**Appendix 2:**

**Dealing with prejudice based comments or incidents in schools**

**1: A Guide to Good Practice**

| Consider… | Next steps: *suggestions for future action* |
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| 1. Was the comment/incident directed at an individual, small group, or what it a generalisation? | *If individual, engage the 2 pupils in a restorative conversation, with an exchange of feelings, and agreement on future behaviour. Apologies made as appropriate. Parents informed of incident and agreement /support sought for resolution and future behaviours. Support future behaviours with brief step-by-step 'What do I do now?' guide for both parties* |
| 2. Did the child understand what s/he was saying/doing? How do you know? | *Discuss use of language, meaning of specific words phrases, why they may be hurtful/ disrespectful plus alternative words/phrases and ways of behaving* |
| 3. Was this an isolated comment/incident, or has something similar happened before? | *If an isolated comment, investigate what might have provoked it and work with pupil on alternative, appropriate actions/reactions for future similar incidents. If a repeated occurrence, involve parents/carers in exploring background to actions/ attitudes and seek agreement on actions to resolve issues* |
| 4. Could you identify a comment or event (inside or outside school) which may have provoked or triggered this reaction? | *Explore background and involve whoever appropriate in increasing understanding of issues and other perspectives. Deal with as appropriate; from individual to whole-school.* |
| 5. Was the incident/comment witnessed by a group of bystanders? How did they react to it? | *If a 'public' event, develop understanding and ways to resolve conflict as a class/ whole school activity* |
| 6. Have you spoken to the pupil yet? The target of the comment/incident? Bystanders? | *Do this as soon as possible so that consequences of actions/words can be understood and issues resolved as soon as possible. Decide at what stage it is appropriate to involve parents/carers* |
| 7. Have you spoken to the pupil's parents/carers yet? | *See above. Make sure parents/carers hear about the incident from you first, so that no mixed messages are received and the situation not mad worrse* |

| 8. Does the school have a pupil-friendly policy on this issue regarding acceptable language/ behaviour? | *If so, does this need reviewing/ refreshing? Does the whole pupil body need reminding of this through further exploration of the issues through the curriculum/ assemblies/ PSHE?* *If no such policy exists, engage whole school in developing this and ensure that pupil 'ownership' is central to this. Such policies should come from the pupils themselves, not be imposed on them by adults. These policies should be displayed around the school and shared with parents/local community and be at the heart of the school ethos* |
|---|---|
| 9. Has the school council/ student body discussed issues related to respect and inclusivity? | *If so, how is this shared with the rest of the school and community?* *If not, ensure the issues is high on the list of topics/issues for discussion and positive action for the pupil body as a whole and/or the student council* |
| 10. Is the school ethos of respect and inclusivity embedded in school life, e.g. school/classroom displays/ codes of conduct/ assemblies/ PSHE/ curriculum/ school events/ celebrations/ Governing Body membership & discussions/ actions? | *Carry out a Learning Walk / Inclusion Audit focusing on related issues and prepare an action plan based on identified areas for development. Ensure that diversity and respect for difference, inclusive attitudes and actions are embedded at every level of school life. Share this with parents and local community through school-based events, newsletters, website etc* |

## 2. Case Studies

The following case studies may help school staff to decide on whether an incident was racist or not, and gives an example of how to deal with similar events:

**Case study: Primary School**

In a mostly white Primary school, a reception class child, Thomas, asked his friend Ben, "Why do you have brown skin?" Ben was upset and began to cry. The class teacher took the boys to one side and asked what had happened. Ben said that Thomas had been nasty about his skin. Thomas was clearly surprised and upset that Ben had been offended. The class teacher said she was very sorry that Ben was upset and asked Thomas if he had meant to upset Ben and he said no. She then reinforced that it had been a very good question as there are many different skin colours and it would be good to learn why Ben's was a beautiful rich brown and Thomas' was a lovely creamy pink. She reassured both children. The incident was recorded and both sets of parents were informed of what had happened and how it had been dealt with, so that they could provide any further support to the boys at home. The teacher followed up the incident with some work on how we are different

and how we are the same, including answering the question about skin colour.
**Action required:**
Some follow up on this incident would be helpful: checking that the boys
are both getting on and progressing well and that parents are confident
there are no other or continuing concerns.
**Comment:**
This incident was dealt with well. Both boys felt upset about what had happened
and involving parents to support them was therefore important. Ben's vulnerability
regarding his skin colour could have arisen from many things, e.g. his relative
isolation in this mainly white school context, something he has heard or feels
regarding Thomas that has not come out in the investigation, or something else that
has happened to him either in school or elsewhere. The school was right to record
this as a racist incident however minor it may have seemed.

## Case study: Secondary School

In a mainly white Secondary school a Year 8 form tutor noticed that Sahid was being
called by the nick-name Bourbon. The tutor was aware that Sahid had experienced
racist abuse in year 7 including being called "chocolate biscuit" and she was
concerned that his new nick-name was a continuation of this.
She approached Sahid who said that he had chosen the nick-name himself and that
there was nothing to worry about.
The tutor remained concerned and spoke to the Head of Year who agreed it was a
matter of concern. The Head of Year interviewed Sahid and discussed the issue with
him more fully, including reference back to previous incidents, whether there had
been any further incidents or if he feared there would be, and finally considering how
his family might feel about this nick-name.
Sahid was not happy about what he saw as interference on a private matter but did
not wish his parents involved and agreed that a different nickname would be
preferable.
**Action**:
This should be recorded as a racist incident
Sahid's vulnerability needs to be kept under review
**Comment:**
A sense of ethnicity and pride in colour/heritage/religion is an important part of the
development of all young people. However there are many ways of expressing this.
This pupil has already experienced racism at school and choosing a nick-name that
colludes with the racism he has experienced may be a self-protection response. If he
wishes to celebrate his colour there are other ways of doing so.
Inviting other people to call him this name places the school in a position where it will
be difficult to have clarity about what is acceptable and what is racist name-calling.
Language used at school should be publicly acceptable as is the case with any
workplace. This issue is increasingly a problem for schools because of the
reclaiming of racist language, for example in rap music. If a term would be generally
considered to be racist it should not be used in school.
Similar concerns would be involved where a minority ethnic person is encouraged,
and may even collude, to simplify their name in order to make it easier for others to
pronounce. We need to ensure that appropriate respect is shown to all individuals,
so that they can be themselves and not have to change their identity to "fit in".

**Case Study: Primary school**

Jordon is in Year 5 and proud of his new 'One Direction' pencil case which he got for his birthday. He gets it out on his desk and his friend starts laughing and pointing at the pencil case saying to another friend, 'that's so gay'. This upsets Jordon and the class teacher over hears the comment. The teacher speaks to Jordon and his friend away from the rest of the class and asks what the friend meant by the statement, 'that's so gay'. The friends replies, "well that is what my older brother calls the boys from One Direction – gays". The teacher asks if he understands what the word means. The pupil does not understand the meaning of the word. The teacher said that she was sorry that Jordon was upset and reinforced to his friend that it is probably not a good idea to repeat words when they don't know what they mean. The teacher informed both boys the meaning of the word gay. The incident was recorded and both sets of parents were informed of what happened and how it had been dealt with. The teacher followed up the incident with work on different families – including lesbian and gay couples.

**Action required**

Ensure that the schools anti-bullying policy refers to challenging homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and that all staff are confident in challenging language and recording any incidents that do occur.

Ensure the schools planned PSHE curriculum contains work on different families from Reception upwards so that pupils understand what the words mean and the different types of relationships.

**Comment**

This incident was dealt with well. The use of the word 'gay' to mean something negative is unfortunately quite prominent at the moment. Pupils need to be informed about a range of relationships and appropriateness of language in primary schools to ensure words are not being used inappropriately and that pupils have the understanding of the meaning of words. Staff need training to ensure they feel confident to challenge the language and include as part of the planned curriculum.

**Case study: Secondary School**

Lisa is 15. She works hard at school and tends not to mix with the other girls very much. The other students have taken to calling her a lesbian every time they see or talk to her. Lisa doesn't know if she's a lesbian, but she thinks she probably isn't. She feels uncomfortable and embarrassed by the taunt. She knows that her teachers have overheard but haven't intervened. Lisa thinks this is because her teachers think she is a lesbian too. She is worried that the teachers might say something to her parents, and will stop thinking she is good at her work. Lisa becomes increasingly withdrawn and her work suffers as a result.

**Action required**

The schools anti-bullying policy needs to clearly state that homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying is unacceptable and all staff within the school need to consistently challenge the inappropriate use of the language. This may require whole staff training and being informed how to record any incidents.

The school planned PSHE curriculum along with other subject areas need to refer to the LGBT community and provide positive role models for pupils to associate with. Pupils need to be informed of the schools confidentiality policy so they know what will be shared with parents and what information will remain confidential.

This is a homophobic incident (even though Lisa may not be a lesbian) and staff should be challenging and recording all the incidents.

**Comment**
All pupils should be able to come to school and feel safe therefore all homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying should be consistently challenged by all members of staff. The school needs a clear policy on what language is unacceptable and that using the word 'gay' or lesbian' is not banter and that it can be hurtful. Staff need to be trained on how to consistently challenge inappropriate language and include as part of the planned curriculum.

**3: Hate incident categories**

**Ethnicity / race**
Any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person on the basis of ethnic origin, skin colour, nationality, culture, language, real or perceived racism.

**Religion / belief**
Any incident which is perceived to be based on prejudice towards or hatred of the religion/belief of the victim or so perceived by the victim or any other person. For example, beliefs, faith, lack of faith real or perceived.

**Homophobic / sexual orientation**
Any incident that is perceived by the victim, or any other person, to be motivated by a prejudice based on another person's sexuality, or perceived sexuality. For example, related to sexual orientation or perceived orientation of target or target's family and/or homophobic / biphobic abuse and language used.

**Disability / SEN**
Any incident perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by the offender's prejudice against people because of their disability or so perceived by the victim or any other person. For example, real or perceived disability, special needs, gifted or talented or health conditions or association with someone in those categories

**Gender identity / Transphobic**
Any incident which is perceived to be based on prejudice towards or hatred of the victim because of that person's gender identity or so
perceived by the victim or any other person. For example any incident based on gender identity that when expressed demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their gender identity. Transgender, perceived to be transgender or someone who does not fit with gender norms or stereotypes or who has a transgender family member.

**Hate**
Hate is a strong word, used to reflect the way that hate motivated incidents can contain a message that communicates to entire groups of people that they are unwelcome and unworthy of social respect. Children and young people should understand the impact hate motivated incidents can have upon both individuals and the broader community.