

HATE CRIMES AND HATE INCIDENTS INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Schools play an important role in helping children feel safe and respected. This information sheet explains what hate crimes and hate incidents are, how they are recorded, and how to report concerns.

WHAT IS A HATE CRIME?

A *hate crime* is any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim, or by any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's identity. In simple terms, this means that a crime (such as assault, criminal damage, harassment, or theft) becomes a hate crime if it is targeted at someone because of who they are or who the offender believes they are.

Examples of hate crimes include:

- Physical assault accompanied by racist or homophobic language
- Damage to property with discriminatory graffiti
- Online abuse targeting someone's disability or religion

The key point is that **the victim (or another person) believes the incident was motivated by hostility or prejudice**. This perception is enough for it to be recorded as a hate crime.

WHAT IS A NON-CRIME HATE INCIDENT?

A *non-crime hate incident* is something that may not meet the criminal threshold but is still perceived as motivated by prejudice or hostility. These incidents do not break the law but can still cause distress and harm and may indicate patterns of behaviour that could escalate.

Examples of non-crime hate incidents include:

- Name-calling or insults related to race, religion, disability, or sexuality
- Offensive jokes or comments in person or online
- Social exclusion based on a protected characteristic
- Sharing offensive content that targets a particular group

Although non-crime hate incidents are not criminal offences, they are still taken seriously. Recording them helps schools and police identify patterns, support victims, and prevent escalation.

PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

Hate crimes and incidents are linked to specific protected characteristics. These are defined in UK law and guidance. The five main monitored strands are:

- **Race or ethnicity** including nationality, ethnic or national origin, skin colour
- **Religion or belief** including no religion
- **Sexual orientation** e.g. lesbian, gay, bisexual
- **Disability** physical, sensory, learning disabilities, or mental health conditions
- **Transgender identity** including people who are trans or perceived to be trans

Schools may also address prejudice related to other characteristics (such as sex or gender), even if they are not part of the five nationally monitored hate crime strands.

HOW THAMES VALLEY POLICE RECORD HATE INCIDENTS AND CRIMES

TVP follow national guidance when recording hate crimes and incidents:

- **Victim perception matters:** If the victim or any other person believes the incident was motivated by hostility or prejudice, it will be recorded as a hate crime or hate incident.
- **Evidence is not required at the point of recording:** The perception alone is enough to ensure the incident is logged appropriately.
- **Separate recording categories:**
 - Hate crimes are recorded as criminal offences
 - Non-crime hate incidents are recorded separately for intelligence and safeguarding purposes

Why Recording Matters

Recording both crimes and non-crime incidents allows police and partners (including schools) to identify patterns or repeat behaviour, protect vulnerable individuals or groups, prevent escalation into more serious offences, build a clearer picture of community safety. Where a pattern of non-crime incidents is identified, early intervention may occur.

HOW CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE CAN REPORT HATE INCIDENTS OR CRIMES

It is important that children feel confident reporting any form of hate or discrimination. There are several ways they can do this:

In School - Students can report concerns to:

- A trusted teacher, their form tutor or head of year
- The school's safeguarding lead
- Any member of staff

Schools are committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment. They will take all reports seriously—even when not criminal—and will follow safeguarding and behaviour policies to support students and respond appropriately.

To Thames Valley Police - Children, parents, or carers can contact TVP directly:

- **Emergency (if danger is immediate)** call **999**
- **Non-emergency** call **101**
- **Online reporting** through the Thames Valley Police website

When reporting, it can help to include what happened, when and where it happened, who was involved (if known), any evidence (e.g. screenshots, messages).

Anonymous Reporting - Reports can also be made anonymously through **Crimestoppers** on 0800 555 111 or online, or **Fearless** (Crimestoppers for Young People) on fearless.org.

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD

Parents and carers play a key role in helping children understand and respond to hate-related behaviour.

What You Can Do

- Encourage open conversations about identity, respect, and difference
- Listen calmly and take concerns seriously
- Reassure your child that it is not their fault
- Report incidents to the school or police where appropriate
- Keep evidence (such as messages or screenshots)

Signs a Child May Need Support

- Reluctance to attend school
- Changes in mood or behaviour
- Withdrawal from friends or activities
- Anxiety, stress, or low confidence

If you notice these signs, speak to the school so appropriate support can be put in place.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- **Thames Valley Police** website - thamesvalley.police.uk
- **True Vision** National police hate crime reporting and information portal - report-it.org.uk
- **Your child's school safeguarding policy**
- **Childline** Confidential support for Young People - childline.org.uk, 0800 1111
- **Safe!** – Support for Young People affected by crime - safesupport.org.uk

Working together, we can ensure all students feel safe, respected and included.