radicalisation: the Prevent duty](#), GOV.UK – DfE
- [Signs of radicalisation, Educate against hate](#)
- [Individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent programme, April 2021 to March 2022](#), GOV.UK – Home Office
- [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015: section 26, legislation.gov.uk](#)
- [Protecting children from radicalisation, NSPCC](#)

This factsheet was produced by [The Key Safeguarding: thekeysupport.com/safeguarding](https://thekeysupport.com/safeguarding)