



Bentleigh West Primary School

RACISM PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact:

Bentleigh West Primary School on 03 9557 1228 or bentleigh.west.ps@education.vic.gov.au

Purpose

To provide a safe environment (physically, psychologically, emotionally and culturally) in which all students from any background have the best opportunity to learn and achieve.

Scope

This policy applies to all school employees – paid, voluntary and sub-contractors, as well as all participants and visitors. This policy applies to all students, parents, families, or guardians attending the school.

Policy

Definition

Racial Discrimination

The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Equal Rights Commission identifies racial discrimination as: **“any act where a person is treated unfavourably because of their race, nationality, colour, descent or ethnic origin”**. It adds:

- The degrees and forms it can take, from name calling and stereotyping to vilification, abuse and violence
- The fact that it can involve direct and indirect exclusion from services, employment, education and opportunities
- That it occurs systemically as a result of policies, conditions and practices that affect a broad group of people.¹

Responsibilities

Preventing expressions of racism in the school environment, and challenging attitudes that allow them to emerge, is the shared responsibility of all school staff.²

Principals and senior school staff have a responsibility to:

- Promote a culture of respect and non-discrimination across the school community.
- Review and monitor school policies, procedures and practices to ensure they embed inclusion and respect for diversity, and do not promote or perpetuate racial discrimination.
- Provide employees with opportunities to participate in continuous professional development regarding culturally responsive practice.
- Identify opportunities and develop a strategy for the inclusion of education regarding racism and discrimination for students.

- Respond to all incidents, allegations and complaints of racial discrimination in a fair, efficient, effective, and transparent manner.
- Respond to all incidents and allegations of racial discrimination in a manner that seeks shared understanding, repair and resolution.
- Where serious incidents of racial discrimination have been substantiated, implement appropriate behaviour management processes and penalties.
- Ensure that parents, families and guardians are aware of the school's position and policy regarding racism and discrimination.

All employees have the responsibility to:

- Monitor their own behaviour to ensure that they do not commit or enable racial discrimination.
- Complete incident reports for all incidents and allegations of racial discrimination so that matters can be appropriately investigated and addressed.
- Support students to develop an understanding of racial discrimination, and their rights and responsibilities under this policy.
- Role model respectful behaviour to students.
- Participate in continuous professional development regarding culturally responsive practice.

Students have the responsibility to:

- Understand their rights and responsibilities under the school's policy regarding racism and discrimination.
- Monitor their own behaviour to ensure that they do not perpetrate or perpetuate racial discrimination.
- Seek support from school staff when they are aware of an incident of racism.

Parents, guardians and families have the responsibility to:

- Understand their rights and responsibilities under the school's policy regarding racism and discrimination.
- Monitor their own behaviour to ensure that they do not perpetrate or perpetuate racial discrimination.
- Role model respectful behaviour to students.
- Notify school regarding any concerns regarding incidents, events or allegations of racial discrimination.
- Participate appropriately, when necessary, in the school's procedures regarding racism.
- Incorporate student voice and action through the Student Voice Council, to address racism and promote inclusion and belonging in the school community.

Incident response

Reporting concerns to Bentleigh West Primary School

Racism is not tolerated at our school. We ensure racist behaviour is identified and addressed with appropriate and proportionate consequences. All racism complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively.

Students who may be experiencing racist behaviour, or students who have witnessed racist behaviour, are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff or another trusted adult as soon as possible.

Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate racist behaviour is greatly affected by students and/or parents and carers reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented by Bentleigh West Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to their classroom teacher. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including other teachers, ES staff, school counsellor, the Assistant Principals or Principal.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed racist behaviour at Bentleigh West Primary School should contact our Principal, Sarah Acome on 95571228 or by email directed to sarah.asome@education.vic.gov.au

Investigations

When notified of alleged racist behaviour, school staff are required to:

1. record the details of the allegations in Compass; and
2. inform relevant staff involved being Principal & Assistant Principal

The Principal or Assistant Principal is responsible for investigating allegations of racism in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of racism, the Principal or Assistant Principal may:

- speak to the those involved in the allegations, including the target/s, the students allegedly engaging in bullying behaviour/s and any witnesses to the incidents
- speak to the parent/carer(s) of the students involved
- speak to the teachers of the students involved
- take detailed notes of all discussions for future reference
- obtain written statements from all or any of the above.

All communications with the Principal or Assistant Principal in the course of investigating an allegation of racism will be managed sensitively. Investigations will be completed as quickly as possible to allow for the behaviours to be addressed in a timely manner.

The objective of completing a thorough investigation into the circumstances of alleged racist behaviour is to determine the nature of the conduct and the students involved. A thorough understanding of the alleged racism will inform staff about how to most effectively implement an appropriate response to that behaviour.

If students don't feel comfortable reporting an incident to someone at Bentleigh West Primary School, or are not happy with the result, contact the Department's Report Racism Hotline. Advisers on the hotline can give you advice about next steps and available support.

Responses to racist behaviours

When the Principal or Assistant Principal has sufficient information to understand the circumstances of the alleged racism and the students involved, a number of strategies may be implemented to address the behaviour and support affected students in consultation with the Wellbeing Team, teachers, SSS, Assistant Principal, Principal, Department of Education specialist staff etc.

There are a number of factors that will be considered when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour. When making a decision about how to respond to racist behaviour, Bentleigh West Primary School will consider:

- the age, maturity and individual circumstances of the students involved
- the severity of the behaviour, and the impact it has had on the target student
- whether the student/s engaging in the behaviour have displayed similar behaviour before
- whether the behaviour took place in a group or one-to-one context
- the alleged motive of the behaviour.

The Principal or Assistant Principal may implement all, or some of the following responses to racist behaviours:

- Offer wellbeing support, including referral to the Student Wellbeing Team, SSS or external provider to:
 - the target student or students
 - the students engaging in the racist behaviour
 - affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the target student.
- Facilitate a restorative practice meeting with all or some of the students involved. The objective of restorative practice is to repair relationships that have been damaged by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the person who has engaged in racist behaviour and forgiveness by the person who has been targeted.
- Facilitate a mediation between some or all of the students involved to help to encourage students to take responsibility for their behaviour and explore underlying reasons for conflict or grievance. Mediation is only suitable if all students are involved voluntarily and demonstrate a willingness to engage in the mediation process.
- Facilitate a process using the Support Group Method, involving the target student(s), the students engaging in racist behaviour and a group of students who are likely to be supportive of the target(s).
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
- Prepare a Safety Plan restricting contact between target and students engaging in racist behaviour when appropriate.
- Provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary.
- Implement cohort, year group, or whole school targeted strategies to proactively prevent racism
- Implement proportionate disciplinary consequences for the students engaging in racist behaviour, which may include removal of privileges, detention, suspension and/or expulsion consistent with our Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy, the Ministerial Order on Suspensions and Expulsions and any other relevant Department policy.

Bentleigh West Primary School understands the importance of monitoring and following up on the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by racist behaviour. Where appropriate, school staff will also endeavour to provide parents and carers with updates on the management of racist incidents. The Principal or Assistant Principal is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to racist behaviour.

Communication

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- Discussed at student forums/through communication tools
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Further Information and Resources

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies found on our website [BWPS Policies](#)

- [Bullying Prevention Policy](#)
- [Statement of Values and School Philosophy](#)
- [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#)
- [Parent Complaints Policy](#)
- [Duty of Care Policy](#)
- [Inclusion and Diversity Policy](#)

The following websites and resources provide useful information on prevention and responding to racism, as well as supporting students who have been the target of racist behaviours:

- [Centre for Multicultural Youth - Schools standing up to Racism](#)
- [Reporting Racism or Religious Discrimination in Schools](#)
- Bully Stoppers
- Kids Helpline
- ReachOut Australia
- Lifeline
- Racism. No way!

Policy Review And Approval

Policy last reviewed	May 2024
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	May 2026