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Safeguarding your children from Online Radicalisation

Practical guide for Parents

Prevent Education Officer: Rabena Sharif

Slough Borough Council

**Parents and Carers Guide to Preventing children becoming radicalised**

**Young people are using the internet more and more these days, especially during lockdown, quite often by themselves. There is a chance that your child may meet people online or visit websites that could lead them to adopting what is considered as unsafe, with extreme views, and become brainwashed/groomed by other people’s ideas and thoughts. Extremist groups use the internet and social media to spread their ideology and recruit vulnerable young people.**

This information leaflet will:

* Develop your knowledge of how young people become radicalised
* Identify ways you can support your children to keep safe online
* Introduce you to a framework to discuss news that is important to you and your children



**Why do young people become radicalised?**

The reasons for young people being drawn into extremist views are many and varied, these may include the following:

* They are trying to make sense of world events.
* They feel that their culture or religion is under threat.
* It makes them feel a sense of identity or belonging or being part of something.
* They are looking for adventure or excitement.
* They have a personal grievance or experience of racism or discrimination and feel they want to change things.
* They are under pressure from their peers who have links with these groups.

Key terms defined….

***Extremism***- Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values such as democracy, the rule of law and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

***Terrorism*** - A violent action against people or property, designed to create fear and advance a political, religious or ideological cause.

***Radicalisation*** - The process by which a person comes to support extremism and terrorism.

**How are young people radicalised?**

Young people may come into contact with adults and peers with extremist views both online and in everyday life. The person may be a friend or relative or may be a stranger they meet online.

Contact online may be through social media such as Facebook, Twitter or YouTube but young people may be invited to join discussions on less well-known sites such as Kik, Whisper, Messenger, Yik Yak or Telegram.

Extremists often use these sites because they are harder to monitor and they can hide their identity. Extremists often manipulate young people by using emotional triggers to engage with them, and may target them when they are experiencing difficulties such as bereavement, emotional trauma, mental health issues or social isolation.

**Tackling concerns and news with your Child: A step by step guide**

1. **Choose a news story:** this could be one your child is interested in, or one that you would like to discuss with them. Ask them how they feel about the story – one way to do this is by using emotion words like the ones below.

|  |
| --- |
| **How does this make you feel?** |
| **Confused** | **Curious** | **Calm** |
| **Angry** | **Anxious** | **Indifferent** |
| **Interested** | **Excited** | **Something else** |

**Further information to support you**

**.**

2. **Research it together**: This could be from a source you have found or one your child has chosen or both! Consider these questions when looking at the resources:

- Who wrote it? Are they reliable and what evidence do they have?

- When was it written? Is the information up to date?

- Why was it written? Is there an agenda? Does the author have a bias?

- Where else can you check the information?

**3. Talk about it**: Share what you have found and discuss your reactions to it. Have your initial thoughts and judgements changed? Engaging in this process and showing you are willing is crucial. This will reassure your child that they can have these conversations with you.

* Educate against hate - <https://educateagainsthate.com/>
* ThinkUKnow - <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/>
* NSPCC Talking to children about terrorism - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/protecting-children-from-radicalisation/>
* Parentzone - <https://www.parents.parentzone.org.uk/>
* Ineqe Safeguarding group <https://ineqe.com/safeguarding-hub/>
* BBC Newsround <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround>
* Simple Politics <https://www.simplepolitics.co.uk/>

**What can I do if I have a concern?**

If you are worried about your child or have concerns that your child may be being radicalised then you can contact:

* Your childs school by speaking to their teacher or the Designated Safeguarding Lead
* Your local Prevent team by emailing prevent@slough.gov.uk

All the professionals will work together with you and your child to see what support can be offered to protect your child against radicalisation and the risks associated with it.