

United Against Bullying School Case Study: Consistency in dealing with incidents of discriminatory language

How Ironville and Codnor Park Primary School developed consistency in dealing with incidents of discriminatory language

Context of our anti-bullying work

4.6) We work actively to prevent discriminatory language and challenge it when it is heard in all its forms (including disablist language).

We had several occasions in school where children used discriminatory language and these incidents weren't dealt with consistently across the school with different staff members.

What we hoped to achieve

Our aim is to ensure that:

- all staff have a clear understanding about discriminatory language and the zero tolerance approach the school takes. We hope to ensure that the staff use the same consequences when children use this language;
- all children understand how the school has a zero tolerance approach to discriminatory language and that these incidents will be taken very seriously;
- all parents/carers understand the consistent approach the whole school staff take in dealing with children who use discriminatory language;
- the number of incidents that involve children using discriminatory language reduces due to the prevention work that is put in place.

The action we took

Staff

The SLT planned a staff meeting on peer on peer abuse and part of the meeting focused on the different types of peer on peer abuse, which included discriminatory language. We talked about how we minimise this behaviour in school, such as PSHEE lessons, celebrating diversity, be unique weeks, diversity books across the curriculum, Wonderful World weeks etc and ways we can improve our current practice to help prevent it from happening. We asked for examples and as a whole staff agreed actions/consequences for these behaviours as well as discussing if the sanctions are the same for the younger children.

Pupils

After the staff meeting focused on peer on peer abuse, the class teachers spent several PSHE lessons reminding the children how we celebrate diversity. They talked about the school mission statement 'Be Unique' and focused their sessions on the use of discriminatory language and the high expectations in the school relating to the RESPECT behaviours as well as how their behaviour affects others.

Parents/Carers

After the staff meeting focused on peer on peer abuse, the parents/carers were involved by the weekly newsletter and email about the decision the school staff had taken regarding children's use of discriminatory language and the consequences of using it as well as what we do in school to prevent it from happening. They were also sign posted to the peer on peer abuse policy which is on the school website.

Impact and outcomes of the work

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are more aware of our zero tolerance to the use of discriminatory language and do not question the sanction or interrogate staff members if their child has been given a sanction. The parents/carers are more aware of the high expectations in our school.

Pupils

Pupils are fully aware of the sanctions that all staff apply if they use discriminatory language. They accept the consequence with much less fuss.

The children have a much better understanding of what we expect of them and what the school classes as discriminatory language and how their words can affect others.

Results of the final pupil questionnaire compared to the initial questionnaire indicate that

*"Other pupils are mean or rude to me online" The children that responded to the initial questionnaire by answering **never** was 76% and in the final questionnaire this improved by 7% to 83%.*

*"I am called mean names by other pupils." The children that responded to the initial questionnaire by answering **never** was 60% and in the final questionnaire this improved by 3% to 63%*

Staff

We have a much more consistent approach across the school in dealing with discriminatory language and this is challenged straight away. Staff are more confident at addressing this with the children and how to support everyone involved.

What we have learned

We have learnt that by ensuring there is a consistent approach to dealing with bullying incidents children have a better understanding of what is right and wrong.

We also learnt that more work needs to be done on using discriminatory language to describe themselves or against themselves and if the same sanctions apply.