Houghton Primary School

Working hard to achieve our best

Responding to Prejudice-Related Incidents

Date reviewed and adopted:	November 2024
Reviewed and adopted by:	FGB
Signed: Chair of governors	Briony Rice
Signed: Headteacher	Andrew Spencer
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Policy for Responding to Prejudice-Related Incidents

1. Aims

At Houghton Primary School we want to provide every opportunity for children to learn to respect one another. We are aware of our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. We celebrate the wide range of ethnic groups, cultures, languages and religious beliefs that are to be found in our school community and beyond. We seek to be welcoming to all different types of people and families and equally inclusive of people who have a disability and those who do not. This forms part of our wider work within school in promoting the British Values of mutual respect and tolerance.

We recognise that prejudice-related incidents do happen and we take them extremely seriously, recognising that they can cause harm to all those involved, as well as to our wider school community. By effectively tackling prejudice-related incidents, we seek to create a positive school environment for everyone and to safeguard the wellbeing of all pupils and staff. In doing so, we aim to fully meet our obligations under the 2010 Equality Act, as well as best prepare our children for life in modern Britain and to thrive in a diverse, globalised world.

The aims of this policy are to:

- establish an agreed definition of prejudice-related incidents;
- share the principles behind our programme of preventative education;
- detail how we respond to, report and monitor prejudice-related incidents.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Equality & Diversity Policy, Positive Behaviour Policy and Anti-bullying Policy.

2. Defining Prejudice Related Incidents

At our school we define a prejudice-related incident as:

- any incident which is perceived by the victim, or any other person, to be prejudiced towards an individual, due to one or more of the protected characteristics.

We recognise the following protected characteristics, as outlined in the Equality Act 2010:

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

We will investigate, record and report all incidents, including those that are reported to be unintentional. We recognise that just because someone did not intend to offend, it does not mean that the incident did not cause harm. Our response will always aim to educate so that everyone understands the potential harm which can result from such behaviour. Intention is important when considering the actions that need to be taken with the perpetrator, but a lack of intent does not prevent an incident from being considered prejudice-related.

We recognise that prejudice-related incidents may take a range of forms, which include but are not limited to:

- use of prejudicial language; ridicule and jokes; verbal abuse; physical assault; graffiti or damage to property; discriminatory behaviour e.g. refusing to work with a person; incitement to behave in a prejudicial manner; bullying, including cyber bullying.

3. Prejudice-Related Incidents and Bullying

We recognise that:

- **any** chid may be affected by bullying
- sometimes bullying is related to prejudice.

All incidents of prejudice-related bullying in schools constitute a prejudice-related incident. However not all prejudice-related incidents would constitute prejudice-related bullying. To determine if prejudice-related incident/s are bullying, refer to our definition of bullying:

- *repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online.*

(Anti-bullying Alliance definition).

We know that experiencing bullying can have a significant, negative and lasting impact on a child's emotional and mental wellbeing. We also recognise the negative impact that engaging in bullying behaviours or witnessing the bullying of another can have. See our Anti-bullying Policy for information about how we respond to reports of bullying.

4. The Role of Preventative Education

We recognise that effective preventative education can reduce the chance of prejudice-related behaviour occurring. We know that children learn about building respectful relationships in a wide variety of ways, not only through planned lessons, but through their everyday experiences at school and at home. Our school ethos, wider enrichment opportunities and the interventions and support offered all contribute to the development of these skills. All members of staff understand their role in supporting our strong inclusive culture.

Our preventive education fulfils the following relevant sections of the DfE statutory requirements for Relationships Education and Health Education (2020).

By the end of primary school pupils should know:

- that others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care, *(Family and people who care for me)*.
- the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs, *(Respectful Relationships).*
- what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive, *(Respectful Relationships).*

These aspect of the Curriculum will be taught via:

- PSHCE through *designated lessons, circle time, participation in focused events and themed weeks*
- Other curriculum areas, especially *English, RE and computing*
- Enrichment activities, especially *our assembly programme, SEAL programme, Peer Mediation opportunities.*

We primarily use the Cambridgeshire Primary Personal Development Programme and the resources recommended within it when planning and delivering PSHCE. The units of work particularly relevant to these themes include Diversity and Communities, Family and Friends, Anti-Bullying and Digital Lifestyles.

For further information about our PSHCE Curriculum, including how we select appropriate teaching resources and external visitors see our Relationships Education Policy and our PSHE Policy.

5. Responding to Prejudice-Related Incidents

All prejudiced language or behaviour should be challenged and how that challenge is made will depend on the circumstances and severity of the incident, and on any previous similar incidents involving either the victim or perpetrator. The terms victim and perpetrator are used within this policy as they are terms that are easily understood, however care should be taken not to use these terms in front of involved parties.

When dealing with any possible prejudice-related incident, members of staff will:

- treat every issue seriously – remembering that someone's perception is their reality at the time and that incidents should never be dismissed or ignored
- respond immediately – acknowledging that the incident has happened and offering support to the victim of the incident
- reinforce the school's position on discrimination and prejudice
- focus on the perpetrator's behaviour, rather than the person – making sure that they know that the behaviour is not acceptable
- ensure that witnesses know what behaviour was not acceptable and why.

Prejudice-related incidents will always be properly investigated (by a class teacher or senior leader as is deemed most appropriate). The person investigating will:

- offer immediate support to the victim, acknowledging their feelings, reassuring them that the matter will be treated seriously and ascertaining whether they have been the victim of prejudice on previous occasions
- ensure that both perpetrator and victim have a fair hearing and are given the opportunity separately to fully explain the incident
- approach witnesses to gain their accounts of the incident (in writing if appropriate)
- where appropriate, bring both parties together to give them a chance to be involved in resolving the situation
- determine whether the incident was indeed prejudice-related or not, and ensure that the reasons why are explained to all parties involved
- give the perpetrator the opportunity to take responsibility for their actions and to try to repair the harm that they have caused
- address underlying issues (for example, with a playground dispute in which prejudice-related abuse has been used, the original dispute should be resolved as well as prejudice-related behaviour)
- ensure that all parties, including the witnesses, understand what is being done to address the incident and the reasons behind this
- inform relevant members of the senior leadership team and parents/carers where this is deemed appropriate

- follow up with the perpetrator and victim after an agreed time period to decide whether any further action is needed
- where appropriate, ensure that there are subsequent curriculum opportunities for all pupils in that class/year group to develop their understanding of prejudice and discrimination, and to address any prejudiced attitudes.

5. Recording and Reporting Prejudice-Related Incidents

Whenever a member of school staff deals with an incident that may be considered to be prejudice-related, they should report that to the Headteacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead

The concern should be logged on My Concern.

The Headteacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead will then report all prejudice-related incidents to the LA using the online system 'PRfE' (Prejudice Reporting for Education: Prejudice Reporting for Education (PRfE). PRfE is an online reporting tool and every incident logged in PRfE captures details on the nature of the incident, type of prejudice, details of the victim and perpetrator and what actions were taken by the school. All incidents logged in the system are anonymised and do not include data that could identify individual pupils. This allows trends to be analysed by the school and the LA.

There may be occasions where a prejudice-related incident may need to be reported to the police as a potential hate incident or a potential hate crime. Police and the Crown Prosecution Service classify hate incidents as any incident which is perceived by the victim, or any other person, to be prejudiced towards an individual, due to disability, race, religion, transgender identity or sexual orientation. *(N.B. this list is shorter that the list of protected characteristics).* If a crime may have been committed the category of a potential hate crime may apply. As the age of criminal responsibility in England is 10 years old, this category is unlikely to apply if the perpetrator is under 10. Criminal offences might include behaviour such as: malicious communications, assault, public order offences, criminal damage, harassment or sexual assault.

If the perpetrator of a prejudice-related incident is a member of staff, the school's disciplinary policy will be followed. However, following a full investigation, this will still be recorded as a prejudice-related incident.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Governors are responsible for:

- ensuring that the school complies with equality legislation, with a named governor taking a lead with this.
- monitoring the frequency and pattern of any prejudice-related incidents and the actions taken be school staff to address them.

The Headteacher, with support from the rest of the Senior Leadership Team, is responsible for:

- ensuring that there are effective policies, procedures, recording and reporting systems in place for dealing with prejudice-related incidents
- ensuring that all prejudice-related incidents are dealt with effectively and that staff and pupils receive appropriate support
- providing training and ensuring that all staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware of their responsibilities
- monitoring the frequency and nature of prejudice-related incidents and the effectiveness with which the school tackles and seeks to prevent them
- reporting prejudice-related incidents to the Governing Body and Local Authority

- setting and monitoring equality objectives in partnership with the Governing Body and other school leaders.

Teachers and all other members of support staff are responsible for:

- challenging prejudicial attitudes and behaviours
- complying with school policies and procedures
- promoting equality through the curriculum
- modelling respectful behaviour
- responding to prejudice-related incidents according to school/college policy
- reporting incidents when they occur.

7. Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly by the Headteacher and the Governing Body, taking into account the frequency and pattern of prejudice-related incidents across the school. This will take place at least every 2 years.