

Responses

These potential responses will apply in some situations but not all. For this activity, we have assumed the perpetrator has unintentionally caused offence. We should all be prepared to challenge and educate.

1. Gendered Assumptions in the Staffroom

Why the perpetrator might have done what they did:

They may have relied on traditional gender stereotypes without realising the impact, assuming women are naturally better at planning. This often stems from unconscious bias.

What the victim or observing teacher might do:

- Respond: “Could we base roles on skills rather than gender?”
- **Start a discussion:** “Why do we think women are naturally better at planning? Is that based on evidence or assumption? How can we make sure everyone gets equal opportunities?”

What peers might do:

- Support the challenge by agreeing roles should be based on skills.
- Reinforce fairness in task allocation.
- Model inclusive language in future meetings.

2. Assumptions About Religion

Why the perpetrator might have done what they did:

They may have assumed that most people celebrate Christmas because it is widely observed in the UK, without considering religious diversity. This is often an attempt to be friendly but can unintentionally exclude others.

What the victim or observing teacher might do:

- Respond: “We don’t celebrate Christmas.”
- **Start a discussion:** “Lots of families celebrate different things—what could we do to make activities inclusive for everyone?”

What peers might do:

- Acknowledge diversity and avoid assumptions.
- Encourage inclusive planning for celebrations.
- Speak privately to the teacher if needed.

3. Ignored Ideas in Meetings

Why the perpetrator might have done what they did:

They may not have noticed who made the original suggestion or unconsciously prioritised voices they perceive as more authoritative. This often happens in fast-paced discussions without malicious intent.

What the victim or observing teacher might do:

- Respond: “I’d like to clarify that I suggested this earlier.”
- **Start a discussion:** “Do we think some voices get lost in meetings? How can we make sure everyone’s ideas are heard equally?”

What peers might do:

- Credit the original contributor.
- Encourage quieter voices to share.
- Promote meeting norms that value all input.

4. Homophobic Insult

Why the perpetrator might have done what they did:

They may have used “gay” as an insult because of peer influence or lack of understanding about the harm caused by such language.

What the victim or observing teacher might do:

- Respond: “That comment isn’t okay.”
- **Start a discussion:** “Why do we use ‘gay’ as an insult? What does that say about attitudes, and how can we make sure everyone feels respected?”

What peers might do:

- Challenge inappropriate language immediately.
- Support the victim by including them in the activity.
- Report the incident to staff if not addressed.

5. Religious Exclusion

Why the perpetrator might have done what they did:

They may have assumed that visible religious identity (e.g., wearing a hijab) means certain restrictions apply. This often comes from not checking facts.

What the victim or observing teacher might do:

- Respond: “I’m happy to help if needed.”
- **Start a discussion:** “Why do we assume someone’s religion means they can’t take part? How can we check preferences instead of guessing?”

What peers might do:

- Avoid assumptions about religious practices.
- Include all staff in planning discussions.
- Promote cultural awareness training.

6. Power Imbalance and Racism

Why the perpetrator might have done what they did:

They may have repeated language they've heard before, assuming it's acceptable because no one challenges it.

What the victim or observing teacher might do:

- Respond: "I'm uncomfortable with that comment."
- **Start a discussion:** "Why do we think remarks like that are acceptable? How can we create a culture where everyone feels safe to speak up?"

What peers might do:

- Challenge discriminatory remarks immediately.
- Support colleagues who raise concerns.
- Ensure leadership addresses inappropriate behaviour.

7. Stereotypes in Subject Choices

Why the perpetrator might have done what they did:

They may have relied on outdated gender stereotypes, assuming girls prefer creative subjects and boys prefer technical ones. This may come from unconscious bias.

What the victim or observing teacher might do:

- Respond: “I’d like to choose graphics because that’s my interest.”
- **Start a discussion:** “Why do we link certain subjects to gender? How can we encourage pupils to follow their passions without stereotypes?”

What peers might do:

- Promote gender-neutral advice during options.
- Share success stories of girls in STEM subjects.
- Monitor guidance given to pupils.

8. Disrespect from Parents

Why the perpetrator might have done what they did:

They may hold prejudiced views and feel emboldened to express them publicly, assuming there will be no consequences. This often reflects societal attitudes rather than school culture.

What the victim or observing teacher might do:

- Respond: "I'm ending this conversation now."
- **Start a discussion:** "Why do we tolerate comments like that? How can we make sure parents understand our commitment to respect and inclusion?"

What peers might do:

- Intervene and back the teacher publicly.
- Ensure the school follows its behaviour policy for parents.
- Offer emotional support afterwards.

9. Sexist Comments About Pregnancy

Why the perpetrator might have done what they did:

They may have assumed pregnancy is a common topic for women and seen it as harmless conversation.

What the victim or observing teacher might do:

- Respond: “That’s a personal matter I’d prefer not to discuss.”
- **Start a discussion:** “Why do we think it’s okay to ask about pregnancy at work? How can we keep conversations professional?”

What peers might do:

- Shut down inappropriate questions.
- Model respectful conversation.
- Support colleagues in raising concerns.

10. Exclusion by Peers (“Whitewashed” / “Coconut”)

Why the perpetrator might have done what they did:

They may have internalised stereotypes about cultural identity and believe certain behaviours mean someone is rejecting their heritage.

What the victim or observing teacher might do:

- Respond: “That term is offensive.”
- **Start a discussion:** “Why do we use labels like that? What does it say about belonging, and how can we make sure everyone feels included?”

What peers might do:

- Challenge derogatory language immediately.
- Invite excluded colleagues to social activities.
- Promote inclusive team culture.