

PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Warrnambool Primary School.

PURPOSE

Warrnambool Primary School is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment where racism will not be tolerated.

Racism or racial discrimination is harmful, extensive and can have long-lasting effects. It negatively impacts an individual's sense of belonging and can increase the risk of anxiety, depression, and psychological distress.

Racism in schools negatively impacts attendance, wellbeing and educational development.

Warrnambool Primary School strives to understand, educate and celebrate the cultural and racial diversity of its school community and the wider community to create an inclusive and safe learning environment.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Explain the definition of racism and racial discrimination and the impacts of these behaviours.
- Make clear that no form of racism or racial discrimination will be tolerated.
- Outline the strategies and programs in place to build a positive school culture to promote cultural diversity and positive, inclusive behaviour.
- Encourage and empower everyone in our school community be alert to signs and evidence of racism or racial discrimination, and to understand the importance and process of reporting these behaviours to school staff.
- Ensure all reported incidents are appropriately investigated and addressed.
- Ensure support is provided to students who may be affected by racism or racial discrimination (including targets, bystanders, witnesses, and students engaging in racism).
- Seek parent, carer and peer group support in addressing and preventing racism or racial discrimination and promoting an inclusive and safe environment for everyone to work, learn and play

SCOPE

This policy addresses how Warrnambool Primary School aims to prevent, address, and respond to racism and racial discrimination. This policy applies to:

- All school activities, including camps and excursions. It also applies to racism or racial discrimination that occurs between students outside school hours, where the behaviour impacts on student wellbeing and safety at school.

- Complaints and concerns relating to racism or racial discrimination made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected or representing the school (physical and online)

Warrnambool Primary School recognises there are other types of inappropriate student behaviour that may not meet the definition of racism or racial discrimination which are also unacceptable.

These behaviours will be managed in accordance with the Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Inclusion and Diversity policy and Bullying Prevention Policy.

DEFINITIONS

Racial discrimination

Racial discrimination is when someone treats you unfairly, including bullying you, because of your race, skin colour, ancestry, nationality or ethnic background.

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

- take different forms, from name-calling and stereotyping, vilification, abuse and violence.
- involve direct and indirect exclusion from services, employment, education and opportunities.
- occur systemically because of policies, conditions and practices affecting a broad group of people.

Racism

Racism is the process by which systems and policies, actions and attitudes create inequitable opportunities and outcomes for people as a result of racial discrimination.

Examples of racist behaviour can include name-calling and bullying, culturally biased nicknames, resentment of support given to students from different cultural backgrounds, being excluded by other students, teasing, being told to return to their homeland, being taken advantage of because of their lack of English, off-hand racist comments made and thought to be funny, racist views or taunts and students refusing to work with culturally diverse students.

POLICY

Responsibilities

Preventing racism in the school environment and challenging attitudes that allow racial discrimination to emerge is the shared responsibility of all school staff. Parents, carers and families also have a role to play.

Principals and staff have a responsibility to:

- Promote a culture of respect and cultural inclusion across the school community by modelling appropriate behaviour and attitudes.

- Support students to develop an understanding of racial discrimination and their rights and responsibilities under this policy as part of daily practices and the Respectful Relationships program.
- 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.
- Participate in ongoing professional development regarding culturally responsive practice and ensure all new staff are provided with appropriate training through induction.
- Respond to all incidents, allegations and complaints of racial discrimination in a fair, efficient, effective, and transparent manner that sees shared understanding, repair and resolution.
- Complete incident reports on Compass for all incidents and allegations of racial discrimination so that matters can be appropriately recorded, investigated and addressed.
- Where incidents of racial discrimination have been substantiated, implement appropriate behaviour management processes and consequences, and escalation if necessary.
- Promote the school's position and policy regarding racism and discrimination with parents, carers and families.

Students and parents, carers and families have a 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.
- Notify school through a trusted member of staff including teachers, wellbeing staff, educational support staff and principal, regarding any concerns regarding incidents, events or allegations of racial discrimination.
- Participate appropriately, when necessary, in the school's procedures regarding racism. Preventing racism and racial discrimination. No one should be treated unfairly because of where they come from, how they look or the language they speak.

The approach Warrnambool Primary School uses to prevent racism and racial discrimination is proactive and supported by evidence which demonstrates that a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effective way to promote inclusive behaviours and environments. To do this, the school uses a combination of school curriculum and teacher professional development activities.

At our school, we:

- Encourage a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing.
- Strive to build strong partnerships between the school, families and the broader community that means all members work together to ensure the safety of students.
- Discourage racism and racial discrimination through the promotion of classroom management strategies including the Respectful Relationships program.

- Consult and listen to cultural and religious groups within the school community to help dispel false beliefs and stereotypes, acknowledging different views between and within cultural groups.
- Use our social and emotional wellbeing curriculum to teach students about racism and racial discrimination and how to respond appropriately.
- Promote a range of activities each year to promote cultural diversity and the importance of preventing racial discrimination, including Language and Culture Captains and Harmony Week.
- Ongoing initiatives to support inclusive behaviours include the Buddy Program, staff professional development with the Centre for Multicultural Youth and Homework Club for students where English is a second language.

For further information about our wellbeing initiatives, please see our Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy.

Responding to an incident of racism or racial discrimination

When responding to incidents of racism or racial discrimination, Warrnambool Primary School aims to:

- be proportionate, consistent, and responsive
- find a constructive solution for everyone
- stop the racism or racial discrimination from happening again
- restore the relationships between the students, families, staff and communities involved.

Reporting concerns to Warrnambool Primary School:

Racism and racial discrimination are not tolerated at our school. All complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively.

Students who may be experiencing racism and racial discrimination, or students who have witnessed this behaviour, are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff as soon as possible. Reporting incidents as early as possible helps the school to take appropriate action sooner and to achieve better outcomes.

In the first instance, students should speak with their teacher. However, students are welcome to discuss concerns with any trusted member of staff including other teachers, wellbeing staff, educational support staff or the principal. Parents or carers who are concerned their child is involved in, or has witnessed racism or racial discrimination at Warrnambool Primary School should contact the Wellbeing Leadership Team by phone on 0355615955 or by email directed to warrnambool.ps@education.vic.gov.au

Reporting procedure

When notified of alleged racism and racial discrimination, school staff are required to:

1. Record details of the allegations in Compass; and
2. Inform relevant staff i.e., class teacher and Wellbeing leader

The Wellbeing Team is responsible for investigating allegations of racism and racial discrimination in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of racism, the Wellbeing Team will:

- Listen to the impacted student to understand their needs, to ensure they are not retraumatised and to understand if they wish to take further action
- Speak to the those involved in the allegations, including the target/s, the individuals allegedly engaging in racism and racial discrimination and any witnesses to the incidents
- Speak to the parent/carer(s) of the individual involved
- Speak to the teachers of the individual/s involved
- Take detailed notes of all discussions for future reference
- Obtain written statements from all or any of the above, as required.

Responses to racism

When the Wellbeing Team has sufficient information to understand the circumstances of the alleged racism and racial discrimination and the individuals involved, they will consider different strategies to address the behaviour and to support affected individuals in consultation with teachers, Student Support Service Officers, Assistant Principal, Principal, Department of Education and Training specialist staff.

There are several factors that will be considered when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour including:

- The age, maturity and particular circumstances of the individual/s involved
- The severity and frequency of the racism and racial discrimination, and the impact it has had on the target Individual
- Whether the Individual/s engaging in racism and racial discrimination demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour.

The Wellbeing Team may implement all, or some of the following responses to racism and racial discrimination:

- Ensure appropriate supports for the target individual are provided
- Ensure appropriate supports for the individual/s engaging in racism and racial discrimination
- Offer support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the target student, including referral to Student Support Service Officers and MHiPS
- Facilitate a restorative meeting with students involved
- Effective restorative process with all students involved in the racism and racial discrimination
- Provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved, including social support groups
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary

- Implement disciplinary consequences for the students engaging in racism and racial discrimination, 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.

Warrnambool Primary School understands the importance of monitoring and following up on the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by racism and racial discrimination.

Where appropriate, school staff will also provide parents and carers with updates on the management of these incidents.

The Wellbeing Learning Leader is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to racism and racial discrimination.

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 and annual staff training
- Included in volunteer induction processes and training for relevant volunteers
- Discussed at annual staff briefings or meetings
- Included in staff handbook or manual
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request
- Develop and promote a summary of this policy with a student representative group to promote appropriate inclusive behaviour to address racism and racial discrimination.

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

This policy is underpinned by legislation including the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010, the Victorian Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001, and the Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act 1975, as well as the Victorian Government's Multicultural Policy Statement and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The following school policies are also relevant to this policy:

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Bullying and harassment policy
- Bullying prevention policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Cybersafety and Responsible Use of Digital Technologies
- Equal Opportunity and Human Rights - Students
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy

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

- Report racism or religious discrimination in schools
- Racism No Way! Anti-Racism education for schools
- Centre for Multicultural Youth
- Student Wellbeing Hub
- Kids Helpline

- Reach Out Australia
- Lifeline

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier as required following an incident, or analysis of new research or school data relating to racism, to ensure that the policy remains up to date, practical and effective.

Data to inform this review will be collected through:

- Discussion and consultation with students and parent/carers
- Regular student surveys
- Regular staff surveys
- Assessment of other school-based data and the effectiveness of the responses implemented
- Attitudes to School Survey
- Parent Opinion Survey

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with student representative groups, parent groups, school council.

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	September 2025
Consultation	Staff, Education Sub Committee
Approved by	Principal/School Council
Next scheduled review date	September 2027