



 It takes commitment to change lives

Keeping Children and Young People Safe Against Radicalisation and Extremism

Advice to Parents and Carers



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The parent / child relationship is the foundation to keeping your child safe and supporting his or her social development and educational attainment.

Parenting can be a challenging task. Maintaining a positive relationship can sometimes be difficult as your child grows, develops and seeks an identity that may be different from that of your own family.

Children and young people have a natural curiosity which as parents you want to encourage. However, as your children grow up you have to take different steps to ensure their safety.

Currently a number of young girls and boys have been persuaded to leave the country against the wishes of their families, or in secret, putting themselves in extreme danger.

This guidance sets out information to help you keep your children safe and explains how you should respond should you have a concern.

Why might a young person be drawn towards extremist ideologies?

- ✚ They may be searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging
- ✚ They may be driven by the desire for 'adventure' and excitement
- ✚ They may be driven by a need to raise their self-esteem and promote their 'street cred'
- ✚ They may be drawn to a group or individual who can offer identity, a social network or support
- ✚ They may be influenced by world events and a sense of grievance resulting in a need to make a difference

How might this happen?

On-line

The internet provides entertainment, connectivity and interaction. Children may need to spend a lot of time on the internet while studying and they may use other social media and messaging sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Vine, BBM or WhatsApp. These can be useful tools, but we need to be aware there are powerful programmes and networks that use these media to reach out to young people and can communicate extremist messages.

Peer Interaction

Young people at risk may display extrovert behaviour, start getting into trouble at school or on the streets and may mix with other children who behave badly, but this is not always the case.

There are no typical characteristics of young people who may be more at risk than others. However, a sudden change in behaviour could be a potential indicator. Sometimes those at risk may be encouraged by the people they are in contact with, not to draw attention to themselves.

It is important, as a parent, to keep an open channel of communication that involves listening to your child's views and concerns. You may not always agree with your child, but you should convey to him / her that you've understood his / her point of view and want the best for his / her in life.

However, if you are concerned about your child, you may want to talk to a person of influence, a Teacher or the Headteacher.

TV and media

The media provide a view on world affairs. However, this is often a very simple version of events which, in reality, are very complex. Children may not understand the situation fully or appreciate the dangers involved in the views of some groups. They may see things in simple terms and not have the whole picture.

Recognising Extremism – signs may include :

- ✚ Out of character changes in behaviour and peer relationships
- ✚ Secretive behaviour
- ✚ Losing interest in friends and activities
- ✚ Showing sympathy for extremist causes
- ✚ Glorifying violence
- ✚ Possessing illegal or extremist literature
- ✚ Advocating messages similar to illegal organisations such as “Muslims Against Crusades” or other non-proscribed extremist groups such as the English Defence League

How can parents support children and young people to stay safe?

- ✚ Know where your child is, who your child is 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 him / her about their interests
- ✚ Encourage your child to take up positive activities with local groups that you can trust
- ✚ Talk to your child about what he / she sees on the TV or the internet and explain that what he / she sees or reads may not be the whole picture
- ✚ Allow and encourage debate and questioning on local and world events and help him / her to 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 he / she may not have the full information
- ✚ Teach him / her that expressing strong views and trying to change things for the better is fine but he / she 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 he / she contact over the internet may be pretending to be someone else or telling him / her things that are not true
- ✚ **Explain that anyone who tells him / her to keep secrets from their family or Teacher is likely to be trying to do him / her harm or put him / her 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 a family member who is a peer to your child, a Teacher or the Headteacher.

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 his / her passport in a safe place.

Some young people do not need a passport for confirming their age, they can apply for an identification card as an alternative.

To obtain an official photo ID for the UK visit : <http://www.validateuk.co.uk>
For more information telephone : **01434 634996**

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.

Confidential Helpline :

The Active Change Foundation (ACF) provides a confidential helpline to prevent British nationals from travelling to conflict zones.

ACF Confidential helpline telephone number : **020 8539 2770**
Crime stoppers anonymously on : **0800 555 111**

Anyone with concerns for the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person can contact :

Children's Social Care Services (24 hours a day) on : **020 7364 5006**
Local Referral and assessment team : **0118 908 8002**
Local Emergency duty team out of hours : **01344 786 543**

Imminent threat of harm to others contact -

Police : **101 or 999**
Thames valley police : **0845 8505 505**
Anti-Terrorist Hotline : **0800 789 321**

Further Sources of Support and Information

- 🏫 School – If you have a concern please talk to your child's class Teacher or another person in the school that you trust as soon as possible. They will be able to help and can access support for you and your child.

Useful websites

www.internetmatters.org

Website has lots of information, advice and resources which can be used to help children stay safe online

www.ceop.gov.uk

CEOP works with child protection partners across the UK and overseas to identify the main threats to children and coordinates activity against these threats to bring offenders to account, protecting children from harm online and offline

www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/0/

Information and support for safe use of the internet

www.childline.org.uk / www.cybersmile.org / www.childnet.com

For more advice on cyber safety