



## Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour: (ERTBB) Supplement

### **Supporting Schools when Addressing Incidents of Bullying Motivated by Race, Faith, Culture and/or Nationality/National Identity**

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This guide to bullying motivated by race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity is designed to link in to the original 2013 Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum's resource entitled "Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour" (ERTBB).

**Staff using this supplement are expected to refer to the linked ERTBB page references included in the text.**

This document focuses on the considerations which staff should be aware of when addressing incidents of bullying behaviour motivated by race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity whether the child is experiencing bullying behaviour, displaying bullying behaviour or *witnessing bullying behaviour*.

- \* By race we mean skin colour, ethnic group, etc. For example, White (including Irish Traveller), Black, Asian, Other
- \* By faith we mean the religion of the individual, either real or perceived. For example, Islam (Muslim), Judaism (Jewish), Buddhism etc.
- \* By culture we mean the practices through which a community identity is expressed. For example, clothing, music, art, dance, symbols, cuisine, language, accent etc.
- \* By nationality/national identity we mean the country or region where an individual, or an individual's family, are from or are perceived to be from, including which country/countries they have citizenship of. For example, China, India, Poland, Pakistan, Brazil etc.

In Northern Ireland, terms relating to faith, culture and nationality/national identity are often used to describe the two communities of Protestant-Unionist-Loyalist (PUL) and Catholic-Nationalist-Republican (CNR). Bullying motivated by these characteristics is usually referred to as Sectarian Bullying and will NOT be discussed in this paper. Separate information relating to sectarian bullying will be provided elsewhere in the NIABF suite of resources.

#### **CONTEXT**

Over the past two decades, Northern Ireland's society has become increasingly diverse. According to the census, the proportion of the population from a minority ethnic group increased from 0.85% (14,352) in 2001 to 1.8% (32,400) in 2011. However, this figure is considered an under-estimate, as it would have excluded most EU Nationals. A more accurate figure is estimated to be around 4%.

According to the Department of Education School Enrolments Summary, there were 16,238 newcomer pupils (defined as pupils who do not have English or Irish as their first language and do not have satisfactory language skills to participate fully in the school curriculum) in schools in Northern Ireland in the 2018-2019 school year. The Newcomer Pupils in Education Report 2017-18 shows that newcomer pupils accounted for almost 5% (15,220) of the school population. However, given the limited definition used, it is important to note that this does not fully reflect the diversity of our school population.

## **SAFEGUARDING POLICIES**

An **Anti-Bullying Policy** forms part of the safeguarding suite of policies, also including the Promoting Positive Behaviour and Safeguarding Policies. These policies need to work together to promote an inclusive learning environment where all learners have access to high quality provision and in a safe and supportive environment.

Schools have a responsibility to protect children from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse” (Article 19, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child).

Schools also have a responsibility under race legislation to protect children from discrimination on racial grounds which, under the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997, includes colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins. Irish Travellers are listed as a specific racial group. Some groups have both ethnic and religious characteristics.

The Executive Office produced a Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland (2015-2025) which, amongst a range of other objectives, commits to addressing racist bullying in schools.

## Building An Anti-Bullying Culture

### An Effective Anti-Bullying Policy:

- \* Meets current legislative requirements
- \* Involves consultation with all stakeholders and active pupil participation in the decision making processes
- \* Ensures that a record is kept of all bullying incidents, interventions put in place and the outcomes achieved
- \* Determines, on the basis of evidence, possible method and motivation i.e. identifies the underlying theme which may include special educational needs and/or disabilities
- \* Is accessible to all (e.g. translation and interpreting services are available if required)

**For further details about possible themes see list included in the 'Bullying Concern Assessment Form'**

### Empowering bystanders by:

- \* Developing their understanding of bullying behaviour and its impact
- \* Encouraging all pupils to work together to support the target and/or report the behaviour to school staff
- \* Enhancing playground supervision by staff and "buddies"

### Working collaboratively with Parents/ Carers to:

- \* Identify particular vulnerabilities
- \* Pre-empt possible difficulties
- \* Provide appropriate in-class support
- \* Ensure the child has access to the curriculum
- \* Foster pro-social behaviours where possible and where necessary
- \* Effect a smooth transition when moving from pre-school to primary school, and from primary to post-primary school

**See ERTBB for further guidance**

### An inclusive restorative school ethos which actively:

- \* Promotes self-reflection and participation
- \* Develops positive relationships
- \* Focuses on restoration
- \* Celebrates diversity
- \* Promotes a feeling of safety

**See ERTBB for examples of restorative approaches**

## Anti-Bullying Policy

All schools are required to:

- \* Have an Anti-Bullying policy which forms part of the safeguarding suite of policies.
- \* Develop and review the Anti-Bullying policy in consultation with registered pupils and their parents.
- \* Have measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying behaviour among pupils.
- \* Promote awareness of policies amongst the whole school population.
- \* Track, monitor and assess the efficacy of the interventions/strategies used.
- \* Record all incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour.
- \* Keep the policy under review, ensuring a full review occurs at least every 4 years.

The **Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016** sets out the duties on schools in relation to addressing bullying behaviour. Key points of the legislation include:

- \* The Act provides all grant-aided schools with a single, legal definition of bullying.
- \* All grant-aided schools must have a preventative anti-bullying policy which is updated at least every four years.
- \* Boards of Governors must be involved in developing and ensuring effective implementation of the anti-bullying policy.
- \* Schools must engage with pupils, parents/carers and the school community when they are developing and reviewing the anti-bullying policy.
- \* Schools must record all incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviours, including the motivation, method of bullying, how the incident was addressed and the outcome of the interventions.

This means that the record must state what, from the circumstances, appears to be the method and motivation for the incident. Therefore, where a bullying incident appears to be motivated by race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity, it must be recorded as such. **Records should be kept using the 'Bullying Concern Assessment Form' in ERTBB and in line with DE guidance.**

## DEFINING BULLYING

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 provides a single, legal definition for all schools. This Act defines as follows:

*Bullying includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use of-*

- a) *any verbal, written or electronic communication,*
- b) *any other act, or*
- c) *any combination of this,*

*by a pupil or a group of pupils against another pupil or group of pupils, with the intention of causing physical or emotional harm to that pupil or group of pupils.*

*'Act' includes omission.*

***Bullying is behaviour, which is usually repeated, carried out to intentionally hurt, harm or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others.***

Bullying is a form of unacceptable behaviour, but not all unacceptable behaviour can be considered to constitute bullying behaviour. Bullying usually involves four key elements:

- \* It is intentionally hurtful behaviour
- \* It is usually repeated behaviour that happens over a period of time
- \* It usually involves an imbalance of power
- \* It is targeted – individual/group

All unacceptable behaviour must be challenged, whether it is bullying or not. Where unacceptable behaviour is assessed not to be bullying, in line with the definition, it should be addressed using the appropriate policy, e.g. the promoting positive behaviour policy.

Where there is a one-off incident of unacceptable behaviour motivated by race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity, it is essential that this behaviour is challenged. Similar strategies to those used to address bullying behaviour can be implemented in such cases.

There are many different ways in which bullying behaviour can be displayed. This could include intentional, repeated, targeted behaviours such as:

- \* Being called nasty names, teased, made fun of, threatened or put down
- \* Being hit, kicked, punched, tripped up or knocked over
- \* Having belongings stolen or damaged
- \* Having rumours or gossip spread about you or people talking about you behind your back
- \* Being left-out, excluded or isolated
- \* Being forced to do something you don't want to do or know that is wrong

It is also important to know that bullying is not:

- \* A disagreement or a 'falling-out'
- \* A one-off fight or argument
- \* Someone being 'nasty' through an ill thought through word or action
- \* A 'relationship' issue where pupils just need to learn how to get along better

### **What is bullying motivated by race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity?**

Bullying motivated by race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity can be displayed in a variety of ways. This can include:

- \* Verbal acts, e.g.:
  - Name-calling involving slurs or names related to race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity
  - Making jokes or belittling an individual or group related to race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity
  - Making threats related to race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity
  - Targeted comments related to particular groups, races, faiths, cultures and/or nationalities/national identities
- \* Physical acts, e.g.:
  - Physical attacks related to race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity
  - Taking, destroying or damaging belongings on the basis of race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity
- \* Written/electronic slurs, e.g.:

- Graffiti related to race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity
- Offensive targeted social media posts related to race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity
- Targeted sharing of offensive or discriminatory material related to race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity
  
- \* Omission, e.g.:
  - Refusing to cooperate with someone because of their race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity
  - Purposefully excluding someone from social activities because of their race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity

Within the category of bullying motivated by race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity, there are many different types. This can include:

- \* Islamophobia
- \* Antisemitism
- \* Anti-refugee/asylum-seeker prejudice
- \* Anti-immigrant prejudice
- \* Anti-Traveller or Anti-Roma prejudice

**Bullying motivated by race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity can occur:**

- \* In all types of schools, including mainstream and special school contexts, and across primary and post-primary schools
- \* Both in school and out of school, in the community
- \* Based on a young person's perceived race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity
- \* Amongst all young people, irrespective of their own race, faith, culture or nationality/national identity
- \* In any school or community, irrespective of the racial or cultural make-up of the school or community

**Whole school proactive strategies to help prevent bullying motivated by race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity**

The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 and the Addressing Bullying in Schools (Northern Ireland) Act 2016 both provide a legislative framework for anti-bullying work within schools in Northern Ireland.

The first step towards a whole school response to any form of bullying is its written policy and this should reference bullying motivated by race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity.

All registered pupils and parents should be consulted in relation to the content of the anti-bullying policy. Young people are experts in their own lives, so schools should seek to ensure that the views and concerns of all young people, particularly more vulnerable young people, are embedded within the development of anti-bullying policy and practice.

The table on the next page outlines all of the essential components that schools should include when developing their anti-bullying strategies.

Language is an important factor when discussing bullying motivated by race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity. For example, what is the difference between a refugee and an asylum-seeker? What is Islamophobia? Often, individuals (including school staff) are hesitant to discuss these issues for fear of using incorrect or inappropriate terms. To support learning, NIABF has brought together a glossary of the most common terms (See page 10).

### **Racist incidences and attitudes within schools and the wider community**

The Department of Education's research into the *Nature and Extent of Bullying in Schools in the North of Ireland (2011)* found that 63% of pupils in Year 9 thought a pupil's race or skin colour made them more likely to be bullied. This was an opinion shared by 38% of pupils in Year 6.

The NI Young Life and Times Survey 2017 found that 41% of young people had witnessed 'racist bullying or harassment' in school. This study also found that 15% of young people said that they were very prejudiced (1%) or a little bit prejudiced (14%) towards people from minority ethnic communities.

The Equality Commission's 2016 social attitudes survey found that the five most negatively viewed groups were all racial groups – Travellers, Roma, asylum-seekers/refugees, migrant workers and minority ethnic communities. Almost 1 in 5 people felt negatively towards Travellers and Roma, and 1 in 10 felt negatively towards minority ethnic groups.

PSNI statistics for hate crimes and hate incidents show that there were 1,045 racist incidents and 647 racist hate crimes between July 2017 and June 2018. During the same period there were 81 hate incidents and hate crimes based on faith/religion (excluding sectarian incidents). Half of all racist hate crimes reported were experienced by individuals whose ethnicity was recorded as 'White'. This includes mainly Irish Travellers and people from Eastern Europe.

### **Choosing an appropriate intervention (ERTBB Pg13)**

Interventions are grouped according to the severity level of the bullying behaviour.

The main aim of an intervention is to RESPOND to the bullying behaviour that is taking place, RESOLVE the concern and RESTORE the well-being of all those involved. When considering an appropriate intervention, schools should take account of:

- \* A range of matters pertaining to the incident
- \* The profile of the children involved
- \* The need to ensure the active involvement of the child in all aspects of the process including post-incident learning through self-reflection and self-assessment

**The ERTBB offers a framework of anti-bullying strategies within four levels of intervention, however, school staff should bear the following considerations in mind when dealing with an incident of bullying motivated by race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity.**

When selecting an intervention to implement, staff should be mindful of the motivation behind the bullying behaviour, and the ways in which that behaviour is displayed. Interventions should

address the situation and the incident may highlight the need for wider action beyond those immediately involved.

For example, while a bullying incident motivated by race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity may involve a few pupils, it may indicate a wider need within the class, year group or whole school community for further ongoing support. This can be more prevalent when there has been a recent intake of pupils from a minority background and preparation activities have not been effective.

It is equally important for staff to be aware of ongoing issues outside school, at community, regional, national or international level, which may heighten tensions and prompt incidents.

### **Considerations to bear in mind when responding to bullying motivated by race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity**

- \* As with all forms of bullying, schools must be open and welcoming to all concerns raised, and should promote a culture where everyone (pupils, parents/carers, staff, etc.) are encouraged to seek help when they have concerns about bullying. It is particularly important to ensure concerns raised by parents/carers who themselves have significant personal experience of discrimination are listened to and taken seriously.
- \* If the bullying behaviour directed at a child or young person is, on the basis of evidence, motivated by race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity, name it and record it as such. This allows trends to be identified and monitored, to be used to inform and guide practice.
- \* Take time to listen to and hear the child or young person, to understand the situation and their perceptions of it. Where the bullying behaviour is related to race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity, name it as such. It is important that schools take prejudice-based bullying seriously; a 'just the same' approach may make the child feel invisible or unvalued in their own identity.
- \* Understand that bullying related to race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity may be displayed in different ways and interventions to address incidents should be planned to meet the needs of the young people in each individual situation. For example, a response to anti-Traveller bullying involving a Year 4 pupil may well require a different response to Islamophobic bullying involving a Year 11 pupil.
- \* If contact with parents/carers is appropriate, this should be managed by the appropriate member of staff. Remember that understanding of bullying behaviour varies across cultures (English is one of the few languages which has a specific word to describe this behaviour) and sensitivity is required.
- \* Give consideration to potential difficulties related to language and communication when planning contact with parents/carers. Where the parents/carers (or the pupil) do not have a sufficient level of competency in English or Irish to fully understand this situation, it will be necessary to engage the services of an interpreter to ensure that communication is effective. Schools can access support from the Intercultural Education Service<sup>1</sup> (IES) in the Education Authority on this.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.eani.org.uk/ies](http://www.eani.org.uk/ies)

- \* Ensure that the child experiencing bullying behaviour is adequately looked after and supported and remember the potential detrimental impact this may have on their mental health and emotional wellbeing. This is particularly the case where the young person may already be facing issues, such as trauma (e.g. refugee and asylum-seeking children) and social isolation.
- \* If contacting the parents/carers of the young person displaying bullying motivated by race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity, be aware that such prejudices may be shared by parents/carers. It is important that school policies make the unacceptability of such behaviours clear and that these policies are shared with parents/carers.
- \* Young people have the right to form and hold their own opinions, including opinions on issues related to immigration. Young people have the right to freedom of speech, to articulate such opinions. However, it is important to support pupils to make the distinction between their opinions and where vocalising their opinions may cause hurt or harm to others.

All schools should ensure that:

- \* Outcomes are tracked and monitored to assess their effectiveness.

**See *Bullying Concern Assessment Form* for recording, tracking and monitoring outcomes**

**Race, Faith, Culture and Nationality/National Identity: A Glossary of Terms**

There are a number of key terms which may arise when speaking about bullying motivated by race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity. The table below lists some of the key terms along with additional information which schools should find useful with regard to understanding the sensitivities required when responding to incidents of bullying behaviour motivated by race, faith, culture and/or nationality/national identity.

Anti-Muslim racism / Islamophobia	Discrimination against or hostility and hatred towards Muslim people, whether they be religiously or ethnically defined.
Anti-Semitism	Discrimination against or hostility and hatred towards Jewish people, whether they be religiously or ethnically defined.
Asylum seeker	A person who has fled her/his own country and applies to the government of another country for protection as a refugee.
BME/BAME	Black and Minority Ethnic or Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic is the terminology normally used in the UK to describe people of non-white descent.
Direct Discrimination	Direct discrimination takes place when 'race', religion or nationality are used as explicit reasons for discriminating.
Indirect Discrimination	Indirect discrimination applies when regulations and procedures (though not set up to discriminate) have the effect of disadvantaging certain groups.
Ethnicity/ethnic group	A group of people whose members identify with each other through a common heritage, often consisting of a common language, common culture (which can include a religion) and/or an ideology which stresses a common ancestry.
Gypsy	A nomadic people also known as Romani, generally thought to have moved to Europe from the Indian subcontinent in the ninth century. Roma and Sinti people are sub-groups of Romani. Gypsy has also been used as a pejorative term for members of the Travelling community. This is unacceptable.
Irish Travellers <sup>2</sup>	Travellers are an indigenous minority ethnic group who have been part of Irish society for centuries. Travellers' long shared history, cultural values, language, customs and traditions make them a self-defined group, and one which is recognisable and distinct.

<sup>2</sup> Taken from Irish Traveller Movement

	Their culture and way of life, of which nomadism is an important factor, distinguishes them from the settled population.
Institutional racism	When a whole organisation's procedures and policies disadvantage BAME people. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racial stereotyping which disadvantages minority ethnic people.
Integration	The inclusion of a minority group into an existing community on equal terms. It has normally meant that BAME people could retain their cultures and customs. This is different to assimilation, where a minority group was expected to conform to the culture of the established, generally larger, community.
Migrant	Someone who moves within or usually between countries, for a variety of reasons.
Multiculturalism	A policy allowing for and/or encouraging a diversity of cultures to thrive in one society. Multicultural also describes the social fabric of the society which has acknowledged BAME people's rights to maintain their own cultures, customs and religious beliefs.
Interculturalism <sup>3</sup>	An approach where the community has pride in its particular identity or identities, but also where it has competence and confidence to relate to others that are different, seeing this as an opportunity to learn and develop, rather than as a threat.
Prejudice	A negative or hostile attitude/opinion based, not on actual factual information, but on a prejudgement depending on stereotypes about a whole group.
Racism	Discrimination against, or hostility and hatred towards, people of a different ethnic group.
Refugee	A refugee is a person who has been granted protection by another country, based on a well-founded fear of being persecuted in their home country.
Segregation	The enforced separation of people from different 'racial' or ethnic groups.

*Adapted from Institute of Race Relations*

<sup>3</sup> NI Racial equality strategy 2015 – 2025 Para 1.8

## References

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***The following case studies are fictional. Any similarity to actual events or persons is purely coincidental.***

## Case Study 1

A bullying concern where there has been a recent intake of pupils from a minority background and preparation activities have not been effective.

### **Background**

Six months ago, the community around Thorntonvale High School welcomed 4 Syrian refugee families to the area. Nine young people from these families joined the school at the start of this term; two in Year 8 and the other seven in Year 9. Ahead of their arrival, the school delivered information sessions and workshops with Year 8 and 9 pupils around the situation in Syria and issues related to refugees and asylum seekers.

### **Incident**

For the most part, the new pupils were welcomed to the school and have settled in well. Over the last couple of weeks there have been a number of concerns raised by pupils in the junior school that a group of pupils in Year 11 have been mocking, teasing and taunting the new pupils, telling them to 'go back to where you came from' and commenting 'refugees not welcome here'. During lunchtime today there was an incident in the playground where the group of Year 11 pupils followed two of the new pupils around, chanting 'go home now' at them.

### **Response**

Having identified the Year 11 pupils involved, the Head of Pastoral Care meets with these pupils to reaffirm the school's commitment to providing education to all young people and to remind them of their responsibility to behave in accordance with the school's expectation and of the potential consequences of deciding to act in an unacceptable way. The incidents have also highlighted a need for further awareness raising and capacity building work with pupils across the school, not just those in the year groups welcoming new pupils. The Principal also sends a letter to all parents, setting out the behaviour expectations of the pupils with regard to their interactions with their peers.

Additional support is provided to the new pupils, including working with them to identify key staff to approach if they have any concerns. A weekly checking in meeting is arranged with the new pupils, to support their settling in at the school.

### **Learning**

The incident highlighted the need for sufficient capacity building and preparatory work across the school, not just in the classes or year group welcoming the new pupils. The school has now made contact with the Intercultural Education Service<sup>4</sup> in the Education Authority to plan for any further intake of pupils.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.eani.org.uk/ies](http://www.eani.org.uk/ies)

## Case Study 2

A bullying concern following a local incident.

### **Background**

Orchard Meadow Primary School serves a small, mostly rural community. The school has a robust Anti-Bullying Policy and a positive, welcoming school ethos.

### **Incident**

Over the past number of years a number of Traveller families have settled in the area, with most of the children attending Orchard Meadow Primary School. Following consultation with representatives from the Travelling community, the local council has announced plans to develop an area near the village to create a Traveller site. This proposal has been met with significant opposition from local residents. In school, a change in behaviour amongst some of the pupils has been noticed. In one class, a number of pupils have continually refused to participate in group work with Traveller pupils saying they are 'dirty and smelly' and that they're 'too lazy to work with'. In another class, a teacher has heard some pupils using unacceptable language in relation to their Traveller classmates.

### **Response**

The Principal meets with the staff team to discuss how to respond. It is acknowledged that there are tensions in the local area relating to the proposed site, and that many people, on both sides of the debate, have strongly held opinions. It is agreed that the behaviour is unacceptable and that it must be challenged. Using the 'Expectation Discussion' from the *Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour* resource, the principal and class teacher talk to all pupils involved, reminding them of the need to show respect to each other at all times. Furthermore, messages around respect and respectful behaviour are reinforced through all-school assembly and PDMU activities. The Principal also writes to all parents and carers, reminding them of the school's open and welcoming ethos, and reinforcing the need for parents/carers to support their children's behaviour in school.

### **Learning**

The school has identified a need for capacity building in this area and has contacted the IES Traveller team for advice and support. The issue has also highlighted the need for the school to build and maintain strong links with parents and carers, and the wider school community.

### **Case Study 3**

A bullying concern following a major national or international incident.

#### ***Background***

St Salvator's High School has a small number of Muslim pupils, mostly in Years 9 and 10. The school has a robust Anti-Bullying Policy and a positive, welcoming school ethos.

#### ***Incident***

Tensions in the area have been raised following a terrorist attack in England, carried out by a militant Islamic group. A lunchtime supervisor has raised concerns that the Muslim pupils appear to be being excluded by the rest of their classmates and have been eating lunch alone this week. She also overheard a group of girls from Year 9 talking about the attack and how the pupils would 'probably agree with that sort of thing' and that they 'can't be trusted'. She also overheard them use a number of Islamophobic slurs to describe the pupils.

#### ***Response***

The Senior Management Team discussed the situation and the school's response to it. In the first instance the Vice-Principal led a 'Think Time Discussion' with the pupils involved, supporting them to recognise the hurt caused by their behaviour. It was also agreed that the Principal would deliver an assembly that week focusing on the attack, making clear that the actions of those that carried out the attack were not representative of the Muslim faith and have been rejected by the Muslim community. She will also highlight how such attacks can have much wider impact on the emotional health and wellbeing of the whole population, beyond those immediately effected. Because of this, space will be given to pupils who are worried or upset by the attack to talk to the school counsellor and/or the pastoral care team, should they wish to do so.

#### ***Learning***

The incident highlighted the impact local, national and international incidents can have on individuals and groups within the school population. As such, the school has explored how all pupils can be better supported following such incidents.

## **Case Study 4**

A bullying concern where the parent has limited competency in English and is not sufficiently supported to engage with the school.

### ***Background***

St Regulus Primary School has a diverse student population. The pupils represent over 30 nationalities, with more than 20 languages spoken in the school. While most of the children have a good standard of English language proficiency, there are a considerable number of parents who have only basic skills in English.

### ***Incident***

Kosso has been a pupil at the school for almost two years, following his family's move from Chad. Happy and outgoing, Kosso loves to sing and often performs solos with the school choir. Recently you have noticed that he has become more withdrawn and quiet. After discussion, he tells you that two girls in his class have been bullying him. He reports they have been calling him nasty names and making fun of his singing. He feels scared to come to school because of how they make him feel.

### ***Response***

As part of the school's response to the incident, including using a range of interventions from the *Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour* resource, the Vice-Principal arranges a meeting with Kosso's mother. At this meeting it becomes clear that Kosso's mother has limited proficiency in English, to the point there is little transfer of information between the Vice-Principal and the mother. The Vice-Principal is unsure whether Kosso's mother does not understand what has been happening and cannot fully engage in the response, or whether she is dismissive of the behaviour and unwilling to take action.

### ***Learning***

Using the IES Interpreting Guidelines the school agreed to use both telephone interpreting during a first meeting and then face-to-face interpreting for follow up meetings with the parent who can provide support in such cases. The school also provides basic information, about bullying and the school's Anti-Bullying Policy, to all parents in a range of languages. While there was a cost implication to this, the school prioritised ensuring all parents are supported to most fully engage in their child's education.

## **Case Study 5**

A bullying concern where the parents of the pupil displaying bullying behaviour do not recognise the unacceptable nature of this behaviour.

### ***Background***

Bridgetown Primary School has a diverse student population, with almost a third of pupils from Eastern European families. While many families have lived in the local area for a number of years, recent newspaper reports of a 'local housing shortage' and 'strain on GP services' have raised tensions in the community.

### ***Incident***

Petyr and Laila are twins and are pupils in Year 6. They joined the school last year, having moved to the town with their mother from Poland. Their father has been living and working in the area for almost ten years. Petyr and Laila settled in well, but recently you have noticed that they have become quiet and withdrawn and are not joining in as much as before. Their school work has also started to suffer and they are both unwilling to undertake group-work activities with the other pupils. Seong-ha, a Korean pupil who has been in the school since Year 1, tells you that Stephen, a pupil in Year 6, has told everyone that they shouldn't talk to, play with or work alongside Petyr and Laila. He says Stephen claimed that if they just leave them out maybe they'll 'go back to where they came from' and that 'we can get our school back'.

### ***Response***

As part of the school's response to the incident, the Vice-Principal arranges a meeting with Stephen's parents. At this meeting, both Stephen's mother and father refuse to acknowledge that Stephen's behaviour is inappropriate. They insist that Stephen is right to do this because, as a family, they 'don't want any more immigrants in this town', citing the recent newspaper reports around housing and access to GP services.

The Vice-Principal acknowledged Stephen's parents' right to an opinion, but noted the behaviour expectations for Stephen in school. Every pupil has the right to learn in a safe and supportive environment and the school's Anti-Bullying Policy explicitly states that intentionally excluding an individual or group of pupils is unacceptable. The Vice-Principal reminded Stephen that, while he does not have to be friends with Petyr and Laila, he is expected to show respectful, friendly behaviour towards all pupils in the school.

### ***Learning***

In light of the incident the school reviewed its Equality and Diversity Policy, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers. The new policy has been strengthened to make clear that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supported environment. A copy of the policy was distributed to all families and an awareness raising event for parents/carers was held to launch the new policy.

## **Case Study 6**

A concern where a young person's right to form and voice an opinion may cause hurt or upset to others.

### ***Background***

Ballygreen High School has a small number of BAME pupils and a small number of pupils from migrant families. The school prides itself on its supportive ethos, where pupils are encouraged to form their own opinions and are facilitated to voice these opinions in school.

### ***Incident***

Grace has always had a keen interest in history and politics and is a member of the school debating society. She is in Year 13 and hopes to go to university to study law. Grace has always had strong opinions but recently her friends have reported that her opinions are becoming quite extreme and divisive. They have printed a number of social media posts that Grace has made where she voices support for a ban on all immigration, including refugee and asylum seekers. She has also shared content from a third party 'action group' regarding a planned protest against immigration, adding comments that some in the school have found offensive. A number of pupils in Year 13 have come to you, telling you they are upset and worried by Grace's comments online.

### ***Response***

On reflection, it becomes clear that this is not a bullying incident, in line with the school's definition in the Anti-Bullying Policy. However, it is clear that many people have been hurt or upset, whether intentionally or not, by Grace's social media posts. As such, the Vice-Principal talks to Grace and makes her aware of the hurt caused. She supports Grace to explore how her posts may be interpreted by individuals as being targeted at them and how this may make them feel uncomfortable. They also discuss how Grace can explore her beliefs and opinions, including how she can frame her views in such a way as to avoid causing hurt to others.

### ***Learning***

The school remains committed to supporting their pupils to develop views and opinions on a range of topics, including topics that may be sensitive or difficult. However, the incident has highlighted a need to support pupils in finding positive and non-confrontational ways of expressing their opinions among their peers. The Senior Management Team will review the Learning for Life and Work (LLW) curriculum to identify ways this skill could be developed.

## Case Study 7

A bullying concern involving BAME young people from similar cultural backgrounds.

### **Background**

Long Road Secondary School has a diverse student population. The pupils represent over 30 nationalities, with more than 20 languages spoken in the school. While most of the children have a good standard of English language proficiency, it is not uncommon to hear a range of languages being spoken in the playground.

### **Incident**

Lyn, a pupil in Year 10, has mixed heritage. Her mother's parents are originally from Hong Kong and moved to Northern Ireland before Lyn's mother was born. Her father is Spanish and has lived here since he was a student.

Lyn is a popular and hard-working student and has many friends from across her year group. She was good friends with Wenjun and Shuai but you have noticed recently that they are not hanging out together. You have also overheard Wenjun and Shuai talking about Lyn, but as they were speaking mostly in Cantonese you are unsure what was being said. When you ask Lyn about it, she confides that she is being left out and ignored by the others because they think her family is weird. She had a birthday party at her house a few weeks ago during which Wenjun and Shuai started making fun of her mixed heritage. Since then they continually mock her and her family and have refused to work with her or sit with her at lunchtime. She says she feels sad, ashamed and lonely.

### **Response**

The teacher talks to Lyn about her identity and agrees to also talk to Wenjun and Shuai about how they are expected to behave in school. The teacher also uses appropriate strategies from the *Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour* resource to challenge the thinking of the pupils and to promote restoration of the relationship with Lyn. This focuses on supporting the young people to celebrate the diversity of the cultures, both within the friendship group and across the school.

### **Learning**

On reflection, the incident highlighted the need for positive cultural awareness messaging throughout the school, supporting pupils to understand and celebrate the diversity within the entire school population. The Senior Leadership Team within the school is now working with organisations in the local community to explore opportunities for celebrating the diversity in the area.