

Safeguarding bulletin

Issue 17: September 2024

Creating a whole school culture of safeguarding

Riots, racism and responsibility

The tragic murders in Southport of three children, Alice da Silva Aguiar, Bebe King and Elsie Dot Stancombe in July 2024 resulted in extremists sharing false information regarding the identity of the offender and promoting their own racist, hateful agendas. The tragedy was used as a way in which to drive forward far right ideology.

False information spread rapidly on social media, promoting hatred and calls for protests across the country at different times and places.

This resulted in a series of violent riots across the country, over several days, with racial and religious hatred the central motive. Mobs of people attacked hotels housing migrants, tried to set the buildings on fire, made threatening and racist chants and looted buildings.

Staff in schools hold a pivotal role and responsibility in providing pupils with an understanding of factual and balanced information.

This safeguarding bulletin explores how staff can support pupils following the riots.



Harmful online information

The internet as an accelerating factor

Information can be rapidly shared online, particularly via social media messaging. Social media platforms were used to organise and document rioting activities, livestreaming activities now means that anyone, anywhere at anytime can view what is happening. The speed and volume of information exchanged means that children can consume vast amounts of information, unfortunately information shared can be factually inaccurate and harmful to the viewer.

It is easy for children to simply check on their devices what is happening, where and who is involved when it comes to incidents taking place. A fear of missing out can mean that children can become involved unintentionally in activities that they wouldn't ordinarily have taken part in. Group mentality and deindividuation can mean that children can become involved in harmful behaviours to impress others, with unintended criminal consequences.

A worrying number of children were directly involved in the riots, with teenagers from across the country arrested and charged with offences. In previous riots in the UK children have often expressed a sense of excitement, boredom, getting back at the Police and the prospect of getting new free things as the main reason for their involvement.

Click on the image below to view this sky news video below which provides a helpful explanation of the riots to children:



Talking to children about racism

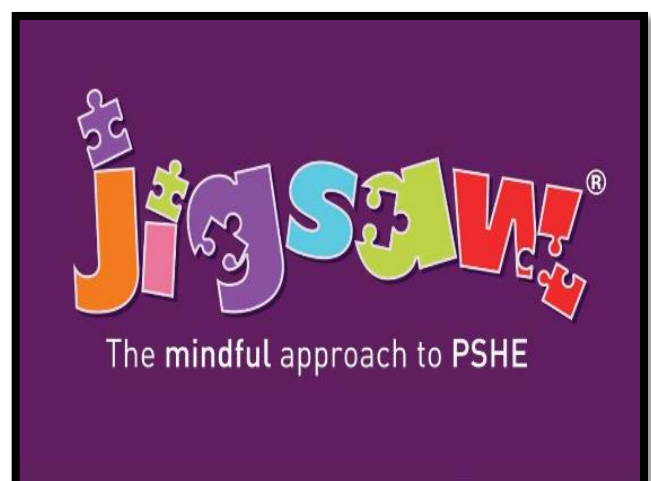
What is racism?

Racial discrimination or racism is when someone is treated differently because of their race, ethnicity, nationality or colour.

Any type of racism or racial discrimination is abusive and distressing for children and young people who experience or witness it.

If someone commits a crime against you or your child because of race, it's considered a hate crime and is against the law. Instances of bullying that are racially motivated but not a crime are considered racist incidents.

The August 2024 riots were centered around racist narratives. Click on the images below to explore NSPCC, Educate Against Hate and Jigsaw resources to support discussions with children regarding racism.



Prevent duty guidance

All schools and colleges are subject to Prevent duty guidance in accordance with the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. In the exercise of their functions, schools and colleges must have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

This means we have a responsibility to protect children from extremist and violent views the same way we protect them from drugs or child criminal and sexual exploitation. Importantly, we can provide a safe place for pupils to discuss these issues so they better understand how to protect themselves.

Schools should be a safe space where children can discuss social and political issues, including extremism and terrorism. Building their resilience will put them in a stronger position to reject extremist views.

You can build children's resilience to extremist narratives by equipping them with the skills and knowledge to explore political and social issues critically, to weigh evidence, debate and make reasoned arguments. This can include facilitating conversations via a broad and balanced curriculum about extremism and radicalisation in an age-appropriate way, as well as other social and political issues.



HM Government

Prevent duty guidance:
**Guidance for specified
authorities in
England and Wales**

[Children can be particularly vulnerable to being radicalised online.](#) Remember, its where they spend vast amounts of time and access vast amounts of information. Left unchecked children can access content which is dangerous and leave them open to being radicalised.

Underpinning the radicalisation process is a an extremist ideology that seems appealing and credible, often because it appears to make sense of the individuals feelings of grievance and injustice.

Susceptibility to radicalisation

Children are particularly susceptible to being drawn into harmful narratives online. This shouldn't be a surprise to us given that most children spend large parts of their lives accessing devices, constantly connected to various platforms, provided with continual streams of information. Information which can be harmless and equally information which can be hateful, with online actions leading to in person activities.

Here are a few key reminders of how the internet can be an accelerating factor:

- We are all a few clicks or swipes away from violent and egregious content.
- We come into contact with multiple ideologies and viewpoints online.
- A multitude of platforms actively encourage violence and conspiracy.
- Online deindividuation - hiding behind avatars and being able to readily discuss deep personal grievances about the way you are being treated.

Deindividuation

Deindividuation occurs to an individual in a group when they are no longer identifiable, which leads to a lack of accountability for their actions. The individual is therefore suggestible to the shared emotions of the group, which spread contagiously through the crowd. The result is behaviour by members of the group that falls outside socially accepted behaviour. The recent rioting has seen the widespread use of masks to conceal identities when carrying out criminal activities.



Free Home Office and Anna Freud training courses

Prevent duty training: Learn how to support people susceptible to radicalisation

Access training courses on the Prevent duty developed by the Home Office, the threat from terrorism and extremism in the UK and how to support people susceptible to radicalisation.

[In these training courses, you will learn about:](#)

- The Prevent duty.
- Different forms of extremism and terrorism.
- The risk around radicalisation and your supportive role.
- Making a Prevent referral that is both informed and made with good intention.
- The interventions and support available.

Anti-racism and mental health in schools e-learning

This free online training course is designed to improve education staff's understanding of the impact of racism on mental health.

Black and racially minoritised young people can experience racism in many areas of their lives - including at school. Experiencing racism can have significant mental health consequences for young people.

[Staff will learn practical strategies](#) for tackling racism in schools, and how to introduce a whole school approach to anti-racism and mental health.

How we can help

There is wide range of useful resources to support schools in their work with children following the riots. Click on the images below to explore extensive resources from national leading safeguarding organisations, NSPCC, Childline, Educate Against Hate and London Grid for Learning.



WORRYING ABOUT THE RIOTS

Rioting across parts of the UK has left many young people feeling scared and worried about their safety.

Safeguarding scenario

The following scenario is recommended to be explored in staff briefings and safeguarding team meetings.

Scenario O

Jack is 11 years old, his favourite things to do are spending time playing on his Xbox and his mobile phone. He loves watching videos and can spend hours scrolling through videos. Jack doesn't cause any bother at home while he is on his Xbox or on his phone so his mum and dad will generally just leave Jack alone in his bedroom.

Jack has returned to school and told you that he loved watching all of the live streams of the riots in the summer holidays, he said that it was brilliant and really exciting because he didn't know what was going to happen next.

You have heard a rumour from two other boys in his class that Jack has recorded himself on social media wearing a balaclava telling people that he loved the riots and that they should happen again.



Key questions to consider:

- How might Jack be feeling?
- How might Jack's actions make him vulnerable?
- What actions could staff take to support Jack?
- When is the right time for support to be provided?

Hull disorder: three 13-year-old boys arrested



Eleven police officers were injured during the violence in Hull on 3 August

Three 13-year-old boys have been arrested in connection with the disorder that followed a demonstration in Hull on Saturday 3 August 2024.

One was arrested on suspicion of violent disorder and affray, one on suspicion of violent disorder, and one on suspicion of burglary.

Several more people, charged in connection with the violence, appeared at Hull Magistrates' Court.

- A 17 year old boy charged with violent disorder, racially aggravated violence and damage to property was remanded into the care of the local authority.
- A 17 year old boy was also remanded into local authority care, charged with violent disorder and four burglaries.
- A 15 year old boy charged with violent disorder was remanded on bail.
- A 17 year old boy charged with burglary was also remanded on bail.

