

MARLFIELDS PRIMARY ACADEMY

Dealing with Racist Incidents Policy

Policy Author (s)	Mrs S Isherwood
Responsible Committee	Resources
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Academy Website	Yes

Introduction to reporting and recording racist incidents

In considering racist incidents, we accept the Home Office definition of a racist incident to be:

- A racist incident is any incident that is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person. The definition is for the purposes of initial recording. Just because an incident is alleged or perceived to be racist does not mean that it is racist. But it does mean that it must be recorded and investigated.

The definition implies that if anyone thinks an incident is racist then it will definitely be taken seriously and investigated. Failure to investigate, even where an incident appears to be of a relatively minor nature, could be seen as condoning racism and could be used as evidence that a school is not taking seriously its legal duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act.

Whether or not the pupil(s) responsible intended their behaviour to be racist is in the first instance irrelevant. Of course, when it comes to dealing with an incident, pupils' intentions and attitudes are an important consideration. But at the stage of initial recording and investigating, their attitudes, motivation and awareness are not the main issue. It's the effects of their behaviour, not the reasons for it that require attention.

Identifying racist incidents and behaviour

Detailed below are some examples of possible racist behaviour:-

- Derogatory name-calling, insults, racist jokes and language
- Verbal abuse and threats
- Physical assaults
- Ridicule based on differences of colour, race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, religion or language
- Refusal to co-operate with others because of any of the above differences
- Stereotyping on the basis of colour, race, ethnicity etc
- Racist comments
- Racist graffiti
- Written abuse
- Damage to property
- Incitement of others to act in a racist manner
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist badges or insignia

- Bringing racist materials such as leaflets, magazines or computer software onto the premises
- Attempting to recruit other young people to racist organisations and groups.

Dealing with racist incidents

Incidents involving young people

It is recommended that staff will use their professional judgement in dealing with specific incidents, but individual practice should be based on policy.

Responding to racist incidents

Should an incident occur that anyone feels is racist the following actions need to be taken:-

- Initial Response.
- Treat the issue seriously.
- Respond immediately.
- Reinforce school's position and rules on racism.
- Focus on the perpetrator's behaviour (rather than the person).
- Support and affirm the victim.
- Connect with, and deal with, pupils' feelings.
- Record - Complete an alleged racist incident report form, which is available from the Principal.
- Notify the named management team member responsible for dealing with racist incidents.

Investigate

Senior manager should lead and:-

- listen to all parties
- address underlying issues, e.g. an incident may not be racial in origin; it might be a general dispute in which racist abuse has been used. If this is the case the original issue should be sorted out as well as the use of the unacceptable behaviour that made it a racist incident
- make sure race issues are covered; do not just treat incidents as a case of bullying - be able to explain why it is a racist incident if you judge it to be such
- reinforce the school's position and rules on racism

- if it is judged not to be a racist incident this **MUST** be explained to the parties involved. The incident might still be an infringement of the school's behaviour policy, which needs a response.

Complete the Racist Incident Investigation Form, which is available from the Principal.

Further response if the incident is judged as racist:

- Inform (a standard note can be useful) and involve class teachers.
- Follow through with both victim and perpetrator.
- Address the perpetrator's racist behaviour and correct racist misconceptions.
- Reinforce the school's position and rules on racism.
- Bring both parties together and give them a chance to be involved in resolving the situation.
- Contact parents/carers of both the victims as well as the perpetrators; a procedure for reporting should be in place. This could possibly involve a letter or telephone call appropriate to the situation.
- Inform parents/carers about the incident and the action the school is taking.
- Log incident on IRIS. (Individual Racist Incident in Schools system)

NB: Victims have a right to refer cases to the police if their parents so wish and all parties have a right to appeal to the Governing Body.

General follow through

- Take appropriate measures to reinforce the school's position with individuals/group/class/school via assembly, circle time, tutor period and curriculum.
- Present monitoring returns to staff to ensure regular discussion and development of good practice.
- Continue to encourage pupils to report and discuss racist incidents and how they should respond.
- Use existing means of involving pupils, such as a pupil post box or student council.
- Work with other agencies to promote good race relations.
- Governing Bodies could be informed termly of incidents and actions taken to deal with them as a part of the Principal's termly report.

- Governing Bodies should look for patterns around racist incidents such as time, location, ethnicity and identify good practice in the school's response to incidents.

All the above should be dealt with in accordance with Data Protection, and confidentiality should be maintained at all times.

Incidents involving staff

An allegation of racist behaviour against any member of staff should be investigated thoroughly before any formal disciplinary procedures are instigated. Whether the victim of alleged racist behaviour is a young person or member of staff, the Principal should initially investigate under the school's disciplinary policy and procedures before taking informal or formal action. It should still be recorded as a racist incident.

Supporting the victims

It is vital that the school creates a climate in which victims of racist incidents feel able to report them. All staff and young people should also be encouraged to report any incident they witness, and all such reports should be followed up. The school should involve parents or carers when offering support to victims of serious incidents and it may be appropriate to involve other agencies. An interpreter should be made available for victims and parents if necessary. Where the victim of a racist incident is a member of staff, support is available through their professional associations and/or through the LA staff counselling scheme, in addition to support from colleagues.

When dealing with racist incidents, staff should:-

- listen attentively
- remain calm and reassuring
- accept the victim's language and terminology
- remember that to report an incident may need considerable courage
- acknowledge the feelings of the victim(s)
- confirm they were right to make the disclosure
- show they understand the difficulty in discussing the matter
- offer immediate support; reassure the victim that the matter will be treated seriously and that a full investigation will take place.

Working with the perpetrators

All racist behaviour should be treated as a serious matter and should never go unchallenged. It is crucially important that the member of staff who first encounters the incident shows firm disapproval and takes positive action to deal with the situation.

A failure to respond could be seen as condoning racist behaviour and could discourage young people and parents from reporting incidents and sharing concerns with staff. Responses to incidents should be prompt, appropriate and consistent. Disciplinary action should be in line with the Behaviour Policy and senior leaders dealing with the incident should check if the perpetrator has a record of previous similar behaviour.

Perpetrators' future behaviour should also be monitored. Senior leaders should emphasise that the aim of the policy and procedures for dealing with racist incidents is to prevent such incidents from occurring and not to get people into trouble. It should be recognised that both victims and perpetrators will often need pastoral support. It is important, in working with perpetrators of racist incidents, to separate the behaviour from the person.

Wherever possible, staff should try to use positive strategies to encourage the perpetrator to overcome his/her prejudices and to desist from similar behaviour in future. The school will use activities, curriculum work and whole-school initiatives to address and change racist attitudes. (See Equalities Policy).

Monitoring and Review

All racist incidents must be reported and dealt with appropriately. Overall responsibility for dealing with racist incidents lies with a designated senior member of staff, currently the Principal. This member of staff is responsible for ensuring that racist incidents are recorded on the Cheshire East Individual Racist Incident in Schools system (IRIS) at least termly.

The pattern and frequency of racist incidents will be analysed to inform future planning and Governors will be informed at least annually about the current situation.

This policy will be reviewed regularly in line with the schools monitoring and review cycle.

Dealing with Racist Incidents flowchart:

Overview of actions that need to be taken by schools and settings on alleged racist incident

1. Initial response
2. Record on Alleged Racist Incidents' Report Form
3. Investigate and complete investigation form
4. If a racist incident-further response
5. If not a racist incident, take appropriate action. Follow through as per school procedures
6. Log on Local Authority Individual and Annual Racist Incident Reporting and Recording System (IRIS)

Guidance on Completing the School Alleged Racist Incident Report Form

The Racist Incident Form is to record the details of each possible racist incident and is for school use only. Used with the Racist Incident Investigation Form, it ensures that there is transparency and accountability in school processes. The data provided also allows monitoring and evaluation to take place. They facilitate reporting to school governors concerning racist incidents and the actions taken to deal with them.

Both forms could be an important source of evidence in:-

- investigations, procedures and legal proceedings related to racism
- Disciplinary, Grievance, Child Protection procedures and legal proceedings
- the school's own disciplinary systems.

It is important, therefore, to ensure that key data are accurately noted in accordance with Data Protection.

The Alleged Racist Incident Report Form is to be completed by the teacher or other adult either directly reporting the incident themselves or to whom the incident was reported.

The following explains some of the headings used on the form:

- **Type of Incident:** This covers the types of harassment most likely to happen in schools and they are self-explanatory. It should be noted that in some instances racist activity can take place without the presence of a specific victim. Such instances still constitute a racist incident and should be responded to and recorded.
- **Location:** it is useful to know which areas of the school and its immediate vicinity are prone to racist incidents. School-based incidents are obviously the school's main concern, but it is also useful to note that incidents affecting pupils, which take place outside the school, may need to be dealt with by the school.
- **Alleged Victim(s) and Perpetrator(s):** covers anyone involved in these incidents, not just pupils.
- **Written account provided:** allows staff or others to indicate if they have provided details of the incident.

Guidance on Completing School Alleged Racist Incident Investigation Form

The Racist Incident Investigation Form is to be completed by the member of the management team responsible for dealing with racist incidents. It is for school use only.

Some incidents that are not at first thought to be racist may turn out on investigation to be racist, at which point they should be recorded as a racist incident using IRIS.

Those involved:

- Role/Status - Allows the type of people involved to be described and coded as pupils, teachers, other staff, governors, parents, other adults, other young people.
- Ethnicity - It is important to note the ethnicity of victims and perpetrators to show exactly what patterns exist and what the issues are.

All schools have to gather information on pupil level ethnicity for PLASC. Similar information may also be held for adults in the school following the enactment of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act. However, for some others who may be involved, e.g. visitors, it may be difficult to fit them into the more detailed categories, but it should be possible to assign individuals to the broader categories e.g. Asian/Asian British; Black/Black Britain; Chinese; Mixed; White. If it is not possible, please just note 'not available'.

Action taken

It is important that any disciplinary action is consistent with the school's existing behaviour procedures and sanctions.

Parents/carers - Include their responses and any joint agreement/ promises.

Action taken involving other agencies - Make a note of any information sent or telephone calls made to any external agency.

Comment - This section allows for reflections on the situation. It is useful to comment:-

- on the origins of incidents
- whether they form part of a pattern
- if lessons have been learned
- how similar incidents might be prevented in the future.

If the incident is considered not to be racist, then this should be clearly stated here along with the grounds for such a decision. It is essential, if this is the case, that this is explained to the parties involved.

This would involve weighing the evidence established against the criteria given in the earlier definition, i.e. does the incident show conduct or words or practices which advantage or disadvantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin? (Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report, April 2000)

All recording should be done in accordance with Data Protection guidance.

Guidance on Evaluating Racist Incident Returns

The following questions are useful for staff and governors in interrogating the data which emerges from the recording and monitoring processes.

Are there more or less incidents reported than in previous year(s)?

Do any patterns emerge from the data - reference:-

- victims/perpetrators
- repeat victims/perpetrators
- clusters around individual victims/perpetrators
- ages/year groups involved
- ethnic groups -perpetrators/victims
- refugees/asylum seekers
- sex
- non-pupil involvement
- types of incidents
- location of incidents
- times of incidents
- numbers/percentages of incidents found to be non-racist
- response to incidents
- use of sanctions
- number of successful resolutions?

Are there changes in patterns from previous year(s)?

- If there are changes, what factors appear to have been involved?
- Have previous suggestions for improving practice been put into operation?
- What has been the effect of implementing suggestions for improving practice?

- If suggestions for improving practice have not been implemented, why not?
- What suggestions for improvements are you putting in place for next year?
- How has the school community been made more aware of, and been more involved, in developing the school's position on racism over the last year, i.e. how have the following groups been engaged:-
 - pupils
 - teachers
 - staff other than teachers
 - governors
 - parents
 - community groups
 - visitors?
- Are there any links between racist incidents and pupil performance at individual/group/school level?
- What support needs arise from this evaluation and who could facilitate?