

South Wirral High School: Anti Racist Policy

This policy reflects our commitments to equalities and the wellbeing and protection of children and young people from bullying and prejudice by other children and young people and aims to prevent bullying and prejudicial behaviours and attitudes with regards to race. This policy sits alongside our antibullying policy which will address all forms of bullying, discrimination and prejudice and includes the right of protection from discrimination for any of the nine protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. This document will provide guidance specifically for tackling racism in school.

Statement of Aims

South Wirral High School is committed to raising the achievement of ethnic minority pupils and ensuring equality of access to the curriculum. We seek to challenge racial inequalities and oppressive racial norms and assumptions.

The amended Race Relations Act 1976 gives schools a statutory general duty to promote race equality. The aim of the duty is to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
- promote equal opportunities; and
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

We aim to ensure that all ethnic minority pupils:

- Fully access the curriculum
- See themselves, their languages and their heritages reflected and valued in the curriculum
- Are encouraged to have high expectations and feel confident and proud to express their cultural identities

We are committed to:

- respecting and valuing differences
- meeting the diverse needs of its pupils
- preparing pupils for life in a multi-ethnic society

The Context of the School: South Wirral High School in 2025/26:

93.7% of South Wirral Population identify as White British, 3.5% identify as other.

Tackling Racist Incidents and Creating an Anti-Racist Culture

Whilst this guidance focuses on responding to racist incidents experienced by children and young people, the principles apply equally to racist incidents experienced by staff and parents from minority ethnic backgrounds.

1. WHAT IS RACISM?

Racism is when someone is discriminated against because of their race, the colour of their skin, nationality, ethnicity (includes culture, religion and language) or national origin.

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

(The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry 1999, Recommendation 12)

Any incident which is perceived to be racist must be recorded and investigated with rigour, commitment and transparency. Whether or not the person responsible intended their behaviour or actions to be racist is irrelevant. When dealing with an incident, the person's intentions and attitudes are an important consideration. However, at the stage of initial recording and investigating, their attitudes, motivation and awareness are not the main issue. The main issue is that they have behaved in a racist manner.

What can racism look like? For example:

- Isolating or marginalising someone because of the colour of their skin, nationality, ethnic* or national origin.

(*Ethnicity includes culture, religion and language.)

- Verbal or non-verbal abuse, e.g. threats, derogatory name-calling, gestures, racist jokes
- Damage to property
- Physical assault and harassment, e.g. hitting, tripping, pushing, kicking
- Visual – racist text or images such as posters, notices or graffiti
- Incitement of others to behave in a racist manner
- Cyber – using social media to promote or incite racism
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist badges or insignia.
- Refusal to co-operate with other pupils because of their race or ethnicity, or their perceived race or ethnicity

Many of these behaviours can also take place online, through social media or messaging platforms.

Racist language, negative views and their impact on children and young people

Racist language, stereotypes and jokes around the school can exclude, threaten, hurt or humiliate young people, whether experienced directly or indirectly. Sometimes, racist language can be used without malice or understanding, but this does not mean that it has no impact on young people who hear it used in this way. Both minority ethnic young people and the wider school community may be seriously affected by these negative

messages. The cumulative effect on the emotional and mental health of minority ethnic children and young people should not be under-estimated. It can lead to:

- loss of self-esteem.
- feelings of exhaustion;
- reduced ability to thrive in an environment.
- mistrust of peers, staff and the 'system'.
- decreased participation and ability to study.
- underachievement.
- reduced attendance.

Not all racist incidents would be considered bullying. For example, a teacher might observe a young person telling a racist joke which isn't directed at anyone in particular. This should still be addressed and recorded as a racist incident.

2. TACKLING RACIST INCIDENTS

A racist incident may be a hate incident or hate crime.

A racist incident is a hate incident if the victim or anyone else thinks it was carried out because of hostility, discrimination or prejudice based on race.

In the case of hate incidents, the designated member of staff / DHT should seek advice from the Police.

If the incident is a criminal offence and the offender targeted the victim because of their prejudice or hostility based on race, this is a hate crime. All possible hate crimes should be reported to the Police through the Safer Schools Officer.

Supporting a child or young person who has experienced racism

This applies in the following situations:

- A child/young person tells you about a racist incident towards them.
- A child/young person (third party) tells you that they have seen or heard about a racist incident involving another child/young person.
- You witness a racist incident involving a child/young person.
- A parent tells the school about a racist incident that their child has experienced or has witnessed.

Be aware that a child / young person from a black and minority ethnic background may react strongly to racism because they experience this not just as a personal attack but as an attack on their family, community and culture. Furthermore, the immediate incident may be only the latest in a series of other racist incidents (micro-aggressions or more significant incidents) which the child or young person has experienced. The child/young person's strong reaction may itself be unacceptable. In such cases, it is important to treat

both the racist incident and the young child/young person's reaction appropriately and proportionately.

NOTE: at all times child protection / risk management procedures should be followed if necessary.

Show belief and treat the concern seriously.

- Children and young people often say they don't feel believed or taken seriously; they can be deeply affected at their core by what they perceive as racism against them, and even if it doesn't appear to you to be a racist event, it is important that you show belief and investigate thoroughly before making a judgment.
- Discuss what the child/young person would like to happen – follow this as far as possible.
- Children and young people often feel teachers want to help but don't always handle it well and may make it worse; they may under-react or over-react. Teachers, especially those with less experience of responding to racist incidents, may not feel confident about what to do.

So, ask the child/young person what they would like to happen and as far as possible follow their feelings.

They may want nothing to happen at this point – it may be enough to tell you, and you have to take a decision on how serious the issue is, and whether you can hold on to that information and support the child for a bit, to help them resolve it in their own way.

Take the views of the child or young person seriously, with awareness that racism cannot go unchallenged even when they may be reluctant to seek a solution or want to avoid a direct approach.

In all cases, tell them what you plan to do and who you need to tell, so they can feel in control as far as possible.

Parents as Partners

Inform their parents/carers of the incident, how their child is being supported and how the incident is being dealt with. This should be done as soon as possible, particularly for victims of racism so that parents can support children when they arrive home on that day.

Give as much feedback as possible on actions and outcomes

Children and young people often say they report racism, and they never hear about it again. This can happen even where the incident has been very effectively handled in terms of the child or young person who displayed racist behaviour, because of the need to recognise their rights and privacy too. There needs to be a balance between the privacy of the child/young person who displayed racist behaviour (in terms of the consequences

and support for them), and the rights of the child/young person who experienced the racist behaviour to feel that justice has been done.

Rights Respecting and Restorative approaches

Core practices in developing positive relationships are: Rights Respecting and Restorative. Address the root causes of the racist behaviour and for the behaviour to stop.

Where appropriate, use restorative approaches, balancing this with respecting children and young people's rights. Recognise that for the child/young person who experienced racism, a purely restorative approach may not feel enough for justice to have been done and their rights to have been respected. A reflection workshop takes place with the designated member of staff to address the issues.

Revisit to check on a sustained basis

Children and young people often say that the teacher dealt with it and it stopped for a time, and they didn't want to keep going back because they would be seen as a 'wimp' or a 'moan'. So, it's important that you take the initiative on a sustained basis, to check that the child or young person is not having problems again. Peer mentoring or buddy systems may be supportive.

Follow up

Ensure that key staff are aware on a need-to-know basis and can help you monitor for future events / occurrences.

Recording of incidents

All incidents will need to be recorded on Arbor and details logged on CPOMs to support the school in identifying trends in order to target year groups or issues and ensure the work we do meets the needs of our school community.