What schools can do

Support document for the Anti-Racism Policy

Anti-racism education strategies

Under the *Anti-Racism Policy* schools are required to include anti-racism education strategies in their school plans and report on their implementation in Annual School Reports. This support document contains information on various strategies relevant to anti-racism education.

Some anti-racism education strategies, such as the nomination and training of Anti-Racism Contact Officers (ARCOs), are mandated by the policy. Schools must also implement strategies that guarantee appropriate responses to expressions of direct racism, such as incidents of racial abuse, harassment and discrimination, and expressions of indirect racism, such as lack of recognition of cultural diversity and culturally biased practices.

In addition, effective anti-racism education strategies must be developed to confront the race-based generalisation, stereotype, bias, prejudice and discrimination that are the foundations of direct and indirect racism.

Anti-racism education may involve whole-school strategies or strategies related to teaching and learning in the classroom. Schools should develop appropriate strategies for both these areas.

Strategies in anti-racism education can target staff, students or the whole school community. They can be as focussed as a single activity or as broad as a combination of activities implemented to promote change in a number of areas.

Effective anti-racism education strategies need to comprehensively address the three dimensions of the *Anti-Racism Policy*:

- promoting acceptance of Australia's cultural, linguistic and religious diversity
- challenging prejudiced attitudes
- ensuring that sanctions are applied against racist and discriminatory behaviours.

Schools should choose strategies that are appropriate to the school's stage of policy implementation. For some schools the planning and implementation of a whole-school anti-racism education project will be appropriate while for others ensuring that sanctions are applied against inappropriate behaviour may be a first step.

The following sections provide some suggestions for what schools can do to counter racism.

ARCOs and complaints procedures

Every school must nominate an Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO). This officer assists parents, staff and students who have complaints regarding racism. The ARCO can talk to complainants about their complaint, seek an informal resolution, if appropriate, assist them in writing the complaint and explain how the complaint will be dealt with using the *Complaint Handling Policy Guidelines*.

Principals must ensure that the ARCO receives training to fulfil their role. Principals need also to ensure that the identity and the role of the ARCO is known to students, parents and staff so that complaints can be dealt with quickly and appropriately.

For more information on these strategies, see other support documents to the *Anti-Racism Policy*.

Planning and reporting

Countering racism is a complex task requiring a range of actions and interventions. Schools need to collect data related to anti-racism education in order to determine what kinds of actions and interventions are required. These data will assist schools in deciding what strategies can be put in place and who would be the target of such strategies.

As a first step, schools can look for indicators of the influence of racism using an audit tool such as *Investigating the presence and effects of racism.* To effectively counter racism, action needs to be taken across the full range of a school's activities. The *Planning and evaluation guide* available on the *Racism. No way!* website provides schools with a framework through which they can identify in which areas strategies need to be developed to counter racism.

Professional learning activities related to the collection and analysis of data, and the planning, monitoring and evaluation of anti-racism education strategies are available on the Department's intranet.

Schools must report in Annual School Reports on anti-racism education strategies implemented and progress in implementing the policy. This reporting is to be included in the mandatory section, Multicultural Education. Schools should collect evaluative data related to the implementation and effectiveness of anti-racism education strategies to assist in their reporting.

School culture, practices and procedures

Schools do not have to write individual school anti-racism or complaints handling policies. The Department's *Anti-Racism Policy* and *Complaints Handling Policy,* with its accompanying *guidelines*, apply to all schools. However, the creation of an implementation plan will assist schools to meet the requirements of the *Anti-Racism Policy.*

Schools must have procedures in place that ensure timely and professional responses are made to complaints about racism. For example, schools need to inform parents, staff and students of the identity and role of the ARCO so they have an avenue through which to make complaints.

Schools should also examine other school practices and procedures to ensure they do not result in discrimination of any particular group or individual.

Consultation with school community members regarding school practices and procedures can also assist in increasing community confidence in the school.

Schools should encourage participation of all sections of the school community in the activities of the school. For example, practices used for the nomination and election of members to representative

bodies such as the Parents and Citizens Association and the Student Representative Council should be examined to ensure they allow for inclusion of members of minority groups.

Using tools such as the Racism. No way! *Planning and evaluation guide* assists schools to determine if their practices and procedures are consistent with the policy.

Professional learning

It is essential that all teaching and non-teaching staff can recognise racism and its detrimental effects on the whole school community. They need to understand what they can do about racism and how to support those members of the school community who may be subject to racism. Professional learning opportunities need to be provided for all staff.

Advice regarding the delivery of professional learning, along with a range of professional learning activities and presentations, is available for staff on the Department's intranet.

Teaching strategies

In order to confront the race-based generalisation, stereotype, bias, prejudice and discrimination that are the foundations of direct and indirect racism, teaching programs and teaching practice need to include strategies that promote the acceptance of Australia's cultural, linguistic and religious diversity and explicitly teach about racism and how to deal with it.

For a range of teaching strategies, see http://www.racismnoway.com.au/.

Engaging parents and community

The participation of parents and community in the life of the school is an essential component of anti-racism education. It allows parents to be confident about the safety of their children. It fosters improved community relations within and outside the school. It provides valuable resources for the school in breaking down stereotypes and teaching about the cultural diversity of Australian society.

As a first step in effectively communicating with parents from language backgrounds other than English, schools should use interpreting services that are available to them. The costs of these services are met by the Department.

A large number of translated Departmental documents are available in up to 40 languages on the DET website.

Training for school staff in how to use interpreters is available though regions. The training is delivered by Community Information Officers (CIOs). Contact Regional Equity Coordinators for more information.

Schools must provide information to parents and community members about their rights and responsibilities in relation to racism, including information about the identity and role of the ARCO and the availability of complaints handling procedures.

Consulting with parents and community members from minority groups can lead to their increased involvement in the life of the school. Conducting group specific meetings in the first instance can lead to the identification of useful community resources and skills and the inclusion of minority community membership of representative bodies such as the P&C.

Student engagement and initiatives

Students are quick to challenge injustices that they recognise in the school and the community. When students learn about the Holocaust or Apartheid or the Stolen Generations they see how unjust racism can be and are keen to act to challenge racist behaviour.

Students should be encouraged to identify and implement initiatives in anti-racism education that engage the interest of other students. Students can form anti-racism action teams to coordinate anti-racism initiatives, such as competitions and performances, that highlight for other students the importance of anti-racism education.

Schools should make web-based resources available to students including:

> Teaching activities on the *Racism. No way!* website
> Student activities on the *Making Multicultural Australia* website
> Student activities on the *Diversity and Social Cohesion Program* website.

Incorporating anti-racism education activities into peer support programs allows older students to demonstrate to younger students that racism is not tolerated in the school. Strategies for what to do when the younger students encounter racism can also be taught. Peer support programs can also be used to advertise the identity and the role of the ARCO and the existence of complaints procedures.

Cooling Conflicts program

Cooling Conflicts involves the use of drama techniques to examine identifiable stages of conflict and to offer participating students skills to deal with conflict. It involves conflict management rather than conflict resolution. It is particularly effective in dealing with cross-cultural conflict.

The program uses the expertise of a school's trained and/or experienced drama teacher to teach a senior drama class in a high school, or a Year 6 class in a primary school, the use of particular drama techniques.

Peer teaching forms the other part of the program. The students who have learnt about conflict then teach their younger peers how to understand and manage conflict through drama.

For more information on the *Cooling Conflicts* program, see the *Cooling Conflicts website*.