



Preventing and tackling discrimination in primary schools

Helpful guidance on how your school can support children and families, make them feel included, and work towards preventing - and tackling – discrimination.

Offer support

- Those who have experienced any type of discrimination – or are at risk – should be offered extra support to minimise long-term risks. This could be through pastoral care or school counselling, school nurses or through referral to community-based support.
- All school staff should normalise conversations about wellbeing and seeking help. It is also important for staff to build trusting relationships with children.

Prevent and challenge discrimination

- Children who act in a discriminatory or racist manner in school should have their assumptions and attitudes challenged. Support should be offered so that they understand about different races, cultures and faiths.
- Help all children to feel good about their race, ethnicity, culture and faith.
- Be aware that children from ethnic and religious groups may experience negative stereotypes which can undermine their wellbeing and sense of self.
- Celebrate diversity and address prejudice early in an age-appropriate way. From early years foundation stage upwards, schools can include work about acceptance and about avoiding stereotypes and prejudice. This can include exploring other types of families using resources such as Stonewall's "different families, same love".
- Challenge gender stereotypes, for example that there is a "typical boy" or "typical girl". This will help children feel happier in themselves and help create a sense of belonging at school.

Speak up

- Encourage pupils to speak out against unfairness or any kind of discrimination.
- Be alert early on for the different ways in which children might be communicating that something is wrong. Think creatively about adjustments that might help them thrive and achieve.



Make sure curriculum and lesson plans are inclusive

- School and classroom posters, pictures, books, music, toys, dolls and other materials should be diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, faith, gender, age, family situations, disabilities, etc.
- Develop the curriculum to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ pupils by reviewing the content of books and resources, and making sure staff do not make assumptions about children's families.
- Sex and relationship education should be relevant to all children and sensitive to their age and needs.
- Acknowledge key festivals across different faiths, particularly representing the school's student cohort.

Implement policies and offer staff training

- Discrimination can be unconscious and difficult to spot. It requires all school staff to be self-aware and think about their own day-to-day responses, strategies and practices. There also needs to be a culture of reflection and of challenging behaviour, language and attitudes. Training is important along with good links with neighbourhood organisations to support children from all types of communities.
- Make sure that effective anti-bullying policies are implemented and that school staff are not passive bystanders to discrimination.
- Set clear ground rules for appropriate language, and challenge anything written or said in a discriminatory way. Stonewall has created some scripts to help schools address incidents where derogatory or offensive language is used.
- Recognise the potential needs of LGBTQ+ children as one of the priorities in your school's health and wellbeing strategies and policies. See this government evaluation of a number of programmes that have tackled homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying.
- Teaching around sexual health and safe relationships should be discussed with governing boards, where appropriate.

Engage families and communities

- Engage families and communities in ways that are meaningful, recognising cultural sensitivities.
- Be sensitive to LGBTQ+ children and families and ensure they are supported in the context of a wider whole-school ethos about respect for others, celebrating difference, inclusivity, equality, diversity, fairness and justice.



- Schools should liaise with parents and carers over the content of sexual health and safe relationships education, and the context in which issues will be presented. This template letter can be used to send to parents or carers before sex education lessons.