

Racism Prevention Policy

1. Aim

To provide a safe environment (physically, psychologically, emotionally and culturally) in which all students from any background have the best opportunity to learn and achieve.

2. Rationale

Our school is committed to the elimination of all forms of racism and discrimination in school. No student, employee, family, guardian or community member should experience racism within the school environment.

The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Equal Rights Commission identifies racial discrimination as: "any act where a person is treated unfavourably because of their race, nationality, colour, descent or ethnic origin".

It includes:

- The degrees and forms it can take from name calling and stereotyping, to vilification, abuse and violence.
- The fact that it can involve direct and indirect exclusion from services, employment, education and opportunities.
- That it occurs systemically as a result of policies, conditions and practices affecting a broad group of people.

For the purposes of this policy, discrimination against a person's ethnicity could include, but is not limited to, comments about the way someone may look, talk, ethnic practices and beliefs. Discrimination against a person's culture may include, but is not limited to, vilification or humiliation of a person based on their heritage and/or family background.

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.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all school employees – paid, voluntary and sub-contractors, as well as all participants and visitors.

This policy applies to all students, parents, families, or guardians attending the school.

4. Responsibilities

Preventing expressions of racism in the school environment, and challenging attitudes that allow them to emerge, is the shared responsibility of all school staff.

Principals and school leadership have a responsibility to:

- Promote a culture of respect and non-discrimination across the school community.
- 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.
- Provide employees with opportunities to participate in continuous professional development regarding culturally responsive practice. This includes all staff undertaking cultural awareness training.
- Identify opportunities and develop a strategy for the inclusion of education regarding racism and discrimination for students.

- Promote and celebrate a range of significant cultural events to raise awareness and education for the college community
- Respond to all incidents, allegations and complaints of racial discrimination in a fair, efficient, effective, and transparent manner.
- Respond to all incidents and allegations of racial discrimination in a manner that seeks shared understanding, repair and resolution.
- Where serious incidents of racial discrimination have been substantiated, implement appropriate behaviour management processes and penalties.
- Ensure that parents, families and guardians are aware of the school's position and policy regarding racism and discrimination.

All employees have the responsibility to:

- Monitor their own behaviour to ensure that they do not commit or enable racial discrimination.
- Respond to the incident and allegation when made aware. Document the incident on Compass under racism/discrimination so that matters can be appropriately investigated and addressed.
- Support students to develop an understanding of racial discrimination, and their rights and responsibilities under this policy.
- Role model respectful behaviour to students.
- Participate in continuous professional development regarding culturally responsive practice.

Students have the 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.
- Seek support from school staff when they are aware of an incident of racial discrimination.

Parents, guardians and families have the 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.
- Role model the school's values and expected behaviours to students and staff.
- Notify school regarding any concerns regarding incidents, events or allegations of racial discrimination.
- Participate appropriately, when necessary, in the school's procedures regarding racism and discrimination.

5. Delegations

The school commits to monitor and enact policy to address racism through:

- a) Formation of a working group involving students, staff, parents/guardians and community members who will be responsible for the following:
 - Dedicated and consistent review of policy and procedures to ensure compliance.
 - Provision of advice to school leadership regarding implementation of the policy and any issues that may arise.
 - Develop strategies to include feedback from all members of the school community regarding the implementation of the policy.
 - Ensure adequate response to complaints, feedback and reports regarding racism and discrimination.
 - Demonstrate leadership and innovation in terms of good practice in the area of non-discriminatory practice.
 - Identify opportunities, and develop a strategy, for the inclusion of education regarding racism and discrimination for students.
 - Monitor incident reports in relation to events or allegations of racism to identify potential themes, risk areas and solutions.

Student voice and action will be incorporated through student leadership channels for the purpose of providing feedback and student-led initiatives to address racism and promote inclusion and belonging in the school community.

Incident Response – Processes for reporting and managing racism

Reporting concerns

Racism is not tolerated at our school. We ensure racist and discriminatory behaviour is identified and addressed with appropriate and proportionate consequences. All forms of racism will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively.

Students who may be experiencing racism, or students who have witnessed racism, are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff or another trusted adult as soon as possible.

Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate racial discrimination is greatly affected by students and/or parents and guardians reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to their year level coordinator or any trusted member of staff including their subject teachers or wellbeing staff.

Parents or guardians who develop concerns that their child is involved in or has witnessed racism at school should contact the Year Level Coordinator or an Assistant Principal.

Investigations and Recording

When notified of alleged racial discrimination, school staff will ensure the following:

- 1) Address the concern immediately if possible, and ensure the student is safe and feels supported
- 2) Listen and record details of the allegations / incidents using Compass, ensuring the following:
 - Acknowledge the student's feelings and support as needed
 - Inform the student that the Year Level Coordinator will be notified and will investigate further.
 - Inform the student that action will be taken if racial discrimination has occurred, in accordance with this policy.
- 3) Inform the relevant Year Level Coordinator.
- 4) The Year Level Coordinator will investigate the allegations in a timely manner and ascertain whether racial discrimination has taken place, using the definitions outlined in this policy. Investigations will usually include:
 - speaking to the those involved in the allegations, including the target/s, the students allegedly engaging in bullying behaviour/s and any witnesses to the incidents
 - speaking to the parent/guardian(s) of the students involved
 - speaking to the teachers of the students involved
 - taking detailed notes of all discussions for future reference and filing on Compass
 - consulting the wellbeing team and/or Assistant Principal
- 5) If the allegations are substantiated, the Year Level Coordinator will touch base with the student to acknowledge that racism has occurred and to let them know that action will be taken in accordance with this policy.
- 6) The Year Level Coordinator will offer the student (and any affected witnesses) wellbeing support. In addition to this, access to external support services will also be offered eg. Racism hotline, 123YARN and other relevant services for those impacted
- 7) Contact with the family of the affected student/s will be made
- 8) The Year Level Coordinator will follow the response process outlined below.

Responses to Racism – Racial Discrimination Management Process

Please note that racism can be complex in nature and there are, at times, mitigating factors or individual circumstances that may impact on this process and how it is implemented, such as:

- the severity and frequency of the racial discrimination and the impact it has had on the target student

- whether the student/s engaging in racial discrimination have displayed similar behaviour before
- whether the racial discrimination took place in a group or one-to-one context
- whether the student/s engaging in racial discrimination demonstrate insight or remorse for their behaviour
- the alleged motive of the behaviour

When the Year Level Coordinator has sufficient information to understand the circumstances of the alleged racism and the students involved, the following process will be followed.

- 1) The Year Level Coordinator will consult with the wellbeing team and relevant Assistant Principal around the incident, including any previous knowledge of the students involved and any similar incidents that may have occurred in the past
- 2) All students who have been involved in racial discrimination will be addressed by the Year Level Coordinator and/or Assistant Principal. These students will:
 - Be informed/reminded of this policy and the processes within
 - Be educated about what racism is, in general terms, and how it can cause harm
 - Be educated around the impact of their specific actions in this case and how they have caused harm (if a restorative practice meeting is appropriate and wanted by all parties, this will be arranged and can be facilitated by the wellbeing team)
 - Be offered individual wellbeing support to help them understand and explore underlying reasons for their behaviour (if appropriate)
 - Be suspended from school for 'Behaving in such a way as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person.'
- 3) Parents/guardians of students who have engaged in racial discrimination will be contacted by the Year Level Coordinator, who will:
 - Inform them of this policy and send it to them
 - Ensure they understand the nature and details of the incident, the harm caused, and that future episodes of racial discrimination will lead to further suspensions from school.
- 4) Year Level Coordinator/Assistant Principal will arrange a return to school meeting, during which a behaviour support plan will be created including strategies to prevent future incidents. Education and support to help the student understand their behaviours are paramount.
- 5) Year Level Coordinator/Assistant Principal will prepare and enact a safety plan, if necessary, to restrict future contact between involved students. All parties will be educated around this, and a copy sent to parents / guardians, teachers, and pinned to Compass.
- 6) Restorative meeting / mediation between students can be arranged as appropriate or as wanted by those involved. The objective of restorative practice is to repair relationships that have been damaged by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the person who has racially discriminated someone and forgiveness by the person who has been impacted. Mediation is only suitable if all students are involved voluntarily and demonstrate a willingness to engage in the mediation process.
- 7) Students involved will have behaviour monitored for an appropriate time and follow up action taken if necessary.

Maffra Secondary College understands the importance of monitoring and following up on the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by racial discrimination. Where appropriate, school staff will also endeavour to provide parents and guardians with updates on the management of these incidents.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Published on Compass newsfeed to parents, staff and students
- Discussed at staff meetings
- Included in school newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from main office upon request
- Included in new staff induction resources

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- Department of Education Preventing and Addressing Racism in schools
<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/preventing-addressing-racism-schools/policy>

Policy Review and Approval

Policy last reviewed	February 2025
Consultation	School leadership team Racism Prevention Action Team Year level coordinators Student leadership team School council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	February 2027 and then every 2 years