

Keeping Safe Against Radicalisation and Extremism

Safeguarding Your Child

The parent/child relationship is the foundation to keeping children safe and supporting their social development and educational attainment.

Parenting can be a challenging task. Maintaining a positive relationship can sometimes be difficult as children grow and develop and seek an identity that may be different from their own family.

As a parent, you need to be aware that individuals and groups with extremist views use the internet and social media to spread their ideologies. Children spend a lot of time online, and this has made them more susceptible to extremism from across the full political spectrum.

Extremist groups tap into young people's insecurities. They often claim to offer answers and promise a sense of identity that vulnerable young people often seek. These feelings of insecurity can become more heightened when a child is feeling:

- Marginalised from society
- Trapped between two cultures
- Excluded from the mainstream

As part of their recruitment strategy, extremist groups also work to undermine the authority of parents. This can be particularly attractive to vulnerable children who don't have parental guidance, or who come from unstable homes.

Extremist groups also use very sophisticated methods to trigger feelings of anger, injustice and shame that a child might feel towards a parent.

But it's important to remember that any child can be affected by extremism. You can play a vital role by providing emotional support that acts as an alternative to the extremist narratives that your child might feel comfortable believing.

It's not easy to talk to your child about the dangers of extremism, but as with issues such as sex and drugs, it's necessary. Give your child a safe space where they can talk about difficult subjects. The more you talk, the more confident your child will become in challenging extremist narratives.

Vulnerabilities and Warning Signs

To be in the best position to protect your child, you should be aware of the factors that may make them more vulnerable to radicalisation.

These could include:

- Struggling with their sense of identity
- Difficult circumstances such as family tensions
- low self-esteem or experiencing a traumatic event

- Troubling external factors such as community tensions, events affecting their region of origin, or having friends or family who have joined extremist groups abroad
- Involvement with criminal groups, experiences of imprisonment and/or poor reintegration into society

How Parents/Carers can Support Young People to Stay Safe

- Know where your child is, who they are with and check this for yourself
- Know your child's friends and their families
- Keep lines of communication open, listen to your child and talk to them about their interests
- Encourage them to take up positive activities with local groups that you can trust
- Talk to your child about what they see on the TV or the internet and explain that what they see or read may not be the whole picture
- Allow and encourage debate and questioning on local and world events and help them see different points of view
- Encourage your child to show an interest in the local community and show respect for people from all faiths and backgrounds
- Help your child to understand the dangers of becoming involved in situations about which they may not have the full information
- Teach them that expressing strong views and trying to change things for the better is fine but they should not take violent action against others or support those that do
- Be aware of your child's on-line activity and update your own knowledge
- Know what social media and messaging sites your child uses
- Remind your child that people they contact over the internet maybe pretending to be someone else or telling them things that are not true
- Explain that anyone who tells them to keep secrets from their family or teachers is likely to be trying to do them harm or put them in danger

If you have any concerns that your child may be being influenced by others get help – talk to someone you can trust, this could be your family members, family friends who are peers of your children, or outside help.

If you feel there is a risk of a child leaving the country, consider what safeguards you could take to avert travel. You might want to consider taking the precaution of securing their passport in a safe place. It may be advisable to keep all of your child's passports hidden and safe in order that the passports of siblings cannot be used.

You should also consider what access your child has to savings accounts or gifts of money from family and friends. You may wish to suggest that gifts are made in kind and not in cash.

What Should I Do if I Think My Child has been Exposed to Extremism or Radicalisation?

If you believe your child is at risk you should talk to them. There is advice on educateagainsthate.com about how to have that conversation and the NSPCC can also provide free, confidential advice if you would like to talk it through with someone.

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How to Report Concerns

Anti-Terrorist Hotline 0800 789 321

Report online material promoting terrorism or extremism: www.gov.uk/report-terrorism

Holidays Abroad

Many families plan holidays or heritage trips abroad and take their child's with them in the college holidays. please take a look at this advice for parents/carers when travelling abroad.

We would like to advise all parents and carers to click on the link below and check whether the Travel Advice from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office considers it safe for travel and whether extra precautions need to be taken. We want all our students to be safe in and out of college and we hope parents will take every measure to keep their children safe.

www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice