

EIS EQUALITY

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The Educational
Institute of Scotland

CHALLENGING RACISM

Challenging racism is part of our responsibility as educators. It is about creating a culture of equality and respect. It is about allowing all learners, children and young people to achieve their potential.

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It is important to note that this document should be read in conjunction with the EIS Anti-Racist Policy and the Bullying and Harassment advice document.

INTRODUCTION

The publication of the Macpherson Report in 1999 provided us with the universally accepted definition of a racist incident. The report states that “A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person”.

Challenging racism is part of our responsibility as educators. It is about creating a culture of equality and respect. It is about allowing all learners, children and young people to achieve their potential.

As a member of the EIS you are supported by your trade union which has clear policies and a long track record in combating racism in education, in society and in the workplace. You may find yourself arguing the case against racism in the staff room or with learners.

LEGISLATION

As someone who works in the education sector you are supported by legislation. The principal legislation under which cases can be taken is the Equality Act 2010. Protection is provided by the Equality Act in relation to race. This legislation makes it unlawful to discriminate against anyone on grounds of race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins. The amended Act also imposes general duties and specific duties on many public authorities to promote racial equality.

Legislation on its own is not enough to challenge racist attitudes. You are also supported by policy and practice. There are many examples of good practice in our educational establishments which challenge racism.

Equal opportunities and anti-racism should be inherent in the structure of all educational establishments. The promotion of anti-racism should be a clear feature of development planning. It must be seen to be integral to the teaching and learning process. Each educational establishment should understand and accept its obligation to promote anti-racism and to provide a curriculum and ethos which will prepare children, young people and adults for the diverse society in which they live.

The Public Sector Equality Duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty has a general duty and specific duties. The general duty states that public bodies must have 'due regard' to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation that is prohibited under the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people that share a relevant protected characteristic and those that don't share it; and
- Foster good relations between people that share a relevant protected characteristic and those that don't share it.

What are the specific duties?

To help achieve the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty, local authorities and other listed bodies are required to undertake specific duties. In Scotland, as part of the specific duties, a listed employer must publish a document or documents that include:

- A report on the progress it has made in mainstreaming the general duty into the exercising of its functions
- Information disaggregated by protected characteristics, such as race, on recruitment and promotion, numbers of part-time and full-time staff, pay and

remuneration, training and development, the return to work of women on maternity leave, grievances (including those about harassment), disciplines (including those about harassment) and dismissals, and other reasons for leaving

- Details of the progress that the employer has made in gathering and using the information to better meet the general duty
- A set of equality outcomes and the progress made to achieve these
- Information on the gender pay gap within the organisation
- An equal pay statement that includes information on occupational segregation
- How they involve people who share a protected characteristic, and those that represent them, such as trade unions
- How they take into account any information it considers relevant
- Equality impact assessments, which should be carried out on an ongoing basis, and published soon after.

This information must be published by 30 April 2013 and subsequently at intervals of not more than two years. The employer must publish this information on its website so that anyone can look at it.

CHALLENGING RACISM AS AN EMPLOYEE

BME members may feel reluctant to complain about racism due to:-

- Fear of not being taken seriously
- Fear of being blamed for creating the problem
- Feelings of guilt, demoralisation and trauma
- Concerns about damage to their reputation
- Fear of victimisation
- Fear of losing their job
- Feeling unsure about policy on confidentiality and handling complaints.

What You Can Do

If you are involved in or witness a racist incident:-

- Do not ignore the incident. Support colleagues and do not be influenced by possible scenarios which, more often than not, do not occur. The EIS will provide you with full support in the unlikely situation that you receive detrimental treatment by others through reporting the incident
- Always seek advice from your EIS Representative
- Keep a note of the dates, times and places and the effects on you, as soon as possible after the incident
- Report the incident in accordance with workplace policy.

In addition:-

- Ensure you and others are aware of policies relating to racism for your establishment
- Raise the issue with management to make sure the recording of racist incidents is monitored
- Be vigilant about all incidents of racism
- Make sure you know how to respond to racist language or comments
Sometimes a few words are all it takes to convince someone they are wrong.
Make sure you know what procedures are in place to deal with racist incidents
- Find out what resources and material are helpful
- Be aware of the importance of diverse and positive images of society
- Combat racist myths as they arise
- Listen to those who have experienced racism
- Question your own values and beliefs
- Familiarise yourself with EIS policies
- Seek help and additional information if you need it.

Advice to Representatives

Members may approach you for advice on this issue. It may be because they feel they have been subjected to racism. You should:-

- Treat cases of racism sensitively and seriously
- Listen carefully and be supportive
- Ensure confidentiality
- Ensure you know existing agreed policies on racism
- Advise the member of existing agreed procedures and policies relating to racism
- Advise the member to keep a diary of events
- Inform the member about support and assistance within the EIS
- Inform the member about the different options for action that are available and reach agreement on what they want to do
- Tell the member what you intend to do next
- Accompany the member(s) to meetings if called
- Take notes of meetings
- Approach your local association secretary for help and advice. If appropriate, your local association Equality Representative may approach you and provide you with further support.

CHALLENGING RACISM AS AN EDUCATOR

If racism is to be effectively challenged within educational establishments the following seven key areas and subsequent key questions should be considered;

School Ethos and Teacher Attitude

- Does your school have a clear Anti-Racism policy known to all?
- Does it place particular emphasis on eradicating racism and racist attitudes?
- Does it indicate clearly how racist incidents will be tackled and provide a mechanism which allows pupils to come forward and discuss such incidents in confidence?
- Is there a framework for reporting, logging and monitoring racist incidents?
- Does the school development plan include annual equality audits to ensure that both multi-cultural and anti-racist educational approaches are being implemented within the school curriculum, policies and procedures?
- Does your school promote positive images of, and responses to, all cultures and communities in our diverse society?

The Curriculum

- Do you review and monitor your teaching to ensure an effective anti-racist curriculum?
- Have you selected appropriate teaching and learning methods for promoting equality and combating racism?
- Have stereotyped assumptions been identified and addressed in the curriculum and assessment procedures?
- Is assessment of bilingual pupils appropriate, fair and accurate?

Bilingualism/Multilingualism and English as an Additional Language

- Is information concerning pupils' language background identified, recorded and disseminated?
- To what extent are these judgements of intellectual ability based on attainment in English language?
- Are EAL teachers and bilingual support staff deployed to enable collaboration and cooperation?
- Are bilingualism and biculturalism presented as having positive advantages for both the individual and the school?
- Is the expertise of the EAL specialist utilised in all areas of the curriculum?
- Does the language policy recognise and promote the cognitive and academic benefits of bilingualism?

Partnership with Parents and Community

- Are strategies in place in the school to ensure that all parents, regardless of linguistic, cultural or social background, are actively encouraged to participate in the life of the school?
- Do the school's practices and policies demonstrate clearly that it values all its pupils and acknowledges their home culture?
- Does the image projected by the school appropriately reflect the cultural diversity of Scottish society?
- Does your staff know how to access local interpreting and translation services?
- Are parents informed of the availability of interpreting and translation services?

Teacher Continuing Professional Development

- Has a senior member of staff been designated and trained as a co-ordinator of anti-racist/multi-cultural education and is this function regularly carried out within the establishment?
- Does your staff development programme provide the opportunity for all staff to become involved in developing anti-racist strategies?
- Are all school staff trained in reporting and dealing with racist incidents?
- Are parents in general and the Parent Council fully informed of staff development activities in this area?
- Is the equality dimension a recognised aspect of all staff development activities?

Leadership and Management

- Are all school evaluations e.g. target setting, discipline and exclusions monitored within the context of the Anti-Racist policy?
- Are procedures in place which encourage applications from minority ethnic and bilingual candidates?

Adapted from 'Educating for Anti-Racism' (GTCS).

USEFUL SOURCES

www.eis.org.uk

www.educationscotland.gov.uk

www.gtcs.org.uk

www.equalityhumanrights.com

www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk

www.tuc.org.uk

home.scotland.gov.uk/home

www.bemis.org.uk

www.oneworkplace.org.uk



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