



PREVENT DUTY STRATEGY

(revised, 2018)

Introduction

The Prevent duty ‘monitoring framework is operated by HEFCE and is intended to satisfy Government that ‘relevant higher education bodies’ [RHEBs] are fulfilling their duty under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the Act) to have due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism (the Prevent duty).’

Mattersey Hall (Assemblies of God Inc.) is an alternative provider of higher education, with specific course designation and therefore we are a ‘relevant higher education body’ (RHEB). This policy document sets out our response to Government requirements and to the Prevent duty monitoring framework.

More information, including downloadable pdfs, is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

Academic integrity and freedom of academic expression

Mattersey Hall seeks to offer an integrated programme, where leadership formation and academic study go hand in hand. Many of the training and formation elements form part of Mattersey Hall’s internal College Diploma, which all on-campus students sign up to, and which runs parallel to the degree programme. Those appointed to the staff of Mattersey Hall, or admitted to the College as students, are expected to accept the values and vision of the College.

One aspect of this is a commitment to academic excellence and integrity, which includes a commitment to the freedom of academic expression. In the course of their research, students and staff are encouraged to explore, critically, a range of viewpoints, and to come to their own conclusions. Whilst the College, as part of Assemblies of God Incorporated, holds a particular doctrinal position, this does not impose limits on the research into and expression of academically viable alternatives. Any concerns of discrimination in this area will be reported, initially, to the Academic Dean, and this will be followed up, at first informally, and where necessary through appropriate complaints and appeals procedures. However, where views expressed might be considered ‘extremist’, as defined by the *Prevent* document, including vocal or active opposition to democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs, or suggest that a student or staff member is being radicalised or drawn into a context that might lead to terrorism, that will be reported to the Principal and College Dean, and will be dealt with under our normal disciplinary and misconduct procedures.

Appropriate conduct

A second important aspect of accepting the vision and values of the College is a commitment to the standard of conduct (which includes speech and action) consistent with formation for Christian ministry. Expectations relating to general behaviour are set out in AoG Policies and in the Mattersey Hall College Handbook. The College Handbook, which is available to all students, is revised each year, in consultation with students, and forms the basis of any internal disciplinary action. These expectations apply to personal as well as to community activities and are consistent with what is set out in the Prevent Duty monitoring framework. They include attitudes of mutual respect and tolerance of cultural differences. Whilst set within a particular religious and denominational context, we also promote respect for those of other denominations, and those of different faith groups, and none. Our Misconduct Procedure (non-academic misconduct) further highlights expectations of student behaviour toward others. Behaviour that runs contrary to those expectations is addressed by the College Principal and Dean (staff and faculty), again, under our normal disciplinary and misconduct procedures.

Managing risk

In the light of the nature of the college and its values we consider the risk of staff or students becoming radicalised or seeking to radicalise others is very small. Nevertheless, we recognise our responsibility in this area, and want to guard against complacency.

After carefully considering all areas of College activity in which students might come under the influence of extremist views (as defined in the Prevent documentation), we have identified the following areas of potential, albeit minimal, risk.

- i) Student or staff engagement with radical elements off campus, leading to extremist views and conduct that affect students on campus.
- ii) Student-led activities on and off campus that might provide a platform for extremist views.
- iii) Inappropriate counselling by staff or students that results in undue influence.
- iv) Extremist views expressed by visiting lecturers and/or occasional speakers.
- v) Misuse of internet facilities.
- vi) Lack of awareness of potential problems and responsibility under the Prevent Duty that may allow adverse situations to develop.

The following procedures are in place to minimise risk in those areas:

i) Student, staff radicalisation

- a) Students and staff come to us, in the first instance, with appropriate verifiable pastoral references. Where there are concerns, we will put in place monitoring procedures. These include mentoring and other pastoral support from staff and students and, where necessary, application of misconduct procedures. Students are also required to undergo DBS checks prior to beginning their programme of study at Mattersey Hall.
- b) We recognise the possibility of students engaging with radical elements off campus and then seeking to influence students on campus with extremist views. Mattersey Hall is a small, close-knit community, with a strong pastoral support network. This includes a mentoring policy, the support of the Pastoral Team and of Lead Students, who work with

faculty and staff to offer additional support to the student body, support from the academic team, as well as informal conversations. There may also be local church support. This allows changes in attitudes and behaviour, as well as the expression of extreme views to be picked up quickly, and dealt with sensitively. To facilitate this, faculty, staff and students will be made aware of what to look for in terms of changed attitudes and behaviour that might indicate radicalisation (see vi below).

ii) Student-led activities

- a) Most student-led activities take place on campus. These are advertised in advance, and invitations are usually extended to faculty and staff. There is no formal monitoring of these activities, and in general we have confidence in students to conduct themselves appropriately. However, the close-knit nature of college life and the wide involvement of Lead Students ensure that there is informal monitoring by peers, and that anything untoward is noted and, where necessary, reported to the management of the College management, for appropriate action.
- b) Off campus activities that take place under the auspices of Mattersey Hall, including Missions Trips, Ministry Placements, Church visits, are generally led or facilitated by staff or faculty members, and include preparatory meetings and guidance. Again, there is informal monitoring by peers, and where students seem to be unduly influenced by extremist views this will be reported and appropriate action taken.
- c) In the unlikely situation where there is concern about an on or off campus activity or event relating to the Prevent duty, a risk assessment will be made to determine whether the activity or event should take place.
- d) As noted, monitoring of student-led events is informal. Where there are concerns by students or staff, the following procedure will be adopted:
 - i. In the first instance the concern should be raised with the Prevent Lead (currently the Academic Liaison Officer). This may take the form of a minuted conversation or a written (e.g. email) communication, giving details of the concern. The Prevent Lead will then make a judgement as to whether the concern points to an issue relating to our Prevent Duty.
 - ii. Where there is considered to be an issue relating to our Prevent duty, the Prevent Lead will raise the matter with senior members of staff and members of the Governing Body, and will follow the procedure for 'Communicating and Escalating Concerns (see below).

iii) Inappropriate counselling

- a) As noted, the College has a strong network for pastoral support. This, though, can be open to abuse by those who seek to take advantage of those who may appear more vulnerable. This risk is minimised in the following ways.
- b) We are careful in the selection of those who are officially given responsibility for counselling and advice, including the pastoral and academic teams and mentors. And all are made aware of the Prevent Duty (see vi below). Where there is evidence of guidance that would conflict with that duty, whether from staff or students, that will be dealt with through our misconduct procedures.

- c) Overlapping official channels of pastoral support, together with informal contact with students by faculty and staff, generally alert us to influence on students that might conflict with our Prevent duty, including influence by peers. Where noted that will be dealt with through our existing pastoral support and, where necessary, misconduct procedures.

iv) Extremist views expressed by visitors

- a) Visiting lecturers are expected, and contractually obliged, to accept and promote the values of the College, including those that relate to the College's Prevent Duty. Visiting lecturers are usually known to members of faculty or staff, and are, in any case, required to provide references. There is regular, formal, monitoring of all teaching faculty, as well as formal and informal feedback from students. We recognise the importance of maintaining academic integrity and freedom of speech (see above). However, where we become aware that speech conflicts with our responsibility under the Prevent duty, the College management will take action under our misconduct procedures. Any students who might be unduly influenced will be offered pastoral support.
- b) Occasional visitors who are invited to speak at College events are expected to accept and promote the values of the College, including those that relate to the College's Prevent Duty, but have no contractual obligation. Visiting speakers are invited, usually by the Principal or other senior members of staff, because they are well-respected in church leadership circles and can have a positive impact on students who are training for Christian Leadership, or as representatives of bona fide groups or organisations, which are known not to hold extremist views, as defined by the Prevent guidance. All visiting speakers attending the institution must be approved by the Strategic Management Team. Where appropriate we will carry out appropriate background checks. Speakers will also be informed, in advance, of the College's responsibility under the Prevent duty.
- c) In most cases faculty and staff are present for addresses by visiting speakers. Where speakers are involved in teaching students, there is informal feedback as noted above. If there is any prior concern about the possible content of lectures, a member of faculty or staff will audit the lecture, and provide feedback to College management.
- d) Where a visiting speaker does express extremist views (as defined by the Prevent document) he or she will be in breach of the conditions of the speaking engagement, and will not be allowed to continue with the address on that occasion. Where appropriate, in line with Government guidelines, a debate where both sides of the argument are represented may be scheduled.
- e) Any apparent undue influence on students will be dealt with through our pastoral procedures.

v) Misuse of the internet

- a) Students are expected to provide their own computers and we do not have a policy of making college computers available to students, unless in exceptional circumstances.
- b) Internet facilities made available to students are subject to the Internet Acceptable Use Policy.

- c) The College has facilities to block access to certain categories of website. This prevents unauthorised access except in the most determined cases. Attempts by students to bypass internet restrictions will be dealt with through our misconduct procedures.
- d) Restrictions currently in place block access to several types of website, including *hate/discrimination* and *weapons*. The various categories of site that may be blocked has been reviewed in the light of Prevent, and we will continue to monitor both the categories and the effectiveness of the restrictions in place.

vi) Lack of awareness of Prevent duty

- a) The Academic Dean is, currently, the Prevent Lead Officer. He is familiar with documents relating to Prevent – including the Prevent Duty Guidelines. He has also completed the Prevent E-Learning online programme, and aspects of the Channel awareness programme. There is also access to the 159 Group Prevent Toolkit. This knowledge will be supplemented by further research and attendance at Prevent training workshops. The Prevent Lead is also in regular contact with the Prevent Regional Co-ordinator.
- b) Details of the Prevent document and our responsibility will, further, be circulated to all staff and faculty members, and we will include detailed discussion of the Prevent duty in staff training sessions. This will include guidance in what to look for in terms of changes in students that may indicate radicalisation. This will form part of our Staff Development plan for the next and future years.
- c) Students will be made aware of our responsibilities as an institution during general induction sessions, and particularly in induction for Student representatives and Lead Students. Information will also be included in the College Handbook. The contents of this Strategy will be discussed, in full, with Student Representatives, and kept under regular review as part of our Enhancement Action Plan.
- d) We intend to engage with Prevent partners, including other similar Colleges, to share information and ideas, and for appropriate personnel to attend relevant training events.

Communicating and escalating concerns

General pastoral support of students is provided by the Pastoral Care team, led by the College Dean, and including the Student Liaison Officer and Disability Officer. The level of pastoral support offered by Mathersey Hall College has been commended by our validating university in successive Partnership Review meetings.

The Pastoral Care team is both responsive and proactive. It will respond to individual requests for support by students, and will also follow up concerns raised by staff members and other students. Lead Students, who are appointed by the Faculty, and who meet regularly with the Principal and College Dean, may also provide a first point of contact for pastoral care, which they will refer to the Pastoral Care Team. Where concerns raised relate to issues under our Prevent Duty, these will be communicated to the Prevent Lead by the Pastoral Care team. In most cases, the support offered to students in such cases will continue to be through the Pastoral Care team, and existing welfare mechanisms.

Staff welfare is also important, and there are regular staff meetings and informal conversations which offer mutual pastoral support. Where students have concerns about staff members that appear to relate to issues under our Prevent Duty these should be communicated directly to the Principal or Academic Dean. Where staff members have concerns about other staff members they should speak first, where possible, to their line-manager, who will raise the issue, in the first instance with the Prevent Lead. Where necessary, students or staff may raise concerns directly with the Prevent Lead.

Once notified of a concern, the Prevent Lead will call a special meeting of senior members of staff (including the Principal, Academic Dean, College Dean, Director of Studies), Training Director and members of the Governing Body. This group, with the Prevent Lead, will consider the concerns raised and to determine appropriate action. This will include discussion of how best to address the particular situation. The Prevent Lead will also seek advice from the Prevent Regional Co-ordinator and other Prevent Partners. Having received appropriate advice, the convened group will consider all options, and make a final decision.

We hope to address most issues by offering internal pastoral support, through our existing welfare mechanisms. Where appropriate, this may involve additional support groups, including the student's family and home Church, and Prevent Partners.

Where there is an apparent danger of radicalisation, further advice will be sought from the Prevent Regional Co-ordinator, and where appropriate, the matter will be referred, with the student's consent, to Channel. Where there is evidence of illegality, the issue will be referred to the Police.