

Diversity and Inclusion at Bensham

(Last updated Sept. 23)

Bensham Manor School is working towards creating an inclusive, diverse and anti discriminatory environment. It is important that ALL staff work together on this learning journey. There are times when we may or may not realise that we have said something or behaved in a particular way that is not appropriate.

This journey is for everyone.

Below has been put together to support us on this journey. This journey is not restricted to the text below: it would be impossible to highlight everything in this document, however, we have aimed to begin this learning journey together and this document is just part of that journey. For some of you the details may be obvious, for others it may not. The aim is not to judge anyone and where they are on this learning journey but to educate each other and become a diverse, inclusive and anti discriminatory environment. This can only be achieved if we work together.

Assume best intent whilst creating an inclusive and diverse environment.

What does best intent mean: When someone says or does something that is inappropriate/ has caused offence, we assume that they did not mean to intentionally do this. We then act on educating the individual so this does not happen again.

Discrimination in any form is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at Bensham Manor. All staff employed at Bensham Manor have a responsibility to provide an environment that is free from discrimination in all its forms, including those based on race, ethnicity, gender, ability, disability, sex, sexuality, age and religion.

What is discrimination?

Discrimination refers to any behaviour or practice based upon an assumption that one group is superior to another, any behaviour that disadvantages people on the basis of the real or perceived memberships of a particular group and includes behaviours such as less favourable treatment, unfair exclusion and asking discriminatory questions.

Examples of discrimination may involve but not be confined to the following:

‘Jokes’ or ‘banter’ about another person’s racial or ethnic background, cultural practices, sex, sexual preference, sex, sexuality, age, ability or disability or appearance.

Displaying pictures, posters etc. which are offensive, derogatory expressing negative stereotypes of particular groups.

Judging someone on their beliefs, origins, appearance, sex, sexual orientation etc. rather than their performance.

Undermining a person’s authority, work or performance because you dislike one or more of their personal characteristics.

What is bias, prejudice, banter and stereotyping?

Bias

More often than not, biases are opinions *about* how something or someone is. The environments we live in, the people we surround ourselves with, our families, our friends, our school are all factors that can influence our opinions and biases. We may get ideas about people and things from these groups of people and these environments without realising it. Having a bias is a tendency to believe that some people or some ideas are better than others that usually results in treating some people unfairly.

Stereotype

A stereotype is an idea or belief many people have about a thing or group that is based upon how they look on the outside, which may be untrue or only partly true. Stereotyping people is a type of prejudice because what is on the outside is a small part of who a person is.

Banter

Banter is teasing or joking talk that is amusing and friendly.

Banter is not about someone’s appearance, their race, sex, gender, sexuality, identity or disability. If you know someone feels self conscious about something, making a comment is not “just banter” it is harmful and mean.

Prejudice

Prejudice is a preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience.

How to respond to everyday prejudice, bias and stereotyping

“In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends”. Martin Luther King Jr

If you're offended it's more than likely something was said that was offensive - let's change that. We all have moments when that very short time passes when someone says something and you struggle with how, or when you respond - these moments should be opportunities that must be acted upon swiftly. Change happens slowly, people can hold onto prejudice with tenacity. However, speaking up will make a difference, others will hear you speak up and follow - and others after them. Often a comment or micro aggression is made and the person is unaware it is offensive.

We should speak up against every biased remark, every time it happens.

Using the correct terms

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-communication/inclusive-language-words-to-use-and-avoid-when-writing-about-disability>

<https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/style-guide/writing-about-ethnicity>

Avoid	Use
(the) handicapped, (the) disabled	disabled (people)
afflicted by, suffers from, victim of	has (name the condition or impairment)
confined to a wheelchair, is wheelchair bound	wheelchair user
mentally handicapped, retarded, subnormal	with a learning disability/ies
cripple, invalid	disabled person
able-bodied	non-disabled
mental patient, insane, mad	person with a mental health condition
deaf and dumb, deaf mute	Deaf, user of British Sign Language (BSL), person with a hearing impairment
the blind	people with a visual impairment, blind people, blind and partially sighted people
an epileptic, diabetic, depressive etc.	person with epilepsy, diabetes etc.

dwarf, midget	someone with restricted growth or short stature
fits, spells, attacks	seizures
elderly, OAP, pensioner, senior	older person, people over the age of...
race	ethnicity
BAME or BAM	ethnic minorities
coloured	Black
half-caste or mixed race	dual heritage/mixed heritage
business man/woman, head master/mistress, police man/woman etc.	person, leader, officer etc.

What staff may want to say to address a situation:

- * That offends me.
- * I don't find it funny.
- * I'm surprised to hear you say that.
- * What do you mean by that?
- * Why would you say something like that?
- * What point are you trying to make by saying that?
- * Did you mean to say something hurtful when you said that?
- * Using that word doesn't help others feel safe.
- * I know you didn't mean to be offensive.
- * That's a bold statement!
- * You may not have meant to cause offence but the point you just made can/has caused offence. Let me explain.
- * Can you explain what you mean by that as it is coming across offensive?

- * I am offended by your statement.
- * What you said is not okay. Do you need a minute to reflect on what you have just said?
- * We are in an inclusive and diverse environment. Views like this are not welcomed here.
- * I would like to speak to you about your comment, I have assumed best intent but what you have just said is offensive. Are you happy to have a chat about it?
- * Please reflect on your comment, it is not acceptable.

Student feedback from Student Council - student friendly responses.

- * Please stop. What you said is not very nice.
- * I think we need to speak to an adult about this.
- * What you said is not true/ is hurtful/ offended me - let me explain / let me get a staff member to explain.
- * We do not judge at Bensham/ be racist or offensive. We shouldn't be doing this anywhere.

How do you say it?

Try to remain calm and thoughtful. Be confident, know you are doing the right thing. Try not to shame or humiliate that person - often this galvanises the behaviour instead of changing it. Take a moment to think before you address the situation, ensure you remain professional regardless of the offence caused. **Address it whilst assuming best intentions.** You are educating your peers on the offence they have caused in a way that will leave them understanding the hurt/offence caused but also allowing them the opportunity to learn. This is a learning journey.

When to speak up?

Is now the best time?

Do I need to reflect and discuss this later?

Is there someone I trust who I can speak with and help prepare a response?

The conversation with Aisha will be advice only or to have the supportive conversation with you and the member of staff (strictly confidential) - if you are unhappy with the way someone has dealt with the situation or taken your conversation - Amy from SLT will also support.

What if the offence continues?

If you have assumed best intent and had a conversation or asked for a conversation to be had on your behalf and you feel that the matter has not been acted upon (i.e. the offence has happened again) please speak to a member SLT about it. Please note that we are educating our peers and this is a learning journey however we take any form of offence extremely seriously. If you feel that SLT have not dealt with it in a way that resolves the issue then speak to our Head Governor.