Virtual Learning uk

TITLE	VERSION
Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism Policy 2026-2027	6

APPROVAL BODY	DATE	REVIEW DATE
Board of Governors	August 2026	August 2027

LEAD PERSON	Head of Safeguarding, (DSL)

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy reflects the statutory guidance contained within the Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales together with the current edition of Keeping Children Safe in Education and forms part of VLUK's wider safeguarding arrangements to protect learners from radicalisation, extremism and terrorism.

BACKGROUND

VLUK is a National Independent Training Provider, delivering education in the 16-19 FE sector. It is part of The Oxford Virtual Education Group. VLUK is led by a Chief Executive Officer, accountable to a Board of Governors and Group Chief Executive Officer and supported by an Executive team and a Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Accountable to the SLT is a layer of middle management located throughout the country. The Middle Leadership team is responsible for tutors and enrichment staff.

Prevent forms part of VLUK's safeguarding responsibilities. Radicalisation is a safeguarding issue and should be managed through the same child-centred approach as any other safeguarding concern, recognising that vulnerability to radicalisation may coexist with other safeguarding risks.

VLUK recognises that radicalisation can occur both online and offline and that learners may be exposed to extremist narratives through social media, gaming platforms, messaging applications, Artificial Intelligence, online forums and other digital technologies.

PURPOSE

VLUK ensures the child is safe and prevents them from suffering further harm by being radicalised through extremist ideologies. The purpose of this policy is to identify learners who may be vulnerable to radicalisation, provide early support, promote resilience to extremist narratives and ensure appropriate safeguarding action is taken where concerns arise.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all employees, volunteers, governors, agency staff, contractors, partners, learners and anyone working on behalf of VLUK.

DEFINITIONS

Prevent: to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.
An **ideology** is a set of beliefs.
Radicalisation is the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.
Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence, damage or disruption and is intended to influence the Government or to intimidate the public and is made with the intention of advancing a Political, religious or ideological cause.
Vulnerability describes factors and characteristics associated with being susceptible to radicalisation.
Extremism Extremism is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance that aims to:

1. negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; or
2. undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights (footnote).
3. intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results in (1) or (2).

The types of behaviour below are indicative of the kind of promotion or advancement which may be relevant to the definition, and are an important guide to its application. The further context below is also an essential part of the definition.

Protective Factors are the strengths, relationships, support networks and resilience which reduce an individual's vulnerability to radicalisation.

Online Radicalisation refers to the process whereby individuals are exposed to extremist ideology through online platforms including websites, live streams, gaming communities, encrypted messaging services, social media platforms and Artificial Intelligence generated content.

Misinformation, Disinformation and Conspiracy Narratives may be exploited by extremist groups to manipulate vulnerable individuals and should be considered within safeguarding assessments where relevant.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Board of Governors	The Governing Board or a delegated committee review and challenge the effectiveness of the internal controls and the management of risk detailed in this policy and receive assurance that Prevent duties are effectively implemented, monitored and reviewed alongside wider safeguarding arrangements.
Chief Executive Officer	Overall responsibility and oversight of this policy, ensuring resources are used effectively and appropriately to implement Prevent duties, staff training and safeguarding arrangements.
Executive & Senior Leadership Teams	Responsible for managing the policy and employee adherence to the policy. Maintain oversight of Prevent risk assessments, action plans, local risks and organisational compliance.
Lead Person	Responsible for ensuring the policy aligns with regulatory requirements and best practice and maintains oversight of Prevent referrals, local Counter Terrorism Local Profiles (CTLP), emerging national risks and changing patterns of radicalisation. Ensures staff receive Prevent training appropriate to their role and understand local referral pathways. Liaises with Police Prevent Teams, Channel Panels, Local Authorities and other safeguarding partners where appropriate.
All Line Managers	Responsible for ensuring all employees are aware of and follow this policy and adhere to it and ensure staff complete mandatory Prevent training and understand how to recognise, respond and escalate concerns.
All Employees and Volunteers	Responsible for understanding and upholding the principles of this policy, in line with professional standards and remain professionally curious where changes in behaviour, online activity or expressed ideology give cause for concern. Report concerns immediately through safeguarding procedures rather than attempting to investigate themselves.

POLICY - ETHOS AND PRACTICE

There is no place for extremist views of any kind on our VLUK campuses, whether from internal sources - learners, staff, or external sources - external agencies or individuals. Our learners see our campuses as a safe place where they can explore controversial issues safely and where our teachers encourage and facilitate this - we have a duty to ensure this happens.

VLUK promotes freedom of expression, critical thinking and respectful debate whilst ensuring extremist ideology, hate speech or unlawful discrimination are not tolerated.
Staff should feel confident facilitating balanced discussions around controversial issues whilst remaining politically impartial and challenging extremist narratives where appropriate.
Learners will be supported to recognise misinformation, disinformation, conspiracy theories and manipulated online content that may be used to promote extremist ideology.
Particular consideration should be given to vulnerable learners who may be socially isolated, experiencing poor mental health, exploitation or other safeguarding concerns that could increase susceptibility to radicalisation.

VLUK recognises that extremism and exposure to extremist materials and influences can lead to poor outcomes for learners and should be addressed as a safeguarding concern as set out in this policy. We also recognise that if we fail to challenge extremist views we are failing to protect our learners.

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.

VLUK provides a curriculum, delivered by skilled professionals, so that our learners are enriched, understand and become tolerant of difference and diversity and also to ensure that they thrive, feel valued and not marginalised.

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

VLUK receives the latest Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) from the DfE Regional Prevent coordinators, which allows the Prevent Lead to identify local risks based on campus location. Sharing information on Prevent is treated the same as wider safeguarding and VLUK follows the Prevent referral process in each respective local authority

As part of wider safeguarding responsibilities VLUK staff are alert to:

- Disclosures by learners of their exposure to the extremist actions, views or materials of others outside of our Campuses, such as in their homes or community groups, especially where learners have not actively sought these out.
- Graffiti symbols, writing or art work promoting extremist messages or images.
- learners accessing extremist material online, including through social networking sites.
- Parental reports of changes in behaviour, friendship or actions and requests for assistance.
- Learners 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.

VLUK's education programmes closely follow agreed procedures in relation to processes and criteria for safeguarding individuals vulnerable to extremism and radicalisation.

At VLUK, we have determined "British Values" to be:

- Democracy.
- The rule of law.
- Individual liberty.
- Mutual respect.
- Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

British Values should be embedded throughout the curriculum and wider learner experience rather than delivered as standalone activities wherever possible.

Opportunities should be created for learners to develop digital literacy, critical thinking and respectful challenge of extremist narratives.

VLUK aim to develop and nurture these by:

- Planning a vibrant, engaging tutorial programme with core ethical values and beliefs at its heart
- Integrating curriculum topic areas with the five key areas as stated above.
- Having a clearly communicated and consistently applied Behaviour Policy so that learners understand what is expected of them and the consequences of both meeting and failing to meet these expectations.
- Learner agreements are regularly referred to and agreed with learners, reiterating that they are part of a community built on mutual respect and understanding.
- Adopting restorative approaches, where possible, to resolve any difficulties between members of their community.
- Having a rigorous commitment to learner safety (for example: trips and visits policy and procedures, safeguarding procedures, attendance procedures and health and safety procedures).

POLICY - TEACHING APPROACHES

VLUK strives to eradicate the myths and assumptions that can lead to some young people becoming alienated and disempowered. VLUK achieves this by good teaching, primarily via the Tutorial programme.

Our goal is to build mutual respect and understanding and to promote the use of dialogue not violence as a form of conflict resolution. We achieve this by using a curriculum that includes:

- Tutorial presentations.
- Open discussion and debate.
- Work on anti-violence and a restorative approach addressed throughout the curriculum and the behaviour policy.
- A curriculum that integrates the Prevent agenda.
- We also work with partner organisations, families and communities in our efforts to ensure VLUK understands and embraces local context and values in challenging extremist views and to assist in the broadening of our learners' experiences and horizons.
- Teaching should include opportunities for learners to understand how extremist groups exploit current affairs, online platforms, misinformation and conspiracy narratives to recruit vulnerable individuals.
- Appropriate discussion should be facilitated around emerging online harms, including AI-generated extremist content, deepfakes and algorithm-driven radicalisation.

VLUK supports learners who may be vulnerable to such influences as part of our wider safeguarding responsibilities and where we believe a learner is being directly affected by extremist materials or influences we ensure that that learner is offered mentoring. Additionally, in such instances, VLUK seeks external support from the relevant Local Authority Prevent Lead and/or local partnership structures working to prevent extremism.

POLICY - ONLINE READICALISATION

VLUK recognises that extremist organisations increasingly exploit digital platforms to influence vulnerable individuals. Staff should remain alert to online indicators including sudden engagement with extremist material, changes in online behaviour, participation within extremist online communities, repeated exposure to conspiracy narratives, sharing extremist content or significant behavioural changes linked to online activity.

POLICY - USE OF EXTERNAL AGENCIES AND SPEAKERS

VLUK encourages the use of external agencies or speakers to enrich the experiences of our learners, however, we positively vet those external agencies, individuals or speakers whom we engage to provide such learning opportunities or experiences for our learners.

These external agencies are vetted 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, VLUK 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 curriculum so we need to ensure that this work is of benefit to learners.

We recognise, however, that the ethos of our education programmes is to encourage learners 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.

Appropriate due diligence should be undertaken before approving external speakers, ensuring content aligns with British Values, equality legislation, safeguarding principles and Prevent duties.

A written risk assessment should be completed where there is any potential safeguarding concern.

POLICY - EARLY INTERVENTION AND CHANNEL

Where appropriate, concerns regarding radicalisation will be considered through the safeguarding process and, where the threshold is met, referred to Prevent or Channel in accordance with local safeguarding arrangements. Referral to Channel is a safeguarding process intended to provide voluntary support to individuals vulnerable to radicalisation.

POLICY - RISK ASSESSMENT

VLUK maintains and reviews a Prevent Risk Assessment at least annually, or sooner where local or national risks change. The assessment considers local Counter Terrorism Local Profiles (CTLP), learner demographics, curriculum delivery, online risks, external speakers, visiting organisations, staff training, safeguarding concerns and partnership arrangements.

POLICY - ACTION PLAN

Should VLUK identify further risks, actions are updated to mitigate the risks, overseen by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

COMPLAINTS

Complaints regarding Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism at VLUK should be made to the Head Safeguarding, (DSL) in the first instance amy.dearnaley@vluk.org - Following this, and if required, please refer to the VLUK comments and complaints policy.

REFERENCES

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Prevent Duty Guidance 2023 - Prevent Guidance
- Prevent Duty Guidance: Further Education Institutions in England and Wales- Prevent Guidance Further Education Institutions in England and Wales
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015-https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/contents
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69fb1c28d0e316a40f269a5b/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2026_a_guide_to_multi_agency_working.pdf
- DfE Prevent Training -https://www.support-people-susceptible-to-radicalisation.service.gov.uk/
- Educate Against Hate Guidance
- Online Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

SIGNATORIES



Chief Executive Officer
1st August 2026



Chair of Governors
1st August 2026