

Matthew Arnold Primary School



Race Equality Policy

Introduction

Racism in any form is damaging to society in general and particularly to those groups in society against whom it is directed. Schools have a vital role in the prevention of racism in society generally.

At Matthew Arnold Primary School we seek to ensure that all children have the opportunity to fulfil their true potential. We are therefore committed to being an educationally inclusive school in which the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of every young person matter. We aim to make effective provision for the teaching and learning of all groups, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, attainment or background, and to promote tolerance and understanding amongst all pupils.

This policy helps to ensure that this school promotes the individuality of all our children, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background. We aim to reflect the multi-ethnic nature of our society and ensure that the education we offer fosters positive attitudes to all people.

Racist bullying is a particularly direct and often violent form of racism which can occur in any school regardless of the numbers of pupils from different ethnic groups within the school. As schools will be aware, avoiding discrimination and promoting equality supports attainment and progression for all pupils.

This guidance recognises that schools have a duty to:

- tackle racist incidents, including incidents involving members of the school community that occur beyond the confines of the school;
- promote race equality and good race relations

It supports schools in:

- understanding their legal responsibilities in this area;
- understanding about the impact of racist bullying on individuals and the wider school community;
- reviewing key aspects of policy and practice in relation to tackling incidents;
- recognising racist incidents and respond appropriately;
- developing procedures for recording, reporting and monitoring racist incidents;
- developing effective strategies towards their prevention as part of overall Behaviour, Equality and Safeguarding policies

Aims and Objectives

In Matthew Arnold Primary School we aim to tackle racial discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good race relations across all aspects of school life. We do this by:

- creating an ethos in which pupils and staff feel valued and secure;
- building self-esteem and confidence in our pupils, so that they can then use these qualities to influence their own relationships with others;
- having consistent expectations of pupils and their learning;

- removing or minimizing barriers to learning, so that all pupils can achieve;
- ensuring that our teaching takes into account the learning needs of all pupils through our schemes of work and lesson planning;
- actively tackling racial discrimination and promoting racial equality through our curriculum, school ethos and environment
- regular consultation with parents/carers and members of the local community, so that they are well informed of our policy and procedures;
- making clear to our pupils what constitutes aggressive and racist behaviour;
- identifying clear procedures for dealing quickly with incidents of racist behaviour;
- making pupils and staff confident to challenge racist and aggressive behaviour.

The Legal Position

The Race Relations Act 1976 states that schools and governing bodies have a duty to ensure that pupils do not face any form of racial discrimination including attacks and harassment. Schools' responsibility to tackle bullying was set out clearly in Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006:

- provides that every school must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures should be part of the school's behaviour policy which must be communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents;
- gives head teachers the ability to discipline pupils for poor behaviour that occurs even when the pupil is not on school premises or under the lawful control of school staff

We are clear that a school's anti-bullying approach must not be blind to race, gender, sexuality, faith or disability. We track bullying incidents to know whether there is a particular prevalence of any types of prejudice-based bullying in the school, shaping our approach in response to make sure any such incidents are taken especially seriously.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 replaced and consolidated all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. The Act provides a single source of discrimination law making it unlawful to discriminate against pupils because of their race, disability, religion or belief or sexual orientation. These are referred to as 'protected characteristics'.

The Act defines four kinds of unlawful behaviour:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Harassment
- Victimisation

Duties under the Act

Schools have one general duty under this act, but there are three tasks in this single general duty.

They must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity; between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not share it
- Foster good relations between people of all characteristics i.e. across all groups

‘Due regard’ has been defined as giving relevant and proportionate consideration to the duty. For schools this means:

- Decision makers in schools must be aware of the duty to have “due regard” when making a decision or taking an action and must assess whether it may have implications for people with particular protected characteristics.
- Schools should consider equality implications before and at the time that they develop policy and take decisions, not as an afterthought, and they need to keep them under review on a continuing basis.
- The Public Sector Equality Duty [PSED] has to be integrated into the carrying out of the school’s functions, and the analysis necessary to comply with the duty has to be carried out seriously, rigorously and with an open mind – it is not just a question of ticking boxes or following a particular process.

Teaching and Learning

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, teaching and learning will:

- ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- use materials that reflect a range of cultural backgrounds, without stereotyping;
- promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist behaviour;
- provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;
- seek to involve all parents in supporting their child’s education;
- provide educational visits and extra-curricular activities that reflect all pupil groupings;
- take account of the performance of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets;
- make best use of all available resources to support the learning of all groups of pupils.

Tackling Racial Harassment

Any incident of racial harassment is unacceptable in our school. Incidents may take the form of physical assault, verbal abuse, damage to a pupil’s property or lack of co-operation in a lesson, due to the ethnicity of a pupil. Any adult witnessing an incident or being informed about an incident must follow these agreed procedures:

- stop the incident and comfort the pupil who is the victim;
- reprimand the perpetrator and inform the victim what action has been taken;
- if the incident is witnessed by other pupils, tell them why it is wrong;
- report the incident to the headteacher or deputy headteacher and inform him/her of the action taken;
- inform the class teacher(s) of both the victim and the perpetrator, then record what happened on CPOMS
- inform both sets of parents, if appropriate.

The diversity of our society is addressed through our schemes of work that reflect the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. Teachers are flexible in their planning and offer appropriate challenges to all pupils, regardless of ethnicity.

Policy Impact

We have a rolling programme for reviewing our school policies. We regularly review the impact of our policies on the needs, entitlements and outcomes for pupils, staff and parents from different racial groups. We pay specific reference to the impact that our policies have on the attainment of pupils from different racial groups.

Monitoring and Assessment

We make regular assessments of pupils' learning and use this information to track pupils' progress, as they move through the school. As part of this process, we regularly monitor the performance of different racial groups, to ensure that all groups of pupils are making the best possible progress. We use this information to adjust future teaching and learning plans, as necessary. Resources are available to support groups of pupils where the information suggests that progress is not as good as it should be. The governing body receives regular updates on pupil performance information.

School performance information is compared to national data and LA data, to ensure that pupils are making appropriate progress when compared to all schools, and to schools in similar circumstances.

As well as monitoring pupil performance information, we also regularly monitor a range of other information. This relates to:

- exclusions;
- incidents of racism, racial harassment and bullying;
- parental involvement;

We consult with staff, parents and pupils about their opinions on the impact of our policies. Parents receive an annual questionnaire about the school and this now includes some questions about the success of our policies in promoting their involvement in their children's learning.

Staffing, Recruitment and Training

The school adheres to the recruitment and selection procedures that are consistent with the statutory race relations Code of Practice in Employment. It takes appropriate steps to encourage people from under-represented groups to apply for positions in the

school. The employment and professional development of all staff are monitored by ethnic groups

All members of staff are entitled to appropriate training, in order that they can play their full part in ensuring that our school promotes racial equality. Training is linked to priorities within the school's strategic plan.

Racist incidents may include:

- Verbal abuse or threats – hostile, deliberately derogatory, hurtful, insulting and generally negative remarks about a person's skin colour, ethnicity, religious beliefs, nationality, language or cultural background. The most common form of verbal abuse is name-calling, sometimes not taken as seriously as other forms of racist behaviour, however, the impact of this can be devastating.
- Racially motivated damage to personal belongings
- Racist jokes, insults and comments
- Acts of violence against someone or a group of people because of their colour, race, nationality or religion
- Shunning other pupils or refusing to work with them because of their race, religion, colour, ethnicity, nationality
- Cyberbullying through texts, e-mail, Facebook and mobile phones
- Mocking cultural or religious symbols or customs e.g. dress, food, language

What to do

Dealing with such incidents can present a challenge to many members of staff. However, failure to respond to them can be perceived as condoning them and inaction towards what might be considered as minor incidents can lead to more serious incidents in the future. It is therefore crucial that schools have in place clear and robust systems for dealing with racist incidents and that staff feel confident and supported in recognising them and responding appropriately.

All schools should have clear procedures in place for dealing with racist incidents. These should be written in consultation with the staff, governors, pupils and parents. All members of the school community, need to be aware of and understand these procedures. Training for the whole staff is essential.

The Governing Body is ultimately responsible for ensuring the school meets its obligations. The Governing Body is informed of the number and nature of incidents each term. An analysis of incidents should form part of the school's ongoing monitoring of its policies and procedures and inform development planning in relation to Race Equality.

When dealing with racist incidents schools need to be mindful that:

- The role of the media in presenting and perpetrating negative stereotypes cannot be underestimated. Such stereotyping must be understood and challenged.
- National and local tensions and conflicts overseas can increase the likelihood of racial incidents. Schools need to anticipate their response to such events.
- No one should have to experience racism. Incidents need to be responded to immediately even if further investigation is required later. A quick response sends a clear message to all about the seriousness with which the school takes such incidents.
- If a response is delayed, it may be interpreted that the school condones such behaviour and might make the victim and their family view the school negatively. They may lose confidence in the school's willingness to act and may take matters into their own hands.
- The ethos of the school and the explicit values modelled are important in determining pupils' attitude and behaviour.
- Responses are seen by pupils and parents to be clear and consistent.
- Procedures are flexible to allow for professional judgement. Different situations will require different responses, but all incidents must be treated as serious.
- Pupils and parents are kept informed of the school's action at all stages.
- Procedures make clear the respective responsibilities of Governors and staff in investigating incidents which have been observed but not reported by the victim.
- The victim's family has the support they need.
- Action may be needed to address the impact on the wider school community.
- Steps are taken to ensure that good race relations are restored

It is important that the pupil who has experienced the incident feels safe, secure, listened to and supported. Where the incident is unintentional, the focus should be on counselling and education rather than punishment. Where it is intentional, the emphasis needs to be on ensuring the perpetrator understands the impact that their actions have had on the victim and that such behaviour is unacceptable.

Key actions

- Reassure the pupil that the school views all forms of racism very seriously.
- Explain that the incident will be investigated in line with existing school procedures.
- Allow the pupil to explain what has happened. Give them time to talk initially.
- Encourage them to talk about how they feel.
- Ask the pupil what they would like to happen and agree the course of action to be taken. Confirm when you will meet with them again.
- Check that the pupil feels satisfied with the way in which the incident has been dealt with. Victims should never be made to feel that it is their fault.
- Reinforce the notion that the school believes that all people should be treated equally.
- You may need to monitor the pupil over time.

- Sometimes victims say that they do not want to have incidents investigated. In such cases the school needs to explain that racist behaviour is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Where an act is detrimental to the school ethos and the community, the school must act.
- Consider the particular vulnerability of children with special educational needs who may also be victims of racist bullying but who may find communicating their position and feelings difficult.
- Staff should be sensitive to the issue of retaliation which may be a reaction to a long series of relatively minor incidents that the victim feels have not been responded to appropriately.
- Record the incident using CPOMS and categorise correctly.
- If a serious racist incident occurs outside school or involves outside perpetrators the head teacher should report the incident to the police (taking age of criminal responsibility into consideration) who will investigate and take further action.
- Confidentiality should be maintained and designated staff given responsibility for ensuring information is stored securely

Engaging the victim's parents

Inform the parents of the pupil who has experienced the incident (or brought the complaint).

- Describe what has happened.
- Explain what the school has done.
- Check that the parents understand why the school has acted in the way it has and that they feel that the incident/complaint has been taken seriously.
- You may want to suggest how they might support their child or ask if they need any additional support.
- Make them aware of other support agencies beyond the school where appropriate.

Dealing with the perpetrator

Sanctions and education

The perpetrator needs to know that such behaviour is unacceptable but also needs to understand why it is unacceptable.

- Explain to the pupil that the school takes all forms of racism very seriously.
- That the incident will be investigated in line with existing school procedures.
- Allow the pupil to explain what has happened. Give them time to talk.
- Give the pupil time to reflect on what they have done and to talk about how their behaviour might have made the victim feel.
- Allow the pupil to explore what led up to the incident in order to identify any attitudes or misconceptions that might need to be addressed.

- Explain the difference between racist behaviour and other forms of unacceptable behaviour and explain why this type of behaviour is taken so seriously.
- Agree sanctions in line with the school's behaviour policy.
- Inform the pupil that their parents will be informed and invited to discuss the matter with the school.
- You may need to monitor the pupil over time.
- In the most serious cases, schools may need to contact the Police.

Communicating with the perpetrator's parents

Inform the parents/carers of the pupil who has committed the act.

- Describe what has happened.
- Affirm the school's stance on racist behaviour.
- Explain what the school has done and why.
- Allow parents to express how their thoughts and feelings.
- Check that the parents understand why the school has acted in the way it has. You may need to deal with the parents own attitudes and views

Bringing the two parties together

Tell both parties that the school takes all forms of racism seriously. Explain why.

- Give the pupil who has experienced the incident the opportunity to explain how they feel.
- Give the perpetrator the opportunity to respond and apologise.
- Allow the victim to accept the apology.
- Aim for reconciliation between the two parties.
- Inform the parents of both parties about the incident and the action taken.

Explain why the action was taken. This needs to be done on the day of the incident. It may be necessary to carry out some follow up work with the victim, the perpetrator and the pupils who have witnessed the incident or been affected by it.