

Behaviour code and guidance for teachers

When using the Foundation's programmes, it is important to:

- follow your school's safeguarding policy and procedures
- follow The Economist Educational Foundation's safeguarding and child protection policies, procedures and guidance
- listen to and respect young people at all times
- show that you value and take their contributions seriously, and that you have high expectations of them
- recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with young people
- obtain written permission from parents for young people to participate in any online activity, workshops or in-person events

Guidance for conversations with young people about important or sensitive issues

We recognise that special caution is required when discussing sensitive issues with young people, or encouraging them to join conversations about these issues. We support teachers to mitigate these risks, by providing the guidance below.

Risk: Young people feel upset by responses to views that they share

We recommend making it very clear to young people that they don't have to share any information or views that they're not comfortable sharing, either in person or online.

Explain to young people that when they share views publicly, either in person or online, they must be prepared for the possibility that others might respond negatively. Balance this conversation about risks with the benefits and importance of having your say, for a positive and encouraging conversation. Young people should be supported to understand that it's healthy to hear different points of view, as this can help them to better understand the issues, other people and even themselves.

We encourage you to talk to young people about how to choose what they're comfortable sharing, both in the group and online, and how to think about any negative responses they might receive.

Nurture an environment where young people know they are expected to respect others' feelings and try to understand different opinions and beliefs.

Risk: Young people with a minority perspective might feel self-conscious, or feel under pressure to defend their point of view

As far as possible we recommend showing 'solidarity' with any potentially marginalised young people, ensuring it's not left to them to stand up for themselves or their views. Make sure that all reasonable points of view get a fair airing. That might involve emphasising some more than others, depending on

the majority perspective in your group. You could consider asking, “Whose voice is missing in our group today, and what might they say?”

Risk: Young people might hear inaccurate information

Ensure that any incorrect information is challenged. We provide accurate news content on important topics, and teaching resources that include answers for closed questions. We encourage teachers to use these resources, and to value a culture of asking questions and finding out answers together with young people.

Risk: Different views within families

When young people discuss the news, they may explore opinions and beliefs that are different to those within their family. We recognise that this might concern some families, or even cause disagreements at home.

To mitigate this, we recommend explaining to parents that you are helping their child to learn about different ideas and develop the skills to make up their own minds, but you are not leading them towards any particular view. Talk to them about the value of the knowledge and skills that their child is developing through these conversations. You might wish to share the news content with parents in advance, so they can see what their child will be learning about.

Risk: Young people are upset by frightening news, or news that challenges their beliefs

We recognise that the news can be a source of anxiety for young people, and we believe that it is less scary when young people have chance to air their concerns, have their questions answered, and build an accurate picture of what’s going on.

We understand that some people feel uncomfortable talking to young people about potentially sensitive issues, such as sexuality, immigration or human rights abuses. However, we encourage the creation of an environment to enable young people to discuss these things in the classroom rather than the playground. This way, we can facilitate conversations that are safer, by ensuring that young people’s assumptions, stereotypes and fears are corrected.

We should encourage young people to talk to someone they trust if they get upset. Where possible, we should encourage students to think in advance about who that would be.

Building young people’s resilience to radicalisation

We recognise that some young people are at risk of radicalisation. We aim to give young people the skills to challenge different points of view, and a safe space to discuss and debate social, political and economic issues. We help them to understand how they can influence and participate in decision-making. This aligns with governmental advice for schools and childcare providers with regard to their duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

We do not promote any particular viewpoint on the issues discussed, and we do not censor or discourage any particular arguments.

This advice should be considered alongside our safeguarding policy and on what to do if you are concerned about a child. For example, we will decide on a case by case basis which comments should be published on the Topical Talk Student Hub to support the creation of a safe space where

multiple viewpoints are welcomed and challenged, which should not be published as they could cause harm to other club members, or which are sufficient cause for concern that the child's teacher should be informed.