

Leichhardt Public School

Anti-Racism Policy



What is racism?

Racism can take many forms, such as jokes or comments that cause offence or hurt, sometimes unintentionally; name-calling or verbal abuse; harassment or intimidation, or commentary in the media or online that inflames hostility towards certain groups.

At its most serious, racism can result in acts of physical abuse and violence. Racism can directly or indirectly exclude people from accessing services or participating in employment, education, sport and social activities.

It can also occur at a systemic or institutional level through policies, conditions or practices that disadvantage certain groups. It often manifests through unconscious bias or prejudice.

On a structural level, racism serves to perpetuate inequalities in access to power, resources and opportunities across racial and ethnic groups.

The belief that a particular race or ethnicity is inferior or superior to others is sometimes used to justify such inequalities.

- Australian Human Rights Commission, National Anti-Racism Strategy, July 2012, Page 4

Effects of Racism

Racism has damaging effects on individuals, families and communities and the learning and working environment. Racism can adversely affect:

- educational outcomes
- individual happiness and self-confidence
- school climate
- cultural identity
- school and community relations
- student behaviour.

Indicators of Racism

Recognising racism in schools may be difficult, as racism manifests itself in a range of ways, some more clearly discernable than others.

- hostility or lack of co-operation between groups
- appearance of racist graffiti
- promotion of racist propaganda
- display of racist behaviour including comments, ridicule or abuse, as well as physical harassment and assault
- existence of discriminatory practices including:
 - low expectations for some groups of students
 - non-inclusive policies, curriculum and pedagogy denying certain groups access to a wide curriculum.

Countering Racism

To effectively counter racism, anti-racism education strategies need to be implemented across the full range of a school's activities.

All schools are required to have a trained Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO). This officer assists parents, staff and students who have complaints regarding racism and facilitates the complaints handling process.

Complaints of Racism

A student, a parent, a staff member, or any member of the school or the community can make a complaint about racism. Complaints about racism are dealt with using the Department's Complaints Handling Policy Guidelines. Data relating to complaints of racism, and the methods used to resolve them, should be maintained, in line with these guidelines.

Complaints of racism can be made to any staff member, but are best facilitated by the ARCO who has been appropriately trained.

How to make a complaint of Racism

1. Complaints of racism should be referred to the ARCO or the principal as soon as possible.
2. The ARCO will speak with the complainant and assess if it is appropriate to seek informal resolution, consistent with the Complaints Handling Policy Guidelines.
3. If an informal resolution is not appropriate or possible, the ARCO may assist the complainant to put the complaint in writing if necessary and inform the complainant of the relevant procedure and their rights.

There are three types of formal procedures used, depending on the nature of the complaint – remedy and systems improvement, negotiation, and investigation.

Remedy and Systems Improvement procedure

- Remedy immediately if possible
- Matter is referred to the principal or local manager – if an immediate remedy is not possible due to a lack of delegated authority
- Refer matter to statewide manager - if a resolution is not possible due to a lack of delegated authority.

Negotiation

Determine whether negotiation is the correct procedure, or if a mediation service might be an alternative

The complainant can request an internal review of the decision made or the use of the procedure

Most formal complaints about racism will require the negotiation procedure to be followed.

Investigation

Assess the need for a co-ordinator

Initiates investigation – if previous action was not sufficient or sound

Conducts investigation

Considers the investigation report, make a decision and inform parties

4. The ARCO will then refer the matter to the delegate who is usually the principal or an executive member of staff.

5. The delegate leads the negotiation or investigation, if required. The delegate follows the steps described in the appropriate procedure from the Complaints Handling Policy Guidelines.

6.If a negotiated settlement is not possible, it is the delegate who makes a final decision and informs the complainant and respondent.

Engaging parents and community

The participation of parents and community in the life of the school is an essential component of anti-racism education. It allows parents to be confident about the safety of their children. It fosters improved community relations within and outside the school and provides an opportunity for collaborative home-school partnerships to be developed in response to local needs.