



# HOW VOTESFORSCHOOLS SUPPORTS THE PREVENT DUTY (2015)

*“From 1 July 2015 all schools, registered early years childcare providers and registered later years childcare providers are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. Schools and childcare providers can also build pupils’ resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British Values and enabling them to challenge extremist views. It is important to emphasise that the Prevent duty is not intended to stop pupils debating controversial issues. On the contrary, schools should provide a safe space in which children, young people and staff can understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremist arguments.”*

## **Department for Education (DfE) Guidance**

At the heart of our work is our understanding of the need to be able to demonstrate to external partners how VotesforSchools supports the requirements set by The Prevent Duty. The table on the following pages details examples of how we support our schools.

Criteria	VotesforSchools Commentary
<b>Pupils should develop questioning skills and techniques to open debate in a safe way.</b>	VotesforSchools is working to develop these skills in every voter. Through outstanding content with diverse activities, voters are gaining skills of communication and critical thinking. The content also provides teachers with materials to ensure the topic engages all voters in the discussion in a safe and balanced way.

<p><b>Pupils should feel confident to discuss honestly a plurality of views.</b></p>	<p>The weekly debate allows this to happen within the classroom; alongside the debate itself, voters can vote on how they feel. The content is unbiased and objective – we always ensure any debate is displayed as multidimensional, with information and opinions clearly laid out and explained.</p>
<p><b>Schools should allow pupils to debate fundamental moral and human rights principles.</b></p>	<p>This is exactly why VotesforSchools was set up: the teachers who develop the resources all agree that voters should be able to engage in moral debates and this should not be governed by whether they have a facilitator in their classroom who believes in that too. The package is whole-school, so every young person gets the opportunity to have these conversations. The approach to every debate is youth-focused, so while VoteTopic questions may seem “light-hearted”, this is used to help capture voters’ attention before they discuss the issue in more depth. A recent example of this is: “Should more people get involved with religious celebrations?”, which encouraged voters to consider the cultural and spiritual significance of different religious celebrations, while also reflecting on their potential to further strengthen communities.</p>
<p><b>Give pupils a safe place to respond to current events that will challenge their beliefs.</b></p>	<p>VotesforSchools works on a weekly basis, which allows us to respond to current events (both national and international). The resources are developed at the beginning of the week and are released on our website on Fridays for teaching the following week. This ensures our schools are equipped to discuss current events as they are unfolding, but also doing so in a calm and thoughtful manner.</p>
<p><b>Pupils can influence and participate in decision-making on issues affecting them in their society.</b></p>	<p>VotesforSchools gives young people the chance to have a voice on issues that go beyond the classroom. A weekly vote is used to make impact on policy change, institutional reform and to contribute to research. In addition, every week voters are told how their voices and votes are making a difference. The assemblies and lessons also frequently provide ideas about how voters can</p>

	influence their schools and local communities in a creative and youth-focused way.
<b>Demonstrate that your school can provide a safe place to discuss and debate topical and controversial issues affecting young people.</b>	VotesforSchools enables any member of the school community, including support staff, to facilitate a debate on a weekly issue. The topic is aligned to the news agenda or to national events, such as Anti-Bullying Week or Black History Month. The content is unbiased and objective, going through thorough quality-assurance checks to guarantee it is appropriate and accurate for voters.
	<i>This is also supported by the additional resource packages provided by VotesforSchools: My World, My Choice and My Body, My Choice.</i>
<b>Pupils should know how to challenge extremist narratives and promote universal rights.</b>	VotesforSchools has previously worked closely with UNICEF to create topics that promote the UNCRC, and frequently consult other organisations to cover issues that relate to human rights, particularly those of young people. The weekly Curriculum Guides map the topics to the UNCRC and to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as to our own 9 Key Themes that include Equalities & Identity, Global Issues & Politics and Crime, Justice & Extremism.
<b>Pupils can express their views and appreciate the impact their views can have on others.</b>	Through well-researched content, the lessons build in various opportunities for voters to express how they feel about the topic. Alongside this, a VoteDiary (provided when schools sign up) allows voters to self-assess their development in critical thinking, oracy and listening skills. They can also leave comments when voting, and this platform is particularly valuable for those who are less able to vocalise their views in the classroom. These comments are monitored by the VotesforSchools team and later shared on the weekly feedback slides for voters around the country to see.

<p><b>Pupils can discuss terrorism and the wider use of violence in a considered and informed way.</b></p>	<p>Using VotesforSchools gives any teacher the opportunity to discuss terrorism and extremism (as well as other moral and ethical issues) in a coherent and clear way. It allows teachers to feel confident to discuss the topic without any prior understanding. The most important factor for schools is that VotesforSchools allows for consistent and quality conversation on these topics. The weekly resources ensure the discussions are appropriate and that teachers remain objective on these topics throughout the session.</p> <p><i>This is also supported by the additional resource packages provided by VotesforSchools: My World, My Choice and My Body, My Choice.</i></p>
<p><b>Schools can facilitate understanding of wider societal issues and how we can exercise democracy to influence change.</b></p>	<p>VotesforSchools allows staff to facilitate discussions on subject areas that are relevant to voters. VotesforSchools provides an interactive way of building an understanding of the world they live in and promotes further (potentially lifelong) engagement. It also allows them to participate in democratic practises on a weekly basis, thereby developing a respect for voting and making your voice heard.</p>
<p><b>Pupils should be given the platform to challenge Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and other prejudices.</b></p>	<p>VotesforSchools regularly introduces debates and discussions on discrimination- and prejudice-based issues. The ability to challenge all types of prejudice in a calm and considered manner allows voters to feel more confident to initiate discussion with those who have differing (or prejudiced) views. The skills developed are transferable to a range of other issues, such as drugs, exploitation, gender-based discrimination and much more. Specific examples include: “Do punishments work?” and “Does the internet normalise toxic support networks?”</p>

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<b>Pupils should use safe-to-learn anti-bullying strategies to minimise hate- and prejudice-based bullying.</b>	Specific topics on anti-bullying strategies and hate crime allow voters to openly discuss these issues and develop strategies to combat them, both on a personal and institutional level. Each week, voters are encouraged to challenge prejudice in its various forms or to consider why people hold different views. The modelling of debate and discussion encourages conflict resolution through effective and considered communication.
	<i>This is also supported by the additional resource packages provided by VotesforSchools: My World, My Choice and My Body, My Choice.</i>

*You can find out which of these criteria are met by a specific VoteTopic through the weekly Curriculum Guides.*