

## DEALING WITH INCIDENTS OF DISCRIMINATION

Slurs against one's race, religion, gender, ethnicity or ability constitute one of the many different forms of racism and discrimination; and insults are often ignored because we don't know how to deal with them. While there is no magic formula to solve every occurrence, some common rules of good communication can serve as guidelines – what is required of an adult is to listen carefully, assess the remark and respond thoughtfully and appropriately. Failure to respond to derogatory remarks has consequences for all parties involved. Victims will be left with feelings of frustration and suffer damage to self-concept. Aggressors will have their prejudices confirmed and will be deprived of an opportunity to deal with their ignorance or fear.

The following guidelines may assist educators in handling incidents in the classroom, however, keep in mind that these are only suggestions. Every situation will be unique and educators should be prepared to choose which items to use, in what order and how.

- Act immediately, explain why the behaviour is inappropriate and make clear to the children that it is not acceptable.
- If children are young, try to determine how much of their behaviour they understand.
- Offer clear support to the child who has been insulted or rejected.
- Be firm, yet supportive with the child who was insulting, and help the children resolve any non-racial part of their argument.
- Don't side-step the issue with a response like, "All people are alike." This denies the obvious differences and may imply differences are something to be ashamed of.
- Be sure you give children correct information.
- Carry out curriculum activities to help illustrate and resolve the problem.
- Discuss incidents with parents and staff, so ideas can be shared, and anti-racist practices reinforced.

Reference: Sections 85, 87 Education Act  
The School Division Administration Regulations 45, 49  
Human Rights Act  
Saskatchewan Employment Act  
Occupational Health and Safety Regulations  
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms  
Canada Labour Code  
Saskatchewan Teacher Federation Code of Ethics  
Saskatchewan Human Rights Code  
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child  
United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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