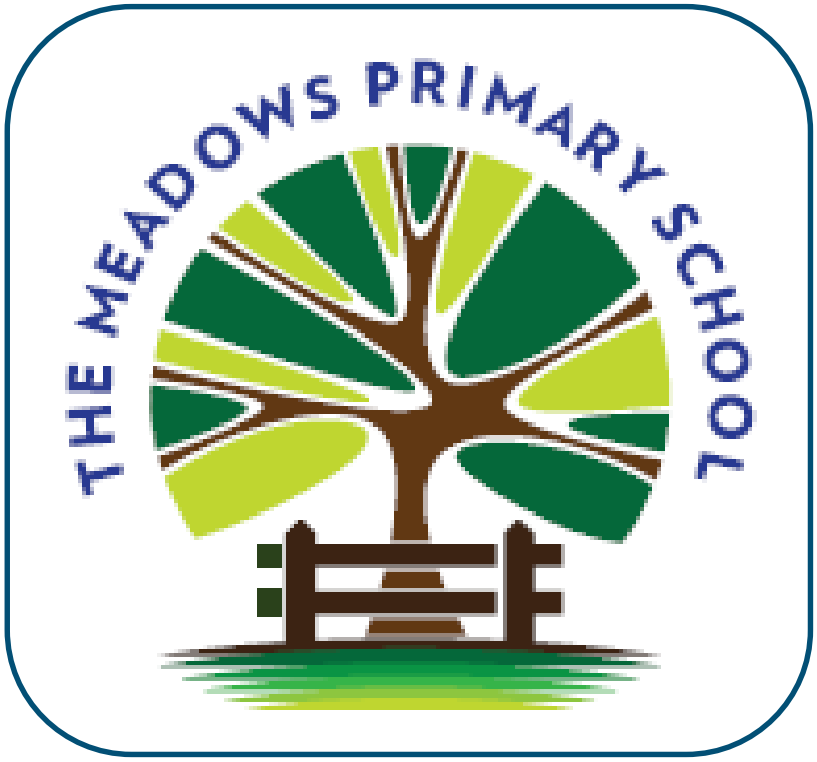

No Platform Policy

Version Control

Version	Date	Purpose	Author
1.0	01/05/22	Policy moved to new format and updated.	BCC/D.Naughton
1.1	06/10/23	Policy updated	DHT
1.2	06/10/24	Policy Updated	AHT 1

‘No Platform’ Policy

Responding to speakers promoting messages of hate and intolerance in Birmingham

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Appendix 1 - Applying the Framework Appendix 2 - Unacceptable Behaviours

Updated PREVENT guidance March 2024
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65e5a5bd3f69457ff1035fe2/14.258_HO_Prevent+Duty+Guidance_v5d_Final_Web_1_.pdf

‘No Platform’ Policy

Responding to speakers promoting messages of hatred and intolerance.

7.1 Introduction

Schools, both state-funded and independent, have a range of duties in relation to safeguarding children from extremism. The statutory guidance ***Keeping Children Safe in Education***, most recently updated in September 2024, is the key document for schools, colleges and their staff as part of the wider safeguarding system for children. It provides an overview of their duties regarding preventing the radicalisation of children[1]. It recognises that children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation and that protecting children from this risk should be part of a schools’ safeguarding approach.

The Government published an overview of the duties on schools in its policy paper ***Preventing Extremism in The Education and Children's Services Sectors*** on 1 September 2015[2] and Prevent Duty guidance April 2019.

In recent times the Government has taken further action to strengthen the duties on schools, in particular with the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, which placed the Government’s ‘Prevent’ Counter-Extremism strategy on a statutory footing, and placed duties on schools to have due regard to the need to prevent children being drawn into terrorism.

The Government has also sought to strengthen a schools’ abilities to address a wide range of potential concerns relating to radicalisation, such as the potential for children to be groomed through several mediums and be drawn into extremist narratives.

7.2 Aims of Policy

This “No Platform Policy” aims to ensure that The Meadows Primary balances the right of freedom of speech against the potential use of its facilities for the promotion of extremist ideological, religious or political beliefs. In this context beliefs are considered to be extremist if they include the expression of racist or fascist views; if they incite hatred based on religious interpretation, ideology or belief; or if they promote discrimination on the grounds of political opinion, age, colour, disability, ethnic or national origin, gender, marital status, race, religion or sexual orientation.

This policy provides guidelines on how schools can respond to extremist concerns and conduct research into the background of potential speakers.

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[1] Department for Education, Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2020

[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-extremism-in-schools-and-childrensservices/preventing-extremism-in-the-education-and-childrens-services-sectors

7.3. Definitions

These can be found in section 2.0 above.

7.4. Principles

The Principles on which this policy is based are:

- No person may use the facilities of The Meadows Primary to express or promote extremist ideological, religious or political views.
- No person may use the facilities of The Meadows Primary to express or promote discriminatory views in relation to the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010.
- The Meadows Primary will not allow the use of its facilities by any group or organisation that is proscribed by HM Government.

7.5. Electronic Communication

The Meadows Primary will not allow the use of the school website, IT facilities or information management processes to:

- Promote discriminatory views in relation to the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010;
- Promote or glorify terrorism; or
- Promote extreme ideological, religious or political beliefs.

The school has a right to exercise control over all activities on its IT facilities, including electronic communications associated with the name of the school and use of school equipment to access external resources. This includes the right to monitor the use of school resources.

7.6 Written and Printed Communication

The Meadows Primary has the right to exercise control over the content of any written or printed material that identifies itself as associated with the school. It will not allow the use of its facilities in the production of such material, or permit the use of its name, or of any identifying marks relating to the school, in such material, if that material appears to:

- Promote discriminatory views in relation to the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010;
- Promote or glorify terrorism; or
- Promote extreme ideological, religious or political beliefs.

7.7 Use of Buildings, Facilities and Property

In deciding whether to allow any group or organisation to make use of its buildings, facilities and property The Meadows Primary will take into account the views, policies and objectives of that group or organisation and may refuse on the grounds that these are incompatible with the policies and objectives of the school. In particular, access will be refused if it appears likely that the proposed activity would promote extremist ideological, political or religious beliefs.

7.8 Accountability

The statutory body of the school (Governing Body) has ultimate responsibility for this policy. The implementation of the policy is the responsibility of the Head Teacher.

The Meadows Primary will use the **No Platform Policy of Birmingham City Council** for guidance on conducting research into the background of potential speakers, consulting other schools, other organisations, using search engines, assessing the reliability of information found, identifying risks to community cohesion etc.

7.9 Reporting Concerns

School staff has a responsibility to act on concerns. Staff will have training on how to recognise a potential issue with the promotion of extremism in school.

The Meadows Primary staff will inform AHT 1 if they have a concern.

Any staff member who has raised a concern will be given feedback on the action taken.

If after reporting a concern staff feel that no satisfactory action has been taken, then they should escalate the concern by informing Kate Watkins on the Governing Body of their concerns. If a concern needs to be escalated further, then The Meadows Primary Whistle Blowing Policy is to be used.

In addition to in-school safeguarding mechanisms if someone is concerned about someone using school premises to promote extremism, then further advice can be sought by writing to noplatform@birmingham.gov.uk

7.10 Training

The school will ensure that school staff and Governors receive appropriate training in the issues raised by this policy.

No Platform Policy – Undesirable Bookings

Advice and Good Practice for Venue Bookings

Follow the steps below to mitigate the risks of undesirable books. This document is not a definitive list and should be used in conjunction with other checking mechanisms.

ASK

What's planned and who's planning it?

1. Who is the individual or organisation booking the event?
    - Ask for their name and associated names they operate under
    - Ask for their address and phone number
    - Get details of the individual or the organisations website and associated websites.

2. Do they implement a policy that promotes equality and diversity and challenges all forms of discrimination? Or will they agree to their event subscribing to your equality and diversity policy?

3. Ask for details of the event, including: theme; title; agenda; content; speakers; expected audience, numbers and demographics; details of how the event will be promoted (ask for copies of flyers/posters etc); is the event open to the public or a ticket only event?

CHECK

Undertake due diligence to confirm what you've been told and find out more.

1. Run a check on the individual/organisation/speakers by:

    - Viewing their website, articles or speeches

    - Consider what other people are saying about them (articles/blogs etc.)

2. Ask for a reference from a venue provider previously used by the individual/organisation.

3. If the booking is for a charity, check the charity number of the organisation with the charity commission at the **charity.commission.gov.uk**

DECIDE

Do you let the event go ahead? Or take action to reduce risk? Use the information collected to inform your decision.

TOP TIPS when taking bookings

- If the booking is being arranged by an event management or another company, make sure you know who their client is
- Be wary of individuals only giving out mobile numbers
- If the enquiries are about internet use and bandwidth, investigate whether any speakers will partake remotely
- Be wary of individuals/organisations making large cash payments
- Ensure that in the event of reputational risk you can withdraw from the contract

TOP TIPS when researching individuals/organisations online

- Complete a thorough investigation on the individual/organisation by:
  - Viewing their website(s)
  - Looking at what other people are saying about them (article/blogs etc.)
- Complete a thorough check on any speakers by looking at what other people are saying about them (article/blogs etc.)
- When you are looking at a website, check that it is being kept up to date
- If you are unsure about an organisation, check it has a landline number and a business address
- Where possible use primary evidence – an organisations manifesto or a person speaking on YouTube

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

List of Terrorist Organisations banned under U.K Law
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations--2

The Charity Commission
charity.commission.gov.uk

If you still have a concern about the booking, you can contact your Local Authority
noplatform@birmingham.gov.uk

In case of an Emergency dial **999**

If you have any information about suspicious activity or behaviour contact Counter Terrorist Police via:
Gov.uk/ACT or call **0800 789 321**

Appendix 1 - Applying the Framework

The following diagrams set out the processes for information gathering and decision-making for the local authority in implementing the No Platform Policy.

Decision-Making Authority According to Venue Type

BCC Owned/ Managed Venue	**BCC Owned Venue but Managed by Third Party**	**Managed by Third Party with Funding relationship with BCC**	**BCC provides advice and support**
e.g. Town Hall, Council House, parks and other event spaces managed by the Council	Third Party organisations leasing Council owned venue	Community and voluntary organisation owned property	Hotels, conference and banqueting centres, private business, office and room hire
BCC is primary decisionmaker	BCC provides advice and support	Community and voluntary organisation primary decision-maker	BCC provides advice and support
	BCC primary decisionmaker following consultation with third party	BCC provides advice and support	Venue owner primary decision-maker

Advice and Decision-Making Process

SOURCE

Member of staff
Local resident
Partner organisation
Local organisation or group
Social media
Other

ASSESS INFORMATION

Gather information
Identify venue type
Apply assessment criteria
Does the speaker/event breach Counter Terrorism ACT 2000 or the Equalities Act 2010
Consult relevant community groups
Be proportionate
Seek appropriate partner advice if required

CONSIDER IMPACT

Consider impact on cohesion, equalities, community safety and potential for disorder
Identify and decide on appropriate course of action
Obtain further advice and clearance from the lead Director via the No Platform Inbox (NoPlatform@birmingham.gov.uk)

MAKE DECISION

Decision to support booking
Decision to not support booking. In this instance inform booking person/organisation of reason for decision, refer them to the No Platform policy and their right to appeal.

GATHER INFORMATION

- Undertake due diligence by conducting open source checks; use more than one search engine to prevent bias.
- Consult partner organisations, communities and third-party sources for further information
- Gather as much primary source and attributable information as possible

ASSESS INFORMATION

- Assess credibility of sources and allocate weight accordingly
- Is there evidence that the speaker/group has promoted messages of intolerance and hate towards any groups
- Under the protected characteristics identified within equalities legislation.
- Identify if the speaker/group has been banned elsewhere previously
- Consider any risks to cohesion, equality, community safety and the potential for public disorder
- Seek further advice from partner organisations to understand information if necessary

CONSULT

- Consult relevant group(s) from protected equality group that may be affected (LGBTQ-I, faith partners etc)
- Review identified risks to cohesion, equalities, community safety and the potential for public disorder and liaise with policy holder.
- Consult partner organisations on any risks identified
- Consult with venue owner

Assessing Information

Assessment Criteria for Managing Extremist Events or Speakers

In assessing the risks posed by an individual event or speaker, Birmingham City Council will work with relevant stakeholders, including West Midlands Police and base our judgment on research that is:

Primary – Caution will be exercised when information about individuals is derived from secondary sources without any supporting primary evidence.

Attributable – Evidence from official, personal websites or videos, remove any doubt as to what an individual said and therefore present a stronger case.

Reliable and Valid - It is important to be able to assess the reliability and validity of a source in order to be credible.
The first is the **validity** of the information. This is the truthfulness of the source in respect to the information presented. When assessing the Reliability of the information, the extent to which we can rely on the source of the data should be considered.

Objective – Statements or actions will be seen within context. What are the intended outcomes of the meeting/messages and what is the intended audience? Is it part of a wider campaign? Are there any speeches/videos? Consider the manner, tone and messaging of these in their current political and social context. It is important to understand what the current climate is and contextualise the impact of the messaging based on this. Support and advice can be sought from the policy holder.

When assessing the risk of potential speakers based on past event the following should be considered:
What is the manner and tone in which the speaker addressed its audience and the subject matter?
Are the comments made derogatory and offensive to any particular group or community, and breach the aforementioned policies? And does the speaker appear to be condoning the derogatory comments in historical or religious texts?

Do the views of the speaker(s) invoke extremist and/or derogatory views?

Statements or actions that provide opposite or positive evidence, or evidence of the individual recanting, clarifying or apologising for previous views will also be considered (as should how consistent and public these clarifications have been).

Reviewed – Research should be periodically reviewed to ensure that it reflects current positions.

The Council recognises the need to ensure that all information/research collated for the purpose of sensitive decision-making is gathered from as many sources as possible and reserves the right, where necessary, to consult partner organisations including West Midlands Police and the Home Office for further advice and guidance.

As part of the information gathering process, appropriate weight will be allocated dependent upon the type of source material; primary evidence will be sought where possible. When assessing information gathered from online sources the Council will exercise caution of allocating too much weight to information contained within blog sites and for example, of quotes that may have been taken out of context.

If someone contravenes the No Platform Policy, staff should be made aware that information collected is reasonable and judgments are consistent with the policy, and that decisions are not based on personal views and judgments. If a decision is made to decline a booking, staff should ensure that reasons for decision making are appropriately logged. Staff should also be prepared to provide proactive feedback and evidence of reasons as to why they have been refused

Potential Breaches

- Associated with a proscribed group
- Subject to adverse media attention
- Views deemed as being discriminatory or inflammatory to others
- Views/activity in breach of the Counter Terrorism Act 2000

Considerations for gathering and assessing open source data found online

- Use more than one internet search engine to minimise search engine bias.

- Where possible find primary source information (e.g. a group's manifesto on their website; You Tube videos of a person speaking or band's music; an individual's personal writing on their blog).

- Is the website stating information as fact (*"depression is the most common mental illness in the UK"*), or is it clearly giving something as the author's opinion? (*"I don't think doctors in the UK get enough training in dealing with depression"*)

- Is the information detailed enough for what you need?

- Does the webpage give sources for the information – does it say where it came from? What other sources can you find to check the information against? Try to find a different type of source, like a report from a well-known body, or published statistics.

- If the webpage is clearly giving someone's opinion on an issue, how much weight should you give to their opinion?

- Can you easily tell who the person or organisation behind the webpage is? Can I trust the person or organisation behind this webpage? Are they likely to be biased? Are they an authoritative source? Is the author taking a personal stand on a social/political issue or is the author being objective? Bias is not necessarily "bad," but the connections should be clear.

- With what organisation or institution is the author associated? Is there a link to the sponsoring organisation, a contact number of and/or address or e-mail contact? A link to an association does not necessarily mean that the organisation approved the content.

- If you found the page through a link or a web search, and are not sure where it comes from, look for the home page, or an "About Us" or similar link. Does the page author give a real-world postal address and phone number?

- Given how quickly information on the web can change and how long some websites have been around, always check how up to date the information is. Does the page say when it was last updated? If not, try checking the Properties or Page Info options

in your Web browser for a date. Is the website generally being maintained – do all the links still work? Can you check against sources you know are up to date for comparison? If there are several out-of-date links that do not work or old news, what does this say about the credibility of the information?

- When undertaking open source due diligence, the following principles must be complied with:[3] ○ Research should take the form of web searches using a well-recognised internet search engine such as Google or Bing, and key terms such as: “extremism", "racism", "sexism", "homophobia", "misogyny", "antisemitism" and "islamophobia".[4]

  - To ensure compliance with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (2000) and the Data Protection Act (1998), any searches must minimise the risk of unfairly intruding upon on an individual's right to privacy, and therefore should not include exhaustive trawls of social media content.
  - Local authorities should only seek to identify information that could give rise to concerns related to extremism.
  - Local authorities should not routinely conduct internet searches as described above for the following purposes: ▪ Party political events and engagements
    - Private engagements or meetings held under 'Chatham House' Rules
    - Personal or non-official activities or engagements
    - To identify whether individuals agree or disagree with HMG policy
  - Local authorities should also not routinely conduct internet searches on the following groups: ▪ Elected UK officials
    - UK public servants
    - Individuals under the age of 18.

[3] Guidance provided by the Office for Counter Terrorism, Home Office

[4] For further helpful guidance on conducting effective internet searches, please see: http://www.techrepublic.com/blog/10-things/10-tips-for-smarter-more-efficientinternet-searching/

Appendix 2 – Unacceptable Behaviours

Unacceptable Behaviours

The Special Cases Unit in the Home Office holds the pen on recommendations for exclusion cases. Detailed guidance is published online regarding the exclusion process[5] . The Special Cases Unit uses the following criteria in assessing whether an individual should be prohibited from entering the United Kingdom.

The list of unacceptable behaviours covers any **non-UK citizen** whether in the UK or abroad who uses any means or medium including:

- writing, producing, publishing or distributing material
- public speaking including preaching
- running a website
- using a position of responsibility such as teacher, community or youth leader to express views which:
- foment, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs
- seek to provoke others to terrorist acts
- foment other serious criminal activity or seek to promote others to serious criminal acts
- foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK

The Equality Act 2010 and **Protected Characteristics**

The Equality Duty, introduced by the Equality Act 2010, is a duty on public bodies and others carrying out public functions.

The Equality Act 2010 lists the nine protected characteristics which are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful. The characteristics are:

Age
Disability
Gender reassignment
Marriage and civil partnership
Pregnancy and maternity
Race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality Religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
Sex
Sexual orientation

[5] Exclusion from U.K, Home Office 2018

The Act sets out the different ways in which it is unlawful to treat someone, such as direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation and failing to make a reasonable adjustment for a disabled person. The act prohibits unfair treatment in the workplace, when providing goods, facilities and services, when exercising public functions, in the disposal and management of premises, in education and by associations (such as private clubs).

The Equality Duty, introduced by the Equality Act 2010, is a duty on public bodies and others carrying out public functions. The Equality duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have *due regard* to the need to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.