

# Challenging racism through PSHE education

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PSHE Association

Your pupils may be understandably disturbed by current events in the US, and may wish to discuss and explore a range of issues as a result. Respect, equality and diversity are key features in a well-planned PSHE education programme. A safe and respectful PSHE classroom can give pupils the opportunity to reflect on how each individual's behaviour, attitudes and biases affect others and teach them how to recognise and challenge prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination.

While PSHE education has a part to play in allowing a safe space to explore attitudes and interpersonal relationships, it should be seen predominantly as preventative education, providing teaching year on year through a planned, spiral curriculum, rather than a reactive measure in response to events. It should also be part of a whole-school approach, including a pastoral system that can mediate specific issues that arise (such as prejudice-based bullying or other incidents).

PSHE also complements other curriculum areas. For example, Citizenship education provides a space to explore topics such as social justice, active and responsible citizenship, and the systemic aspects that can influence biases and stereotypes.

Anti-racism education must be embedded throughout a young person's school journey. It cannot be effectively delivered in a single lesson, assembly or through commemorative events (such as **Black History Month**) alone; though these can greatly enrich a planned programme. Where schools are following our Programme of Study and Programme Builders, there are a number of opportunities to provide anti-racism education at age and developmentally appropriate stages (as set out below).

For pupils in primary school, teaching about topics such as 'managing hurtful behaviour and bullying' and 'respecting self and others' can be tailored to explore anti-racism. Schools teaching about relationships and bullying in Key Stage 1 may discuss how name-calling, bullying and excluding others is unacceptable and may select age-appropriate scenarios that enable them to discuss this in an anti-racism context.

During Key Stage 2, this learning may develop to consider how these actions and words can affect others in a wider variety of settings, including online. Discussion regarding identifying and reporting discrimination in a range of situations can include examples related to race in these lessons. Schools may wish to use our **Inclusion, Belonging and Addressing Extremism** pack to begin teaching about issues such as belonging and stereotypes.

In secondary school, enabling students to recognise and tackle stereotypes, bias and discrimination can be embedded into teaching about self-concept, including privilege or limiting beliefs; forming and

maintaining respectful relationships; and bullying, abuse and discrimination. As students move from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 and post-16 learning, the situations should evolve to become increasingly nuanced and relevant to young adults. For example, Key Stage 3 students' and contexts within the school environment more relatable, while older students may require more situations that are reflective of workplaces or higher education.

To facilitate anti-racism education, stories and literature can provide the opportunity for distanced scenarios to discuss in the classroom. Stories bring issues to life and help young people understand how to identify discrimination and racism, the impact it has on people and how to report and challenge such attitudes and behaviours. There is a wide range of books that can provide a stimulus for classroom discussion. Organisations such as [BookTrust](#) and [LoveReading](#) recommend a range of books on a wide variety of topics (including racism), and include an age recommendation with all of the books listed on their site.

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