

Briefing on Racially Aggravated Incident at Cornwall Islamic Community Centre: supporting students and addressing the incident.

What happened?

The Cornwall Islamic Community Centre is a place for Muslims living across Cornwall to access worship and community. They also support schools in Cornwall with education around Islam.

Overnight between Thursday 17 September and Friday 18 September an incident took place at the Cornwall Islamic Community Centre in Truro. Devon and Cornwall Police have said the incident was 'racially aggravated criminal damage' and involved gates being deliberately struck by a vehicle and an unknown substance (possibly oil) poured within the grounds and on the exterior wall of the centre¹. Schools should be aware that the police investigation remains ongoing and pupils may have encountered speculation or misinformation online. Staff should avoid speculation and refer to verified information from official sources.

As a result of the attack, Islamic students may feel more vulnerable. There has been a positive community response, with many groups and individuals offering the centre support. However, online there has been widespread misinformation and hostile commentary online, including content which has been perceived as Islamophobic rhetoric.

We wish for our schools to feel confident in both supporting your Muslim students and addressing the hate incident

How can schools respond?

We encourage you to take the opportunity to reinforce the following messages to your students:

If you would like this information in another format please contact:

Cornwall Council, County Hall, Treyew Road, Truro TR1 3AY

Email: equality@cornwall.gov.uk Telephone: 0300 1234 100

¹ [News Article - Devon & Cornwall Police](#)

- Everyone has the right to feel safe, respected and welcome.
- We support the British Values of individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance; we may have differences but we are respectful of those differences.
- In Britain, people have the right to practise a faith, to hold a belief, or not to follow a religion at all. These rights should be respected equally.
- Hate incidents and hate crimes have a significant impact on individuals, families and communities.
- If pupils experience or witness prejudice or hate incidents, they should report it to a trusted adult or the police.
- We support diversity and reject racism, discrimination and prejudice.

Supporting Pupils

Schools should be mindful that some pupils, particularly Muslim pupils and non-Muslim students from global majority backgrounds, may more vulnerable following media coverage of the incident. Their families too may also feel anxiety as a result of the incident and may need support also.

Staff should:

- Support students through pastoral care
- Be alert to changes in behaviour, attendance and engagement and approach any changes in a trauma-informed, timely manner.
- Listen carefully to student concerns and reinforce feelings of safety and belonging.
- Signpost to appropriate pastoral support where required.

You may wish to signpost to the following support services:

- Muslim Youth Helpline: <https://myh.org.uk/>
- Kooth: <https://www.kooth.com/>
- StartNow Cornwall: <https://www.startnowcornwall.org.uk/>

Safeguarding Considerations

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2026 has made explicit that child-on-child abuse can take the form of *'discriminatory behaviour, including racism, faith-targeted abuse, and other prejudice-based incidents'*. It is imperative that schools take a zero-tolerance approach to abuse.

Ensure that all staff...

- Are confident in challenging hate incidents, discriminatory language and prejudicial behaviour.
- Understand the impact of hate incidents, discrimination and prejudice

- Are clear on reporting procedures and how to support students (schools should continue to record and report prejudice-related incidents in line with their existing behaviour, safeguarding and equality policies).
- Take opportunities to reinforce respectful relationships and inclusive values

Where concerns arise regarding targeted prejudice, online radicalisation, community tensions or the emotional wellbeing of affected pupils, schools should follow their existing safeguarding procedures and seek advice from safeguarding partners as appropriate.

Schools are not expected to lead detailed discussions about the ongoing police investigation. The primary purpose of any discussion should be to reinforce inclusion, challenge prejudice, promote respectful relationships and provide reassurance to pupils who may feel affected by the incident or wide online commentary.

Schools should be mindful that pupils may encounter related material online and should respond in line with their existing online safety and safeguarding procedures.

Additional Resource: Assembly Script

Below you will find a script for an assembly which you can use to help explain the incident to students and tackle misinformation. Please take time to review the script and make it relevant to your school and your students. This could include incorporating your school's unique values, adding additional information about other forms of discrimination which are impacting your school community or exploring how hate incidents can be reported in your setting.

We know that our schools will exercise professional judgement regarding whether an assembly, tutor activity or classroom discussion is the most appropriate mechanism for their age range and community context.

Assembly Theme/Title	Our Differences Make Us Stronger
Values Links	This assembly links to the British Values of: - Mutual Respect - Tolerance - Individual Liberty
Slide 1: Introduction	<i>Assembly Leader Script</i> “Today we are going to talk about respect, belonging and community. You may have heard about a recent attack on the Cornwall Islamic Community Centre. The police are treating this as a racially aggravated criminal damage. This means the police believe it was attacked because of the beliefs of the people who use the centre. This is a hate crime.”
Slide 2: What is a hate crime?	“Sometimes people are treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. This may be because of: - Their race or ethnicity

	- Their religion - A disability - Their sexual orientation - Their gender When someone is targeted because of these characteristics, it is a hate incident or a hate crime."
Slide 3: What is the impact of hate crimes?	<i>This could be an opportunity for discussion and asking the students what they would feel if they were a victim of a hate crime.</i> "Victims of hate crime often feel: - Scared - Anxious - Worried It can impact their day-to-day lives and their mental health. Perpetrators of hate crimes are also impacted. They may face criminal convictions and reduced career opportunities. In our community, we want to be a hate free place. Where everyone feels safe and that they belong.
Slide 4: What makes a community?	"What words would you use to describe a good community?" <i>Take in responses such as: kindness, safety, friendship, trust, support, inclusion, belonging, respect</i> "A community is strongest when everyone feels they belong, regardless of background, religion, culture or beliefs" <i>If you have the time, you may wish to share the book Last Stop on Market Street (for primaries) or read the poem People Will Always Need People by Benjamin Zephaniah (for secondaries).</i>
Slide 5: How has the Cornish Community helped the Islamic Community Centre?	"After the incident, something powerful happened. <i>Show pictures of the community supporting Cornwall Islamic Community Centre.</i> People from across Cornwall offered support to the centre. Community members sent flowers, helped clean the damage and shared messages of solidarity. Local leaders have condemned racism and Islamophobia. This shows an important lesson: a community is defined by how people come together, not by acts of hate.
Slide 6: What kind of community do we want?	"What kind of community do we want for our school? We want a community that... - Says no to racism - Says no to discrimination - Says no to hatred of people for their protected characteristics

	Most hate incidents do not start with major acts. They often start with: - Name calling - Jokes at someone else's expense - Stereotypes - Excluding people - Hurtful comments online If you see, hear or experience hate... <i>explain your reporting processes at this point.</i>"
Slide 7: Key Message	"_____ school is made up of all different people, with different beliefs, different experiences, different ways of living. We may look different, we may act differently, we may live differently but everyone deserves: - Respect - Safety - Belonging"
Slide 8: Final Reflection	"In Cornwall and across the UK, people of many cultures, faiths and backgrounds live, learn and work together. Our differences should never divide us. They should help us to learn from one another. Let us be people who choose respect over prejudice, kindness over hostility and unity over division. Together, we can ensure that everyone feels safe, valued and welcome in our community."