

Prevent Policy Implementation at David Game College 2025-26



Prevent Strategy

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This document should be read in conjunction with the College's Safeguarding and Prevent Policies

Rationale

This document provides a strategic update on the College's approach to Prevent for the 2025–26 academic year. It is intended to support staff awareness, reinforce good practice, and ensure that the College remains alert to current risks associated with radicalisation, extremism, and terrorism within the broader context of safeguarding.

The Prevent Duty remains part of the UK Government's wider counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST. While the broad structure of CONTEST and the central aims of Prevent have remained stable in recent years, there continue to be developments in guidance, in the national threat picture, in online risks, and in the broader social and geopolitical climate that require schools and colleges to remain vigilant, informed, and proportionate in their response.

The three core objectives of Prevent remain:

1. Tackling the ideological causes of terrorism
2. Intervening early to support individuals who may be susceptible to radicalisation
3. Enabling appropriate disengagement and rehabilitation support where individuals have become involved in extremist or terrorist-related activity

The UK Government (March 2024) defines extremism as:

“The promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, which 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; or
3. Intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results in (1) or (2).”

The College remains committed to maintaining a safe, orderly, and inclusive environment for all students and staff. It has a zero-tolerance approach to unlawful discrimination, hate speech, harassment, intimidation, or the promotion of extremist views that are incompatible with the law, safeguarding principles, or the rights and freedoms of others.

At the same time, the College recognises that students should be able to discuss difficult, controversial, and emotionally charged issues in a safe and structured environment. Young people need opportunities to question, debate, analyse, and test ideas if they are to develop intellectual resilience and critical thinking. Prevent work in an educational setting is therefore not about suppressing discussion, but about ensuring that discussion takes place within an appropriate framework: respectful, evidence-based, lawful, and supported by staff.

The College’s Debating Society, Student Council, tutorial framework, PSHE provision, and Geopolitical Club all contribute to this work by giving students legitimate, supervised spaces in which to explore current affairs, political ideas, ethical issues, and historical events. These forums are expected to uphold freedom of expression within the law and to reflect the spirit of the Equality Act 2010, ensuring that different backgrounds and viewpoints are treated with seriousness and respect.

Strategic areas of Prevent implementation

In terms of strategic implementation, the College continues to focus on the following key areas:

Leadership and partnership

The College designates a senior member of staff to lead on Prevent. At David Game College, this role is undertaken by John Dalton. In his absence, any member of the Designated Safeguarding Lead team may assume operational responsibility.

The College works openly and constructively with relevant outside agencies, including the Local Authority, safeguarding partners, and where necessary the police and Channel process. The purpose of this partnership working is not to criminalise vulnerability, but to ensure that concerns are properly understood, assessed, and, where appropriate, acted upon early.

The Prevent Lead works alongside the wider safeguarding structure of the College so that Prevent concerns are not treated in isolation, but within the broader context of pastoral care, mental health, behaviour, online safety, family circumstances, and student welfare. This is important because

indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation can overlap with other safeguarding issues, and staff must therefore think carefully and proportionately before drawing conclusions.

Understanding risk

The College undertakes an annual Prevent risk assessment, which is shared with relevant staff and reviewed at leadership and governance level. This risk assessment is intended to identify areas of potential vulnerability within the College context and to ensure that proportionate mitigations are in place.

Staff receive Prevent-related training through INSET, safeguarding updates, online training, and regular communication from senior leaders. This training is intended to ensure that staff understand the nature of radicalisation risk, the role of ideology, the significance of online content, and the practical steps they should take if they are concerned about a student or adult within the College community.

It is essential that staff understand that risk does not exist in a vacuum. Local, national, and international developments can all affect the atmosphere in which young people form opinions, seek identity, and consume information. This does not mean that students who express strong opinions are necessarily at risk; nor does it mean that engagement with political, religious, or social issues is in itself a cause for concern. Rather, staff should be alert to the possibility that periods of heightened tension, public controversy, or sustained exposure to misinformation can increase the vulnerability of some students to manipulative narratives, grievance-based thinking, or intolerant worldviews.

Boarding staff, tutors, pastoral staff, and teachers therefore all have a role in noticing significant changes in behaviour, emotional presentation, social interaction, online discussion, or patterns of language. This must always be done with care and proportion, and without undermining lawful freedom of thought, discussion, or religious observance. Any concerns raised are considered by the Prevent Lead and relevant safeguarding staff, with a view to determining whether the issue is best understood as a Prevent matter, a broader safeguarding matter, a pastoral issue, or no issue at all.

Sharing information

The College maintains robust processes for the secure sharing of safeguarding information, including Prevent-related concerns. These processes are designed to ensure that concerns are recorded promptly, passed to the right people, and handled confidentially and lawfully.

The College uses MyConcern and other secure internal systems to allow staff to report concerns regarding students, colleagues, or other individuals connected to the College. Reports should be factual, clear, and timely. Where there are concerns that a student may be expressing extremist views, engaging with concerning material, or showing signs of vulnerability to radicalisation, these concerns should be reported in the same way as other safeguarding concerns.

Information is shared internally on a need-to-know basis and externally where there is a safeguarding justification or legal basis for doing so. Appropriate use is made of encryption, password protection, and secure systems in order to protect personal data and maintain compliance with data protection obligations.

Reducing permissive environments

The College seeks to ensure that its physical and online environment is not exploited by individuals or groups seeking to influence students in harmful or extremist ways. This includes ensuring that facilities are not used inappropriately, that external speakers are suitable, and that there is proper oversight of events, activities, and materials distributed on site.

Freedom of speech and expression remain important educational principles, but they must be balanced with safeguarding, the law, and the rights of others. Structured discussion groups such as the Debating Society or Geopolitical Club provide supervised contexts in which difficult issues can be discussed responsibly. In these spaces, students are expected to challenge ideas through evidence and reason rather than through hostility, dehumanisation, or intimidation.

The support curriculum, including PSHE, SMSC and RSE, plays an important preventative role. Through these areas, students are encouraged to reflect on democracy, the rule of law, mutual respect, tolerance, identity, media literacy, healthy disagreement, and the dangers of simplistic or absolutist thinking.

Online safety

Online safety remains one of the most important Prevent-related concerns. Many of the most harmful forms of radicalising content now circulate online, including through mainstream social media, private messaging platforms, video-sharing sites, gaming spaces, discussion boards, and recommendation algorithms that may push users towards increasingly extreme content.

The College promotes the safe use of technology through its safeguarding app, guidance for students, staff training, digital literacy work, and filtering and monitoring systems. Staff should remain aware that concerning online behaviour may not always be visible through overt statements. It may instead present through sudden shifts in language, repeated use of slogans, obsessive engagement with grievance-based or conspiratorial content, or increased withdrawal into highly polarised online communities.

Filtering and monitoring systems are kept under review and are intended to reduce the likelihood of students accessing harmful material through College systems. This forms part of a broader strategy rather than a standalone solution, since students may also access content through personal devices and off-site networks.

Key Prevent facts and trends

The strategic picture continues to require attention. Since the introduction of the Prevent Duty in 2015, many thousands of referrals have been assessed nationally, with a smaller proportion progressing into Channel support. This reflects the fact that Prevent is intended to identify and assess concern early, and that not all referrals will meet the threshold for specialist intervention.

Nationally, referrals continue to arise across a range of ideological categories and concerns. These include Islamist extremism, extreme right-wing extremism, mixed or unstable ideologies, school massacre-related concerns, and other forms of grievance-driven violence. The overall picture demonstrates that Prevent must address all forms of terrorism and extremist influence, and that risk

can emerge in different ways depending on age, personal vulnerability, current events, online exposure, and social environment.

Younger people continue to make up a significant proportion of referrals, which is one reason educational institutions remain central to Prevent safeguarding work. Young people may be more vulnerable to simplistic explanations, online manipulation, identity-based recruitment, conspiracy narratives, and communities that present hatred, violence, or exclusion as strength or certainty.

The current threat picture in the UK continues to include both Islamist and extreme right-wing terrorism, alongside other smaller or emerging ideological trends. Staff should avoid assuming that risk only presents in one form. The College's strategic position is therefore to remain alert to all forms of radicalisation risk and to focus on indicators of vulnerability, ideology, intent, and harm rather than on stereotypes.

Data Trends

A succinct, accurate overview for England and Wales is:

In 2024/25, Prevent recorded 8,778 referrals, the highest annual total since the data series began, up 27% from 6,922 in 2023/24. That rise needs caution: the Home Office says 2024/25 is affected by a new case-management system, new concern categories, and a change in how Channel adoption is counted, so some year-on-year comparisons are not like-for-like. The Home Office also says the sharp rise in early 2025 likely reflected publicity around the Southport case as well as operational changes.

For the categories you asked about, extreme right-wing (ERW) remained the largest ideologically defined strand in 2024/25, with 1,798 referrals (21%) and 612 adopted Channel cases (42% of adopted cases with a stated concern). Islamist extremism (IE) accounted for 870 referrals (10%) and 226 adopted Channel cases (15%). InCel extremism remained small in absolute numbers, with 66 referrals (1%) and 21 adopted Channel cases (1%). A bigger emerging area was "fascination with extreme violence or mass casualty attacks (where no other ideology)", which reached 469 referrals (5%) and 126 adopted cases (9%), with nearly three-quarters of those adopted cases arriving in the final quarter of 2024/25.

Compared with 2023/24, the underlying direction was mixed rather than uniform. ERW referrals rose from 1,314 to 1,798; Islamist referrals fell slightly from 913 to 870; InCel referrals rose modestly from 54 to 66. In 2023/24, ERW also led adopted Channel cases (230) ahead of Islamist (118), with InCel very small (9).

The broad picture for 2026 is therefore:

- ERW is likely to remain the largest ideologically defined Prevent referral stream unless there is a major external shock. That is where the official referral data is already heaviest.
- Islamist risk is still strategically very significant, even though referral volumes are lower than ERW. MI5 says the UK's counter-terrorism caseload remains roughly 75% Islamist extremist and 25% extreme right-wing, and that Islamist terrorism remains the UK's most significant terrorist threat by volume.
- InCel and "extreme violence / mass casualty" cases are likely to keep growing or at least stay elevated, especially among younger males, because the official 2024/25 data shows both a higher

adoption rate than Islamist cases for Incel and a sharp late-year surge in the non-ideological mass-casualty category.

On the Gaza / Palestine war, the careful conclusion is this: it is plausible that the conflict will continue to intensify grievance narratives, antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred, and polarised online mobilisation in 2026, which may feed some Islamist, ERW, and mixed-grievance referrals. But the Home Office does not isolate “Gaza-related” Prevent referrals and explicitly cautioned in the 2023/24 release that changes after 7 October 2023 cannot be directly attributed to conflict-related factors. So the safest evidence-based view is that the war is a risk amplifier, not a separate measurable Prevent category.

What is a Prevent referral?

A Prevent referral can be made when there is concern that an individual may be susceptible to radicalisation or may be on a pathway towards supporting terrorism or extremist violence. This could relate to a student, a member of staff, a parent, or another adult connected to the College.

A referral is not a criminal charge and does not in itself imply guilt or criminal intent. It is part of a safeguarding process designed to assess risk and determine whether support is needed.

Prevent referrals are generally handled through local multi-agency arrangements involving the police and safeguarding partners, rather than being treated as routine disciplinary matters. If an individual is assessed as presenting an immediate security threat or there is evidence of criminal activity, the matter would be handled by the police through the appropriate channels.

Where a referral is made, initial screening takes place. If the individual is found not to be at risk of radicalisation, the case may be closed quickly. In other cases, further assessment may take place to determine whether support or Channel intervention is appropriate.

Making a referral

In the College context, any member of staff can raise an initial concern with the Prevent Lead or with any DSL in relation to a student, parent, or colleague where there are concerns about extremist views, vulnerability to radicalisation, or behaviour that may indicate a Prevent-related risk.

Staff do not need to reach certainty before reporting a concern. Their duty is to notice, record, and report concerns in good faith where they believe there may be a safeguarding issue. The role of the DSL/Prevent Lead is to assess, contextualise, and determine the appropriate next step.

Where a member of staff is worried but unsure whether the concern reaches a threshold for referral, advice can be sought internally first. Externally, advice may also be sought from the local authority safeguarding team, police Prevent teams, or the national Prevent advice line. The ACT Early and Educate Against Hate resources also remain useful sources of guidance.

Contacting relevant authorities or safeguarding leads does not, in itself, place an individual in trouble if no criminal act has occurred. The purpose is early support and appropriate safeguarding intervention.

Governance

The College's Governance Advisory Committee (GAC) comprises independent advisers who oversee executive actions and support the College in meeting its statutory obligations and best practice expectations. Within the GAC, a designated member has responsibility for oversight of the College's compliance with safeguarding and Prevent-related duties.

This oversight includes reviewing the implementation of Prevent measures, ensuring that the College's annual safeguarding audit addresses Prevent appropriately, and confirming that staff are trained to identify relevant concerns and understand referral procedures.

Governance oversight is important because Prevent work in education requires both seriousness and proportionality. Governance helps ensure that the College remains alert to risk without becoming reactive, politicised, or inconsistent in its approach.

Context: polarisation, hate incidents, and the impact of current events

The College recognises that major national and international events can have a significant impact on discourse among young people. In recent years, events in the Middle East, acts of terrorism, online conspiracy movements, and polarised political narratives have all contributed to an environment in which hate incidents, misinformation, and emotionally charged argument have become more prominent.

Staff should be aware that such developments may lead students to encounter distorted narratives, hostile stereotypes, selective evidence, and pressure to align with highly polarised positions. In some cases, these narratives can become gateways into broader extremist thinking, particularly where they present the world in binary terms, dehumanise entire groups, justify hatred, or frame violence as understandable or necessary.

The College does not take partisan positions on geopolitical events. Its concern is safeguarding. Where public events trigger heightened emotion or tension, the College's role is to maintain calm, lawful, evidence-based discussion; to protect students from intimidation, prejudice, or harassment; and to challenge misinformation and dehumanising language wherever it appears.

It is also important to note that hate incidents affecting different communities in the UK have risen in periods of international tension. This underlines the importance of remaining vigilant in relation to antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred, racism, and other forms of prejudice. Prevent work in education must sit alongside the College's duties under equality law and its wider safeguarding culture.

New developments to help students counter extremist views and misinformation

To help combat extremism in a meaningful and educationally sound way, the College continues to develop its work on critical thinking, source evaluation, and responsible research. Students now access a Study Guide which includes sections on independent thinking, evaluating evidence, identifying bias, and distinguishing between high-quality information and misinformation or disinformation.

The College encourages students to understand that not all online content is equal and that persuasive presentation, emotional force, or repeated claims do not make information reliable. As part of the curriculum and tutorial support, students are taught how to compare sources, question motives, notice omissions, identify manipulative framing, and apply tools such as the CRAAP test when assessing material.

This work is important not only academically but also as a protective measure. Students who are capable of recognising false dichotomies, selective evidence, conspiratorial rhetoric, and manipulative emotional appeals are less likely to be drawn into extremist or absolutist narratives.

The issue of fake news, propaganda, ideological framing, and content designed to provoke outrage is therefore discussed within the broader framework of digital literacy, safeguarding, and intellectual responsibility.

What is Prevent?

Prevent is one of the four strands of CONTEST, the Government's counter-terrorism strategy. Its purpose is to stop people from becoming terrorists or from supporting terrorism.

The four strands of CONTEST are:

1. **Prevent** – stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism
2. **Pursue** – stop terrorist attacks
3. **Protect** – strengthen protection against attacks
4. **Prepare** – mitigate the impact of attacks

Prevent should be understood in schools and colleges primarily through the lens of safeguarding. It is concerned with reducing vulnerability, supporting appropriate intervention, and protecting individuals and communities from harm.

Prevent: the three strategic objectives

1. Tackling the ideological causes of terrorism
2. Intervening early to support individuals susceptible to radicalisation
3. Enabling individuals who have engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate

Terminology

Extremism: vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Radicalisation: the process by which a person comes to legitimise or support terrorism or extremist violence.

Channel: a key part of the Prevent framework. It is a multi-agency process designed to provide support at an early stage to individuals identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

Channel

Channel is a safeguarding programme which focuses on early support for people who may be vulnerable to radicalisation.

It is a multi-agency approach that:

- Identifies those at risk
- Assesses the nature and extent of that risk
- Develops the most appropriate support plan for the individual concerned

Channel generally considers vulnerability through three broad criteria:

1. Engagement with a group, cause, or ideology
2. Intent to cause harm
3. Capability to cause harm

How might staff notice possible radicalisation?

This is a difficult and sensitive area. Generalisations are often unhelpful, and there is no single checklist that can identify whether someone is becoming radicalised. Many behaviours associated with vulnerability may also reflect distress, isolation, immaturity, mental health difficulties, or other safeguarding concerns.

That said, the following may indicate that a student requires closer attention or discussion with safeguarding staff:

- Persistent use of insulting, derogatory, or dehumanising language towards particular groups
- Repeated claims that harm or violence against others is justified or inevitable
- Endorsement of violence, terrorism, or political intimidation
- Obsessive blaming of a group for social or political problems
- Significant and concerning changes in behaviour, peer group, or presentation
- Possession, sharing, or repeated referencing of extremist material
- Speaking in highly scripted or formulaic terms without openness to challenge
- Reliance on conspiratorial or highly distorted narratives
- Increasing social withdrawal or rejection of long-standing friendships
- Hostility to difference and intolerance of dissent
- Apparent adherence to extremist influencers, propagandists, or hate preachers
- Strong identification with narratives of absolute grievance, victimhood, or civilisational conflict

Children and young people who are vulnerable to radicalisation may also have low self-esteem, feel socially isolated, have experienced bullying or discrimination, or be searching for identity, belonging, or certainty.

Possible routes into radicalisation may include:

- Online grooming or algorithm-driven exposure
- Direct or indirect influence from adults or peers
- Extremist literature, videos, or social media content
- Closed online communities that reinforce hatred or binary thinking

As always, these signs do not necessarily mean that a child is being radicalised. They may instead indicate another safeguarding or pastoral issue. Staff should therefore avoid assumptions and report concerns for proper consideration.

Push factors

Push factors may include a child or young person feeling:

- Isolated
- That they do not belong
- That they have no purpose
- That their aspirations are unmet
- Angry, frustrated, or humiliated
- Deeply uncertain about life or the world
- A strong sense of grievance or injustice
- Socially excluded or misunderstood
- Vulnerable due to discrimination, trauma, or instability

Pull factors

Pull factors may include an extremist group, ideology, or individual:

- Offering identity, purpose, or belonging
- Offering excitement or a sense of mission
- Making the young person feel special or chosen
- Providing simple answers to complex questions
- Promoting an “us versus them” mentality
- Blaming entire communities for grievances
- Encouraging conspiratorial thinking

- Validating anger and redirecting it towards hatred
- Glorifying violence or dominance
- Offering certainty, status, or ideological purity

Boarding and the risk of radicalisation

The presence of boarding provision does not in itself create radicalisation risk, but it does require particular awareness in safeguarding terms. Boarders are living away from home, often with greater independence, and may experience periods of loneliness, homesickness, social change, or altered patterns of supervision compared with day students.

Students in boarding accommodation may spend substantial time online and may also form new friendships and influences more rapidly. This means that house staff and pastoral teams must remain attentive to changes in mood, behaviour, language, peer relationships, and wider wellbeing.

House parents are trained in safeguarding and Prevent awareness so that they can notice concerns at an early stage. The focus is not on intrusive monitoring or suspicion, but on ensuring that students are safe, supported, and known well enough for concerning changes to be recognised.

Where boarders attend places of worship or community settings, this is approached respectfully and appropriately, with due regard to safeguarding, parental expectations, and the College's duty of care. Similarly, friendships, packages, contact patterns, and off-site engagement are managed in line with boarding and safeguarding procedures, with the aim of reducing risk while preserving dignity and normality.

Summary of the College's strategy to educate, engage and monitor

The College's strategy includes the following:

1. Embedding Fundamental British Values within the curriculum and support curriculum, including PSHE, SMSC, RSE and tutorial work
2. Ensuring that teachers challenge extremist views, prejudice, dehumanising language, and signs of intolerance where these arise
3. Reinforcing through displays, assemblies, tutorials, and guidance the importance of tolerance, pluralism, lawful free speech, and mutual respect
4. Using assemblies and curriculum opportunities to discuss historic and contemporary examples of extremism, intolerance, genocide, terrorism, and propaganda, and the lessons that can be learned from them
5. Training staff on Prevent, radicalisation risk, referral pathways, current trends, and the need for proportionate professional judgment
6. Ensuring that students have opportunities to express views and participate in College life through bodies such as the Student Council and debating activities
7. Encouraging carefully chosen outside speakers who can speak meaningfully about intolerance, hate, resilience, or democratic participation

8. Ensuring that the College's internet systems include suitable filtering to reduce access to harmful extremist content through College devices and networks
9. Keeping filtering and monitoring arrangements under review as part of the College's wider online safety strategy
10. Vetting external speakers and visitors appropriately to reduce the risk of extremist influence being brought onto the site
11. Ensuring that any speakers or events arranged through students are properly authorised and checked
12. Requiring approval from senior management before leaflets or materials on political, social, or cultural issues are distributed on site
13. Promoting awareness of different religious beliefs, identities, and traditions in a way that supports mutual respect and understanding
14. Reinforcing the importance of the Equality Act 2010 and of non-discriminatory conduct through the Student Guide, behaviour expectations, and wider pastoral work
15. Encouraging engagement with public institutions, democratic processes, and civic responsibility in ways that help students understand the role of lawful authority and public service
16. Promoting cultural capital through the core and extended curriculum so that students encounter a broad range of British and international ideas, histories, traditions, and experiences
17. Producing an annual Prevent risk assessment that identifies areas for attention and sets out appropriate mitigation
18. Inviting individuals, where appropriate, who have lived through periods of extremism, persecution, or intolerance to speak about their experiences and the lessons society can draw from them
19. Encouraging boarders and students more generally to engage critically with documentaries, literature, and educational material that illuminate the dangers of propaganda, intolerance, and authoritarian thinking

Conclusion and further action

The latter part of recent years has posed significant challenges within a national and international landscape often characterised by tension, polarisation, misinformation, and rapid online amplification of conflict and grievance. In such a climate, it is essential that the College remains a place of balance, calm, and intellectual seriousness.

The College has a duty to ensure that students are educated not only in subject knowledge, but also in the habits of mind that protect them from manipulation: scepticism towards simplistic narratives, awareness of bias, respect for evidence, and willingness to engage with complexity.

Prevent strategy in a college setting should not be reduced to surveillance or compliance. At its best, it is part of a wider safeguarding and educational mission: helping students become thoughtful, resilient, informed, and humane young adults who are resistant to hatred, coercion, and ideological manipulation.

The College must therefore continue to educate students about the dangers of extremism, prejudice, conspiracy thinking, and dehumanising narratives, while also giving them the tools to analyse difficult issues with care and independence. By encouraging students to examine claims critically, consider multiple perspectives, and resist pressure towards binary or absolutist thinking, the College helps to foster a culture of maturity, moderation, and informed discourse.

This remains an important strategic priority for the year ahead.

John Dalton

March 2026

Explanation of abbreviations used in this document

- **FBV** – Fundamental British Values
- **SMSC** – Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural
- **PSHE** – Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education
- **RSE** – Relationships and Sex Education