

Racist Incident Policy

Oak Tree Federation

Policy for Preventing and Dealing with Racist Incidents

'Inspiring Learning for Life'

Introduction

At Firle CEP and Laughton CP Schools we are committed to working with children, staff, governors and parents/carers to create a school community where racism is not accepted and a community which aspires to fulfil our aims of 'Inspiring Learning for Life'.

All members of the school community (staff, children, parents and visitors) have a right not to experience racism at school, whether or not this is directed at them.

In order to maintain the positive whole school ethos, which permeates the day to day life of the school and which is sympathetic to pupils' cultural, ethnic and social needs, we have created a caring atmosphere based on a sense of community and shared values. Our schools value all children and seek to ensure that they learn that challenging hurtful behaviour and discrimination is an important part of our inclusive ethos and is central to our role in promoting British values to prepare children for life in modern British society.

Racism is evident in wider society and therefore inevitably will occasionally occur within schools. Racist incidents can occur in any school setting, including ours.

At Firle CEP and Laughton CP schools we work actively:

- to develop a climate which is intolerant to racism
- to ensure an atmosphere in which all pupils feel valued and listened to and have
- confidence that their concerns will be addressed

Children are taught about racism, that it is unacceptable and that it diminishes us all.

As a school we aim to recognise, value and celebrate our diversity by ensuring that:

- all children have an equal and strong sense of belonging within our diverse school community
- there are few racist incidents and these are dealt with effectively
- children from different ethnic, faith and cultural backgrounds mix and get on well with each other

Every School has a statutory duty to promote race equality. This arises from the Race Relations Act 1976, Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Equality Act 2006.

A key legal duty is to record and monitor all racist incidents and ensure appropriate action is taken following each recorded incident.

This policy runs alongside the Equalities policy, Anti-bullying and Behaviour policies.

What is a racist incident?

Schools are required to use the following definition for recording and responding to racist incidents:

'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'

The Home Office Code of Practice explains that 'the purpose of the definition ... is to ensure that investigations take full account of the possibility of a racist dimension to the incident and that statistics of such incidents are collected on a uniform basis'.

In recording incidents under this definition, it is not the intention to label individuals as racist. Records of incidents are held centrally using My Concern in our schools.

By recording all incidents, the school is able to:

- demonstrate that they have dealt satisfactorily with incidents
- monitor trends and patterns of behaviour if they exist
- take preventative action against racism which may come into the school from society in general
- provide good educational responses to any behaviour that is of concern

Consequently, any incident which is perceived by anyone to be racist will be investigated, recorded and monitored as such. This designation does not necessarily mean that racism has occurred.

In investigating any incident as defined above the school will be seeking to establish whether any behaviour, language or expression has occurred which has caused harm or offence in relation to colour, culture, ethnic group or religion.

In some incidents it may be found that the motivation was to cause harm or offence, in others it may have been unintentional, but both would still be recorded. Intentionally racist behaviour will be dealt with differently to unintentional incidents. For example, younger children may unwittingly use offensive language which they do not understand and did not intend.

It is important to note that racist incidents and racist bullying can be subtle and may not always be racially explicit. These kinds of incidents can be just as damaging to victims as explicit racism. Children may also suspect the motives and intent of other children when perfectly acceptable language is being used.

Importantly, wherever offence is caused it needs to be understood and resolved, and where it concerns elements related to colour, culture, ethnicity or religion it will be recorded as a racist incident.

It should be noted that under the prescribed definition racist incidents can occur without a victim or target being present, for example telling a racist joke or making derogatory remarks about a particular ethnic community. Such incidents will also be recorded and resolved.

Some racist incidents involve allegations that the school itself has failed to provide equal and fair opportunities or treatment to individuals or groups on the basis of their colour, culture, ethnicity or religion. Where such an allegation is made this too will be recorded and investigated as a racist incident.

Racist incidents may include*:

- Threatened or actual physical assault
- Verbal abuse
- Racist graffiti (on school furniture, walls or books)
- Distributing racist literature - including internet links
- Wearing of badges or symbols belonging to known racist organisation
- Name calling
- Teasing in relation to language, religion or cultural background
- Expressions of prejudice calculated to offend or to influence the behaviour of others
- Intimidation
- Isolation and spreading of rumours
- Inappropriate and hurtful humour

* N.B. This list is not exhaustive

This policy is fully consistent with and should be considered alongside the school's policy on anti-bullying but also complies with additional legal requirements for identifying and responding to racist incidents.

Roles and responsibilities

1. The Executive headteacher and Head of School are the members of staff responsible for investigating incidents where this is required, for overseeing the application of the policy across the school, for monitoring the effectiveness of the policy and for reporting to governors. A report (including a nil report) must be made at the termly full governing body meeting.

2. All staff are involved in dealing with racist incidents and maintaining good race relations.

3. Teachers wherever necessary will:

- immediately address any child's negative, stereotype or racist response to difference related to culture, colour or ethnicity
- provide support to any child who has experienced offence from another person
- refer language or behaviour that has been hurtful to the Executive headteacher or Head of School for further investigation and resolution
- provide an educational response so that children develop the knowledge and skills necessary for living in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-faith society: this can be achieved through the use of multi-cultural resources, displays, the context of children's work and, as subject leaders, ensuring that there are opportunities within our broad and balanced curriculum to celebrate and focus on achievements from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds

4. All staff will be vigilant at all times and open to children's concerns about experiences of racism, being ready to listen and to take reports seriously.

Distressed children will be supported and all incidents reported on to the appropriate member of staff.

Expectations of children

All children, as appropriate to their age and understanding, have a responsibility for promoting a harmonious school community and challenging and/or reporting racist and other hurtful behaviours.

It is understood however that it may be difficult for children who are the targets of racism to report it.

Expectations of parents

We always take parents' concerns seriously. However, the school can only respond to incidents that are drawn to our attention.

Parents are expected to ensure that their children display appropriate and acceptable behaviour in and out of school. When problems arise in school we will seek the support of all parents in ensuring their children understand where and why offence has been caused and what, if any, change might be necessary to adhere to the school's policies.

Responding to incidents

1. In responding to incidents that may occur the school will aim:

- to provide appropriate support to the children
- to deal with any unacceptable behaviour
- to prevent racism and discrimination and
- to re-establish good race relations

2. Support will be given to anyone who has experienced offence. It will be made explicit that their concerns will be listened to.

3. An investigation will look into the details of what has occurred.

4. The cause of offence will be clearly identified and an educational response provided where appropriate.

5. Where offence was intentional children will be subject to disciplinary procedures as detailed in the Behaviour Policy.

Where offence was unintentional children will need to understand how offence was caused and be supported to make any changes necessary in their behaviour.

The highest priority will be placed by the school on resolving any breakdown in relationships and ensuring that children can move on positively from the experience.

Restorative approaches will be at the centre of our response to any incidents.

6. Children who have experienced racism and their parents will be kept informed throughout the investigation and resolution of the incident.

Recording and reporting incidents

When a racist incident takes place, this must be recorded using My Concern.

The school must report racist incidents to the Governing Board through the DSL safeguarding report this will include racist incidents that have been recorded.

If racist incidents have occurred, then these should be reported to the Governors each term.

As required:

1. All incidents will be recorded, including the date, the names and ethnicity of the perpetrators and victims, the nature of the incident, and action taken in response.
2. Where racist incidents occur which involve any of the following, further advice will be sought:

- physical violence or serious damage to property
- repeated or orchestrated harassment, including text messaging and cyber bullying
- links with extremist groups, including distributing of racist literature
- racist graffiti
- absence related to a racist incident
- exclusion related to a racist incident

Racist incidents may indicate concerns about violent extremism. In this case the Executive headteacher will contact the Local Authority as this may require further reporting and intervention (Prevent Duty).

Violent Extremism is defined by the Crown Prosecution Service as 'the demonstration of unacceptable behaviour by using any means or medium to express views, which:

- Encourage, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs
- Seek to provoke others to terrorist acts
- Encourage other serious criminal activity or seek to promote others to serious criminal acts
- Foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK

Performance indicators for preventing and dealing with racist incidents

In reviewing the effectiveness of this policy, staff and governors will consider:

- the feelings of victims (and their parents) on the satisfaction of the support received and the resolution of incidents
- the continued good progress and self-esteem of those who have been offended
- the continued good progress and self-esteem of those who have caused offence
- whether the action taken successfully prevented repeat incidents
- the willingness of children (and parents) to draw their concerns to the attention of staff
- the consistency of response and confidence of all staff in following school policy
- whether good race relations are being maintained in the school community
- underlying causes for any rise in numbers of incidents, whether these were preventable and if further action or change in policy and practice is now necessary

Protocol for dealing with a racist incident

1. Investigate what happened

- Listen to all parties
- Address underlying issues, e.g. an incident may not be racist in origin - it might be a dispute over something else in which racist abuse has been used; in which case the original issue should be sorted out as well as the use of the unacceptable words that made it a racist incident
- Make sure race issues are covered - don't just treat incidents as a case of simple bullying
- Be able to explain why it is a racist incident if you judge it to be such. If it's not judged to be a racist incident this needs to be explained to the parties involved
- The incident might still be an infringement of the school's behaviour policy which needs a response
- Record on My Concern under the 'racism' tag. Include a clear account of what happened
- Make sure that any witnesses know that the behaviour will not be tolerated

2. Protective and educational consequences at next available opportunity

- focus on the behaviour rather than the person
- explain that this is a type of behaviour that is not tolerated in our school (if appropriate explain that it is illegal)
- explain how racism develops stereotypes and that these are destructive
- try to uncover the route of the ideology
- challenge racist beliefs and correct racist misperceptions, e.g. about not belonging in "our" country

3. Inform parents

- Send template letter to both sets of parents
- Make sure that the parents are also spoken to about what has happened either when the letter is handed to them or via a phone call if they do not collect their child from school e.g. after school club or child walks without an adult

4. Restore

- If appropriate, attempt restorative approaches. It makes sense to try this after the incident when the situation has become calmer. This might be the next day. This could be in the form of a meeting between the two children, a letter or a message passed onto the victim via an adult. The person who received the racism should be given the opportunity to express how the incident affected them if they feel comfortable. The aim here is to create a safe space for communication where empathy is developed. It is not about win/loss. It is about facing up to the harm until understanding is reached.
- It should also be made clear that as a community racism has an impact on all of us. That when one child experiences racism it offends/ impacts many/ all of us

5. Reoccurring

- If the same child is racist again then the above steps will be completed by the Executive Headteacher and they will contact the PCSO to come into school.

Where review indicates that change is needed, policy and practice will be amended as part of the school development process.