

Prejudicial language and behaviour guide for parents/carers



Equality And Rights Advocates (EARA) pupil quotes (Years 8 – 10), June 2019

Every child and adult in our school community has the right to be protected from prejudicial views and behaviours. Prejudicial language or behaviour can be defined as words or acts based on preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience, for example, not liking someone based on their skin colour or sexual identity.

Within our school we will not tolerate any prejudicial language or behaviour aimed at students or adults.

The following quote was first recommended as a working definition for racist incidents by The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and has since been extended to cover all incidents related to the protected characteristics set out in The Equality Act 2010:

"A prejudice-related incident is any incident which is perceived to be prejudice-related by the victim or any other person."

The Act uses the term *protected characteristics* to refer to aspects of a person's identity. Treating a person less favourably because they have one or more of these characteristics would be unlawful. The protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

The most common prejudice-related incidents take the form of:

- prejudicial language
- ridicule and jokes
- verbal abuse
- physical assault
- graffiti or damage to property
- discriminatory behaviour, eg refusing to work with a pupil because of their religion
- incitement to behave in a prejudicial manner, eg wearing racist badges, recruiting to racist organisations, bringing in homophobic literature
- cyber bullying.

Whilst all forms of bullying can be incredibly damaging, there are some features of prejudice-related incidents which distinguish them from other incidents:

- prejudice-related incident does not just impact on the individuals involved, but is an attack on someone as a representative of a community or group, which means that the impact of the incident is felt more widely, spreading fear and creating a hostile environment for other pupils and staff who share the same protected characteristic
- perpetrators of prejudice-related incidents may feel that they are entitled to behave in this way and that their behaviour is condoned by wider society. If left unchallenged, they may develop a deep-seated intolerance and inability to value diversity.

Psychological research has shown that stereotyping and prejudice create a negative impact on children's young minds. They can play a major role in shaping their individuality as they grow up. Some negative effects of stereotyping are:

- it makes children narrow minded
- it creates cultural barriers
- it demotivates children and lowers their self esteem
- it deters children from being their own selves
- it can create loneliness, anxiety and depression in marginalised children.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Educational Psychology.

"Prejudice and discrimination seriously limit children's development and growth. They lead to some children being left out and denied the opportunity to develop friendships and to learn new things...in the end, everybody loses out from the effects of prejudice and discrimination."

Fairplay, Barnardos.

Tolerance is giving to every other human being every right that you claim for yourself.

Robert Green Ingersoll

Schools:

It is important that schools record, track and respond to prejudicial behaviour in order to:

- **identify patterns:** identifying trends will enable schools to better tailor programmes of education and carry out more preventative, rather than reactive, work
- **identify training needs:** understanding the nature and frequency of prejudice-related incidents allows training needs for staff and pupils to be identified and targeted training to be delivered
- **monitor the success of strategies**
- **ensure accountability:** thoroughly recording incidents, and all of the actions taken in response, will ensure that staff members and the school are accountable for their actions
- **provide a safe environment for staff and pupils:** recording prejudice-related incidents
- **demonstrate to both staff and pupils that the school has a positive ethos:** where all pupils are valued, and prejudice and discrimination are not accepted.

Parents/carers:

As parents/carers, we have an important role to play in combating prejudice and discrimination among our children. We are the most significant and influential people in our children's lives. We have an opportunity to make a real difference by:

- setting a good example for our children through our own attitudes and behaviour towards others
- talking to our children about prejudice and discrimination and getting them to think about their attitudes and the way they treat others
- giving our children support and encouragement if they experience prejudice and discrimination.