

Top tips to help teachers discuss radicalisation with pupils

Terrorism and extremism are sometimes used interchangeably but they have distinct definitions.

Having a good understanding of the terminology will give you confidence when the topic comes up in class.

Terrorism

Terrorism is an action or threat designed to influence the government or intimidate the public. Its purpose is to advance a political, religious or ideological cause.

In the UK we define terrorism as a violent action that:

- endangers a person's life, other than that of the person committing the action
- involves serious violence against a person
- causes serious damage to property
- creates a serious risk to the public's health and safety
- interferes with or seriously disrupts an electronic system.

Extremism

"Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and respect and tolerance for different faiths and beliefs.

We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist."

The Counter Extremism Strategy 2015.

Action

Review the definitions at educateagainsthate.com/teachers/terrorism-definition

Look for opportunities to broaden students understanding of fundamental British values

You can build resilience in your students by promoting fundamental British values of:

- democracy
- rule of law
- individual liberty
- mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.

Effective teaching of values such as tolerance and respect can improve students' resilience to extremist narratives — but you don't need to do it through specific 'values' lessons.

There are already lots of opportunities to cover fundamental British values in the national curriculum. The citizenship programme prepares pupils to take their place in society as responsible citizens, and the history curriculum helps pupils gain an understanding of Britain's past, diverse societies and relationships between different groups.

Action

Review the guidance on promoting British values in schools.

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380595/SMSC_Guidance_Maintained_Schools.pdf

Give students the chance to engage with difficult issues through open classroom discussion

Schools should be a safe space where students can discuss social and political issues, including extremism and terrorism. Building their resilience will put them in a stronger position to reject extremist views.

You can build students' resilience to extremist narratives by equipping them with the skills and knowledge to explore political and social issues critically, to weigh evidence, debate and make reasoned arguments.

This can include facilitating conversations about extremism and radicalisation in an age-appropriate way, as well as other social and political issues.

Action

Review the guidance available in the [teachers' hub](#) on the Educate Against Hate website which has more tips on holding discussions on difficult issues.

Be clear about your responsibilities — and be wary of myths

As a teacher, you are in a key position to protect children and young people from the dangers of extremist narratives so it's important you understand Prevent and the role you play in helping your school meet its duty.

The Prevent duty covers all types of extremism and is embedded in your school's wider safeguarding policies to help you:

- protect students from radicalising influences
- build your students' resilience to extremist narratives
- identify any vulnerabilities or worrying changes in behaviour
- know what to do if you have concerns about a student.

There are no mandatory reporting requirements under the Prevent duty.

Channel is not mandatory either, but a voluntary, confidential support service for anyone who is concerned about a person they think is at risk. It is not a criminal sanction and will not affect a person's criminal record.

Action

The Home Office has a **free e-learning tool**, to support teachers and frontline staff to identify concerns that may make individuals vulnerable to radicalisation. It also includes valuable information to help you understand what a proportionate response might look like.

Trust your instinct and seek advice if something feels wrong

If you are concerned a student is being radicalised, you should follow your school's standard safeguarding procedure. This includes discussing any concerns with your school's designated safeguarding lead, who may get further advice from the local authority. It is important to keep in mind any response should be proportionate and many concerns can be dealt with at school level.

For additional support outside of your school, you can:

- speak with your Prevent coordinator or local authority school safeguarding team
- contact your local police force or dial 101 (the non-emergency police number).

The Department for Education has a counter-extremism helpline which you can call for advice on 020 7340 7264.

If you think someone is in immediate danger, or if you see or hear something that may be terrorist-related, trust your instincts and call 999 or the confidential Anti-Terrorism Hotline on 0800 789 321.

Action

If you have concerns one of your pupils is being, or has been radicalised, you should follow your school's standard safeguarding procedures.

Be open with parents and address their concerns head on so everyone is working together to keep children safe

Keeping children safe from radicalisation is similar to any other safeguarding concern you may have.

Many parents will only be aware of the Prevent duty through media reporting, which can include inaccuracies or be misleading, so it would be useful to introduce parents to the duty yourself.

Action

Be open about what you are planning to include in your lessons and give parents the opportunity to ask questions. You can help alleviate any concerns they might have in this way.

You can direct them to the [Top Tips to Help Parents Discuss Radicalisation and Extremism](#) advice and the [Educate Against Hate](#) website. This contains more useful materials for them. Speaking to other schools in your area can also help generate tips on how to keep parents on board.