

Covid 19 and Prevent Update January 2021- Remote Education

Following the [Prime Minister's announcement on 4 January 2021](#), only children of critical workers and vulnerable children and young people should attend school or college. All other pupils and students will receive remote education.

Radicalisation and extremism safeguarding concerns

Advice on [GOV.UK](#) has been published by the Department for Education; this should be your first port of call on safeguarding. As with other safeguarding functions, Prevent management in local authorities is still operating – if you have concerns, follow your usual safeguarding referral processes for Prevent.

Further information is available on [spotting the signs](#) of radicalisation and [how to raise concerns](#) you may have.

Pupils receiving Channel support

Where schools already have one or more pupils receiving Channel support, the continuation of this support will need to be managed on a case-by-case basis. If you haven't already been contacted, you may want to reach out to your local authority contact to discuss interim arrangements for supporting the child or young person. You should ensure that the relevant local authority staff know the best way to contact your school's designated safeguarding lead(s).

School attendance

Leaders of education settings and designated safeguarding leads have the flexibility to offer a place to those who they consider most vulnerable. As a result, schools and other education providers should work with local authorities to carefully consider whether pupils receiving Channel support can be offered a school or college place.

Channel panels should continue to conduct regular assessments of the vulnerability of those receiving Channel support. Any assessment about the nature of ongoing support for children and young people, including the offer of a school or college place, should involve the parents or carers.

This assessment should take into consideration what is in the best interests of the child, accounting for any underlying health conditions, the potential impact to the individual's wellbeing, and the ability of the individual's parents or home to ensure their needs can be met safely.

In circumstances where a child or young person is offered a place but they or their parent/carer does not want them to attend their education setting, the education setting and relevant local authority staff should explore the reasons for this directly with them and their parent/carer.

Mental health and wellbeing

Many children and young people may be feeling anxious, worried and isolated as a result of COVID-19 and the subsequent changes in their daily lives. [Guidance for parents and carers on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#) has been published on GOV.UK.

Keeping children safe online

Measures taken to slow the spread of COVID-19 mean most children will be at home and spending increasing amounts of time online. There is a risk that extremists may exploit this situation by sharing harmful misinformation and conspiracy theories and targeting vulnerable children and young people directly.

Educate Against Hate has [published guidance](#) for senior leaders, teachers and safeguarding leads on how extremists are using COVID-19 to promote disinformation, misinformation and conspiracy theories. This non-statutory guidance outlines the potential radicalisation risks and actions for settings to take. In addition, practical suggestions to support senior leaders to respond to the Prevent risks are available via a recorded webinar and available resources on [the London Grid for Learning's Prevent and COVID-19 page](#).

Counter-Terrorism Police have produced guidance for parents on some of these risks and how to seek further support, which can be found on the [Let's Talk About It website](#).

If you come across online material promoting terrorism or extremism this can still be reported using the [online tool](#).

The Department for Education's safeguarding guidance also includes advice and guidance on online harms that we encourage settings to share with parents. In addition, [guidance for parents](#) has been published which includes resources to help keep children safe online:

- [NSPCC](#)

- [London Grid for Learning \(LGFL\)](#)
- [Parentzone](#)
- [Internet Matters](#)
- [Shout Out UK](#)
- [National Education Union](#)
- [Thinkuknow](#)
- [Parent Info](#)

Extremist Narratives in Communities

The impact of COVID-19 on communities may give individuals and extremist organisations opportunities to promote hateful or harmful narratives. In some cases, education leaders or designated safeguarding leads may be aware of graffiti, leafleting and stickering that is of an extremist nature that children and young people may be exposed to. Education settings should consider the impact this material may have and encourage pupils to share any concerns if they feel worried, upset or anxious.

You can report hate crime [here](#).

Further support

If you have any questions related to the advice and guidance, or have concerns about the management of any children and young people receiving Channel support, please email counter.extremism@education.gov.uk.

The Department has also set up a helpline for queries about coronavirus in any education setting: 0800 046 8687 (Monday to Friday from 8am – 6pm and weekends 10am to 4pm) – email dfc.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk.