Stanchester Academy

Prevent Policy

2024 - 25

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Stanchester Academy Prevent Policy

Context

“Dealing with violent extremism is nothing new. Throughout history there have been groups prepared to use violence to achieve their aims… A small minority seek to radicalise young people with an ideology which justifies the use of violence…

While violent extremism influenced by faith-based extremists currently pose the greatest threat to life, other forms of extremism and prejudice are also affecting individuals and communities across the country and can be a catalyst for alienation and disaffection and potentially lead to violence.”

“Extremists of all persuasions try to paint the world as black and white, accentuating division and difference, and exploiting fears based on ignorance or prejudice. Education can be a powerful weapon against this, equipping young people with the knowledge, skills and reflex to think for themselves, to challenge and to debate; and giving young people the opportunity to learn about different cultures and faiths and, crucially, to gain an understanding of the values we share. Exploring ideas, developing a sense of identity and forming views are a normal part of growing up. Academies can support young people in this: providing a safe environment for discussing controversial topics.”

From “A toolkit to help academies contribute to the prevention of violent extremism” 2008

Introduction

Stanchester Academy is committed to providing a secure environment for all our students, staff and stakeholders.

Since 2010, when the Government published the Prevent Strategy, there has been an awareness of the specific need to safeguard young people and their families from violent extremism.

Stanchester Academy values freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs / ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society’s values. However, freedom comes with responsibility and free speech that is designed to manipulate the vulnerable or that leads to violence and harm of others goes against the moral principles in which freedom of speech is valued. Free speech is not an unqualified privilege; it is subject to laws and policies governing equality, human rights, community safety and community cohesion.

The normalisation of extreme views may make young people vulnerable to future manipulation and exploitation. Stanchester Academy is clear that this exploitation and radicalisation should be viewed as a safeguarding concern.

Our Academies “Prevent Policy” draws upon the guidance contained in the “Prevent Strategy, 2011” and DfE Guidance “Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023”. The latter refers to the national development of Channels to help keep our young people safe (referred to in Appendix 2). Definitions of radicalisation and extremism, and indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation are to be found in Appendix 1.

Academy Ethos

Stanchester Academy inspires its students to learn and empowers them to excel. There is no place for extremist views of any kind in our academy. It is imperative that our students and parents/carers see our academy as a safe place where they can discuss and explore controversial issues safely and in an unbiased way, and where our teachers encourage and facilitate this.

As an academy we recognise that extremism and exposure to extremist materials and influences can lead to poor outcomes for our students. 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.

At Stanchester Academy we will:

- Challenge:
    - Extremist views,
    - Prejudice,
    - Derogatory language.

- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum so that our students understand and become tolerant of difference and diversity,
- Support our students to ensure that they:
    - thrive,
    - feel valued,
    - are not marginalised.
- Any discrimination or extremist views, including derogatory language, displayed by students, staff, visitors or parents/carers will always be challenged and where appropriate dealt with (please also see our “Anti Bullying Policy”).

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

- Disclosures by students of their exposure to the extremist actions, views or materials of others outside of academy, 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 accessing extremist material online, including through social networking sites.
- Parental/Carer reports of changes in behaviour, friendship or actions and requests for assistance.
- Local Academies, Local Authority services, and police reports of issues affecting students in other Academies or settings. (See appendix 1 and reference to “Channel”)
- 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.

Teaching Approaches

As a academy we will:

- **strive** to eradicate the myths and assumptions that can lead to some young people becoming alienated and disempowered.
- **ensure** that 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.
- **help** support students who may be vulnerable to such influences as part of our wider safeguarding responsibilities
- **dedicate** our programme of assemblies to promoting fundamental British values that will further support a holistic approach to student development.
- **promote** the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs.
- **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 beyond.

Use of External Agencies and Speakers

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

• Any messages communicated to students support fundamental British Values

• Any messages communicated to students are consistent with the ethos of the academy and do not marginalise any communities, groups or individuals

• Any messages communicated to students 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

Risk reduction

The academy governors, the Head Teacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will assess the level of risk within the academy and put actions in place to reduce that risk.

Risk assessment may include:

- consideration of the Academies PSHRE curriculum,
- E Safety policy,
- visiting speakers,
- the use of academy premises by external agencies,
- anti-bullying policy

as well as any other issues specific to the Academies profile, community and philosophy.

This risk assessment will be reviewed as part of the annual report to governors.

Response Staff will be alert to the fact that whilst Extremism and Radicalisation is broadly a safeguarding issue there may be some instances where a young person may be at direct risk of harm or neglect. For example, this could be due to a young person displaying risky behaviours in terms of the activities they are involved in or the groups they are associated with. Staff may also become aware of information about a young person's family that may equally place the young person at risk of harm. (These examples are for illustration and are not definitive or exhaustive.)

Therefore, all adults working at Stanchester Academy are required to report instances where they believe a student may be at risk of harm or neglect or if they have concerns that a student may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism. They should speak with the Mr Mockridge (Head Teacher), Mrs Hooper (Assistant Head Teacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead), Sally Power (Trust Safeguarding Lead) or Mrs Milard (Safeguarding Officer).

Appendix 1

Indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation

1. Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.

2. Extremism is defined by the Government in the Prevent Strategy as:

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. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

3. Extremism is defined by the Crown Prosecution Service as:
The demonstration of unacceptable behaviour by using any means or medium to express views which:

- *Encourage, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs;*
- *Seek to provoke others to terrorist acts;*
- *Encourage other serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts;*
- *Foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK.*

4. There is no such thing as a "typical extremist". Those who become involved in extremist actions come from a range of backgrounds and experiences, and most individuals, even those who hold radical views, do not become involved in violent extremist activity.

5. Students may become susceptible to radicalisation through a range of social, personal and environmental factors - it is known that violent extremists exploit vulnerabilities in individuals to drive a wedge between them and their families and communities. It is vital that academy staff are able to recognise those vulnerabilities.

6. Indicators of vulnerability include:

- **Identity Crisis** – the student is distanced from their cultural / religious heritage and experiences discomfort about their place in society;
- **Personal Crisis** – the student may be experiencing family tensions; a sense of isolation; and low self-esteem; they may have dissociated from their existing friendship group and become involved with a new and different group of friends; they may be searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging;
- **Personal Circumstances** – migration; local community tensions; and events affecting the student's country or region of origin may contribute to a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy;
- **Unmet Aspirations** – the student may have perceptions of injustice; a feeling of failure; rejection of civic life;
- **Experiences of Criminality** – which may include involvement with criminal groups, imprisonment and poor resettlement / reintegration;
- **Special Educational Need** – students may experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with others, understanding the consequences of their actions and awareness of the motivations of others.

7. However, this list is not exhaustive, nor does it mean that all young people experiencing the above are at risk of radicalisation for the purposes of violent extremism. More critical risk factors could include:

- Being in contact with extremist recruiters
- Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element;
- Possessing or accessing violent extremist literature; Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage; Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues;
- Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations; and
- Significant changes to appearance and / or behaviour;
- Experiencing a high level of social isolation resulting in issues of identity crisis and / or personal crisis.

Appendix 2

Preventing violent extremism - Roles and responsibilities of the single point of contact (SPOC)

The Single Point of Contact for Stanchester Academy is the **Assistant Head Teacher and DSL, Mrs Sharon Hooper.**

The SPOC is responsible for:

- Ensuring that staff of the academy are aware that we work together to protect students from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism;
- Maintaining and applying a good understanding of the relevant guidance in relation to preventing students from becoming involved in terrorism, and protecting them from radicalisation by those who support terrorism or forms of extremism which lead to terrorism;
- Monitoring the effect in practice of the Academies RE and PSHE curriculum and assembly policy to ensure that they are used to promote community cohesion and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs;
- Raising awareness within the academy about the safeguarding processes relating to protecting students from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism;
- Acting as the first point of contact within the academy for case discussions relating to students who may be at risk of radicalisation or involved in terrorism;
- Attending Channel* meetings as necessary and carrying out any actions as agreed;
- Sharing any relevant additional information in a timely manner with appropriate personnel and/or local agencies.

Further information on Preventing Radicalisation –

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, places a duty on specified authorities, including local authorities and childcare, **education and other children's services providers**, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism ("the Prevent duty"). This guidance will be updated further to reflect the implications of the Prevent duty, which is expected to come into force later in 2015.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 will also place a duty on local authorities to ensure Channel panels are in place. The panel must include the local authority and chief officer of the local police. Panels will assess the extent to which identified individuals are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, following a referral from the police and where considered appropriate and necessary consent is obtained, arrange for support to be provided to those individuals. The Act will require partners of Channel panels to cooperate with the panel in the carrying out of its functions and with the police in undertaking the initial assessment as to whether a referral is appropriate. Academies and colleges which are required to have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education are listed in the Act as partners of the panel. The relevant provisions of the Act will come into force on 12 April 2015 but many local authorities already have Channel panels set up in their area." DfE March 2015

Appendix 3

'Key Ingredients' for successful teaching in the context of 'push' and 'pull' factors

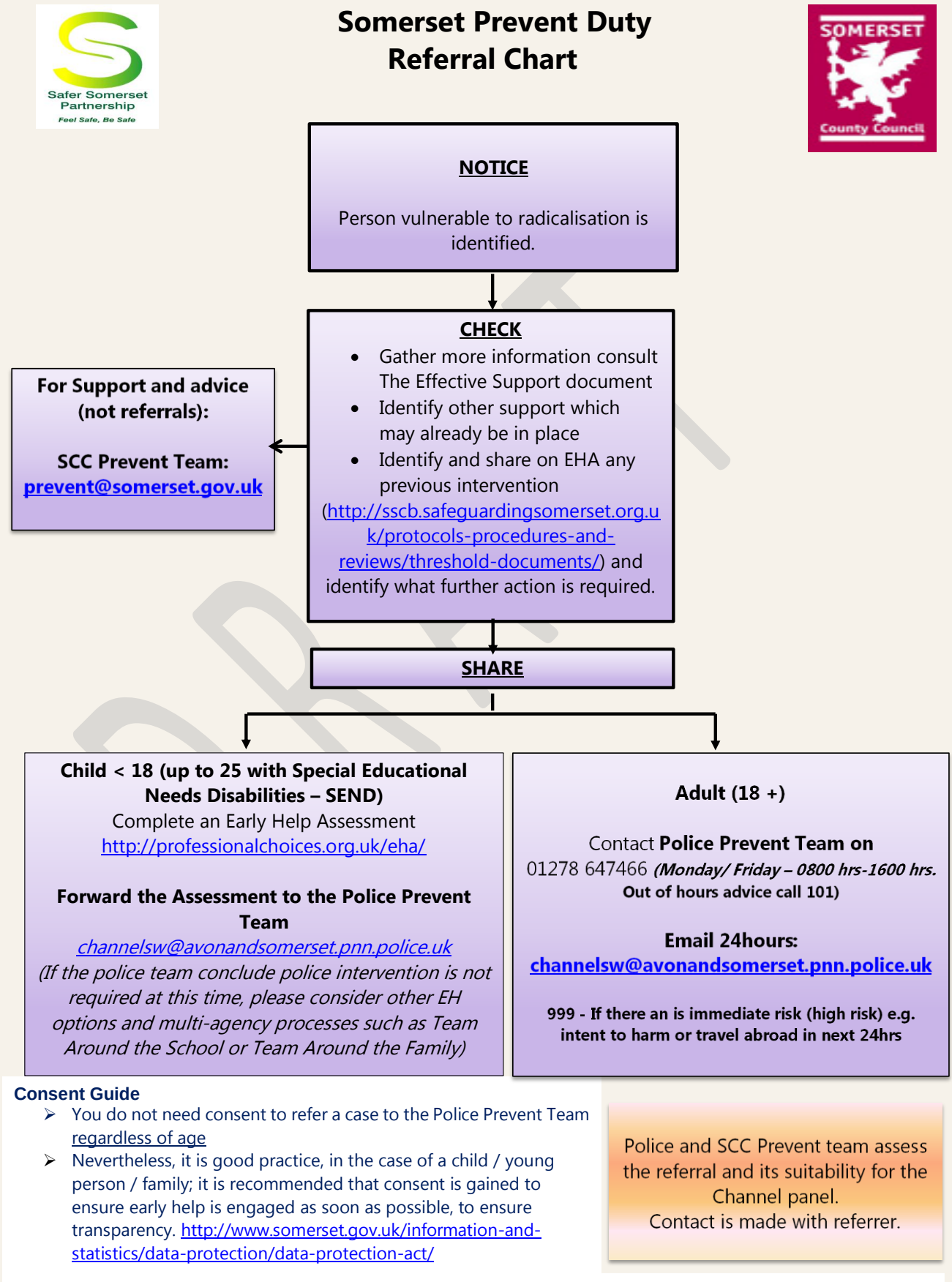
PUSH FACTORS *factors that push an individual/make an individual vulnerable to extremist messages*	**PULL FACTORS** *factors that draw young people into extremist messages*
• Lack of excitement, frustration • Lack of sense of achievement – seen as significant 'lack of purpose'// confidence in the future, life goals • Lack of an outlet for views • Gaps in knowledge or understanding of Islam – both young people and their parents/carers • 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	• Charismatic/confident individuals (recruiters) • Network/sense of belonging • Broader community views which enable or do not oppose extremism. • Persuasive, clear messages. • Exploiting knowledge gaps. • Disaffection with wider societal issues • Disruptive home life • Support from senior leaders

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.
- 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
- 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 academy 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

Appendix 4

Somerset Prevent Duty Referral Chart