

Kingsbury High School

**Keeping children and young people safe
against radicalisation and extremism**

Advice to our parents and carers

2015

A. Introduction

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

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.

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

Currently a number of 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 leaflet sets out information to help parents keep your children safe and explains how you should respond if they have a concern.

We have drawn on an excellent publication from the London Borough of Tower Hamlet's parental engagement team to provide you with the information which follows. We are grateful for their permission to do so.

B. Why might a young person be drawn towards extremist ideologies?

There are many reasons why a young person might be drawn towards an extremist ideology.

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 feeling 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 and a social network.

They may be influenced by world events and a sense of grievance resulting in a need to make a difference.

C. How might this happen?

On-line

Children spend a lot of time on the internet while studying and they use social media and messaging sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram and 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 sometimes start getting into trouble at school and mix with other children who behave badly but this is not always the case.

Sometimes those at risk are encouraged not to draw attention to themselves. Their behaviour may seem to be improving: children may become quieter and more serious about their studies; they may dress more modestly and mix with a group of people that seem to be better behaved than previous friends.

TV and media

The media provide a view on world affairs. However, this is often a very simple version of events which are actually very complex. Therefore children may not understand the situation fully or appreciate the dangers involved in the views of some groups.

D. Recognising Extremism

The signs that a young person is being drawn to extremism may include:

- Out of character changes in dress, 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 extremist groups such as the English Defence League

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

There are many ways you can support your sons and daughters in keeping safe. You can:

- **Know where your child is**, who they are with and check for yourself
- Know your child's friends and their families
- Talk to your son or daughter about their interests and 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; update your own knowledge
- Know what **social media and messaging sites** your child uses
- Remind your child that people they contact over the internet may be pretending to be someone else or telling them things that are not true
- **Explain that anyone telling them to keep secrets from their family or teachers is likely to be putting them in danger.**

F. What to do if you have concerns

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 religious leader, extended family members or outside help.

You are always welcome to talk to your child's Year Leader or another person at Kingsbury High that you trust. They will be able to help access support for you and your child.

If you feel there is a risk of a child leaving the country, consider what precautions you could take to prevent travel. You might want to consider taking the **precaution of locking their passport in a safe place. Some young people think they need to use a passport for confirming their age - they do not – they can apply for an identification card.** 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.

Anyone with concerns for the safety or wellbeing of a young person can contact **Brent Children's Social Care Services** on 0208 937 4300 (Mon-Fri, 9.00 – 5.00). Out of working hours you can phone 0208 863 5250.

Confidential helpline:

The Active Change Foundation (ACF) provide a confidential helpline to prevent British nationals from travelling to conflict zones: **020 8539 2770**

Imminent threat of harm to others:

Police **999** or the Anti Terrorist Hotline **0800 789 321**

Useful websites

www.internetmatters.org

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

For more advice on cyber safety visit:

<http://www.childline.org.uk>

<http://www.cybersmile.org>

<http://www.childnet.com>