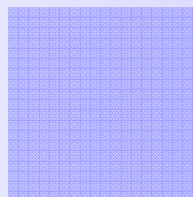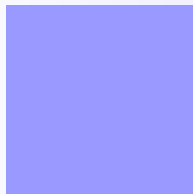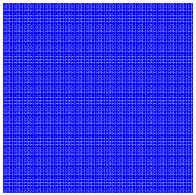# Moving on from 7/7:

Advice to Schools

Moving On from 7/7: Advice to Schools from the Department for Education and Skills

Introduction

July's indiscriminate terrorist attacks targeted at London's commuters and the possible threat of attacks elsewhere in the country have created a number of challenges to schools and to the whole country. The shock and distress caused by this activity has also raised the unwelcome prospect of increased tension within communities including between religious and ethnic groups. This tension could manifest itself in schools, especially if further exploited by those with extremist views.

It is more important than ever that schools continue to be places where normal life goes on and where pupils are able to thrive in a stable, safe, fair and happy environment. Schools do, however, need to respond to the grave challenges arising from terrorist activity in a positive and sensitive way.

No school or community has been untouched by these recent incidents. Victims have included Britons of many ethnic backgrounds and faiths, including Muslims. Many other nationalities have also been among the casualties. Acts of terrorism create victims among those that have suffered directly through death, injury, trauma or bereavement but also those who have been indirectly affected through the reactions to these events. There are also those who have suffered the backlash of victimisation due to their appearance or assumptions about their faith or beliefs.   In the particular climate of recent attacks, many Muslims, and those assumed to be Muslims, are in a position of being simultaneously among the potential victims of terrorism while at the same time at risk of suffering anti-Islamic sentiment, racism, suspicion and hostility. Schools need to ensure that active steps are taken to address the spread of fear, prejudice and tension that may manifest itself in different ways within the diverse communities served by our schools.

Schools will also need to be prepared for the practical concerns that are likely to arise in the event of an actual incident, threat or emergency in the future.

The DfES acknowledges the very helpful and relevant materials that have already been produced by interested organisations, including workforce unions, in response to terrorist threats, racism and Islamophobia. This document is intended to supplement or complement this material rather than replace it.

Terrorist incidents and the responsibility of schools

In responding to the events of July 2005, schools have an obligation to keep within the legal requirement of balance and non partisanship. Schools should be sensitive to the wide range of opinions and views that pupils may be subjected to through their parents, peers and other influences. However, racism and religious intolerance are unacceptable. **Extremism and terrorist violence and targeting civilians cannot be justified in the context of a democratic society**. Schools

should actively challenge such beliefs in a constructive but unequivocal way.

Responding to the Repercussions of Terrorist Incidents

Many schools will already have responded intuitively or in a planned and measured way to the increased threat or actual impact of terrorist activity. It is not possible to be categorical about what is an appropriate level of response as circumstances will vary widely. It is important that all schools, regardless of their geographical location or character, take some time to ensure that there is in place an effective whole school approach to dealing with the direct or indirect effects of terrorism. Schools will normally be best placed to determine where to apply the most emphasis according to their own particular circumstances.

The following should be considered while drawing up any strategy to deal with the wider impact of terrorism:

- The strategy should be widely understood within the school, by the Governing body and by the school workforce and pupils.

- The school's approach and ethos should also be communicated to parents and the communities served by the school. Schools may wish to devise their strategies through utilising the experience and perspective of a range of different staff, pupils, parents and the wider community, including community and religious leaders.

- Schools should also consider how their plans could include support from other outside agencies and services.

- This will also include any strategic and contingency planning proposed by Local Authorities, the Police and Emergency Services.

- Schools may also want to consider how to engage with race equality organisations and different faith organisations including those which are inter-denominational.

Actions and Challenges for Schools

We have outlined below a number of specific areas where schools can be effective in ensuring that the impact of terrorism is dealt with in a practical and positive way. These actions will contribute to keeping pupils safe, will tackle prejudice and intolerance and will help strengthen the school's relationships with parents and the wider community.

When responding, schools should ensure that any action they take is set within a genuinely whole school context. This could involve using the skills and knowledge of a wide range of teachers, support staff and senior managers to develop or review the approach. Pupils themselves may be able to make a significant contribution and could be encouraged to do so. There are also great benefits in consulting with parents and involving the wider community.

Schools may already be taking action across these and other areas, however, July's events provide a timely opportunity to review practices to ensure that they are effective and responsive to any new challenges presented by 7/7.

Dealing with the risks of Islamophobia and bullying

Racist incidents

Immediately following July's events, the reporting of racist and Islamophobic incidents increased dramatically. Every pupil, student or member of staff has the right to attend their place of learning/work in safety and free from prejudice, intolerance or discrimination. Following the recent terrorist activity, heightened community tensions may well be reflected in schools, colleges and universities, and staff will wish to be vigilant for racially or religiously-motivated incidents, especially Islamophobic incidents.

Schools are required (Race Relations [Amendment] Act 2002) to have systems in place for the recording, monitoring and effective handing of racist incidents. Post 7/7 schools will need to ensure that systems are in place to encourage reporting; taking action against perpetrators; and supporting victims.

July's events provide an opportunity to ensure such systems are robust, working effectively and address the particular needs of Muslim pupils. Many schools and local authorities now define Islamophobia as a form of racism when monitoring, recording and reporting racist incidents, and when dealing with such incidents. This wider definition of racism reflects, though does not directly follow from, recent changes in the criminal justice system and in anti-discrimination legislation. Schools and local authorities may find this wider definition helpful for ensuring that anti-Muslim hostility is treated with appropriate seriousness, and for preventing extremists from using religious intolerance as a cloak to disguise racism based on colour and appearance.

Bullying and behaviour

Reducing and responding to all kinds of bullying, including racist and Islamophobic bullying, should be integrated within overall policy and practice on promoting equality, respecting diversity and giving all pupils a sense of inclusion and belonging.

• Preventative approaches are crucial, particularly through the curriculum. Pupils learn much about countering racism, Islamophobia, and bullying from experiential approaches, for example drama, role play, puppets and stories.

• The visual environment of the school, including shared spaces such as dinner halls, is central to signalling the school's commitment to equality and diversity, its endorsement of positive and supportive behaviour, and its opposition to racism and bullying. (There is a wealth of resources, of course, for this, including the SEAL materials and DfES multi-lingual anti-bullying posters but some of the most powerful are photos of learners from the school supporting each other).

- Aspects of good practice in responding to bullying, already in use in many schools, are especially important at times of tension – examples include easy access to confidential ways of reporting bullying (schools are increasingly using e mail and text message routes); the availability of known sources of peer support and suitable spaces for peer supporters to use; publicising helplines on pupil notice boards and in pupil planners.

- Monitoring new arrivals to the school and reviewing their progress as they begin to settle in can be key to the early identification of bullying and ensuring that new pupils quickly fit in.

- Approaches which are both preventative and responsive include creating opportunities for learners to talk about events and express their feelings, encouraging them in their expression of supportive attitudes to each other and helping them to develop peaceful means of resolving disagreement. As well as learning to work together and empathise with one another, the children also develop resilience and skills in positive coping. A good examination of these issues can be found in the article "The World We All Live In" by Jane Lane which can be found on the Intered website. http://www.intered.uk.com/index.php?site=eye

- It is important for pupils to be involved in the formulation of codes of practice for responding to incidents and in the design of peer support schemes.

- The ethos of the school needs to support pupils and parents who find it particularly hard to report bullying. Schools may find the DfES 'Are you being bullied?' postcards, available in the first languages of a range of communities, helpful in encouraging reporting. It is crucial that pupils subject to racist and Islamophobic bullying should know, and know that the school knows, that it is not their fault that they are being targeted.

- Similarly the involvement of parents and other multi-agency sources of support can be extremely helpful in the planning and delivery of responses to racist bullying and creates a feeling of inclusion.

- Staff who lead at lunchtimes and breaktimes often come from the same communities as learners and their parents; they may well be the first people in whom learners confide. They need to be fully part of school policy and practice and to know that any concerns that they raise will be taken seriously. They may also need emotional support themselves, especially where much bullying is being disclosed.

The role of the school in building cohesive communities

Schools are also in a position to form effective partnerships with other schools and help break down barriers that may exist between pupils from different communities.

Twinning of schools can help schools with similar profiles, perhaps in different parts of the country to share expertise, experience and knowledge. It is also effective for schools that may be mono-cultural to forge links with schools that have diverse school populations or have a mono-cultural school population of a different ethnic make up.

All schools, especially Extended Schools, are a key resource in the life of a community. Where schools have good contacts and relationships with the communities they serve, they can also act as a conduit between the community and other services, voluntary organisations, faith groups and the police. Some schools will be in a position to broker informal and formal partnerships through pastoral work they have already undertaken to support their pupils and their parents. There is no "quick fix" to harmonious community relations. However, a school's stated values and ethos can be a powerful influence. A school is in a strong position when forging contacts and relationships if the school has a reputation of taking an active and visible role in tackling racism and intolerance and taking progressive steps to engage with the community in all its diversity.

All communities will benefit through genuine partnership working and mutual understanding. Every community will be strengthened through having a school at the centre of such a partnership.

Improving the understanding of Islam as well as other faiths and cultures

Pupils should not be shielded from the nature of terrorist events but constructive avenues should be found to enable pupils to explore their feelings, fears, curiosity and concerns in a supportive and positive environment. This could be through circle time, school assemblies, in the classroom or even specially convened discussions, seminars or presentations.

> Case study - To be a British Muslim
>
> Learners attend to the testimony and experience of young British Muslims, as outlined and discussed on the websites of *Muslim News*, *Q News* and the *Muslim Council of Britain*, and in the 2004 report of the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia. They identify commonalties, similarities and differences in the lives and identities of British Christians, British Jews and British Sikhs, and then also examine dual identities such as Black British, Scottish British, Mancunian British.

The curriculum provides a range of opportunities for schools to explore other faiths, cultures and languages. History and geography, for example, are two arenas in which young people can find out about the Islamic way of life and the influence and achievements of Islamic civilisations as well as being avenues through which myths and distortions can be dispelled.

Religious education provides a unique opportunity for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of the teachings and practices of principal religions and the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures. It also enables pupils to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular

those whose faith and beliefs are different from their own. Schools are, and have always been, encouraged to give children the opportunity to visit different places of worship and to encounter religion through visitors. Religious education should also provide a non-judgemental environment for children to share their views, beliefs and values with others.

Collective worship also provides schools with an excellent opportunity to develop a positive ethos and set of common values. During collective worship children are able to reflect on social and moral issues and should be encouraged to actively participate and respond to global events.

Citizenship education provides opportunities to tackle concepts such as equality, tolerance, fairness and social justice, and the negative impact of racism and aggressive and antisocial behaviour on society. It also covers issues about legal and human rights, government, the role of organisations such as the EU, UN and the Commonwealth, the significance of the media in society, questions of identity, and conflict resolution.

These offer excellent opportunities to engage pupils in understanding different faiths and religions, for critical thinking and in-depth exploration of current conflicts and controversies in a safe environment. This can help pupils to access factual information from a range of sources, and become aware of the range of argument on different viewpoints. The emphasis should be on helping pupils to distinguish between facts, myths and propaganda in order to arrive at their own informed viewpoints.

Note: Parents have the right to refuse to allow their children to visit other places of worship or to attend classes where religions other than their own are described or explained. While schools should maintain the rights of parents to opt out in this way, if there are significant numbers of parents choosing this course, it may indicate an underlying "hearts and minds" issue that may need particular care and sensitivity to address. It may be that inter-denominational groups working with parent groups could help inform strategies to address parental resistance to sharing a greater understanding of the world's major religions.

The National Strategies have produced, and are further developing, curriculum materials to support schools in their work to develop pupils' social and emotional skills and understanding and to support a positive school climate. These materials provide opportunities for discussions about relationships and managing conflicts and links may be made to wider societal issues.

CASE STUDY

Global Citizenship and Resolving Conflict (through participation)

Bourne Community College has a Year 9 project which focuses on the global dimension of contemporary examples of conflict, the role of international organisations (political and voluntary organisation), the examination of resolution, and support for victims of conflict. Pupils use research, planning, enquiry, communication, participation, and reflection skills in the process.

Initially Year 9 pupils research the nature, history and role of the UN, and Human Rights (and associated vocabulary) through books, the web, quizzes, and discussion about media examples. They identify a specific conflict in groups and use formal homework time to investigate it more deeply looking at what the conflict is about (motives, perspectives and consequences); ways of resolving it; consequences of conflict (refugees or asylum seekers); and which international organisations are trying to help.

Duty of Care, Health and Safety and emergency planning

Problem or solution?

Learners debate three 'Big Myths' set out in *Connect: different faiths, shared values*, published by the Inter Faith Network in association with TimeBank and the National Youth Agency in 2004. The myths are (1) 'Well, they may say they're religious but no-one believes any of that stuff' (2) 'Religious people are just a bunch of fanatics' and (3) 'Religion divides people – all the religions hate each other'. They then sort through some of the stories and case studies in the *Connect* booklet about practical inter-faith projects in various parts of Britain. For each project they ask and consider three questions: What do you see as the strengths of this project? What reservations or criticisms do you have? If you could meet someone from the project what would you ask?

Teachers and the School Work Force

Teachers and other school staff will have expertise that will be invaluable in helping to develop the whole school strategy. Some staff may have links with the community, or language skills that can help with communicating with parents and the wider community.

Members of staff themselves may have been affected by these incidents and others, particularly those from minority ethnic backgrounds, may also be vulnerable to hostility or victimisation in or outside of school. Schools have a duty to ensure that staff are safe and able to participate in the life of the school without fear or intimidation, schools should review this position when considering the effectiveness of their racist incidents procedures.

All staff will need to be familiar with any emergency or contingency planning that the school would have to implement in the event of an incident.

Emergency planning

Schools should consult with their Local Authority when drawing up any emergency plans to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort and to ensure that the school's plans fit in with any area-wide strategic planning that is in place. Many schools will already have formulated their own procedures to put in place in the event of an emergency. It is prudent to review these plans periodically. The following websites provide a great deal of information and help to schools with planning or reviewing their duty of care and health and safety procedures.

http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/emergencies/

http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/healthandsafety/

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolsecurity

Other useful websites:
Please note that the DfES is not responsible for the content of external websites and does not necessarily endorse or share opinions or viewpoints expressed in any external source.

DfES
Don't Suffer in Silence: *http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying/index.shtml*

Ethnic Minority Achievement: *http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ethnicminorities/*

School Security: *http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolsecurity*

Teacher Net
Teachernet Home page: *http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/*

Teachernet Emergencies: *http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/emergencies/*

Teachernet Health and Safety: *http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/healthandsafety/*

Teachernet (SEAL):   *http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/seal/*

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
QCA Respect for All   *http://www.qca.org.uk/301.html*

Home Office
http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/

Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)
http://www.fco.gov.uk

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)
http://www.odpm.gov.uk/

Training and Development Agency (TDA)
Multiverse website*:   http://www.multiverse.ac.uk/*

General Teaching Council of England (GTCE)
http://www.gtce.org.uk/

Local Government Association (LGA)
http://www.lga.gov.uk

Workforce Unions

ATL Association of Teachers and Lecturers
http://www.askatl.org.uk/

NASUWT National Association of School Masters/Union of Women Teachers
http://www.nasuwt.org.uk/

NUT National Union of Teachers
http://www.nut.org.uk/

NAHT National Association of Head Teachers
http://www.naht.org.uk/

PAT Professional Association of Teachers
http://www.pat.org.uk/

SHA Secondary Heads Association
http://www.sha.org.uk/

Other Websites

BBC   *http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion*

Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Relations
                          http://www.caabu.org/

Insted	*http://www.insted.co.uk/*
Intered	*http://www.intered.uk.com/*
IAW Virtual Classroom	*http://www.isb.org.uk/virtual/newsite/index.htm*
Islamic Awareness Week	*http://www.iaw.org.uk*
Islamic Cultural Centre	*http://www.iccuk.org*
Islamic Foundation	*http://www.islamic-foundation.org.uk*
Islamic Society of Britain	*http://www.isb.org.uk*
Islam for Today	*http://www.islamfortoday.com*
Muslim Council of Britain	*http://www.mcb.org.uk*
Muslim Directory	*http://www.muslimdirectory.co.uk*
Muslim Educational Trust	*http://www.muslim-ed-trust.org.uk*
Muslim Heritage	*http://www.muslimheritage.com*
Muslim News	*http://www.muslimnews.co.uk*
Q News	*http://www.q-news.com/*
Soul of Europe	*http://www.soulofeurope.org/*
Ummah	*http://www.ummah.com*

Local Authority Websites

Links to the following Local Authority Websites can also be found on the DfES Ethnic Minority Achievement Website-this is by no means an exhaustive list - the Ethnic Minority Achievement Unit (EMAU) would be delighted to add more links from Authorities who have relevant material that would be useful to colleagues nationally. If so please contact our mailbox on:
Ethnic.MINORITIES@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

EMA Online (set up by a consortium of Birmingham Leeds and Manchester)
http://www.emaonline.org.uk/

Hampshire:
http://www.hants.gov.uk/education/ema/

Hounslow Virtual Education Center:
http://www.hvec.org.uk/

Leicester Multicultural Education Services
http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council--services/education--lifelong-learning/about-us/lea-services/multicultural-education

Manchester Diversity and Inclusion
http://www.manchester.gov.uk/education/diversity/

Nottingham
http://www.nottinghamschools.co.uk/eduweb/Department/department-template.aspx?id=166

Portsmouth
http://www.blss.portsmouth.sch.uk/