

# ANTI-RACISM EDUCATION

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Implementation document for the Anti-Racism policy

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## Document history

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# 1 Definitions

## 1.1 Racism

Racism is a contested term and can refer to beliefs, behaviours and systems<sup>1</sup>. The Australian Human Rights Commission has defined it and its various forms as follows:

'Racism takes many forms and can happen in many places. It includes prejudice, discrimination or hatred directed at someone because of their colour, ethnicity or national origin.'<sup>2</sup>

Forms of racism include:

'jokes or comments that cause offence or hurt, sometimes unintentionally, name-calling or verbal abuse, harassment or intimidation, or commentary in the media or online that inflames hostility towards certain groups. At its most serious, racism can result in acts of physical abuse and violence. Racism can directly or indirectly exclude people from accessing services or participating in employment, education, sport and social activities. It can also occur at a systemic or institutional level through policies, conditions or practices that disadvantage certain groups. It often manifests through unconscious bias or prejudice. On a structural level, racism serves to perpetuate inequalities in access to power, resources and opportunities across racial and ethnic groups. The belief that a particular race or ethnicity is inferior or superior to others is sometimes used to justify such inequalities.'<sup>3</sup>

## 1.2 Related terms

**Anti-racism** – Ideas and practices that seek to confront and eradicate racism and racial discrimination on both the interpersonal and systemic level to uphold human rights and ensure equal opportunity for all members of society.

**Bystander** – Someone who hears or sees something racist and who may want to say or do something to offer support but often is not sure of what action to take. Often used interchangeably with upstander (see below).

**Culture** – An umbrella term that encompasses social norms and behaviours found in human society as well as the knowledge, beliefs, art, laws, customs, capabilities and habits of individuals within a group.

**Cultural safety** – Providing a learning environment that is conducive to the diverse learning needs and aspirations of Aboriginal students, and where the students' cultures and identities are visible, centred and valued.<sup>4</sup>

**Direct (overt) racism** – Occurs when one person or group of people receive less favourable treatment than another person or group in the same position would have received on the grounds of their race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin.<sup>5</sup>

**Discrimination** – Behaviour that treats people unequally based on their perceived group membership. It can range from exclusion to hate crimes.

**Equity** – Fairness in the way people are treated, which results in everyone having access to equal opportunities. It differs from equality in that it recognises that not everyone starts with the same resources or options, and that some individuals and groups may require specialised or additional support in order to access the same opportunities as others.

**Everyday racism** – Reinforces negative stereotypes and prejudice about people based on their race, colour or ethnicity. It is often expressed through jokes and casual comments and does not always target a specific person. It is often not intended to cause offence or harm but can have serious impacts on people’s health and wellbeing.<sup>6</sup>

**Individual racism** – The expression of racist attitudes or behaviours by individuals or groups towards other individuals or groups.<sup>7</sup>

**Indirect (covert) racism** – A subtle form of racism that discriminates against people in a passive or disguised manner. It includes practices or policies that appear to be neutral or fair because they treat everyone in the same way but adversely affect a higher proportion of people from one (or more) racial, national or ethnic group/s. It can occur when there is no intention to discriminate.<sup>8</sup>

**Institutional (or systemic) racism** – Occurs when institutions such as governments, legal, medical and education systems and businesses, discriminate against certain groups of people based on race, colour, ethnicity or national origin. Often unintentional, such racism occurs when the apparently non-discriminatory actions of the dominant culture have the effect of excluding or marginalising minority cultures.<sup>9</sup>

**Multiculturalism** – A policy that supports cultural diversity within a society.

**Prejudice** – An unfounded opinion or attitude regarding a group or its individual members that is often unfavourable and often formed based on ignorance, fear and misinformation.

**Race or racial categorisation** – Groupings of humans based on perceived similar physical or social characteristics deriving from their common descent.

**Racial vilification** – A public act intended to offend, insult or intimidate another person or group because of the race, colour or national or ethnic origin of that person or group.<sup>10</sup>

**Stereotype** – A generalised set of traits attributed to a group that is based on the belief that individual members of the group share these traits, allowing little or no room for individual differences. Stereotypes can be positive, negative or neutral.

**Unconscious bias** – Learned stereotypes about certain groups of people that are formed unconsciously. Unintentional prejudice that is deeply engrained in our beliefs and which influences our attitudes and behaviour.<sup>11</sup>

**Upstander response** – Racism often happens in the presence of witnesses or bystanders. An upstander response is an active response where the person witnessing the racism acts, when it is safe to do so, by offering support to the target, or by reporting the racism.

**Values** – Principles or standards of behaviour that a person considers to be important in their life and which underlie and influence their beliefs and behaviours.

**White privilege** – The implicit societal advantages afforded to white people relative to those who experience racism in societies where white people are the dominant group. It typically refers to the institutional (rather than personal) benefits that are afforded to white people<sup>12</sup> in this context.

## 2 Understanding racism in schools

In schools, racism can take many forms, both on-site and online. It may include jokes, name-calling, verbal abuse, harassment or intimidation. It may also include threats or acts of physical abuse and violence. Teaching and learning practices that do not respect the cultural, linguistic or religious identities of students and staff are also a form of racism.

Racism at school may be direct or indirect and may manifest through unconscious bias or prejudice. It can occur in obvious as well as subconscious, subtle and subversive ways. Without policies and practices in place to actively challenge racist behaviours and biases, systemic racism and racist attitudes may go unchecked in the teaching and learning environment, creating an inequitable and damaging school culture.

### 2.1 Who experiences racism?

At an individual level, people from any cultural background may experience racism, or discriminate against others on the basis of their ethnicity. This is known as individual racism. However, groups who are not from the dominant culture in society are more likely to experience institutional or systemic racism.

In Australia, racism is inextricably linked to colonisation and migration. In the past, a number of racist policies and practices were embedded in Australian laws and institutions and these impacted greatly on many Aboriginal and migrant groups.

For Aboriginal people, this historic racism resulted in the loss of land, language, culture and lives, the forced removal of children, denial of citizenship and lack of recognition as Australia's original inhabitants.

Prejudice and discrimination were also directed towards many groups who migrated to Australia from both English and non-English speaking backgrounds. For example, the White Australia policy aimed to prevent immigration from non-European backgrounds. An escalation in unemployment was often historically linked to scapegoating of immigrant groups such as the anti-Chinese riots and Chinese immigration restrictions which occurred during the gold rush.

While legislation now exists to protect the rights of all Australians, there is a continuing legacy from this history, and racism continues to impact on many Aboriginal people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

### 2.2 Indicators of racism

There are a range of indicators that may flag the presence, or possible presence, of racist attitudes, behaviours or practices in the school environment.

#### **Inequitable systems:**

- not providing access to interpreters or translations for parents who need them
- not addressing lower academic attainment levels for students from specific cultural, linguistic or religious backgrounds
- applying more severe discipline measures for students from some cultural, linguistic or religious backgrounds

- over-representation of specific cultural groups in suspensions and expulsions
- inappropriate use of targeted equity resources for specific groups, such as Aboriginal, English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) or refugee students
- failing to ensure equitable access to government information, programs and services for people from all backgrounds.

**Denial of racism, history or cultural expression:**

- not delivering an Acknowledgement of Country at formal events
- not allowing students to speak in languages other than English at school
- compelling students to take part in activities that conflict with their cultural or religious beliefs
- condoning, ignoring or inappropriately responding to racism or complaints of racism
- forcibly anglicising student and staff names
- not informing students, parents and staff of their rights in relation to racism.

**Under-representation or exclusion of some groups:**

- having parent and community committees that do not represent the school community's diversity
- discouraging the involvement of parents, carers, and community members from some cultural, linguistic or religious backgrounds in school activities or decision-making processes
- under-representation of cultural, linguistic or religious diversity in student and staff leadership roles
- not acknowledging the cultural, linguistic or religious diversity among the school community
- refusing to work or play with people because of their cultural, linguistic or religious background, or that of their relatives or friends.

**Lower expectations of students from some backgrounds:**

- having lower expectations about the abilities of students from some cultural, linguistic or religious backgrounds than others
- inappropriate placement of students in low ability or support groups based on their cultural, linguistic or religious background
- not giving awards or recognition to students from some cultural, linguistic or religious groups
- disregarding the cultural capital students bring to their learning.

**Non-inclusive teaching practices:**

- teaching programs that assume perspectives of the dominant group as normal
- teaching activities and approaches that lack consideration and respect for Aboriginal peoples, identity, cultures, heritage, and languages
- using examples or resources that reinforce racial stereotypes and generalisations about some cultural, linguistic or religious groups
- giving low priority to language and cultural programs in the school's timetable
- excluding students from groups based on their cultural, linguistic or religious background.

### **Stereotyped views or unconscious bias:**

- making judgements about a person's language ability based on their accent
- making assumptions about people's abilities or preferences based on their language, religion or cultural backgrounds
- generalising about the values and skills of people from particular cultural, linguistic or religious groups
- excluding people from social groups based on their ethnic background or religious beliefs.

### **Behaviours that incite racism:**

- wearing badges, insignia or clothes with slogans against particular cultural, linguistic or religious groups
- writing negative graffiti, slogans or online posts directed at individuals or groups from particular cultural, linguistic or religious backgrounds
- writing or presenting images which encourage racial discrimination, hatred or violence
- creating racist or social exclusion campaigns on social networking sites.

### **Racist comments or abuse:**

- using derogatory language or terms to describe particular cultural, linguistic or religious groups
- making stereotyped statements, fun or jokes of people from different cultural, linguistic or religious groups
- telling people to 'go back where they came from'
- verbal or physical assault of people from different cultural, linguistic or religious backgrounds.

## **2.3 Impact of racism**

Racism in schools hurts both individuals and the learning and working environment. It generates tensions that distort cultural understanding and narrows the educational experiences of all students. Racism directed towards students, teachers and other members of the school community can prevent them from fully participating in school life and achieving their full potential.

### **2.3.1 Impact of racism on students**

For students, racism may impact on educational performance, wellbeing, participation and behaviour.

#### **Impacts of racism on educational outcomes may include:**

- lower literacy and numeracy outcomes
- under-achievement in academic performance
- disengagement and lower rates of attendance, participation, and retention
- barriers to further educational pathways and employment
- lack of recognition of high potential or talent resulting in reduced educational opportunity.



### **Impacts of racism on individual wellbeing may include:**

- low self-esteem and feelings of failure
- fear of school and withdrawing from others
- loss of confidence
- higher levels of stress
- anxiety and depression.

### **Impacts of racism on identity and belonging may include:**

- rejection of own culture
- refusal to speak languages other than English
- confusion about own identity
- sense of isolation
- feelings of powerlessness and lack of resilience.<sup>13</sup>

### **Impacts of racism on behaviour may include:**

- silence, withdrawal or disengagement from learning
- reduced concentration or inability to take risks with learning
- disengagement from healthy activities
- increased absenteeism
- failure to cooperate or being disruptive in class.

## **2.3.2 Impact of racism on the school climate**

Racism can negatively impact on the school climate, influencing whole school culture and the level of social cohesion and community harmony within the school community. It may result in:

- little or no cooperation or friendship between students from different cultural, religious or linguistic backgrounds
- frequent conflict in the playground between students from different cultural, religious or linguistic groups
- tense or unproductive student–teacher relationships
- staff having low expectations of some students
- lack of parental and community confidence in the school
- parents/carers from some culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds being unwilling to engage with the school
- ineffective home-school relationships
- disharmony within the school community.

## **2.3.3 Impact of racism on school staff**

School staff may also experience racism at school and this may take the form of harassment, abuse, lack of support for career pathways and/or access to leadership opportunities. School staff may also be exposed to racist stereotypes expressed by students and colleagues. This may result in:

- antagonism between school staff of different cultural, linguistic or religious groups
- lack of collaboration or tensions in the working environment
- high levels of stress, anxiety and depression in the workplace
- loss of confidence and enjoyment in teaching or in working at the school

- increased sick days or other forms of absences
- limited promotion and leadership opportunities for some members of school staff
- high turnover of school staff
- loss of confidence in school leaders to treat all members of the school community fairly.

While evidence shows that racial discrimination has a direct impact on a person's overall wellbeing<sup>14</sup>, individual reactions to racism often vary. For example, people who do not expect to be dealing with racism may be confused and shocked when they encounter it, while others who may have previously experienced racism, or dealt with it over many years, may respond with anger. Irrespective of the individual response, racism will often have a deep and long-lasting effect on individuals and groups.

### **3 Countering racism in schools**

Developing knowledge and understanding about Aboriginal histories and cultures and the impact of racism on Australia's first peoples is essential for countering racism in schools and in the community. Similarly, strategies that build intercultural understanding and knowledge about our cultural diversity, and encourage cultural inclusion is essential for enabling the equitable participation of people from all cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds. These strategies help prepare all students for effective participation in our culturally diverse society.

#### **3.1 Implementing anti-racism education**

Schools counter racism by implementing anti-racism education programs that develop knowledge about our history as a culturally diverse nation, understanding of the nature and impact of racism, and skills in recognising and challenging racism when it occurs.

All schools are required to have an Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO) who assists in countering and managing complaints of racism. While ARCOs play a critical role in supporting principals to lead anti-racism education, every member of the school community has a responsibility to behave in a non-racist way and reject racism and racist attitudes at school.

Effective anti-racism education strategies need to comprehensively address all sections of the Anti-Racism policy, including:

- acknowledging and addressing all manifestations of individual and institutional racism
- recognising and respecting the unique identities of Aboriginal peoples as the First Peoples of NSW
- encouraging and promoting the voices of those with lived experiences of racism to guide understanding and inform action for countering racism
- embracing the value and benefits of Australia's cultural, linguistic or religious diversity and recognising that anti-racism practice is fundamental to cultural inclusion, social cohesion and community harmony<sup>15</sup>
- challenging prejudiced attitudes and ensuring that sanctions are applied against racist behaviours and systems which deny equitable access to educational opportunity.

Anti-racism education strategies should not be developed solely as a reaction to a complaint of racism. This circumstance, with its accompanying tensions, does not provide a conducive environment in which to initiate anti-racism education strategies or to have productive discussions about racism. More effective are proactive whole-school strategies that involve staff, students and the wider school community in countering racism, including collaborative strategies that seek to achieve meaningful solutions and the prevention of racism in schools.

Schools should choose strategies that are appropriate for their local contexts and address the needs of their school community. These can be single activities, or a combination of activities implemented over time to promote change within the school community. Joint programs between schools or involving a community of schools may also be beneficial in countering racism. The Racism. No way. [Planning and evaluation guide](#) can assist schools to evaluate how well they are tracking in achieving a racism free environment and to prioritise areas for action.

### **3.2 The importance of Aboriginal education**

Because racism has a particular impact on Aboriginal students and communities, it is critical that anti-racism education strategies implemented in all schools build understandings of Aboriginal histories and cultures and the impact of racism on Australia's first peoples, regardless of the number of Aboriginal students or staff within the school.

Schools must also provide an environment of [cultural safety](#) for all Aboriginal members of the school community so that they may participate equitably within the learning and working environment. They must have effective [Aboriginal Education](#) strategies that establish and maintain high expectations, and improve outcomes for Aboriginal students in Preschool to Year 12, as well as implement strategies that increase all students' understandings of Aboriginal histories and culture. Strategies should also be put in place to ensure that teachers are well equipped to teach Aboriginal perspectives and content across all learning areas and can appropriately support the learning needs of all Aboriginal students, including high potential and gifted students.

To support this, the department has a [partnership agreement](#) with the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Incorporated (NSW AECG Inc.), which fosters collaboration with schools to promote, acknowledge and value Aboriginal histories and cultures. Aboriginal education advisors and officers are available to assist schools in incorporating the cultural contexts, values and practices of local Aboriginal communities into the mainstream delivery of education.

For more information, see [Aboriginal education in NSW public schools](#) on the department's website.

## **4 Roles and responsibilities**

### **4.1 All members of the school community**

All members of the school community including students, parents, carers and volunteers, must demonstrate respect for the cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds of others and behave in ways that promote acceptance and harmony in the school environment.

### **4.2 Students**

In addition to following wellbeing and discipline policies, students must:

- monitor their own behaviour so that it does not result in anyone experiencing racism
- report any incidents of racism to teachers
- call out racism and racial bullying, if safe to do so, as an upstander.

### **4.3 Staff**

All departmental staff must complete the mandatory Anti-Racism policy training. They must demonstrate respect for Aboriginal peoples as the First Peoples of NSW, treat all members of the school community fairly, and must not discriminate against others on the basis of their cultural, linguistic or religious background in the school environment. Eradicating racism, including challenging the attitudes that allow it to emerge, is the shared responsibility of all departmental staff.

### **4.4 Principals**

Principals lead the development of school practices and procedures that eradicate expressions of racism and challenge attitudes that allow them to occur. They reflect on their own behaviour so that it does not result in anyone experiencing racism. The principal is responsible for ensuring that complaints of racism are dealt with in accordance with the [Complaints Handling policy](#) and the [Anti-Racism policy](#).

Principals must:

- appoint an Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO), or ARCOs, and include information about the ARCO/s in the Annual EAL/D Survey
- support the ARCO/s to complete the mandatory training, ARCO blended online training course, and in performing their role
- promote the role of the ARCO within the school community so students, staff, parents and carers are able to access support when needed
- include anti-racism strategies in the 4-year school plan
- model behaviour that demonstrates respect for the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of the school community
- provide an environment of cultural safety for Aboriginal students, staff, parents, and other members of the school community
- verify that all staff, including volunteers and contractors are aware of their responsibilities under the policy

- verify that all staff have completed mandatory Anti-Racism policy training (principals determine whether a volunteer or contractor should complete this mandatory training on the basis of their role at the school)
- establish and maintain procedures within their local school context that respond efficiently and appropriately to direct racism, such as incidents of racial abuse, harassment and discrimination and indirect racism, such as lack of recognition of cultural diversity and culturally biased practices
- maintain records of incidents of racism.

Principals are encouraged to include commentary or analysis in their school annual report to provide context and interpretation on the auto-populated data provided for the Anti-Racism policy.

## 4.5 Teachers

All teachers are required to reflect on their own behaviour so that it does not result in anyone experiencing racism.

Teachers must:

- develop an understanding of racism and its impact on individuals and society and their responsibilities under the policy
- promote cultural safety by acknowledging and respecting Aboriginal students' identities, heritage, cultures and languages, and respecting Aboriginal knowledge systems and ways of knowing
- develop and implement culturally inclusive programs to ensure students learn in a supportive environment free from prejudice and discrimination
- develop intercultural understanding as a general capability through the curriculum
- demonstrate respect for the cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds of the school community
- manage discussions of race and racism sensitively to create culturally safe learning environments
- ensure educational practices reflect high expectations of students of all cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds.

Teachers must also address incidents of racism so that appropriate action and support is provided for both the perpetrators and targets of racism. When dealing with incidents of racism, they must:

- always call out racism and not allow it to go unnoticed so that incidents of racism are used as teaching moments
- acknowledge that an incident is racist and explain the impact of the racist behaviour
- provide ongoing support to the target of racism by checking their wellbeing
- provide guidance for the perpetrator to build understandings of the impact of racism on individuals and society and monitor their behaviour to ensure that racism does not reoccur.

## **4.6 School Administration and Support Staff**

School Administration and Support Staff (SASS) make a significant contribution to a school's culture and cohesion, and are often the first point of contact within the school. They play an important role in countering racism and in creating a welcoming and inclusive school environment. SASS staff must:

- reflect on their own behaviour so that it does not result in anyone experiencing racism
- develop an understanding of racism and its impacts on individuals and society and their responsibilities under the policy
- demonstrate respect for the cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds of students, staff, parents/carers and community members in the course of their work
- report any incidents of racism to their supervisor in line with local procedures for reporting incidents of racism.

## **4.7 Volunteers and contractors**

Volunteers and contractors who work with students and/or teaching and non-teaching staff must:

- monitor their own behaviour so that it does not result in anyone experiencing racism
- demonstrate respect for the cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds of students, parents/carers and community members
- report any incidents of racism to their supervisor in line with local procedures for reporting incidents of racism.

## **4.8 Corporate staff**

Corporate staff and non-school based teaching service staff are to demonstrate respect for cultural, linguistic and religious diversity through their work and in their dealings with staff and community members. They provide support and professional advice for schools that is consistent with the policy.

Corporate staff must:

- reflect on their own behaviour so that it does not result in anyone experiencing racism
- develop an understanding of racism and its impacts on individuals and society and their responsibilities under the policy
- demonstrate respect for cultural, linguistic and religious diversity in the course of their work
- ensure culturally inclusive practices in the course of their work
- report any incidents of racism to their supervisor in line with local procedures for reporting incidents of racism.

## 4.9 Senior executive officers

Senior executive officers play a critical role in responding to racism and racial discrimination across the NSW public school sector and corporate offices. They demonstrate and promote respect for cultural diversity, fairness and equity in the delivery of school and corporate provisions. They also develop, review and evaluate policies, systems, strategies and curriculum initiatives that reflect equity and anti-racism principles and promote these principles in their business areas.

The Secretary and Deputy Secretaries have reasserted the department's commitment to eliminating racism in our school communities. This is reflected in our strategic goals and in our organisational values.

Executive Directors, School Performance and Directors, Educational Leadership:

- reflect on their own behaviour so that it does not result in anyone experiencing racism
- monitor, support and guide the implementation of the policy in schools
- assist principals to provide strategic leadership in implementing anti-racism education and in building safe and culturally inclusive school communities
- support schools to develop, implement, monitor and review strategies to prevent racism and counter institutional racism
- verify the implementation of Anti-Racism policy in schools under their leadership.

Corporate division directors and executive directors:

- reflect on their own behaviour so that it does not result in anyone experiencing racism
- lead state-wide practices and processes that are consistent with the policy
- ensure provision of resources that are equitable and inclusive of needs of students, staff and communities of all backgrounds.

## 4.10 Anti-Racism Contact Officers

The Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO) plays an important role in assisting the principal to implement 3 major aspects of the Anti-Racism Policy:

- promoting anti-racism education
- supporting the handling of complaints about racism relating to students, staff and members of the school community
- collecting data about complaints and incidents of racism.

The ARCO assists in promoting anti-racism education and supporting the management of complaints of racism involving students by:

- providing advice on incorporating whole-school anti-racism education strategies in school planning
- facilitating professional learning to build awareness of the impact of racism on student learning, wellbeing and social cohesion
- assisting teachers to access resources which build awareness and understanding of the impacts of racism
- promoting upstander responses to incidents of racism for staff and students
- addressing complaints and incidents of racism involving students through approaches such as restorative practice, which promote respectful behaviours.

The ARCO supports the handling of complaints by:

- providing advice to students, staff and community members on making a complaint and the complaints handling process as it relates to complaints about racism
- managing or supporting the management of complaints of racism made by students against other students in accordance with the Behaviour Code for Students and the school's discipline and wellbeing procedures
- providing information and support to staff, students and community members who wish to make a complaint of racism, in cases where the complaint involves staff or a community member
- assisting the complainant during the complaints handling process
- providing advice related to the impact of racism to the principal and/or nominated complaints manager.

The ARCO assists the principal to gather data about the prevalence of racism and analyse significant statistical trends in relation to complaints and incidents of racism by:

- maintaining records of complaints and outcomes, allegations and incidents of racism
- identifying which datasets regarding racism should be collected, what data should be reported and to whom, and how data can be used to improve the school's response to racism.

## **4.11 Becoming an ARCO**

### **4.11.1 Nominating an ARCO**

The principal is required to nominate a teacher or an executive member to be the school's ARCO. The ARCO should:

- be a full-time experienced teacher or executive member
- be trusted by students, staff, parents/carers and the school community
- have good communication and interpersonal skills
- have a commitment to anti-racism education.

The cultural, linguistic or religious background of a teacher is not a criterion for selecting an ARCO. Depending on the size of the school and the needs of the school community, the principal may decide to nominate several ARCOs. For example, principals may nominate ARCOs for specific learning stages or to support wellbeing structures in the school.

### **4.11.2 ARCO training and professional support**

Principals are responsible for ensuring that newly nominated ARCOs complete the ARCO blended online training course (course code – AC00089). This training develops understanding of racism and the ARCO role and aims to increase confidence in supporting complaints of racism. An experienced ARCO, who has been trained as an ARCO tutor, will usually deliver the training. ARCOs are required to refresh their training every four years. Principals may also complete this training.

It is important that ARCOs receive ongoing executive support in undertaking their role. Until a newly appointed ARCO receives training, the principal will need to provide support and advice to the ARCO about their role and responsibilities.

The Anti-Racism Education Advisors in state office provide ARCOs with ongoing professional support. Resources to assist principals, complaints managers and ARCOs are available on the department's Anti-racism education web pages.



## 5 Managing complaints of racism

Complaints about racism are dealt with using the department's [Complaints Handling policy](#), [School Community and Consumer Complaint Procedure](#) and the [Staff Complaint Procedure](#). Data relating to complaints of racism, and the methods used to resolve them, should be maintained, in line with these procedures.

### 5.1 Making a complaint of racism

Any student, parent or carer, departmental employee or community member who has experienced, witnessed or otherwise become aware of alleged racism may make a complaint.

Complaints of racism can be made to any departmental employee. In schools, the principal is responsible for determining who will manage the complaint, taking into account the nature of the concerns, the potential risks, and perceived or actual conflicts of interests. The ARCO, who has been trained in the complaints process may support the resolution of a complaint. Complainants must be advised that the ARCO is available to assist them as a [support person](#) or to provide advice on the complaints handling procedures. The ARCO needs to be advised of complaints so that they can assist as required.

Complaints of racism made to other business areas within the department should be referred to the relevant workplace manager for management under the department's [Complaints Handling policy](#) and procedures.

### 5.2 Complaints manager, schools

The complaints manager is usually the principal, or an executive member of staff nominated by the principal. When dealing with complaints of racism, the complaints manager can consult the ARCO on matters such as any reasonable adjustments that may be made to the complaint process, cultural or language considerations, information about strategies that could be employed to rebuild trust, or support that can be provided for the person experiencing racism.

Principals should provide [training](#) to executive members of staff who act as complaints managers, which includes information about managing complaints about racism. Principals can contact their Director Educational Leadership for advice in managing complaints. A range of [resources](#) to support professional learning for teaching and non-teaching staff in schools is available.

The [Staff Complaint Procedure](#) outlines the process for managing staff complaints about workplace issues. The [Staff complaints toolkit](#) provides guidance for the complaints manager in the resolution of complaints.

The [School Community and Consumer Complaint Procedure](#) outlines the process for managing complaints from parents, carers, students and community members. The [School Community and Consumer Complaint Toolkit](#) provides guidance for the complaint manager in the resolution of complaints.

The [Engaging with school communities](#) page in the complaint managers' toolkit includes information for principals about engaging with Aboriginal families, how to promote a positive feedback culture within school communities, including examples of newsletter and school handbook items about the complaint process.

### 5.3 The role of the ARCO

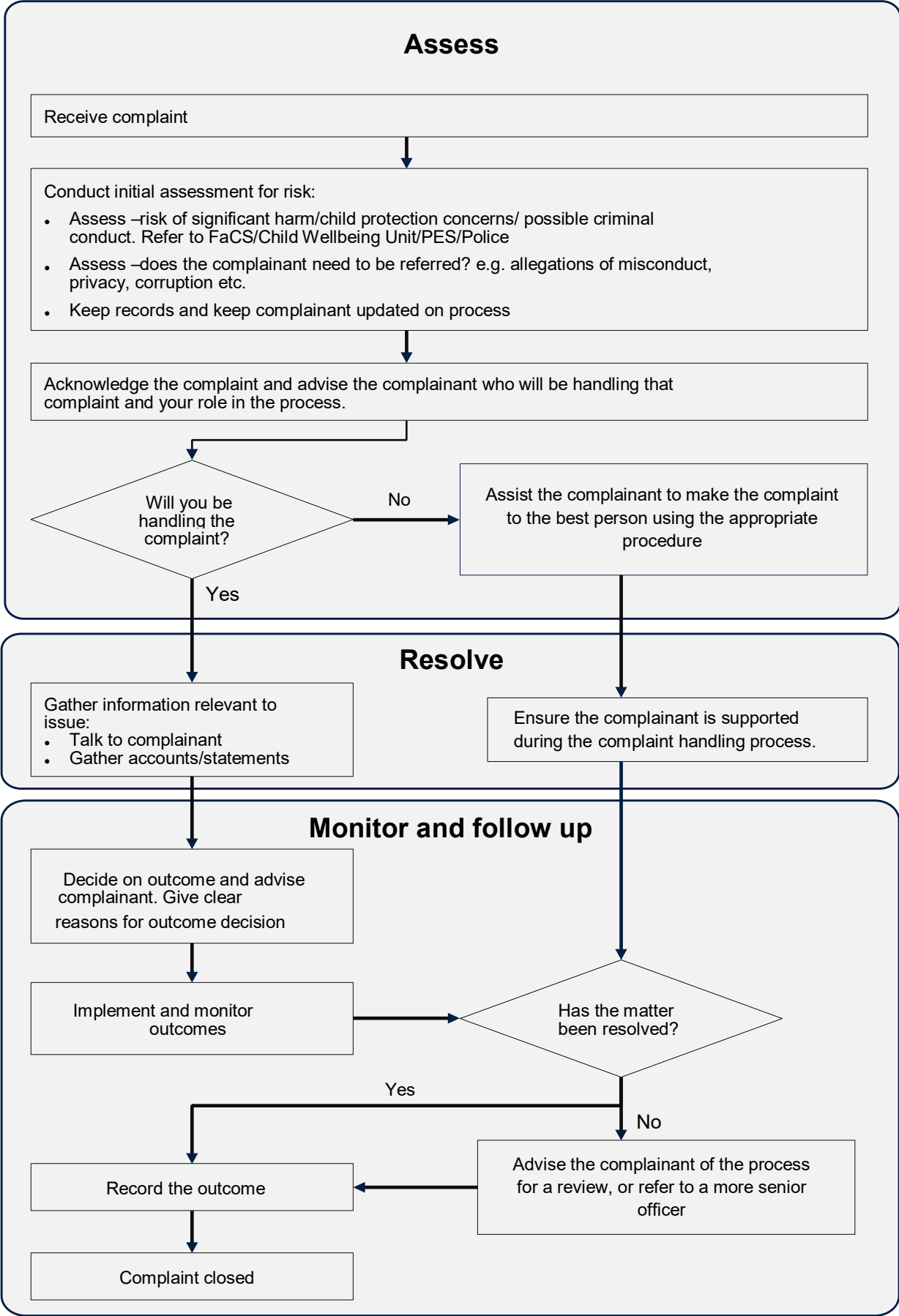
ARCOs are advocates for anti-racism education. They have two distinct roles. They can be support persons for staff and school community members who make complaints of racism and impartial facilitators in the complaints handling process for complaints of racism made by students about students.

ARCOs are not required to manage the resolution of complaints of racism made by or about staff or community members. These complaints are managed using the School Community and Consumer Complaint Procedure and the Staff Complaint Procedure.

If a matter is initially referred to the ARCO by staff or a community member, the ARCO will speak with the complainant and assess the appropriate avenue for seeking a resolution. If the complaint of racism is made by or about an Aboriginal student, teacher or community member, the ARCO should consult with an Aboriginal Education Officer or an Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer. If the complaint is made by or about a community member from a language background other than English, the ARCO can consider whether there are language or cultural considerations that should be addressed in the complaint resolution process. In some cases it may be appropriate to use an interpreter to facilitate communication with families. Information about the complaint process and support persons and advocates has been translated into 17 community languages.

The flowchart (Figure 1) can assist the ARCO to determine how to best manage or refer a complaint.

**Figure 1 Schools Anti-Racism Contact Officer Complaint Process**



## 5.4 Complaints procedures

It is important for schools and corporate offices to keep records of incidents of racism and how they were addressed. Principals and managers must develop local processes for the relevant school or business area for dealing with incidents and complaints of racism and the ARCO can assist at the school level. The local processes should include information on:

- how to deal with incidents and complaints of racism
- where to report incidents and complaints of racism
- how to record incidents and complaints of racism.

Data on incidents of racism and complaints of racism also provide valuable information for planning anti-racism education strategies in response to the needs of the school and wider community and issues of local concern.

## 5.5 Promoting anti-racism support

Principals and workplace managers should make the school and wider community aware of the process for making a complaint or providing feedback, which should include information about complaints relating to racism. Principals and workplace managers should ensure that all departmental employees are aware of the [Complaints Handling policy](#) and associated procedures and the support available for addressing racism.

Information about the process for making complaints of racism should be included at least once each year in school communications to students and the school community. The information below is an example of what schools can provide to parents and carers. More examples can be found in the Staff complaints toolkit at [Engaging with school communities](#).

### **Our commitment to anti-racism education**

With your support, we do the very best we can to ensure culturally inclusive, cohesive, safe and engaging learning experiences for all our students. If at any time you find that you have a concern about racism in our school, you are encouraged to come to the school and talk with a member of staff so that your concern can be resolved. In the case of complaints relating to racism in schools, you can also contact the school Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO) <insert name> on telephone: <insert telephone> or via email <insert email>.

The NSW Department of Education is committed to resolving complaints fairly and at the local level where possible. More information about the process for making and resolving complaints can be found on the education.nsw website at: [Complaints, compliments and suggestions](#).

It is important that all members of the school community know who the ARCO is and what they do. Information for parents on the ARCO's role has been translated into 35 languages and is available at [The role of the Anti-Racism Contact Officer](#).

Newsletters, parent and student meetings, assemblies, posters and social media may be used to raise awareness about the role of the school ARCO. Additional support materials are available on the department's [anti-racism education](#) website.

## 6 Resources

For support materials and resources, including professional learning and research, see the following pages on the department's website:

- [Aboriginal education and communities](#)
- [Anti-racism education](#)
- [Multicultural education.](#)

### Additional resources

- [Racism No Way – NSW Department of Education](#)
- [Resources for Teachers – Australian Human Rights Commission](#)
- [Narragunnawali Curriculum Resources – Reconciliation Australia](#)
- [AIATSIS Map of Australia](#)
- [Let's talk race: A guide on how to conduct conversations on racism – Australian Human Rights Commission](#)
- [Schools Standing Up To Racism – Centre for Multicultural Youth](#)
- [NSW AECG Partnership Agreement – Walking together, working together](#)

### Further Support:

Contact: Principal Policy Officer, Anti-Racism

Phone: 02 7814 0260

Email: [antiracismeducation@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:antiracismeducation@det.nsw.edu.au)

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission (2019), '[Let's talk race: a guide on how to conduct a conversation about racism](#)', Racism. It Stops with Me, p.23

<sup>2</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission (2020), '[What is racism?](#)'

<sup>3</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission, (2012), '[National Anti-Racism Strategy](#)', p. 3

<sup>4</sup> Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (2020), '[Indigenous cultural competency in the Australian teaching workforce](#)', p. 22

<sup>5</sup> Racism. No Way (2021), '[Glossary](#)'

<sup>6</sup> University of South Australia (2014), Centre for Research in Education Annual Oration: '[Reflections on casual racism and the sentiments](#)', Australian Human Rights Commission

<sup>7</sup> Racism. No Way (2021), '[Glossary](#)'

<sup>8</sup> Racism. No Way (2021), '[Glossary](#)'

<sup>9</sup> Racism. No Way (2021), '[Glossary](#)'

<sup>10</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission (2020), '[At a glance: Racial vilification under sections 18C and 18D of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 \(Cth\)](#)'

<sup>11</sup> Racism. No Way (2021), '[What is unconscious bias?](#)'

<sup>12</sup> Racism. No Way (2021), '[What is white privilege?](#)'

<sup>13</sup> Macedo, D.M., Smithers, L.G., Roberts, R.M., Haag, D.G., Paradies, Y., and Jamieson, L.M., (2019), '[Does ethnic-racial identity modify the effects of racism on the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal Australian children?](#)' PloS One

<sup>14</sup> Priest, N., Ferdinand, A., Perry, R., Paradies, Y., and Kelaher, M., (2014), '[Mental health impacts of racism and attitudes to diversity in Victorian schools](#)', Deakin University

<sup>15</sup> Berman, G., & Paradies, Y. (2010). '[Racism, disadvantage and multiculturalism: Towards effective anti-racist praxis](#)'. Ethnic and Racial Studies, 1-19, Deakin University