

Federation of St Charles and St Mary's Catholic Primary Schools



St Charles Catholic Primary School
Love God, Love Thy Neighbour



St Mary's Catholic Primary School
Learning together in Faith and Love

PREVENT POLICY

Date policy adopted by the Governing Body: Autumn 2024
Date policy to be reviewed: Autumn 2026

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The School Governors Federation Ethos Statement

As Governors we acknowledge our responsibilities as strategic leaders to ensure every child, in St Charles' and St Mary's Schools, are given the best possible opportunities to reach their full potential, spiritually and academically. We do this by promoting high standards of educational achievement, pastoral care and by modelling of the Gospel values in both communities.

We are strongly committed to building and strengthening the shared Catholic ethos of both schools whilst maintaining their individual identities.

We strive to build on the foundations of faith started at home and seek to provide an environment where beliefs and values of the Catholic faith are taught, explored, developed and nurtured. We aim for all our children to believe in their own potential, in an environment where they can flourish, succeed and achieve.

As a governing body we have a strong focus on three core strategic functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction which aim to deliver high expectations and to improve the lives and outcomes of all students.
- Holding the Executive Head Teacher and both Heads of School, to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and for ensuring excellent quality of teaching.
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

As governors, we bring a wide variety of experience and expertise to the schools, and this ensures that both schools move forward and standards are constantly raised in a way that is in line with the overarching ethos and vision of the schools, along with the statutory directives from the Department for Education and The Archdiocese of Westminster.

Introduction

St Charles and St Mary's schools are committed to providing a secure environment for all of our students, staff and stakeholders.

The current threat from terrorism extremism in the United Kingdom can involve the exploitation of vulnerable people, including children, young people and vulnerable adults to involve them in terrorism or activity in support of terrorism.

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

The 2011 Prevent Strategy has three specific objectives:

- * Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it;
- * Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure they are given appropriate advice and support; and
- * Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to address

As of July 1st 2015 there is a statutory duty for schools to report on extremist's behaviours or act upon concerns they have related to extremism. Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on certain bodies in the exercise of their functions to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".

There have been several occasions both locally and nationally in which extremist groups have attempted to radicalise vulnerable children and young people to hold extreme views including views justifying political, religious, sexist or racist violence, or to steer them into a rigid and narrow ideology that is intolerant of diversity and leaves them vulnerable to future radicalisation.

St Charles and St Mary's schools value freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs/ ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society's values. Both students and teachers have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions. 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 current threat from terrorism in the United Kingdom may include the exploitation of vulnerable people, to involve them in terrorism or in activity in support of extremism and terrorism. The normalisation of extreme views may also make children and young people vulnerable to future manipulation and exploitation.

St Charles and St Mary's schools are clear that this exploitation and radicalisation should be viewed as a safeguarding concern and this is noted with our respective Safeguarding Policies.

Our schools' Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy also draws upon the guidance contained in the "Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales, March 2015"; DfE Guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2024" and "Working together to safeguard children, 2023".

Definitions of radicalisation and extremism, and indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation are to be found in Appendix 1.

Our Ethos and Practice

There is no place for extremist views of any kind in our school, whether from internal sources – students, staff or governors, or external sources – school community, external agencies or individuals.

It is imperative that our students and parents see our school 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.

In both schools, 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.

Therefore, at St Charles and St Mary's schools we will provide a broad and balanced curriculum, delivered by skilled professionals, so that our pupils are enriched, understand and become tolerant of difference and diversity and also to ensure that they thrive, feel valued and not marginalised.

We are aware that young people can be exposed to extremist influences or prejudiced views from an early age which emanate from a variety of sources and media, including via the internet, and at times students may themselves reflect or display views that may be discriminatory, prejudiced or extremist, including using derogatory language.

Any prejudice, discrimination or extremist views, including derogatory language, displayed by students, staff, visitors or parents will always be challenged and where appropriate dealt with. As part of wider safeguarding responsibilities school staff will be alert to:

- * Disclosures by students of their exposure to the extremist actions, views or materials of others outside of school, 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 reports of changes in behaviour, friendship or actions and requests for assistance
- * Local schools, Local Authority services, and police reports of issues affecting pupils in other schools or settings
- * 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

We will all strive to eradicate the myths and assumptions that can lead to some young people becoming alienated and disempowered, especially where the narrow approaches children may experience elsewhere may make it harder for them to challenge or question these radical influences. In our schools this will be achieved by good teaching, primarily during RE, PSHE and Citizenship lessons; but also by adopting the methods outlined in the Government's guidance 'Teaching approaches that help build resilience to extremism among young people' DfE 2011.

We will ensure that all of our teaching approaches help our students build resilience to extremism and give pupils a positive sense of identity through the development of critical thinking skills. We will ensure that all of our staff are equipped to recognise extremism and are skilled and confident enough to challenge it.

We will be flexible enough to adapt our teaching approaches, as appropriate, so as to address specific issues so as to become even more relevant to the current issues of extremism and radicalisation.

This approach will be embedded within the ethos of both our schools so that students know and understand what safe and acceptable behaviour is in the context of extremism and radicalisation. This will work in conjunction with our school's approach to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils as defined in Ofsted's School Inspection handbook. We will also work with local partners, families and communities in our efforts to ensure our school understands and embraces our local context and values in challenging extremist views and to assist in the broadening of our pupil's experiences and horizons. We will help support students who may be vulnerable to such influences as part of our wider safeguarding responsibilities and where we believe a student is being directly affected by extremist materials or influences we will ensure that that student is offered mentoring.

We will promote the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs. We will teach and encourage pupils 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 pupils safe and prepare them for life in modern multi-cultural Britain and globally.

Use of External Agencies and Speakers

At St Charles and St Mary's schools we encourage the use of external agencies or speakers to enrich the experiences of our students; however, we will positively vet those external agencies, individuals or speakers who we engage to provide such learning opportunities or experiences for our pupils.

Such vetting is to ensure that we do not unwittingly use agencies that contradict each other with their messages or that are inconsistent with, or are in complete opposition to, the school's values and ethos. We must be aware that in some instances the work of external agencies may not directly be connected with the rest of the school curriculum so we need to ensure that this work is of benefit to our students.

Our schools 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 respective ethos of both schools 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

We recognise, however, that the ethos of our schools is to encourage students to understand opposing views and ideologies, appropriate to their age, understanding and abilities, and to be able to actively engage with them in informed debate, and we may use external agencies or speakers to facilitate and support this.

Therefore, by delivering a broad and balanced curriculum, augmented by the use of external sources where appropriate, we will strive to ensure our students recognise risk and build resilience to manage any such risk themselves where appropriate to their age and ability but also to help students develop the critical thinking skills needed to engage in informed debate.

Risk reduction

The Federated Governing Body, the Executive Head and Designated Safeguarding Leads of both schools will assess the level of risk within the school and put actions in place to reduce that risk. Risk assessment may include consideration of the school's RE curriculum, E Safety policy, visiting speakers, the use of school premises by external agencies, anti-bullying policy and other issues specific to the school's profile, community and philosophy.

The schools will screen staff, visitors and volunteers to ensure that they will not deliver messages of extremism or radicalisation.

This risk assessment will be reviewed as part of the annual report to governors that is monitored by the local authority and the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Response

Our schools, like all others, are required to identify a Prevent Single Point of Contact (SPOC) who will be the lead within the organisation for safeguarding in relation to protecting individuals from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism. The responsibilities of the SPOC are described in Appendix 2.

The SPOC at St Charles school is the Head of school, Tony Lynch.

The SPOC at St Mary's school is the Head of school, Magdalena Tusting .

Staff at St Charles and St Mary's schools will be alert to the fact that whilst Extremism and Radicalisation is broadly a safeguarding issue there may be some instances where a child or children may be at direct risk of harm or neglect.

For example; this could be due to a child displaying risky behaviours in terms of the activities they are involved in or the groups they are associated with or staff may be aware of information about a child's family that may equally place a child at risk of harm. (These examples are for illustration and are not definitive or exhaustive). Therefore, all adults working in St Charles and St Mary's schools (including visiting staff, volunteers, contractors and students on placement) are required to report instances where they believe a child 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 SPOC, Tony Lynch, or to Assistant Headteacher and Deputy DSL, Marily Troyano at St Charles. At St Mary's the staff should speak to the SPOC, Magdalena Tusting, or to Assistant Headteacher and Deputy DSL, Loredana Beurthe.

Disclosures should be reported without delay in line with guidance in our safeguarding policy.

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; or
- * 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. Pupils 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 school staff are able to recognise those vulnerabilities.

6. Indicators of vulnerability include:

- * Identity Crisis – the student / pupil is distanced from their cultural / religious heritage and experiences discomfort about their place in society;
- * Personal Crisis – the student / pupil 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 / pupil'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 / pupil 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 / pupils 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.

8. 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 SPOC for St Charles School is the Head of school, Tony Lynch, and the SPOC for St Mary's school is the Head of School, Magdalena Tusting.

The SPOCs are responsible for:

- * Ensuring that staff of the school are aware who the SPOCs for each school are, in relation to protecting students/pupils from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism;
- * Maintaining and applying a good understanding of the relevant guidance in relation to
- * preventing students/pupils from becoming involved in terrorism, and protecting them from radicalisation by those who support terrorism or forms of extremism which lead to terrorism;
- * Raising awareness about the role and responsibilities of the respective schools in relation to protecting students/pupils from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism;
- * Monitoring the effect in practice of the school's RE 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 school about the safeguarding processes relating to protecting students from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism;
- * Acting as the first point of contact within the school for case discussions relating to students who may be at risk of radicalisation or involved in terrorism;
- * Collating relevant information from in relation to referrals of vulnerable students into the Channel* process; attending Channel* meetings as necessary and carrying out any actions as agreed;
- * Reporting progress on actions to the Channel* Co-ordinator; and
- * Sharing any relevant additional information in a timely manner.