



Prevent Policy

The Legal definition of a child is a person under the age of 18 as outlined in the Children's Act 1989. Study Links accommodates students of a range of ages and is AEGIS and BSA accredited and matches the requirements of the British Council for being a service provider and placement organiser to international students of all ages studying in the UK.

Policy Statement

Context

At Study Links we recognise our duty of care towards our students who are living away from their normal residents and without their usual support network.

As part of our child protection policies, our Prevent Policy has been implemented to ensure we are complying with our legal and moral obligation to provide safe accommodation for all the children and young persons who are using our services under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. The current threat from terrorism and extremism in the UK is both real and severe and can lead to the exploitation of vulnerable young people. As a result, it has potential to affect any student who is visiting the UK as part of a course of study. The purpose of this policy is therefore to provide clear guidance and structure around any response to our safeguarding concerns for students who may be or could become vulnerable to the messages of extremism whilst staying with a Study Links homestay.

This policy is aligned with the Prevent Duty guidance updated in 2023.

What is Prevent?

Prevent is one of the four elements of CONTEST, the government's counter-terrorism strategy. Its aim is to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

The Prevent strategy focuses on:

- Tackle the ideological causes of terrorism.
- Intervene early to support people susceptible to radicalisation.
- Enable people who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate

Definitions

Radicalisation and Extremism are best defined as follows:

- Radicalisation is the process by which people come to support terrorism and extremism and in worst case scenarios, to then participate in terrorist groups either here in the UK or overseas;
- Extremism is being vocal or demonstrating active opposition to our fundamental British values. This is also defined as death threats against members of our armed forces, racism, homophobia, right wing ideology and religious extremism.

The Process

Study Links promotes a multicultural workplace for its employees and treat all equally and all respects each other's backgrounds, beliefs, disability and upbringing.

As a company, our Communications Policy does not allow employees to use social media sites, email or the internet for personal use during work time, which includes access to personal email and social media sites and/ apps. In addition, we reserve the right to monitor the internet usage of all our employees, which will include usernames, IP addresses, website URLs, date and time of sites viewed and content. This information can be made available to and viewed by the Directors, the Designated Safeguarding Officer, their deputy and any relevant authorities if requested.

Preventing terrorism does also mean challenging extremist views and intervening where appropriate to stop students from moving from extremist ideas into terrorism itself. Study Links understands its responsibility to raise the awareness of its homestay hosts, as their daily contact with our students may in some cases be greater than that of their teachers or our own staff.

It's important for our homestay hosts to challenge any prejudicial, discriminatory or extremist views and at the same time promote the fundamental British values of the UK. Core British Values are defined as:

- Our democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual tolerance of all faiths and beliefs

Students being drawn into extremism is a safeguarding issue which can also be classed as a "child protection" issue. As a result, Study Links ensures all staff have completed a Prevent training course, so they are aware of the Prevent agenda and are able to recognise signs and indicators of radicalisation and be able to respond appropriately. We ensure that we have a Lead Safeguarding Officer, and a deputy Safeguarding Officer who have completed Level 3 Safeguarding.

Employees who are involved in recruitment must also be trained in identifying suitable staff and homestay hosts, and all staff will need to be enhanced DBS checked. All training will need to be updated regularly.

Study Links recommends that homestay families complete Prevent Training. The link for training is: <https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/edu/screen1.html>

If any homestay hosts require more information or are unsure how to complete the training that is required, they can contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer Ailie Fan on director@studylinks.co.uk, and 01274 679710.

Study Links also recommends homestay families and staff familiarise themselves with the government's Educate against Hate website: <http://www.educateagainsthate.com/>

Our aim as a company is to be able to create an environment that encourages and allows students to develop a greater understanding for others, promote common values and diversity and to promote an understanding of and a desire to uphold the human rights of others. We also want all the students using our homestay service to be able to act responsibly and, by sharing common values, create a society that is inclusive with strong and positive relationships.

There is an element of risk assessment when identifying individual concerns. Therefore, there could be cases where there are vulnerable young people experiencing certain factors but they are not automatically at risk of extremist exploitation. It is a complex relationship between someone's identity and how vulnerable they are to extremism and those who are vulnerable come from a variety of different cultures, backgrounds and experiences.

The following may help to identify how a student may be vulnerable:

- Identity crisis – their distance from their cultural/ religious heritage and being uncomfortable with their place in society around them
- Personal crisis – family tensions, a sense of isolation, adolescence, low self-esteem, disassociating from existing friends and forming a new group of friends, searching for answers about faith/ identity/ belonging
- Personal circumstances – migration, local community tensions, events affecting their home country, alienation from UK values, feeling aggrieved because of a personal experience of racism or discrimination by people or by aspects of the UK government
- Unmet aspirations – perceptions of injustice, feeling like a failure

These can come across in a variety of different behaviours which can include:

- Using inappropriate language
- Having violent, extremist literature or accessing extremist websites
- Behavioural changes
- Expressing extremist views and/ or supporting violent extremist causes or leaders
- Encouraging and advocating violent actions and methods
- Associating with known extremists
- Using extremist views to explain personal disadvantage
- Joining or wanting to join extremist organisations
- Trying to recruit others to an extremist ideology

If you, as a homestay host, student, school staff, parent or representative, have any concerns about a young person, listen to them and speak with one of our team.

If you are still unsure, please speak with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Ailie Fan on director@studylinks.co.uk, and 01274 679710.

In an emergency, contact our emergency phone number on 01274 924055 which is available 24/7.

No one piece of information is too small to be insignificant. If you are in doubt, please talk to us as this could be the piece of information that makes a difference for the person in question.

Useful Government Links:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-children-from-radicalisation-the-prevent-duty>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

Review

This policy is reviewed annually taking into account any changes in legislation, practice or roles concerned throughout the year.