



BLACKWATER COMMUNITY SCHOOL
LISMORE, CO. WATERFORD.

ANTI-RACISM POLICY

29-03-2023

Blackwater Community School

Anti-Racism Policy

Racism is *“any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on “race”, colour descent, or national or ethnic origin” (U.N.)*

Introduction

Blackwater Community School is an anti-racist community and is committed to addressing racism in any form.

Racism in any form is not tolerated. All students at Blackwater Community school have the right to be treated with respect and feel safe with regard to their individual ethnic background and identity.

The school anti racist policy and practice helps to identify and change those attitudes which lead to negative discrimination against people on the basis of their “race”, ethos nationality or ethnic origin.

Parents and students should feel confident that if racist incidents occur, they will be thoroughly investigated and dealt with and help and support will be given to all involved.

Racial equality is central to the ethos and core values of Blackwater Community School. To establish and maintain this Blackwater Community School is committed to following aims:

Aims

- To ensure effective protection and redress against discrimination in Blackwater Community School through a structured policy framework.
- It is the right of every student to an education that is aimed at developing the personality, talents, mental and physical abilities of the student to their fullest potential based on “race”, colour descent, or national or ethnic origin.
- Encourage the students to acquire the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes to recognise and challenge examples of racism they may meet in their lives.

- To ensure school is a safe and welcoming place for all its members by providing an environment in which racist assumptions, attitudes and behaviours are continually challenged.
- Take steps to establish a climate in which all members of the school community have the confidence to report and record racist incidents.
- That all members of the school will know where to report and record racial incidents.
- That all staff receive training in defining and responding to racial incidents. That staff will develop staff awareness of Racism within the school, community and society, and address issues of using correct terminology, customs, and language.
- To give students and adults confidence that racism can, and must, be eradicated.
- Blackwater Community school will promote “race” equality and all students will be provided with opportunities to celebrate their own values and those of others, appreciate diversity and develop respect for others.

Identifying Racist Incidents

A racist incident is behaviour, language, practice or policy that makes a person ‘feel unwelcome or marginalised because of their colour, culture, religion, ethnicity or national origin’ (Richardson, 2004)

Categories of racist behaviour towards school staff, students’ and visitors

Unacceptable racist incidents such as:

- Direct physical assault or threat of it of a racist nature.
- Inciting racism in others.
- Behaving in a racist way and treating others less favorable on the basis of “race”.
- Derogatory name calling, insults, racist jokes, and negative or insensitive language.

- Expressing prejudices or deliberate misinformation on racial or ethnic distinctions.
- Written abuse of a racist nature including racist comments made by emailing or text messaging, or any social media forums, such as Facebook or Twitter.
- Damage to property motivated by racism.
- Provocative behavior such as wearing racist badges, insignia or clothing.
- Bringing racist materials such as leaflets, photographs or magazines into the school.
- Writing or expressing provocative slogans or catchphrases.
- Refusal to cooperate with other people because of their ethnic origin.
- Racist comments in the course of discussion in lessons, unless part of a study of racism within the curriculum.
- Ridicule based in differences of colour, “race”, ethnicity, nationality, culture, religion, or language.
- Stereotyping on the basis of colour, “race”, ethnicity, nationality, culture, religion/belief or language.
- Attempt to recruit for a racial organisation or group.
- Verbal and non-verbal abuse and threats of a racist nature.

Strategies for the Prevention of Racism in

Blackwater Community School

- Blackwater Community School is committed to the Yellow Flag Programme and all it represents.
- Blackwater Community school endeavors to build a school community based on inclusion, equality, and partnership.
- Blackwater Community School promotes an atmosphere of friendship, respect, and tolerance through programmes such as SPHE, Religious Education, Well-Being and Social Education.
- We will use the curriculum to teach tolerance and opportunities across all subjects to support students in valuing cultural diversity and understanding.
- We are committed to identifying cultural awareness issues across the curriculum, and to maximizing opportunities both within and outside the classroom to promote greater understanding and to lead students towards becoming confident and positive contributors to their school community.

- Blackwater Community School will teach students the difference between right and wrong in relation to racism and the need to respect each other and themselves.
- Diversity is represented with dignity on the walls of the school. Students in Blackwater Community School can display elements of their “race”, ethnicity, nationality, culture, religion and language on our Yellow Flag noticeboard.
- Blackwater Community School hosts an annual coffee morning, all parents are encouraged to visit the school and participate in their child's education and school activities.
- Teachers are expected to respect the rights of others and to respect those with different beliefs; expressing a personal view in an unprofessional way would be considered inappropriate.
- Teachers respond sensitively to students who disclose and incident of racism.
- All disclosed incidents of racism are investigated.
- Parents contribute to and support the school’s Anti Racism policy by encouraging positive attitudes and behaviour both at home and at school and by being vigilant for signs and symptoms that their child is subject to racism or is subjecting another child to racism.
- We include racial issues in the school’s Anti Bullying policy.

Procedures for Dealing with the Incidents of Racism

The school establishes the facts, records, and follows up on racism incidents as follows:

PHASE ONE:

STEP 1: Student reports racist incidents to a member of staff/year head/deputy principal/principal. Student fills out a racist incident report form.

Staff report racist incidents to year head/ deputy principal/ principal.

Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretaker, cleaners are encouraged to report any racist incidents witnessed by them or mentioned to them to year head/ deputy principal/ principal.

If a parent/guardian reports a racist incident to a member of staff, the parent/guardian will be asked to complete a racist incident report form.

A member of staff should report a racist incident directed towards them by another party to the principal. The member of staff will complete a racist incident report form and the incident will be investigated by the principal.

STEP 2: Year head/principal speaks to students involved, outside of class, and takes a brief note in a calm, dispassionate manner. Get the facts: What, Where, Who, When and Why.

STEP 3: Discuss with the student who has been identified separately and take a brief note of their account of the incident.

STEP 4: Try and resolve the situation. Tell the students the racist behaviour must stop immediately, and that the situation is being monitored. Ask the student who is the victim of racism how they would like to proceed – I.e Would they like perpetrator to be told stay away, or would they like to have a discussion with them with the support of a peer, teacher, school cllr etc. Ask the student to keep a record of any further incidents. They should be told to return to you immediately if the situation continues.

STEP 5: Fill out the Racism Incident Form in the Teachers' Handbook and file for future reference with the relevant Year Head.

In this way, all members of the school community will be encouraged to “tell” about racist incidents within school.

Parents/guardians of all involved will be contacted and informed.

PHASE TWO:

STEP 1: If racism persists, students inform their tutor and year head. Victims of racism shall be offered an appointment with the Guidance Cllr and they may wish

to accept or decline. If staff members are still experiencing racist incidents, they inform the principal.

STEP 2: At this stage students engaged in racism should be informed they are in breach of the School Code of Behaviour and will follow disciplinary procedures. It will always be made clear to offending students that such behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at Blackwater Community School.

STEP 3: The victim and the perpetrator should be given support and guidance by having a link person who they return to immediately should the racism continue. Ideally this would be the teacher dealing with the initial incident or the Tutor, Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain, Head of Year or Class Tutor. Support Line information is offered to a victim outside school hours should they need it.

It is important that sanctions for racism are clear and reflective of the serious nature of such behaviour. However, it is always important to carefully study context, the impact the behaviour has had and the wishes of the victim. Education is also critical to ensure there is understanding and reflection.

- Actions will be taken which could result in, suspension, expulsion, or dismissal. For other members of the school community, this could result in being barred from the school grounds or the school buildings.
- In such serious cases, it may be necessary to inform the Gardaí if a Hate Crime is being committed (e.g., serious physical assault)
- No matter what, the message is always consistent and clear. Racism is not tolerated and must be reported and recorded.

In Blackwater Community School we have proactive strategies in place to increase awareness of racist behaviour and promote a positive school culture such as:

- Annual student surveys regarding incidents or evidence of racism at BCS.
- Presentation to students regarding racism and consequences of same.
- Presentation to parents regarding racism and consequences of same.
- SPHE focuses on racism with all year groups and building self-esteem.
- The Yellow Flag committee promote a positive cultural environment throughout the year in BCS.

- Cairde System to support first years and trained to look out for vulnerable students.
- Lunch time activities for first and second years to promote integration.
- Emphasis on Mental Health Awareness, Meditation and Mindfulness and Suicide Awareness Programmes.
- Management, Staff and Parents strive to create an atmosphere where racism is unacceptable. Supervision and monitoring of pupils particularly at break times and staff informed by management/Year Heads of vulnerable students.
- Early indicators e.g., truancy, poor concentration, signing out sick are monitored.
- Visits to primary schools before 1st years come to secondary to get information on incoming students and disseminating this to staff at first meeting in August.
- Positive Discipline System – to promote positive behaviour and compliance with school rules.
- Establishment of the Yellow Flag, Amber Flag, Wellbeing committee and Diversity Lounge in BCS.
- Weekly pastoral care meetings.
- Student Council members are encouraged to bring concerns about racist behaviour to the attention of the relevant staff members outlined above.
- Annual staff refresher on anti-racism procedures.
- Some parents may require interpreting/translation support in order to engage in a meaningful way with discussion and decision-making. Senior management should endeavor to ensure that appropriate support is provided. Parents should always be informed of their right to be supported by translation/ interpreting services where needed.
- Outside agencies are contacted e.g., the HSE, Gardaí, NEPS, where/when necessary.

Monitoring

- A record will be kept of all racist incidents occurring and pertaining to the school, by means of the racist incident report forms.

- These records will give details of the offence, the parties involved, action taken, and sanction imposed.
- These records will be reviewed each term and will be used to monitor the frequency and nature of racist incidents and to measure the effectiveness of the methods used by our school in responding to them.
- Based on this information the school may adapt the methods used.
- Parents/guardians and students involved are informed of the outcome of the investigation.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Management

The Board of Management is responsible for:

- Ensure that the anti-racism policy is implemented.
- The Board of Management does not allow racism to take place at Blackwater Community school, and that any incidents of racism that do occur are taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately.
- The Board of Management monitors the incidents of racism that occur and reviews the effectiveness of the school policy on an annual basis.
- The Board of Management requires the school to keep accurate records of all incidents of racism and to report to the Board on request about the effectiveness of school anti racist strategies.
- The Board of Management responds immediately to any request from a parent/guardian to investigate incidents of racism.
- In all cases the Board of Management notifies the principal to conduct an investigation into the allegations and to report back to the Board.

The Principal

- Ensuring that the policy is implemented on a day-to-day basis.
- The principal ensures that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given training and support.
- The Principal takes appropriate action in any cases of racial discrimination.

All Staff

- It is primarily the role of the school to investigate and act upon a racist incident and to record and report further incidents.
- All incidents of racism occurring in school or pertaining to the school will be reported to the principal and recorded with conjunction with the parties involved.
- Following a racist incident, it is the role of the school and the principal to monitor future behaviour but also to provide help and support for the victim and challenge racist behaviour through awareness raising programmes on values, identity and discrimination
- It is expected that parents/guardians and all members of the school community, will cooperate and work together with the school on a continuous basis to help eliminate any racist behaviour.

Revision of this policy

This Policy will be regularly revised by the school management team.

Monitor, Review and Evaluation

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published in the school and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____

Declan Doocey

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____

Denis Ring (Principal)

Adopted by Board of Management: _____

Review Date Agreed: _____