

Welcome to this week's SMRT Safeguarding Update...

## WAKE UP WEDNESDAY

This edition includes information related to the recent protests in the local Redcliffe area and the school's response to all forms of extremism.

### Extremism and Radicalisation (Mon 24 Nov – Fri 28 Nov)

In this edition of Wake up Wednesday we offer advice and guidance about talking to young people about extremist views, this is particularly relevant in the context of the national narratives at the moment around immigration. In the last few weeks, there have also been organised protests and counter protests focused on local hotels where asylum seekers are living. This has led to conversations in school between staff and students about the difference between hate speech and free speech and what the differences are between extremism, terrorism and radicalisation.

At SMRT we want to ensure students have the opportunity to reflect on the differences between hate speech and free speech and the right to protest, particularly when the protests are directly affecting our students and happening so close to our school.

As our Headteacher has previously stated in a response to the 2024 summer riots:

*We must let our young people talk about how what they have seen and experienced has affected them, and the way they see themselves and their place in our society and the future of our country.*

As a school we will utilise expertise within the school, our Alive Curriculum, and the external resources available to us, to reflect and plan meaningful discussion. It is important that through their lessons and the wider experiences we offer, we continue to equip our young people to:

- Be critical consumers of the information they come across online.
- Be literate, articulate, and numerate.
- Secure the skills and qualifications to have a plausible stake in the economic prosperity of our country.
- Understand people and communities very different to their own and have an empathy for those who are the most vulnerable in our world.

We must also teach our young people about the abject poverty and hopelessness that blights our working-class communities of all colours and backgrounds. It is also important that they learn about the struggles of the most helpless on the margins of our society: refugees desperately fleeing war, the elderly suffering from loneliness, those ravaged by the misuse of drugs, and those experiencing serious mental health issues.

Positively, across the country we also saw people coming together to sweep up the debris and make their streets safe again, the simple kindness of strangers repairing looted shops, and the courage of those who stood silently and stoically to protect the homes and places of worship of others. Within walking distance from our school, we saw people stand in between far right groups and refugees.

We have long known that our schools are microcosms of wider society, reflecting the ills and challenges of the communities we serve at any given time. However, we should not fall into fatalism after these events. Our schools are also drivers for change, the pioneers of a better future, and the hope of a more peaceful, more caring world. I witness this from so many of our students daily.

Below are some useful definitions of these terms from the educate against hate website, that may be good starting points for any conversations that may arise at home:

#### **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 are ...**

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.

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 extremism, radicalisation, misogyny and

online hate specifically. 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. In addition to this, 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.

In school and in society, institutions, organisations and families are asked to watch out for the warning signs of radicalisation (we have included a list of these below). Please be aware that this is not an exhaustive list and It is important to remember that 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 in the educate against hate guidance leaflet included in today's issue.

## Warning Signs

Possible indicators that a young person has been or is being radicalised include....

Beginning to isolate themselves from family and friends

Refusing to listen to different points of view

Unwilling to engage with and becoming abusive towards individuals who are different

Embracing conspiracy theories

Legitimising the use of violence to defend ideology or cause

Drawing and graffititing extremist symbols and imagery

Producing or sharing terrorist material offline or online

Being sympathetic to extremist ideologies and groups

Becoming increasingly argumentative

Being secretive and reluctant to discuss their whereabouts

Changing friends and appearance, and distancing themselves from old friends

If you are concerned about the possibility of a friend, family member or someone living in your area being radicalised, Prevent is a national government body established to accept reports about these concerns.

To discuss concerns about someone in the UK who may be vulnerable to radicalisation, you should contact the national police **Prevent advice line on 0800 011 3764** or use the [ACT Early website](#). These services offer confidential advice and guidance to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism.

If you would like further guidance and advice in this area, Educate against hate provide a top-tips for parents' leaflet (see attached) that gives additional support strategies for starting conversations with young people.

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](mailto:safeguarding@smrt.bristol.sch.uk)



# What Children & Young People Need to Know about **FREE VS HATE SPEECH**

Everyone in the UK has the right of "freedom of expression". That's the right to voice your opinions and share information and ideas with others. It's not the right to say whatever you want without regard for others' feelings and values. We all have a responsibility to use this right properly: being respectful and inclusive to others. Whether online or offline, communication attacking or discriminating against groups or individuals (because of protected characteristics like race or religion) is hate speech, not free speech.

Free speech is a person's legal right to share information, opinions and ideas without fear of retaliation, censorship or legal consequences. This freedom of expression is recognised in international human rights legislation, and here's what it does for us in our day-to-day lives ...

The Human Rights Act 1988 states that everyone has the right to express themselves freely – even if their views are unpopular and might offend others.

Freedom of expression encourages listening to others and allowing opposing views to be heard. It's important to respect someone's opinion, even if we disagree with it. Free speech lets us engage in meaningful discussions with people who feel differently.

Any concept could potentially offend someone. Galileo's ideas were incredibly offensive to many at the time, while not everyone agrees with Darwin's theory today. Freely exchanging ideas promotes progress.

Free speech allows us to engage people we disagree with in a debate. The ability to challenge others' views is healthy – while having ours challenged helps us learn how to deal with criticism and think deeply about what we say and believe.

Free speech is a powerful tool for change, justice and reform. Many modern UK rights – such as women being allowed to vote or decent working conditions – couldn't have been achieved without it.

Freedom of expression includes the right not to do something, like not standing up for – or singing – the national anthem. Even though some people would find that offensive, it isn't illegal.

Hate speech refers to any communication – like talking, texting or posting online – which displays prejudice against someone's identity. Derogatory, demonising and dehumanising statements, threats, identity-based insults, offensive name-calling and slurs would all count as hate speech. Here are some common forms it takes ...

Targeting people or groups because of who they are – including but not limited to aspects such as race, sexuality, religion or a disability – and verbally abusing them with slurs and name-calling. The Equality Act 2010 has more information on this.

Content that dehumanises people based on those same attributes: referring to them as if they were animals, objects or other non-human entities, for example.

Calling for violence or hatred against certain people or groups and justifying and glorifying those actions.

Claiming that specific types of people are physically, mentally or morally inferior (or even that they are criminals) to encourage others to view them in the same way.

Making up or repeating insults about a person or group because something about their identity is different to the person who's posting.

Promoting the segregation of certain groups, or discrimination against them, because of who they are.

## Meet Our Expert

The Global Equality Collective is an online community for homes, schools and businesses, a collective of hundreds of subject matter experts in diversity, equality and inclusion, and the organisation behind the GEC app, the world's first app for diversity, equality and inclusion.

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Source: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/schedule/10/part/10.1/schedule/10.1.1> Text: Everyone has the right to freedom of expression



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