

Paper 20: Critical incidents

This paper

It is frequently valuable to discuss real or imaginary events. What should happen immediately, in the next few minutes? What should happen in the next few days? The next few months? What are the implications of adopting a holistic approach (paper 15) to the event described?

This paper contains five short stories that are likely to stimulate valuable discussion and to act as introductions to many of the other papers in this resource folder.

A bit of teasing

Following an incident yesterday in Iraq, a pupil who's of Sikh heritage told me she was being teased by other pupils. 'We killed hundreds of your lot yesterday ... Saddam's your dad, innit ... we're getting our revenge for what you Pakis did to us on 11 September...' I asked her if she had told her class teacher. Yes, she had told her teacher, and her teacher had said: 'Never mind, it's not serious. They'll soon get over it. You'll have to expect a bit of teasing at a time like this.'

Not fair

A pupil was complaining to me bitterly earlier today. 'All right, I'm overweight and I'm not proud of it. But it really gets to me when other kids go on about it. Last week I lost it. I was out of order, right, but when these two kids said I was fatter than a Teletubby and twice as stupid I swore at them and used the word Paki. I got done for racism and was excluded for a day and my parents were informed and all, and I'm really pissed off, and nothing at all has happened to the kids who wound me up. It's not fair.'

Not surprising

I mentioned to a pupil's mother that in a PSHE lesson her son had made some unacceptably negative and extreme remarks about people seeking asylum. 'Well unfortunately it's not at all surprising,' she said. 'The fact is, my husband is an active member of the BNP.'

Hasn't come to school

I'm in Year 6. Yesterday there was a netball match against another school. I was in our team, so was Sue, my best friend. She's the only black pupil at our school. In the changing room before the match a girl in the other team said when she saw Sue, 'Oh, I thought we'd come to play netball, not to watch Planet of the Apes.' Sue was upset, particularly since there were some sniggers from other members of our own team. The insult was repeated and before I could do or say anything Sue threw a ball hard into the girl's face and caused a really spectacular nose bleed. The teacher from our school who was with us was furious, wouldn't listen to a word from Sue and sent her home. Today, Sue hasn't come to school.

Ugly inside

We have a system whereby pupils can send anonymous notes if they wish about incidents of bullying. Today, we received the following: 'I am feeling very, very worried. Most of my life people haven't been horrible to me because of my colour but recently it's got bad. I get called wog and nigger by other pupils in the playground and in the classroom when the teacher can't hear. Yesterday I got mad with someone and yelled at them and was told off by the teacher for swearing. Help me, please help, I feel so ugly inside.'
