

Guidance document

Inclusive language discussion guide

Creating an inclusive classroom environment

Building a culture of inclusivity in the classroom, that embraces and celebrates differences, creates a supportive learning environment for all pupils. Embedding a culture of inclusion is beneficial in a classroom setting as an increased sense of belonging in pupils leads to stronger engagement with classroom activities, and increased confidence and self-esteem both in the classroom and beyond. Use this guide to create an inclusive classroom environment through embedding inclusive language and having important discussions with your pupils.

Embedding inclusive language in the classroom

Inclusive language is crucial to creating a welcoming and respectful environment for everyone. Here are some guidelines to follow:

- **Acknowledge and respect differences:** Recognise that people come from diverse backgrounds and have varied experiences. Be open to learning about different cultures and traditions and show respect for others' beliefs and practices.
- **Promote inclusion and speak up against discrimination and misogyny:** If you witness or experience discrimination, speak up and take action. This can include racism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and disability discrimination. Take action by advocating for diversity and inclusion in your school community.
- **Practise allyship:** Being an ally means actively supporting and advocating for marginalised groups. This can include listening to their experiences, bringing diverse perspectives into conversation, educating yourself on their struggles and issues, and taking action to create positive change.
- **Use inclusive language and examples in the classroom:** This means using terms that acknowledge difference in terms of gender (pronouns), race, sexuality, family structure and disability. Avoid generic labels and use terms that people use to describe their identity.

By following these guidelines, you can create a more inclusive and welcoming environment that respects and values people of all races, ethnicities, and cultures.

Guidance document

Inclusive language discussion guide

Keywords

Please note that language is constantly evolving and the language in this guide may not apply in every instance or to every individual.

- **Inclusive culture** means building an environment that embraces and celebrates our differences.
- **Discrimination** means treating someone or a group of people unfairly.
- **Allyship** means helping or supporting other people who are part of a group that is treated unfairly, although you are not yourself a member of this group.
- **Inclusion** means including everyone, whoever they are.
- **Diversity** means different forms or types, e.g. races, religions, countries, cultures, genders.
- **Misogyny** means dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against women.
- **Respect** is accepting someone for who they are, even when they're different from you or you don't agree with them.
- **Unique** means very special or unusual; belonging or connected to just one thing.
- **Stereotyping** is when people form a mistaken idea or opinion (which is untrue or partly untrue) about a group of people that stops them being seen as individuals.
- **LGBTQ+** stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Questioning and Other Identities.
- **Rainbow laces** are worn by Premier League football players as part of Stonewall's Rainbow Laces campaign across sport. They are worn to show that football is for everyone, including people from the LGBTQ+ community.

Top tips on holding class discussions

Having open and regular discussions about these topics can really support pupils' understanding and allow opportunities for learning.

- **Set the expectations** at the start of the discussion, e.g. 'This is a very important topic, so we should all have open minds, show maturity and kindness to each other' to establish a collective expectation as opposed to a need from the teacher. This can be linked to any existing class contracts. You may wish to consider with the class how to address this.
- Ensure that pupils **understand keywords** from the beginning to enable conversation to flow with ease when the lesson starts.
- It can be helpful to **reflect** on your own experiences of the topic when you were the age of the pupils in your class.

Guidance document

Inclusive language discussion guide

- If you don't have the answer to a question, acknowledge pupils' questions and assure them that **you will find the answer out**.
- Allow pupils the **right to pass** if they don't want to answer a question.
- **Be sensitive to pupils' own experiences** and offer brain break opportunities for pupils who may struggle emotionally with any content.
- **Listen to what the pupils know** and then build on the conversation, helping them with any gaps or challenges they may encounter.
- Make the conversation relatable by bringing in examples of others' lived experience and use **role models to support conversations**.
- Allow pupils to **reflect** or record their learning for that session.

Differing viewpoints within discussion

It can be challenging when differing views come up in the classroom. If pupils experience shame, it can make it harder for them to learn and change and ultimately it is dialogue and learning that will help pupils learn about being inclusive.

- Having strong, non-judgmental, positive relationships with pupils is the foundation for helping address difficult viewpoints.
- Acknowledge that everyone is learning and growing on how to better talk about tricky things, and that if differing viewpoints come up it is okay, but as a class they can think together about what the impact might be.
- Separate the pupils from their behaviour or viewpoint to help them be able to explore that viewpoint.
- Avoid sanctioning any pupils for their views without having a restorative conversation that helps them understand and learn about difference and the rights of everybody to be safe and free from discrimination. Where possible, use a restorative model to help the pupil understand why their view could have hurt someone and where appropriate, apologise or take some restorative action.
- Help pupils understand the impact that language or discrimination can have on others, helping them develop their empathy by using distanced examples to explore how words or actions can impact others.
- Any discriminatory viewpoints should be addressed, but it can be taken away from the individual pupil in that moment by saying 'sometimes people hold this view that __x__, what might be the challenges or difficulties with this viewpoint?'
- Consider having wider conversations with parents at school events about school policy on issues of difference. Explore further outreach if necessary.

Guidance document

Inclusive language discussion guide

Existing PLPS resources

The Premier League Primary Stars programme has lots of resources to help you to have meaningful and productive discussions about allyship and diversity with your pupils:

- [Youth Voice Films](#)
- [Diversity](#)
- [No Room for Racism – Allyship](#)
- [No Room for Racism – Stereotyping](#)
- [No Room for Racism – Racism and inclusion](#)
- [Rainbow Laces – Inclusion has no off-season](#)
- [Premier League Primary Stars Rainbow Laces](#)
- [Inclusion](#)

Other external resources to support with Inclusive Language

- Chartered Insurance Institute – [Inclusive language guide](#)
- Sporting Equals (Race and Religion) – [Sporting Equals Terminology Resource](#)
- Stonewall (LGBTQ+) – [List of LGBTQ+ terms](#)
- Activity Alliance (disability) – [Activity Alliance Factsheet 4: Language](#)