

# Restorative + Educational Approaches

**Handling Racist Incidents Toolkit**



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# 1. Why Move Beyond Punitive Responses?

Traditional approaches often rely only on punishment — detentions, exclusions, or written warnings. While these may stop immediate behaviour, they do not:

- Repair the harm caused.
- Help learners understand the impact of their actions.
- Address the wider culture or curriculum that allows racism to persist.

👉 **Anti-racist approaches must combine restorative justice practices with educational follow-up.** This ensures incidents become opportunities for learning, empathy, and long-term change.

## 2. Restorative Justice Practices

Restorative approaches are not about excusing behaviour. They are about accountability, dialogue, and repair.

### Core Elements:

- **Acknowledging harm:** The person responsible takes responsibility.
- **Voice for the harmed:** The learner who experienced racism is heard and validated.
- **Dialogue not blame:** Structured conversations facilitated by staff.
- **Commitment to change:** Practical steps agreed to prevent recurrence.

### Sample Restorative Prompts:

- “What happened, and what were you thinking at the time?”
- “Who has been affected, and how?”
- “What needs to happen to make things better?”

### 3. Educational Follow-Up Opportunities

Every racist incident should be seen as a teachable moment. Learning must be embedded into the curriculum or pastoral support.

#### Whole-Class Activities (after a group incident):

- **Empathy-Building Circles:** Learners share how certain words/actions make people feel.
- **Unpacking Media Bias:** Analyse adverts, news, or social media posts for racial stereotypes.
- **Exploring Historical Context:** Link incidents to broader historical patterns (e.g. exclusionary language).

#### Individual/Small Group Activities (for learners who caused harm):

- **Reflective Journals:** Write about what happened, who was affected, and how to act differently.
- **Case Studies:** Explore real-world examples of racism and discuss consequences.
- **Identity Mapping:** Reflect on identity, privilege, and relationships with others.

### Restorative + Educational Activities by Age

#### Ages 5–7 (Foundation/Key Stage 1)

Activity	Description	Focus
Feelings Faces	Children choose a feelings card (happy, sad, angry, worried) to show how they feel about an incident. Discussion follows: "What helps when we feel this way?"	Emotional literacy & empathy
Story Circle	Teacher reads a picture book featuring diversity (e.g. Sulwe, Amazing Grace). Class discusses fairness, kindness, and respect.	Storytelling, values

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Focus</b>
Kindness Chain	Each learner says one kind action they can do to include others. Responses are written on paper strips and made into a "kindness chain" displayed in class.	Positive behaviour reinforcement
Role Play	Simple role play: one learner is left out, others act out inclusive responses. Reflect on how inclusion feels.	Empathy through play

### **Ages 7–11 (Key Stage 2)**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Focus</b>
Empathy Circle	Learners take turns finishing prompts: "It hurts when...", "I feel safe when...", "We can help each other by...".	Understanding others' perspectives
Language Matters	Class brainstorms "words that hurt" vs "words that heal". They create a poster with inclusive language.	Respectful communication
History Link	Explore a simple case of injustice (e.g. Rosa Parks, Windrush stories). Learners connect past to present: "Why do words/actions still matter today?"	Historical awareness
Group Charter	Learners co-create a set of class rules for respecting difference. Each signs it as a commitment.	Shared accountability

## Ages 12–15 (Key Stage 3)

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Focus</b>
Restorative Dialogue	Facilitated conversation: harmed learner explains impact, peer listens, both agree steps forward.	Repairing harm, accountability
Media Bias Analysis	Learners analyse adverts, news for racial stereotypes. They re-design or re-write with inclusive alternatives.	Critical thinking, media literacy
Privilege Walk (adapted)	Learners respond to statements by stepping forward/backward (e.g. "I see people like me in books we read"). Debrief in circle.	Recognising inequality
Identity Mapping	Learners create a personal identity map. Reflection questions: "Which parts give me advantages?" "Which parts might be stereotyped?"	Self-reflection, empathy
Action Planning	Learners write commitments: "How will I act differently?" "How can I challenge racism?" Staff follow up later.	Behaviour change, empowerment