



# **Willow Bank Infant School**

## **Guidance for dealing with racist incidents in schools**

<b>Approved by</b>	<b>FGB</b>
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**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

# **Guidelines for dealing with racist incidents in schools**



## Guiding Principles and Purpose of these Guidelines

Wokingham Borough Council recognises and welcomes the breadth and diversity of its communities. It believes that a safe environment, free from racism and the fear of racism, and all other forms of prejudice, is crucial to people's wellbeing and will affect the extent to which they will be able to take advantage of the opportunities offered in schools and other establishments.

### Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to assist and support schools to:

- Respond to racist incidents and maintain a non-racist ethos.
- Meet their statutory duties within legislation.
- Satisfy the expectations of OFSTED.
- Record and monitor racist incidents in order to identify actions required and evaluate the effectiveness of actions taken.

### The Legal Framework for Schools

- **The Equality Act 2010** brings together and reinforces the various pieces of discrimination law that have been introduced over the last 30 years. There are two specific duties which schools have to undertake in relation to the Equality Act 2010:
  - To publish information which shows they have due regard for the need to:
    - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
    - advance equality of opportunity between people from different (equality) groups
    - foster good relations between people from different (equality) groups.
- To publish at least one equality objective.
- Information and objectives have to have been published by 6 April 2012 at the latest. Objectives have then been prepared and published every four years. Information has been updated annually and this annual updating should include an indication of progress on achieving the objectives. Willow Bank Infant School includes this information in the Headteacher's report which is prepared on a termly basis.

## Definition of a Racist Incident

The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report recommended that the Police, local government and other relevant agencies should universally adopt the following definition of a racist incident:

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

“The purpose of this definition is not to prejudge the question of whether a perpetrator’s motive was racist or not ... (but) rather to ensure that investigations take full account of the possibility of a racist dimension to the incident”  
*(Home Office Code of Conduct)*

## Examples of Racist Incidents

The LA recognises that the following are examples of racist incidents, which may involve pupils and school staff:

- derogatory name calling, insults, racist ‘jokes’ and language, making fun
- verbal abuse and threats, teasing and taunting
- racist graffiti and other written insults
- provocative behaviour such as wearing racist badges or insignia
- racist comments in the course of discussions
- ridicule of an individual’s cultural or religious differences, e.g. food, music, dress, language etc.
- bringing racist materials into the school, e.g. leaflets, comics, magazines or electronically stored material
- attempts to recruit other pupil to racist organisations and groups
- physical assault and intimidation
- damage caused to a person’s property
- incitement of others to behave in a racist way
- refusal to co-operate with other people because of their ethnic origin

It is not possible to provide examples covering all possible incidents. It will be a matter for professional judgment in cases of behaviour that fall outside those described above, but these main principles apply:

- Did the behaviour interfere with the peace and comfort of the aggrieved person?

- Did the aggrieved person fear for their safety?
- Was the quality of life of the person aggrieved reduced?
- Did the behaviour fall into the definition of a racist incident above?

### **Dealing with Racist Incidents**

In order to guard against discrimination, it is important for all schools to adopt policies and procedures for dealing with and reporting racist incidents, as well as other prejudice-related incidents.

School policies should make it absolutely clear that racist behaviour, and other discriminatory behaviour, is unacceptable and damaging to everyone, and should make clear how staff and pupils should deal with incidents. Policies should be widely known to parents and pupils, as well as to all staff within the school. All pupils should be made aware of what incidents are covered by the policies and what sanctions would follow. The use of exclusion from school should be considered in appropriately serious cases. In order to avoid the continuation of racist behaviours, the needs of perpetrators, as well as those of victims, will need to be considered. All teachers should be trained to deal with discriminatory incidents.

In cases of racist incidents, the context, the age of the people involved and the seriousness of the situation will influence how it is dealt with. All incidents need to be acknowledged and talked through, even with very young children. The following is a set of suggested actions to be taken by schools when racist incidents occur.

<b>Action to be taken in all cases</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify the racist behaviour and acknowledge the incident.</li> <li>2. Support the victim at the time of the incident.</li> <li>3. Explain to perpetrator, and any onlookers, that the behaviour is unacceptable and why.</li> <li>4. Provide a full report to the designated member of staff.</li> <li>5. Decide what action will be taken and sanctions used.</li> <li>6. In schools, decide whether parents of perpetrator and victim should be informed, explaining action taken and relating this to the school's policy.</li> </ol>

<p>7. Offer support to the victim and appropriate action for the perpetrator.</p> <p>8. Record the incident, for internal purposes, using the behaviour module in SIMS or a document such as the form available on the Racist Incidents page on the Wokingham Schools Hub.</p> <p>9. Inform school Governors of incidents on a regular basis. (This can be done using the form at the back of this document)</p>
<p>Further action to be considered</p>
<p>1. Involve the Police, who can support schools.</p> <p>2. Exclusion, in the case of serious incidents.</p>

In addition, schools should systematically:

- Check for racist graffiti and ensure its immediate removal.
- Remove all forms of racist literature and materials, deleting/ blocking information stored electronically where appropriate.

**Remember, it is important:**

- For staff to discuss individual incidents, the steps taken and the position and policy of the school towards racist incidents.
- That all members of staff are aware of their role and responsibility within the policy so that its implementation is effective.
- To ensure that victims can feel supported and perpetrators will realise the consequence and inappropriateness of their actions.
- To review all aspects of school curriculum and procedures to ensure that racism is challenged and not inadvertently reinforced.
- To establish procedures for dealing with parental and other complaints about racist incidents within the school.

Where the perpetrator of the incident is a member of staff, the appropriate disciplinary procedures should be invoked.

It is good practice to have a designated person in the establishment who receives reports of racist incidents and who co-ordinates the responses made to each situation.

### **Recording and reporting racist incidents**

Despite the commonly held belief (a belief also held by the DfE for some time), it is not, and never has been, statutory to record and report racist incidents. However, recording and reporting are still widely considered to be good practice, and their importance and value are reinforced by the Equality Act 2010, and by the current Ofsted framework.

#### Ofsted

Under the current inspection framework, OFSTED inspectors are expected to consider:

- Types, rates and patterns of bullying and the effectiveness of the school's actions to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying and harassment – this includes cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying related to special educational need, sexual orientation, sex, race, religion and belief, gender reassignment or disability.
- The effectiveness of the school's actions to prevent and tackle discriminatory and derogatory language – this includes homophobic and racist language, and language that is derogatory about disabled people.

*School inspection handbook (OFSTED, September 2012 p 37-38)*

#### Equality Act 2010

Under the Equality Act 2010 schools have a legal duty to publish equality information annually. It seems reasonable for parents to expect this to include information on whether children are safe from discriminatory incidents and bullying. Publishing information on the number and nature of racist incidents and other prejudice-related incidents, and actions taken to prevent/ deal with them, is an obvious way of doing this.

Recording incidents enables schools to monitor incidents of prejudice related bullying, identify any actions required to eliminate discrimination, and evaluate whether actions taken are effective.

The LA recommends that:

- All discriminatory incidents should be recorded.
- Summary information about discriminatory incidents should be regularly reported to governors and parents through the requirement of the Equality Act to publish equality information annually. (Data on racist incidents can be submitted to Governors using the form at the back of this document.)

- Schools should always advise the police of any criminal activity related to discrimination.

NB In some incidents there will not be a victim present (for example, jokes/comments made in the course of class discussions), but these incidents should still be recorded and reported. Every occurrence of discrimination should be reported so that a complete picture can be built up and appropriate action taken to reduce the number of incidents.

Ideally, the behaviour module in SIMS should be used to record details of individual incidents. Alternatively, schools may wish to use the form available on the Racist Incidents page of the Wokingham Schools Hub.

### **Sources of Support and Information**

#### **LA**

Adviser for Minority Ethnic Achievement and EAL  
Children's Services  
Wokingham Borough Council  
Shute End  
Wokingham  
RG40 1WN  
0118 974 6201  
[Emily.waddilove@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:Emily.waddilove@wokingham.gov.uk)

**Training** on combating and dealing with racism, and on equalities can be provided by Reading Borough Council Equality Services. Please contact Nicola Davies ([Nicola.davies@reading.gov.uk](mailto:Nicola.davies@reading.gov.uk)).

#### **Local**

Alliance for Cohesion and Racial Equality, Reading  
Telephone: 0118 951 0279  
Email: [info@acre-reading.org](mailto:info@acre-reading.org)  
[www.acre-reading.org](http://www.acre-reading.org)

#### **National**

Equalities and Human Rights Commission  
<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>

The Runnymede Trust  
The UK's leading independent race equality thinktank.  
<http://www.runnymedetrust.org/>

Trentham Books  
<http://www.trentham-books.co.uk>

- publishes 'Race Equality Teaching' journal and many books relating to race equality in education, including 'Racist incidents and bullying in schools: how to prevent them and how to respond when they happen' (ISBN 978185 8564289)

### TERMLY REPORT OF RACIST INCIDENTS TO GOVERNORS

School:

Term:

Year:

Please enter the number of reported incidents in the appropriate boxes:

Category of incident	Number of incidents
1. Derogatory name calling, insults, racist 'jokes' and language	
2. Verbal abuse and threats, teasing and taunting	
3. Racist graffiti and other written insults	
4. Wearing racist badges or insignia	
5. Racist comments in course of discussion	
6. Ridicule of individual's cultural differences (food, dress, etc)	
7. Bringing racist materials into school	
8. Attempting to recruit pupils to racist organisations or groups	
9. Physical assault or physical intimidation	
10. Damage to person's property	
11. Incitement to others to behave in racist way	
12. Refusal to co-operate with others on racial grounds	
13. Other (please specify):	

#### ANALYSIS OF INCIDENTS:

Incidents involving:	Number	Place of incidents:	Number
Pupil to pupil		Classroom	
Pupil to staff		Playground	
Staff to pupil		Outside school	
Staff to staff		Public areas of school	
Parent to pupil			
Parent to staff		<b>Number of pupils excluded</b>	
Staff to parent		Fixed term	
Pupil to parent		Permanent	

**Establishment policy and procedures:**

Has the establishment made any changes to its policy and/or procedures as a result of the incident? YES/NO
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If yes, please give brief details:
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