

SCOTLAND EQUALITIES
CONSULTATION CONFERENCE

**'CHAMPIONING EQUALITY
IN SCOTLAND'**

Championing Equality in Scotland

The NASUWT is committed to supporting and developing teachers with protected characteristics in schools and tackling discrimination and prejudice within the teaching profession.

Championing equality in schools and colleges is an absolute priority for the NASUWT. The Union is working towards creating better, safer and healthier working environments for teachers, and, as a consequence, better and more inclusive learning environments for all children and young people.

This declaration sets out the concerns of the 2019 Scotland Equality Conference.



Preamble

1. This Conference declares that:
 - providing a safe, supportive, inclusive and diverse workplace for teachers will best support children and young people in raising concerns of prejudice-related bullying or harassment;
 - equality requires recognition and celebration by employers of multiple identities along the lines of sex, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender identity, age, disability and sexual orientation;
 - all teachers should be entitled to and provided with mandatory equalities training both at Initial Teacher Education stage and throughout their career; and
 - government, councils and school leaders need to act immediately and decisively to eradicate abuse based on prejudice (frequently disregarded as 'banter') from schools.
2. This Conference reflects the frustration of teachers regarding discrimination, harassment and victimisation in schools and colleges in that:
 - many employers fail to address or appropriately report harassment and discrimination; and
 - many teachers have not benefited from equality training in the workplace.

Concerns

3. This Conference expresses the concerns of teachers that:
 - schools are not tackling issues of pupil indiscipline;
 - 'banter', jokes or comments relating to protected characteristics are not challenged consistently in schools;
 - teachers have not been provided with appropriate equalities training to enable them to challenge discrimination; and
 - failing to provide a safe, supportive space for teachers will have a knock-on impact on pupils' ability to raise concerns of prejudice-related bullying.



A real-time electronic poll of attendees at the Conference found that:

How seriously is your school tackling the issue of pupil indiscipline?

42%

Not particularly seriously

33%

Not seriously at all

“ On paper, it looks like they are taking it seriously, but when it comes to action and consequences, there is a distinct lack of commitment ”

“ The school has spent loads of money buying in a system which insists I shake hands with my pupils, but it has made absolutely no difference ”

“ I am really concerned about the knock-on effect on the mental health of the young people ”

Have you ever experienced or witnessed the following in the past two years at work?

10%

Sexist 'jokes'

6%

Disparaging questions or suggestions about your background or faith

2%

'Banter' of a racist nature

14%

Comments based on stereotypical assumptions of disabilities

2%

Inappropriate comments about your body or clothes

4%

Comments about your sexuality or perceived sexuality

39%

Most/all of the above

“ A comment was made to a student teacher that she should put on more make-up, higher heels and a skirt in order to be taken seriously by the pupils – she was in floods of tears ”

“ I was told my accent sounded aggressive and I should try to change it. While I received an apology the next day, this type of comment is really unhelpful ”

“ When it was found out I had no faith, I was treated very negatively ”

Next Steps

4. This Conference calls for urgent action to secure equality for all teachers in schools and colleges, including action to:



challenge bullying, harassment and discrimination in schools and colleges;



secure compulsory equality training for all staff in schools and colleges; and



campaign for and promote the embedding of equalities within the curriculum.

Have you been subjected to any form of hate crime in the last 12 months?

0%

Yes – and it was dealt with to my satisfaction

23%

Yes – but it was not dealt with to my satisfaction

13%

Yes – but I did not report it



A pupil referred to me as the 'curry lady' in their notebook. When I approached my line manager, they didn't deal with it. A lot of the time, racism is ignored: it is easier to pretend it hasn't happened



Colleagues don't challenge racism when exhibited by other teachers



'I hate lesbians' was printed out and placed in the classroom. While I reported it, over six months passed before I got a response



I have no confidence that my headteacher will pass information on hate crimes on to the council



How well is homophobic, transphobic and biphobic bullying tackled in your workplace?

46%

Not well

26%

Not tackled at all



Colleagues don't have the training or skill to support pupils. They are worried they will say something wrong or get complaints from parents



The senior management are more worried about a parental backlash than abiding by the GTCS standards and tackling homophobia in the school



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