

Welcome to this week's SMRT safeguarding update...

WAKE UP WEDNESDAY

Adolescence, Netflix and extremist views

It may be that you have watched or that you have heard others talking about the series Adolescence. The mini-series premiered on Netflix on 13 March 2025, to critical acclaim for its directing, writing, and cinematography and it has become one of the most watched shows on Netflix. The show has added to the debate about the role of parents, carers, local authorities, the police and schools to help educate and address online extremism

Adolescence is a 2025 British crime drama television mini-series created by Jack Thorne and Stephen Graham and directed by Philip Barantini. The series has heightened an awareness of some of the dangers young people can be exposed to online, particularly the influence of extremist views. Politicians have, recently, been commenting on the series and the possibility of it being shown in schools as part of the PHSE curriculum.

What's it about?

Adolescence tells the story of the arrest Jamie Miller, a 13-year-old boy, on suspicion of murder of a classmate, Katie Leonard. Jamie is processed and held at a police station for questioning, and then remanded in custody at a secure training centre awaiting trial. Investigations at Jamie's school, and interviews by a forensic psychologist, reveal that Jamie has been chronically bullied via social media. Other students, including Katie, had targeted him on Instagram, calling Jamie ugly and labelling him an incel (Involuntary Celibate). Jamie has come to internalise these things and lashes out when this worldview is questioned. At home, Jamie's family deals with the community's backlash against them as they work together to cope with Jamie's arrest.

How is this relevant to SMRT?

At SMRT we value good relationships and educate students about what healthy relationships and friendships look like via our VIP lessons, pastoral curriculum, assemblies and acts of worship. The VIP curriculum has set lessons that tackle the issues of misogyny and online hate specifically and each year group is taught about online safety and how healthy relationships can be built and maintained online. Extremist views, hate speech and threats of violence and harmful sexualised behaviour is also discussed in these lessons and we have a range of external partners who deliver sessions to students that warn about the risks of inappropriate behaviour online. The safeguarding team monitor any concerning school-based searches online daily and there are stringent filtering systems to ensure that students are not able to access explicit material or age-inappropriate content.

What can you do?

At home, it would be helpful if you could have conversations about your young person's online life and how they interact with their peers. While there can be issues between young people online (and in person) this is part of growing up and it is helpful for us to work together to address any concerning interactions.

It is also important to discuss the kind of content that young people are accessing. If there are no restrictions on your child's phone, or your Wi-Fi at home, there are increased risks that your child may be exposed to or accidentally access material that could be harmful.

NSPCC advice for parents of pre-teens and teens

- **Follow age requirements** - Many popular Apps, sites and games are 13+, it's important to check and follow these with pre-teens.
- **Speak to phone providers** - If your child owns their own smartphone then contact the service provider to make sure it is registered as a child's device. This means additional safety restrictions can be put in place.
- **Support your child with their settings** - Support your child to manage their safety and wellbeing settings across devices and accounts.
- **Focus on regular safety conversations** – It's important to keep conversations regular at this age. Check our advice on [tackling challenging conversations](#) including tips for how to use technology to support you with this.
- **Share youth facing help and support** - Make sure your child knows about services that can help like Childline. You could start by sharing the [online safety advice content](#) and the [Report Remove tool](#) created by the IWF and Childline.
- **Revisit parental controls** – you will likely need to revisit your parental controls again at this age and adjust them. Keep checking these regularly to make sure they are in place.
- **Explore healthy habits together** – Healthy habits work best when all the family agrees to following them. This could be agreeing to charge devices away from beds to support sleep and not using devices during mealtimes to help take breaks.

NSPCC advice for parents of children with SEND

- **Parents are best placed to know their child** – This is particularly true for children with SEND. We recommend parents consider the right age and stage for their child based off the level of support they need.
- **Make use of tech to support** – We know tech can be vital for communication, learning and sensory or emotional regulation for children with special educational needs. It's important that children continue to receive access that is right for them.

- **Explore all relevant strategies** – While age-based recommendations may not be appropriate they can instead be approached as a list of practical strategies for parents to explore.
- **Use resources tailored to children with SEND** – We worked with Ambitious about Autism to create [tailored advice and resources for parents](#) to use with their children.

Teachers at SMRT are trained to identify safeguarding concerns in school and online and are compliant with the national Prevent Duty. This places emphasis on the need to prevent pupils from falling under the influence of extremist ideas and there is a requirement for schools to integrate this into the ongoing safeguarding role of teachers, lessons and systems. Please see attached a leaflet that explains the Prevent duty, how to report a concern and what to look out for.

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Prevent and Countering Extremism in Young People

Advice and Guidance for Parents
and Carers

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Who is this guidance for?

This guidance explains the importance and relevance of Prevent, Channel and Counter-Extremism efforts to parents and carers of young people. This guidance is for:

- parents, carers and guardians of children and young people

This guidance will help them:

- understand what Prevent is
- understand what Channel is and the support available for young people who may be susceptible to radicalisation and extremism
- understand key terminology and definitions relating to extremism and radicalisation
- understand how to initiate and engage in difficult conversations with young people
- identify potential indicators of radicalisation in young people
- identify potential factors that may make some young people more susceptible to radicalisation
- understand where to go for support if they feel a young person may be at risk of being drawn into radicalisation

Why is this relevant to you?

Any child could be susceptible to extremist narratives.

There are some factors that may make some children more susceptible than others.

Extremist groups tap into young people's insecurities and claim to offer answers and promise a sense of identity that young people often seek.

As part of their recruitment strategy, extremist groups also work to undermine the authority of parents and guardians.



Scan here for more information on Prevent and its relevance to you as a parent or carer

Definitions and key terms

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."

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."

Radicalisation is...

"the term commonly used to describe the processes by which a person adopts extremist views or practices to the point of legitimising the use of violence."

Fundamental British Values include...

- Democracy
- The Rule of Law
- Individual Liberty
- Respect and Tolerance for Different Faiths and Beliefs



Talking about and promoting these values is encouraged in education settings as this helps to build resilience to radicalisation in young people.

Forms of extremism

Form of Extremism	Definition	Examples of Attacks
Extreme Right-Wing	Covers sub-ideologies, including Cultural Nationalism, White Nationalism and White Supremacism. These themselves span a range of extreme beliefs such as antisemitism, anti-Islam, neo-Nazi, ethno nationalism or anti-establishment.	2017 Finsbury Park Attack 2016 Murder of Jo Cox MP 2011 Norway Attacks in Oslo 2019 Christchurch Mosque Shooting in New Zealand
Islamist Extremism	Islamist extremist inspired acts of terrorism are perpetrated or inspired by politico-religiously motivated groups or individuals who support and use violence as a means to establish their interpretation of an Islamic society.	2001 9/11 Plane Attacks 2005 London Transport Bombings 2017 Manchester Arena Attack 2019 Sri Lanka Easter Bombing
Left-Wing, Anarchist and Single Issue (LASI) Extremism	Extreme Left-Wing: extremists who believe in using violence and serious criminality to abolish existing systems of government and replacing them with anarchist, socialist or communist systems.	
	Anarchist Extremism: extremists who believe in using violence to replace current systems of Government and law enforcement with a system that prioritises complete liberty and individual freedom.	
	Single-Issue Extremism: extremists who endorse violence and serious criminality focused on a specific topic, such as animal rights.	
Mixed, Unstable, and Unclear (MUU) Ideologies	Mixed: ideology presented involves a combination of elements from multiple forms of extremist ideologies.	
	Unstable: shifts between different ideologies.	
	Unclear: individual does not present a coherent ideology yet may still be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.	
Incel and Extreme Misogyny	Incel is the term adopted by a world-wide online community to describe a group of involuntarily celibate men. It is a form of extreme misogyny but followers of this ideology also target attractive or sexually active men as well as women.	

Prevent

Scan here for more
information on
CONTEST and
Prevent



Prevent is part of the government's counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST.

The purpose of Prevent is at its heart to safeguard and support vulnerable people to stop them from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

Prevent has three specific objectives:

- 1 Tackle the causes of radicalisation and respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism.
- 2 Safeguard and support those most at risk from radicalisation through early intervention, identifying them and offering support.
- 3 Enable those who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate.

Channel

Scan here for more
information about
Channel



Channel is a voluntary, confidential programme which safeguards people identified as susceptible to being drawn into terrorism.

It is a multi-agency process involving partners from the local authority, the police, education, health providers, and others.

Channel is a support programme - **not a criminal sanction**.

A Channel referral can come from anyone who is concerned about a person they know who might be at risk of radicalisation, including family members, friends, school leaders, or colleagues.

Channel can offer a number of different types of support, such as:

- help with education and career advice
- dealing with mental or emotional health issues
- dealing with drug or alcohol abuse
- theological or ideological mentoring from a Channel intervention provider (a specialist mentor)

The Channel Process

Scan here for more
information about
Channel



When someone makes a referral, lots of agencies work together to offer support where they consider it necessary and proportionate to do so. The Channel process is as follows:

- 1** Referrals are assessed to see if they are suitable for Channel or if alternative support would be more appropriate.
- 2** If suitable for Channel, all relevant partners attend a Channel panel meeting to decide if intervention is necessary.

Please note: the individual who has been referred to Prevent is informed and must give their consent (or via a parent or guardian if they are children) before an intervention can take place.
- 3** If intervention is required, an appropriate tailored support package is developed.
- 4** The support package is closely monitored and reviewed regularly by the Channel panel.

Did you know?

Between April 2021 and March 2022...

The most common Prevent referrals are for Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism. Of those discussed at a Channel panel, 57% go on to be adopted as a Channel case.

36% of all Prevent referrals were made by the education sector and 3% were made by friends and family of individuals.

76% (4,848) of referrals were deemed not suitable for Channel consideration and exited the process prior to a Channel panel discussion; of which the majority were signposted to other support services (3,754; 77%)

Individuals aged 15 and under made up **37%** of all Prevent referrals that went on to receive channel support

Indicators

There is no single route to radicalisation. However, there are some behavioural traits that could indicate a child has been exposed to radicalising influences. For example:

- Beginning to isolate themselves from family and friends
- Becoming increasingly argumentative
- Legitimising the use of violence to defend ideology or cause
- Unwilling to engage with and becoming abusive towards individuals who are different
- Embracing conspiracy theories
- Feeling persecuted
- Changing friends and appearance and distancing themselves from old friends
- Producing or sharing terrorist material offline or online
- Being secretive and reluctant to discuss their whereabouts
- Being sympathetic to extremist ideologies and groups
- Drawing and graffitiing extremist symbols and imagery



The Online Space

With the growth of the internet, social media, gaming platforms, and chat platforms, extremist individuals and groups have taken up this opportunity to radicalise and recruit others in the online space.

It's important that you're aware of your child's online activity and digital footprint, and that you can support them in developing critical thinking skills that will allow them to build up their resilience to radicalisation and extremist content.

Some possible indicators that a young person has been or is being radicalised online include:

- Accessing extremist content online
- Joining or trying to join an extremist group or organisation
- Changing their online identity
- Being sympathetic to extremist ideologies and groups



It is important to remember that the above is not an exhaustive list of indicators of radicalisation and evidence of these behaviours may not necessarily indicate that a young person is being or has been radicalised. If your child is displaying any of these behaviours and you believe it is a cause for concern you should try to discuss this with your child, or seek support from one of the avenues detailed at the end of this resource.

Going Too Far?

Going Too Far? is an interactive classroom resource developed by the Department for Education and London Grid for Learning.

The resource aims to help young people understand their online behaviour and the risks this may bring.



You may find it useful to access the resource to help you promote critical thinking skills to your child so that they are able to challenge extremist narratives and consider the consequences of their online actions.

Scan the QR code to the right to be taken to the Going Too Far? resource.



Susceptibility

Children from all kinds of backgrounds can be radicalised. Below are some factors that may make some young people more susceptible to radicalisation and extremist narratives than others.

- Feeling socially isolated
- Struggling with a sense of identity and belonging
- Questioning their place in society
- Issues within the family and at home
- Experiencing a traumatic event
- Experiencing racism or discrimination
- Difficulty in interacting socially and lacking empathy
- Difficulty in understanding the consequences of their actions
- Low self-esteem
- Becoming distanced from their cultural or religious background



It is important to remember that the above is not an exhaustive list of vulnerabilities that can make young people more susceptible to radicalisation and presence of these vulnerabilities in a young person may not necessarily indicate that they are likely to be radicalised.



What can you do?

Talking to your child about extremism and giving them the facts will help them to challenge extremist arguments.

Be honest with them and talk to them about extremism and radicalisation on a regular basis.

Teach your children to understand that just because something appears on a website, it doesn't mean it's factually correct.

Talk to your child about online safety.

Starting Conversations

It can sometimes be difficult conversations with young people. Here are some tips on how to get started, but remember - **you know your child best and what works for you.**

- Choose somewhere your child feels at ease and make it a time when you're unlikely to be interrupted
- Perhaps start the conversation when something relevant to extremism comes up on TV
- Ask them what they know about the subject and their opinion on it
- Ask questions that don't result in a yes or no answer
- Take care to listen to them and let them answer without interrupting
- Encourage them to ask you any questions
- Talk about your own views on extremism
- Try not to react if they say something you don't expect. Ensure that they know that they're not being told off

Scan the QR code to watch a video of how three parents answered their children's questions about terrorism.



Let's Discuss

Let's Discuss is a series of resources produced by the Department for Education.

They are designed to support teachers in facilitating difficult classroom conversations on the Extreme Right-Wing, Islamist Extremism, LASI Extremism, and Fundamental British Values.

You may find it useful to access the resource to determine how you can open up a conversation about extremism with your child at home.

Scan the QR codes to access each Let's Discuss resource.



**Let's Discuss:
Extreme Right-Wing**



**Let's Discuss:
Islamist Extremism**



**Let's Discuss:
LASI Extremism**



**Let's Discuss:
Fundamental British Values**

Further Available Support



If you are worried that your child is being radicalised, you have a number of options. Talking to your child is a good way to gauge if your instincts are correct, but you might prefer to share your concerns with someone else first. For example, you could...

- Raise the issue with your child's teacher, a friend, or a close family member
- Organise a meeting with the designated safeguarding lead at your child's school
- Contact your local police or local authority for advice and support
- You can report concerns to the Government Anti-Terrorist Hotline on 0800 789 321
- If you think someone is about to carry out an act of terrorism, dial 999
- If you have concerns, but there is no immediate danger, dial 101
- You can also share your concerns and seek support and guidance by visiting the ACT Early website, or contacting their support line on 0800 011 3764

If you have concerns regarding extremism within an education setting, including allegations against institutions and staff, you can anonymously report these to us at the Department for Education by searching 'Report Extremism in Education' on Google.

As always, if you have any immediate concerns about safeguarding issues, students, or the school site, please get in touch via:

safeguarding@smrt.bristol.sch.uk